To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by David N. Black entitled "Television From A Third Coast: A History of Nashville Network and Syndicated Television Production, 1950-1983." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communications.

Herbert H. Howard, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

TELEVISION FROM A THIRD COAST: A HISTORY OF NASHVILLE NETWORK AND SYNDICATED TELEVISION PRODUCTION, 1950-1983

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

David N. Black
December 1996

Copyright David N. Black, 1996

All rights reserved

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the guidance of my committee chair, Herbert Howard, who constantly offered me insight and clear direction in the completion of my study. Also, I would like to thank the members of my committee, Ed Caudill, Charles Jackson, Barbara Moore, and Sam Swan for their support and encouragement during my graduate experience at UT. One person every UT graduate student is thankful for is Betty Bradley. As the College of Communication's senior secretary for Graduate Studies and Research, Betty was very attentive and knowledgeable with my needs and provided reassurance during those critical moments. I want to thank my parents, Harry and Alice Ann Black, for always believing in me and to my in-laws, Reza and Margaret Ordoubadian, for encouraging me to try graduate study. Lastly, I will be forever grateful to my family, wife Parri and sons Aaron and Ethan, for their constant support and sacrifice during the past seven years. They also provided me a much needed distraction and a reminder of what my real priorities are.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the history of Nashville television production as it contributed to television programming on a national and regional level. Production activity encompassed those programs for airing on broadcast or cable networks and for syndication. The study defines Nashville as a major production center in terms of the range of program content produced, the primary companies and individuals involved in that effort, and the factors that influenced its development. The main sources for this historical study included company newsletters, news releases, promotional material and memorandum; interviews with individuals involved; and newspaper and periodical reports. The study found Nashville's country music broadcast and recording industry the primary factor that shaped the nature of the television efforts taking place there. As National Life's WSM with its "Grand Ole Opry" radio show first influenced the development of the country music industry, so did it play the most important role in the development of television production activity. As a niche television production center, Nashville has maintained a leading role in country music television.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Statement of the Problem	3
	Research Questions	4
	Significance of the Study	5
	Limitations of the Study	7
	Terms and Organizations	9
	Terms	9
	Organizations	10
	Organization of the Chapters	11
II.	THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: A BRIEF OVERVIEW	15
III.	LITERATURE REVIEW	34
	System of Network and Syndication Production	35
	Nashville Television Production	40
	Country Music Studies	41
	Broadcasting Studies	46
	Nashville Studies	50
IV.	METHODOLOGY	55
	Sources	58
V.	THE EARLY YEARS: 1950 TO 1958	63
	Television Arrives in Nashville	63
	"Stars of the Grand Ole Opry"	75
	Owen and Harold Bradley	81
	The Quonset Hut Productions	86
	"Purina Grand Ole Opry"	88
	"Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry"	91
	Broadcast Station Production	96
VI.	SYNDICATION GROWTH: 1960-1969	101
	WSM-TV, Noble Dury, and Show Biz Pioneer Country Music Syndication	101
	"Gospel Song Shop" and the Chattanooga Medicine Company	106
	"The Porter Wagoner Show"	107
	Wagoner Introduces New Star: Dolly Parton	115
	"The Wilburn Brothers Show"	120
	Show Biz Outgrows and Separates From Noble Dury	123
	"The National Life Grand Ole Opry"	126

CHAPTER PAGE

Show Biz Continues to Expand 129

Nashville's TV Stations Enter
Syndicated Field 133
WSM-TV Begins Syndicating New Shows 133
WLAC-TV Establishes Syndication Unit 135
WSIX-TV Becomes Factor in
Syndication Production 153
Country Music Shows Land
on Network Schedules 155
Nashville's Status at
the End of the 'Sixties 165

VII. NETWORK PRODUCTION:
FROM BROADCASTING TO CABLE, 1969 TO 1983 . . .166
The Development of Opryland U.S.A. 167
"The Johnny Cash Show" 174
"Hee Haw". 182
"Hee Haw" Comes to Nashville 184
Summer Series Production 189
"Hee Haw" Returns 196
Network Cancellation 199
Syndication 203
Other Production Efforts 210
"Hee Haw" Moves to Opryland 212
Gaylord Acquisition 217
Pre-Opryland Production Growth: 1969 to 1974 .220
Cates, Hagan and Miller 221
Grammy Awards 224
New Companies 225
Pre-Opryland Specials 227
Potential for Network Series Production . .228
Opryland U.S.A. 233
Early Activity 233
The New Grand Ole Opry House 235
Opryland Productions 236
Growth of Specials 244
Johnny Cash Specials 246
CMA Acquires Awards Show Ownership 248
Celebrity Specials 250
Nashville Public Broadcasting Production . . .251
PBS's "Live From the Grand Ole Opry" 254
Show Biz 258
Show Biz Sold 258
Show Biz Program Efforts, 1974 to 1977 . . .260
"Pop! Goes the Country". 260

CHAPTER PAGE

"Nashville on the Road" 262
"Dolly" 263
Final Years, 1978 to 1983 269
Jim Owens and Multimedia 275
Television From a Third Coast 282
Country Music Television 288
The Nashville Network 293
Formative Period 294
Formation of TNN 299
Gearing Up for Production 300
Programming 303
The Launch of TNN 304
Nashville by the Early 'Eighties 309

VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 310
Summary 310
The Early Years: 1950 to 1958 310
Syndication Growth: 1960 to 1969 318
Network Production:
From Broadcasting to Cable, 1969 to 1983 . .323
Conclusions 332
Implications of the Study 350
Nashville's Future 353
Suggestions for Further Research 359

BIBLIOGRAPHY 363

APPENDICES 392
Appendix A. Syndicated Programs From the 1960s . .393
Appendix B. "Night Train" 395
Appendix C. Syndicated Programs From the 1970s . .396
Appendix D. Network and Syndicated Specials
From the 1970s and '80s 398
Appendix E. TNN Charter Programs 401
Appendix F. Notes 405

VITA 407

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

New York and Los Angeles have acted as the primary centers of network and syndication production in the United States following television broadcasting's early period of operation (Sterling and Kittross 1990, 330; Barnouw 1970, 61-65). However, Nashville, Tennessee, with its long-standing country music industry, developed into a major second-tier television production center with a long history of producing syndicated TV shows and network specials. Its status as an important cable network center also was assured when The Nashville Network and Country Music Television network were established in 1983. Some industry participants have boasted that Nashville is "the third coast" for television production (Hall, 1981). Whether Nashville's prolific past merits such status deserves further examination and is the focus of this research study.

Readily identified as "Music City U.S.A.," Nashville's growth as a major entertainment and communications center reaches back seventy years to broadcasting and country music's formative period. In the mid 1920's, the National Life and Accident Insurance Company began broadcasting its own radio barn dance program, later named the "Grand Ole Opry," through radio

station WSM which eventually became the most popular country music radio show in the country and influenced the development of Nashville as the international center for country music recording. This concentration of country music activity gradually transformed Nashville into an important tourist destination. Beginning in the early 1970s, the Opryland U.S.A. theme park served the needs of country music fans offering country music entertainment on a large, formal scale with a new auditorium for the "Grand Ole Opry," numerous musical stage shows, and state-of-the-art television production facilities (Wolfe 1977, 93-109).

Television production became a part of Nashville's growing country music entertainment industry soon after television stations began broadcasting. Before Opryland's production facilities began to produce a continuous schedule of network specials, many syndicated country music programs along with "The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw" on the networks established Nashville as a major center for country music television production (Wolfe 1977, 109). That activity culminated with national cable network programming when The Nashville Network began in 1983 (Malone 1985, 372).

Statement of the Problem

This study will examine the history of Nashville television production, with emphasis on production companies, producers, and programs from the sign-on of Nashville's first television station in 1950 to 1983, which saw the establishment of The Nashville Network. Quite often companies from outside the Nashville area have been involved in television production activities in Nashville. That involvement may be as small as outside companies distributing Nashville-produced syndicated programs or as great as outside production companies using Nashville-based talent and facilities to produce their own programs. This range of activity and involvement suggests the question: What does "Nashville" television production mean? The study will examine the role of Nashville-based companies and producers in terms of the control they have had on program production in relation to outside companies and individuals.

Also, to understand Nashville's potential as a production center it is important to examine the types of programs that have been successfully produced in relation to programs that either failed or were never attempted. Since country-western musical variety shows have been the overwhelming genre produced in Nashville,

this fact itself defines Nashville as a production center. Very little in other genres such as drama, comedy, or game shows appear to have been originated from Nashville. The study will examine the kinds of programs that have had a successful production run, the programs and pilots that failed to return to production, and why certain programs types never, or seldom, were attempted.

Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer seven questions relating to Nashville-based programs and companies in defining Nashville as a national center for television production. These questions cover the programs produced, the companies involved, and the range of television production activity:

1. What TV program genres have been attempted in Nashville?
2. What syndicated and network television programs have been successfully produced in Nashville?
3. What Nashville-based companies and individuals have been instrumental in producing syndicated and network television programs.
4. What factors present in Nashville allowed this city to become an important TV production center?

5. What landmark events significantly influenced the development of the television production industry in Nashville?
6. How may Nashville's success as a TV production center be properly assessed and characterized?
7. By 1983, had Nashville truly developed into a major TV production center somewhat comparable to New York and Hollywood?

Significance of the Study

An historical study of Nashville's unique contribution to television broadcasting and production will bring into focus the prominence Nashville has played as a national television production center and one of the leading cable programming centers outside of New York and Hollywood. Today, Nashville is the operations center for two major cable networks-The Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Television (CMT). In the three decades leading up to the launch of TNN and CMT, many country music programs were produced for syndication and network showing by a variety of producers based within and outside of Nashville. Today's efforts are directed toward cable network production along with syndicated and network specials.

Television program production on a national scale will be better understood by distinguishing the types of programs that have been successfully produced in Nashville from the program types that failed. Knowing the strengths and limitations of Nashville's production experience will clarify its relationship with other production centers.

The establishment of TNN and CMT suggests a further solidifying of Nashville's independence as a television production center. Through an examination of Nashville-based producers and companies and their roles in relation to outside influences, Nashville's unique contribution to national television programming will become clearer.

Until the late 1970s, viewers in most television markets had a choice between one public and three commercial broadcasting networks. The advent of satellite delivered programming created a growth in cable networks and greater program choices for viewers. As a city active in production before and after the rise of cable network production and programming, a study of Nashville offers an opportunity to gain an understanding of an important transition in our communications history. In Nashville, that transition appears to reflect a change from syndicated and broadcast network

series production activity to syndicated and network specials and cable network series production. Local Nashville broadcasters were a driving force in that change. This study will aid in understanding the dynamics that created the current state of broadcast and cable television activity in Nashville.

Limitations of the Study

This study begins with Nashville's post World War II economic emergence and covers the period from the sign-on of its first television station, WSM-TV, in 1950, to the development and sign-on of The Nashville Network (TNN) in 1983. The arrival of TNN, a 24 hour cable network currently reaching over 50 million subscribers, marks a significant milestone in Nashville's role as a production center and outlet for entertainment programming. Nashville's role in production today still reflects the important influence of TNN.

As used in this study, television production activity encompasses entertainment programs intended for regional or national distribution by syndication or network. The study does not attempt to examine other types of production such as news, public service, commercial, or corporate programs. Programs produced

only for local use are included as context only if they help explain a company's overall production effort. Likewise, feature-length motion picture production and music videos are included only in context to overall Nashville production. The study does not examine New York or Hollywood but focuses on Nashville's contribution to production on a national level that is somewhat comparable to the two centers.

Production companies and individuals studied include those that are based in Nashville and have been involved in any syndicated or network production, or those companies based outside Nashville which have been involved with programs produced in Nashville. Individuals interviewed for the study include producers and other persons involved in management-level activity and decisions. Companies involved in production support and production crew members are mentioned in general context to Nashville production activity.

Programs have been studied in terms of how they fit into Nashville's overall production activity. No attempt was made to critically analyze the content of each program; but, when possible, general evaluations have been made of production quality in terms of shooting format and complexity, on-camera talent, and

other aspects of the program's production effort including lighting, editing, and video and audio quality.

Terms and Organizations

Terms

Broadcast television. Programming transmitted over-the-air by local stations. Stations receive programming through local origination, outside services, and their affiliate broadcast networks.

Cable television. Programming received by wire from a local cable system operator. The cable system acquires the programming from a variety of sources: local origination, broadcast stations, outside services, and cable networks. The size of a cable system is measured by the number of households it services. The potential size of an audience for a program on cable can be measured by the total number of households on all cable systems that receive the program.

Network programs. Programs produced and sold to broadcast networks for distribution to large national audiences.

Rating. Audience estimates for a program, either broadcast or cable. The percentage of all television homes tuned to a program.

Series. A program produced and scheduled to run in a regular pattern, most often either daily or weekly.

Share. Another measurement of audience size. The percentage of all homes watching television that are tuned to a program. Share is a larger number than rating.

Special. A program produced and scheduled to run once.

Syndicated programs. Programs produced and sold directly to stations and cable systems.

Organizations

Gaylord Enterprises. Media company based in Oklahoma City involved in newspapers, radio, television, and entertainment. Bought "Hee Haw" in 1981 and WSM, Inc. two years later.

"Grand Ole Opry." A country music radio show airing since 1925 on WSM-AM in Nashville, Tennessee.

National Life and Accident Insurance Company. Owner of WSM, Inc. from 1925 to 1983.

NLT Corporation. The holding company formed in 1968, which included National Life and Accident Insurance Company.

WSM-AM. Clear channel radio station in Nashville, Tennessee, broadcasting to a large part of the United States. Producers of the "Grand Ole Opry."

WSM-TV. Television broadcast station in Nashville, Tennessee, reaching an audience in an approximately 50 mile radius of Nashville.

WSM, Incorporated. Organization first incorporating the "Grand Ole Opry," WSM-AM, WSM-FM, and WSM-TV. Later included Opryland U.S.A. theme park, Opryland Productions, the Opryland Hotel and Convention Center, and The Nashville Network.

Organization of the Chapters

Chapter I introduces the study and includes a brief historical background, the statement of the problem, the

research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, and chapter organization.

Chapter II traces the major developments of Nashville production during the time period covered by the study. This chapter borrows from other histories to present a background upon which the study is based.

Chapter III reviews historical production literature found in country music, broadcasting, and general Nashville histories. The chapter concludes with an assessment of what is included in the literature and what needs further study.

Chapter IV presents the methodology used in the study. This chapter explains how the study was conducted and the sources involved.

Chapter V begins the narrative study with the sign-on of Nashville's first television station, WSM-TV, in 1950. It covers initial production activity during the fifties including the ABC network-run series "Purina Grand Ole Opry"; the Al Gannoway syndicated film series, "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry"; Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs' live show on WSM; and a few other programs. This chapter examines the extent to which television was utilized next to a growing country music recording industry and the already institutionalized "Grand Ole Opry." This formative period is noted for how, or

whether, Nashville television interests took advantage of the other creative activity going on at the time.

Chapter VI covers the rise of regional program syndication. It examines the programming associated with Show Biz, Inc.; two additional Opry-type syndicated shows; WTVF's 21st Century Productions; and the beginning of the Country Music Association's live network awards show. The decade of the 1960s marks a further growth in country music's popularity, and with it, Nashville-based television. This chapter examines that growth and the increased outside interest in Nashville television.

Chapter VII begins in 1969 with the production of two network prime time country music series: "The Johnny Cash Show," and "Hee Haw." Several years later, the NLT Corporation established a new state-of-the-art television facility, opened as a part of the Opryland theme park complex, which attracted many network specials and syndicated programs. The study examines the production activity at the Opryland facilities during the 1970s, the decline of country music series syndication, and the development of The Nashville Network in the early 1980s.

Chapter VIII provides conclusions from the study. It analyzes the nature of Nashville as a national

television production center in terms of the programs produced and the relationships between inside and outside producers. It also presents the researcher's conclusions about Nashville as a third major national production center and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Since television was originally an extension of radio broadcasting, New York was a natural starting place for television production with the radio networks already headquartered there. New York's live episodic and anthology programs dominated prime time network television from 1948 until the mid 1950s, when Hollywood film companies began making a major commitment to television with filmed series. By the late 1950s, Hollywood became the established center for prime time entertainment production. New York specialized in studio-based news, documentaries, and daytime program production along with its continued network administrative and fiscal activities. This relationship began loosening in the late 1970s with the growth of cable networks (Sterling and Kittross 1990, 330; Barnouw 1970, 193-198).

Chicago briefly served the role as a third network production center during television's early days beginning in the late 1940s due, in part, to its location in relation to New York on the developing national coaxial cable hookup. Motion picture production was active in the city from 1907 to 1917, as well as network radio production from the early 1930s

until the late 1940s. The "Chicago Style" of production, including "Kukla, Fran, and Ollie," "Garroway at Large," and "Stud's Place," exemplified an informal, low budget approach that successfully created an intimate appeal with viewers. Once the network cable reached the West Coast in 1951, the networks began dropping Chicago-based productions for either the more polished Hollywood filmed series or New York live programs (Nielsen 1965, 305-312).

Unlike network programming, production for syndication started primarily on the West Coast. Companies and producers in the early days, including Ziv Television Productions, Jerry Fairbanks, Hal Roach, Screen Gems, Desilu, Revue, and others, began supplying local stations with filmed episodic action programs to fill their programming schedules. An early "golden age" for syndication did not last very long. Those producers began to decline in numbers from the late 1950s through the 1960s with the continued growth of network programming and off-network syndication (Barnouw 1970, 134; Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 305; Erickson 1989, 11; Moore 1979, 24-47).

By the end of the 1960s, syndication production began to pick up momentum that would continue into the 1970s. Independent UHF stations increased in number as

a result of the 1964 "all channel" bill requiring UHF tuners on all television sets. Station groups such as Westinghouse, Metromedia, and Avco began a trend that is very alive today with cost-effective talk shows. The enactment of the FCC's "Prime Time Access Rule" in 1971 helped to fuel the syndication business, but more on the level of talk and game shows and former successful network programs rather than more diverse, local-oriented programs the rule had intended (Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 305; Erickson 1989, 12; Moore 1979, 47-48).

The pattern for network and syndication production continued until the late 1970s when the rise of cable networks located in other cities outside New York and Los Angeles marked another shift in production activity. When confronted by governmental policies restricting their activities in the 1960s, cable systems began to move away from their function as a retransmission service, and larger multiple-system-operators began engaging in program origination and production. Satellite program distribution to cable systems began with Home Box Office in 1975. The following year Ted Turner uplinked his local independent in Atlanta, WTCG-TV, now WTBS, as a superstation supplying programs to cable outlets. A loosening of regulation in the 1970s

likewise helped to fuel cable's growth. By the end of the decade, numerous services were being launched, establishing the trend in cable network growth (Head, Sterling, and Schofield 1994, 76-79); Picard 1993, 1).

Along with Atlanta-based Cable News Network (CNN), Turner Network Television (TNT), and The Weather Channel, other cable networks developed in locations outside of New York and Los Angeles. These locations included Nashville as the headquarters for The Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Network (CMT) (Broadcasting and Cable 1993, G-85-86).

Nashville's activity in syndication and network television production has been primarily associated with its country music industry. Although most closely associated with the "Opry," "Music City USA," and country music, Nashville has an active cultural, intellectual, and economic past that provided a foundation for its entertainment development. During the late 1800s, long before identifying itself as "Music City USA," city boosters promoted Nashville as the "Athens of the South" with the many colleges located in the area. A resurgence in cultural and academic activity took place in the 1920s and 1930s, further supporting that claim. Poets and intellectuals called The Fugitives became best known for two movements they

spawned. New Criticism became a style of literary analysis influencing the teaching of literature in the United States. A reactionary Southern movement known as Agrarianism protested scientific and economic progress while looking inward to past Southern values. The arts also developed during this period as symbolized by the permanent renovation of the 1897 Parthenon reproduction exhibit in Centennial Park, the city park. With the Parthenon temple as a focal point, the city became an attraction for music, dance, theater, and art (Doyle 1985, 3-18).

Nashville benefited by the post World War II economic resurgence along with the rest of the sunbelt South. Banking, insurance, securities, health care, higher education, and religious publishing and administration grew substantially in local and regional influence. By the late 1950s, Nashville was the home to 10 colleges and universities and published over 100 million copies of religious books and periodicals annually. Referred to as the "Protestant Vatican," the city is the home office for the United Methodist Church, Southern Baptist Convention, and other religious organizations. The United Methodist Publishing House

produces religious film, video, and radio programs, earning it the title "Methodist Hollywood" (Doyle 1985, 108-109, 158-178).

The roots of Nashville's country music industry began in 1925 with the "hillbilly" music radio program, "WSM Barndance," later named the "Grand Ole Opry." Not the first barn dance radio show, nor the most popular during its first years, the "Opry" steadily grew in listeners and influence by drawing upon regional musical talent. The 1930s and 1940s saw its most substantial growth. WSM achieved 50,000 watt clear-channel status and near national nightime coverage in 1932, and the "Opry" was picked up by NBC in 1939. In 1938 before the network began airing the "Opry," listenership was high with WSM receiving 355,000 letters of fan mail (Howard 1992, 107). The program reached a high level of popularity that Hollywood observed with Republic's 1940 motion picture release, "Grand Ole Opry," starring Uncle Dave Macon, George D. Hay, and Roy Acuff (Hurst 1975, 120-121).

The "Opry" was broadcast from several locations over the years until it settled into the Ryman Auditorium, an old tabernacle formerly used for religious meetings, in 1941. Many new stars joined its roster in the 1940s and its popularity continued to

expand. Ratings and attendance to the show declined in the 1950s, as did other radio barn dance shows, primarily due to the rise of rock and roll. Country music record sales slowed. Attendance figures recovered in the 1960s and new management at the "Opry" and WSM began to work on improving the "Opry's" overall image and commercial potential. The biggest result occurred in the early 1970s with the construction of a new $15 million Opry House, including television facilities, as part of the Opryland USA theme park complex (Hurst 1975, 139, 189-191, 292-303; Malone 1985, 74-75) .

Promoted as the "Air Castle of the South," radio station WSM was also active in production outside of the "Grand Ole Opry" and country music. By the early 1950s, WSM produced 27 weekly shows for NBC, making Nashville among the largest radio network origination points outside of New York and Hollywood. WSM supplied a variety of programs to CBS, Mutual, and other radio networks. A number of important and well-known entertainers began their careers in Nashville radio including Dinah Shore, Pat Boone, Snooky Lanson, and Francis Craig ("Air Castle" 1970, 15). Overall, however, it was on country music that WSM exerted a major influence. WSM radio's broadcasts spawned country music recording and eventually transformed Nashville

into a major entertainment center including broadcasting; music recording, publishing, and licensing; radio and television production; network cablecasting; and tourism. The beginning of Nashville's recording industry was first engaged on a low level, removed from any corporate strategy or interest (Wolfe 1977, 109).

For a few years beginning in late 1945 or early 1946, several WSM radio engineers operated the city's first recording facility, the Castle Recording Company, as a freelance endeavor providing country artists the ability to make music albums without traveling to New York or Hollywood. WSM management discouraged the activity, but the successful freelance effort generated interest with established recording labels. Through the 1950s several record companies opened Nashville offices. These firms included Decca, RCA, Capitol, and Mercury. The work of producers such as Owen Bradley and Chet Atkins further popularized country music with the development of the "Nashville Sound" (Rumble 1978, 22-41; Malone 1985, 209, 256-257; Green 1980, 184-186) .

From those developments, other activities related to the country music industry took root in Nashville. The first country music publishing house in the Southeast began in 1942 with the Acuff-Rose Publishing

Company. In the early 1950s the music licensing firm Broadcast Music, Inc. opened a Nashville office, meeting the demands of music composers and country artists and further building upon the growing music industry (Green 1980, 184; Rumble 1978, 24).

With television signing on in 1950 in Nashville, the city was not among the first markets to produce country music television programming. Country music performances found their way in front of video cameras during television's development as well as the formal beginning of television broadcasting. In 1927, country artist Bobby Gregory sang before an experimental system in New York City (Colley 1972, 107). Radio cowboy Tex Owens performed "Cattle Call" in 1936 for an experimental Kansas City broadcast. Red River Dave McEnery holds the distinction of being the first country music artist to perform during regular television broadcast service. McEnery and his group, the Swift Cowboys, were televised at the RCA Exhibit during the 1939 World's Fair in New York. Viewers in Pennsylvania reported watching the performance. He promoted himself as holding that distinction by driving a Buick with the claim on the side: "Red River Dave: World's First Television Star." He later hosted his own local

television show during the late 1940s in San Antonio (Green 1977, 42: Colley 1972, 109; Malone 1985, 269).

Many country music television programs borrowed the barn dance format from radio. These programs often were televised versions of successful radio shows. A number of programs made their way to the networks during this period. "Midwestern Hayride" began a televised version of the radio program in Cincinnati produced by Powell Crosley's WLWT-TV. Beginning in 1948, "Hayride" was broadcast on the Crosley Network of four Ohio stations before being picked up by NBC and ABC during the 1950s (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" January 1988, 14; Green 1977, 42; McNeil 1991, 500; Brooks and Marsh 1985, 402). Also in the late 1940s, ABC broadcast a televised version of WLS radio's "National Barn Dance," called "ABC Barn Dance," from Chicago, as well as "Hayloft Hoedown" from Philadelphia. Out of New York, NBC carried "Village Barn" and "Saturday Night Jamboree" during this period (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" 1988, 14; Brooks and Marsh 1985, 1, 255, 546, 658; Bundy 1956, 1). Syndication began in 1949 with the "Old American Barn Dance" filmed in Chicago (Green 1980, 42). Into the 1950s, other syndicated programs appeared including "Town and Country Time," and "Western Ranch Party" (Country Music

Foundation February, "Television's Role" 1988, 11; Green 1980, 15). When television made the Nashville airwaves in 1950, the city's country music industry could only consider itself an indirect participant in the development of country music television which included broadcasts on the networks from a variety of other cities across the country.

The strongest competition for Nashville came from Springfield, Missouri, where Grand Ole Opry star Red Foley hosted "Ozark Jubilee," a weekly country and western program airing on ABC-TV for five years starting in 1955. Foley left the "Grand Ole Opry" to work with record promoter Si Simon in Springfield. Several stars who would later have their own television shows in Nashville performed on "Ozark" early in their careers, including Porter Wagoner, Bobby Lord, and Leroy Van Dyke (Eng 1992, 88-91).

Nashville-based activity was slow to develop in the 1950s. "Opry" performers were also anxious during this period to perform on television, but WSM officials were concerned over the impact the new medium was having on the decline in the Opry's live audience attendance. "Opry" talent was featured on a live NBC network program from Nashville in 1955. Near the same time, Nashville artists were booked for four twenty-five minute segments

on NBC's "Kate Smith Show." Later, ABC picked up the "Purina Grand Ole Opry" once a month in place of the "Ozark Jubilee" from 1955 to 1956. The Purina "Opry" was a one hour, live program produced in Nashville featuring various "Opry" talent. Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, not performing on the "Opry" at the time, began their local bluegrass show on WSM-TV in the early 1950s. It was to become the first syndicated show out of Nashville when videotape came into use at the end of the decade (Country Music Foundation February, "Television's Role" 1988, 11 and March 1988, 8; Hurst 1975, 190-191, 216).

The two other VHF stations in Nashville, WSIX-TV and WLAC-TV, signed on in 1953 and 1954 respectively, providing additional production facilities. Very active during this time was record producer Owen Bradley, who was instrumental in establishing Nashville's Music Row in the 1950s. Bradley opened studios with his brother Harold Bradley not only for music recording but also for television film production. Bradley's "Quonset Hut" became famous as a music recording studio and its acoustics helped establish the "Nashville Sound" and the music recording industry located in an area of Nashville called Music Row (Ivey and Green 1980, 244). Al Gannoway utilized the Quonset Hut and produced valuable

color film footage of "Opry" performers in the "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" from 1954 to 1955. The syndicated program included all major "Opry" acts and reached markets in the South, Midwest, and West Coast (Country Music Foundation, "Country Music" 1987, 67).

By the early 1960s, Nashville began to take the lead in country music television production. The syndicated "Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry" was produced from 1960 to 1963. Nashville-based Show Biz, Inc. began its domination of country music television syndication with "The Porter Wagoner Show" in 1960. Wagoner's show ran for 20 years in syndication, becoming one of the most recognized country music programs and also helping to launch Dolly Parton's crossover rise to stardom. Many other Show Biz programs followed, often low budgeted and similar in format with one group or star performing after another. Other "grass roots TV" series produced in Nashville starred Bill Anderson, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, the Wilburn Brothers, and Dolly Parton. A list of the many shows includes "The Bobby Goldsboro Show," "Candid Camera," "Marty Robbins Spotlight," "Nashville on the Road," "Dolly," "Pop! Goes the Country," and "That Good Ole Nashville Music" (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" May 1988, 15 and June 1988, 23; Wolfe 1977, 109).

In 1965, National Life for the first time sponsored its own 30 minute weekly program, "National Life Grand Ole Opry." It was syndicated in 13 of the company's main markets and received good ratings; however the show was cancelled because the program was perceived as not increasing insurance sales (Peterson 1975, 349). In a matter of a few years, National Life would take a dramatically different approach in utilizing its entertainment resources.

By the mid 1960s, the country music recording industry in Nashville began to be visited by folk-oriented pop and rock recording artists, marking a new awareness and respect for country music. The growth in country television syndication reflected the growth in popularity for country music taking place during this period (Ivey and Green, "The Death of Rock" 1980, 266). "The Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry" reflected this new awareness (Hurst 1975, 212-222).

The greatest development in Nashville television activity took place in the late 1960s. In 1968, the Country Music Association began promoting country music with an annual live network program. The "CMA Awards Show" premiered with strong ratings and contributed

toward promoting Nashville and country music on a national level (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" June 1988, 23).

The momentum continued a year later with two successful prime time network series beginning production in Nashville, marking a new plateau in national exposure for country music. "Hee Haw" was taped at the CBS affiliate WLAC-TV, while across town Johnny Cash produced a show on ABC that was partly broadcast from two trailers located behind the Ryman Auditorium (Wolfe 1977, 109).

National Life took some bold steps of its own during this period. Like many companies, National Life had formerly held to a managerial policy of focusing on one line of business, in this case the selling of insurance, and discouraged venturing into activities not directly related to that goal. Without the enthusiastic leadership from its general manager, Edwin Craig, WSM may not have become the broadcasting giant it did. For many years, WSM and the "Opry" were valued only as advertising and company image vehicles that would aid in selling insurance policies. In the late 1960s, National Life began implementing a corporate strategy of "conglomerate synergistics," branching into other fields for the purpose of maximizing its profit. In 1968, NLT

Corporation was formed as a holding company to expand in areas outside of their insurance activities (Peterson 1975, 350-351, 356). Newly appointed WSM president Irving Waugh and "Grand Ole Opry" manager E. W. "Bud" Wendell were interested in increasing the "Opry's" attendance and improving overall tourism. Waugh and Wendell succeeded in convincing the management of parent company National Life to risk a large financial investment in a state-of-the-art television production facility as a part of Opryland USA, a multimillion dollar theme park and new home for the "Grand Ole Opry" showcasing country as well as other forms of American music. The investment was a risk since WSM did not currently have a level of production activity to justify the two and one half million dollars needed to equip the facilities. The risk quickly dissipated as production business began when the equipment first arrived (Hagan 1989, 281).

As the 1970s progressed, networks turned to country music specials in place of series, and syndication remained strong with much activity occurring in the new Opryland television complex. Among those many specials included the first time the actual "Opry" radio show made it to network television. The "Opry" programs produced up to this time featured "Opry" stars, and some

were produced in the Ryman but the radio program was off limits to TV cameras. The "Grand Ole Opry" radio program also aired live annually on PBS for three years beginning in 1978 as a part of the network's annual fund drive campaign (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" August 1988, 13). Country music syndication fell off in the early 1980s with the sale of Show Biz, Inc. and the rise of cable television (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" February 1989, 20-21).

Cable programming became the source for the second major development in Nashville television activity--the development of two national cable networks, The Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Television (CMT). Tom Griscom, senior broadcasting executive for NLT Corporation, TNN's parent company, was instrumental in the network's establishment by convincing NLT to sell WSM-TV to facilitate an investment in the new network. Griscom was interested in expanding WSM's activities and saw cable television as the future in utilizing the company's established resources in country music talent and facilities. The period surrounding the start-up of TNN saw more corporate readjustment and upheaval.

In forming TNN, NLT signed a joint venture in early 1982 with Group W Satellite Communications to handle TNN's marketing and distribution. Later that year as

TNN prepared for its premiere telecast, the Houston-based insurance company American General Corporation acquired NLT. American General quickly expressed an interest in selling off all of NLT's activities unrelated to insurance. These activities included "Grand Ole Opry" itself, WSM radio, the Opryland theme park and hotel, and the upcoming The Nashville Network. Within approximately a year and a half of the American General acquisition, TNN successfully signed-on and Oklahoma-based Gaylord Broadcasting acquired all of the Opry properties (Hagan 1989, 322, 325-326).

The Nashville Network became the dominating force in country music television, initially signing on with an 18 hour daily schedule of original programming (Ogles and Howard 1993, 59-61). As the host of TNN's flagship program, "Nashville Now," Ralph Emery indicates many country stars were apprehensive about appearing on the new network. They did not want to lend their names to a project that lacked a track record (Emery 1991, 207). CMT, on the other hand, began on a more modest scale with approximately 20 music videos available when it signed on. The music video network was sold to TNN's parent company in 1991. Under one ownership, the two networks now reflect a complementary relationship as an FM station does to its co-owned AM counterpart, making

Nashville a major cable television production and origination center (Ogles and Howard 1993, 59-61, 143-149).

This chapter has provided a brief historical overview of Nashville television program production. The subsequent chapters examine in detail the historical development of Nashville as an important center for television origination. The next chapter examines the literature pertaining to the study.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Histories of national television production activity primarily focus on program content along with the companies, institutions, and individuals involved in their creation and distribution. Many studies interpret a process of progressive development controlled primarily within the boundaries of the television industry but affected by external social, cultural, economic, political, and technological influences. In recent years, historical studies have expanded their focus and interpretations, attributing stronger influence and interaction by those outside influences (Sloan 1991, 300-317, 334-346; O'Conner 1983, xiii-xlii; Nord 1989, 308-315; Stevens and Garcia 1980, 15-34).

This study uses the more traditional historiographical model, examining the development of Nashville production and questioning the nature of its success as a national program producer. The study follows other industry-oriented histories such as works by Erik Barnouw; Christopher Sterling and John Kittross; and J. Fred MacDonald in examining the individuals and organizations, both from within and outside the Nashville industry, that influenced program production.

The past literature offers a variety of perspectives dealing with syndication and network production that offer a beginning foundation for this study.

System of Network and Syndication Production

The development of general production practices for network and syndication are often found within the context of general broadcasting studies and network histories, especially dealing with the transition of prime time production from New York to Hollywood during the 1950s. By the end of the decade, the production landscape was established with East and West coast centers turning out programming for national distribution. The focus then shifts more to what was produced and why it was produced rather than how or who produced it. Eric Barnouw's Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television traces the major internal and external forces involved in the development and control of American broadcasting. Barnouw covers some early production efforts and the transitional period in the 1950s with the shift of network entertainment production, along with the development of syndication production to the West coast. That shift began with small film producers and increased under its own momentum by 1954 with major film studios entering

into television production after Walt Disney and Warner Brothers signed with ABC. Toward the end of the decade, Hollywood was the established "mecca" for dramatic production (Barnouw 1970, 134, 193-198).

J. Fred MacDonald covers the Hollywood film studios that turned to network and syndicated TV production in One Nation Under Television. MacDonald examines the broadcasting industry, functioning simultaneously as a business enterprise and a creative cultural force. Many small production companies folded by the end of the 1950s with Hollywood studio involvement in TV production. Chicago made its contribution to network programming but, along with New York, was eclipsed by the Hollywood motion picture industry (MacDonald 1990, 118-121).

In Stay Tuned, Sterling and Kittross cover the major events and trends in broadcasting including the growth of packagers in network program production. In the mid 1950s, program production was split evenly between advertisers, the networks, and packagers. From that point, the trend in production activity was with packagers. Creative control of production resided in Hollywood by the mid 1950s (Sterling and Kittross 1990, 330, 399-341).

Castleman and Podrazik describe network and syndication programming in Watching TV: Four Decades of American Television. All NBC and CBS programs were produced in-house until 1946 when NBC allowed outside sponsorship control by the J. Walter Thompson agency with "The Kraft Television Theater." Chicago's contribution displayed a fresh approach in the early 1950s because it existed outside the theatrical, dramatic radio and Broadway influence that characterized New York television. The New York-based DuMont network unsuccessfully attempted to compete with Hollywood when it constructed a modern East coast film production facility. Few signed on and most went West instead (Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 29, 44, 78, 87).

In Fifties Television, William Boddy examines cultural, economic, and regulatory factors that played into network programming decisions and the shifting of production control that eventually ended in Hollywood. Boddy traces the network's apparent turn-around in giving away direct production control to the film industry after having taken the effort to wrestle that control away from sponsors and agencies by expanding their own production capabilities. The networks intended to control programming partially by engaging in in-house production. By 1952, CBS had expanded to

fifteen production locations in New York and began building Television City in Hollywood. This approach was expensive and prohibitive for even the networks to cover their schedules. The networks found they could exert as much control over the programs produced by licensing to independent producers. This also helped their relations with Congress and the public who were critical of strong network control of their affiliates (Boddy 1990, 168-170).

In "Television in the 'Golden Age': An Entrepreneurial Experiment," James L. Baughman notes the economic imperatives driving program production decisions by the young networks during television's early days. Baughman indicates the networks were interested in Hollywood early but Hollywood was hostile to network television and was waiting for pay television systems to take hold. Hollywood's resistance forced the networks to turn to talent in New York theaters and night clubs to fill their schedules (Baughman 1992, 403-417).

Another study of the transitional period in the 1950s between the two coasts is Christopher Anderson's Hollywood TV. The resistance of the major film studios to television was due to their lack of control over the new industry and less to a natural dislike for the new

medium. Hollywood became a participant in broadcasting through production, a role lacking the authority it was used to having but still found to be in its best interests. By the start of the 1960s, it was mainly the smaller studios that were the most successful in TV production rather than the majors (Anderson 1994, 2-13, 255-260).

Chicago's role in network production is profiled by Ted Nielsen in the study "Television: Chicago Style." Local Chicago broadcast stations acted as the production facilities for network programs. NBC's WNBQ (now WMAQ-TV) led others in 1951 with eleven shows in production. Nielsen suggests the informal, low budget approach exemplified by the Chicago style contributed to its own decline as a network program supplier. Other stations across the country could duplicate the Chicago programming with a greater local appeal. Once the network coaxial cable reached the West coast, New York turned to Hollywood for higher budget programming (Nielsen 1965, 305-312).

The number of producers generating syndicated programs experienced a decline from a supposedly golden age of activity in the mid 1950s according to Barbara Moore in a study entitled "Syndication of First Run Television Programming: Its Development and Current

Status." Although syndicators saw their greatest increase in activity begin after the FCC station allocation freeze was lifted in 1952, problems including a rise in program production and distribution, competition from off-network reruns, expanded network scheduling, newly released back-logged Hollywood films, and an influx of syndicators themselves soon forced a trend in syndication characterized by low budgets and poor scheduling. This trend began to reverse by the end of the 1960s, but even the introduction of the Prime Time Access Rule by the FCC in the early 1970s could not change the overall nature of first-run syndicated programming as second rate television. Moore notes that the relative success of Nashville's "Hee Haw" as a unique, high-budget syndicated program born from the Access Rule merely maintained the production standards it possessed as a highly successful network show (Moore 1979, 24-50, 136-137).

Nashville Television Production

The subject of Nashville television production is also found within larger historical studies falling into three categories: country music, broadcasting, and Nashville history.

Country Music Studies

Country music histories comprise the greatest amount of material on Nashville television. The most in-depth work is Television's Role in Country Music, 1948-1987: A Preliminary Survey. Written by The Country Music Foundation for Group W Communications, Inc., this study examines programming trends, commercial developments, economic factors, and audiences relating to the country music television industry. Nashville country music television activity is placed in context with the efforts occurring in other markets. Nashville started slowly into television in the beginning but took the lead with syndication in the 1960s and network specials in the 1970s. According to the study, cable programming efforts by TNN, CMT, and others were the primary reason for the decline of country music syndication (Country Music Foundation, Television's Role" January 1988-March 1989).

The most extensive history of country music is Bill Malone's Country Music USA. Malone reveals the constant trend of country music in drifting away from its traditional roots to reach a more affluent middle class audience. The "Grand Ole Opry's" move from the rundown Ryman Auditorium to the Opryland theme park is an example of the industry's ambivalence about its rural

past. Major country music television programs are profiled in terms of how they presented the country music image. Syndicated programs presented a more traditional form overall in contrast to network shows which were "marginally country." Malone's traditional bias favors star headlined shows such as "The Porter Wagoner Show." He is more critical of "Hee Haw's" computerized, hillbilly approach and TNN's first wave of programs (Malone 1985).

In The Illustrated History of Country Music, William Ivy and Douglas B. Green cover television activity in Nashville in the late 1960s. "The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw" offered different network interpretations of country music. The Cash show presented a romantic view of country music as music of the common man. "Hee Haw" possessed a split personality presenting an unpopular hay bale image of country music while billing some of the best traditional performers. "Hee Haw's success in syndication shows the grassroots support that existed at the time despite the network's resistance to unadulterated country music (Ivey and Green "The Nashville Sound," 1980, 267-268).

In Tennessee Strings, Charles Wolfe indicates Nashville became known for its television production beginning in the late 1960s. Major network shows were

produced in Nashville during the 1966-1975 period, along with a number of syndicated programs. Wolfe suggests television production, as a part of the "dream factory" in Nashville's country music industry, occurred due to the presence of the sustained strength of "Grand Ole Opry." Nashville acted as a center, bringing together authentic folk roots and modern technology to commercialize country music (Wolfe 1977, 107-111).

In Grand Ole Opry, Chet Hagan traces the television programs associated with the "Opry." Hagan's background in network and Nashville television production provides valuable detail. Hagan points out the Country Music Association's (CMA) first network awards program was delayed three weeks until the network's standards and practices department could screen the taped program. The reason related to the network's past questionable programming activities and not over doubts about country music and the CMA (Hagan 1989, 267-268).

Steve Eng traces the musical career of Porter Wagoner including his involvement in television in A Satisfied Mind: The Country Music Life of Porter Wagoner. Eng notes the influence of Red Foley's "Ozark Jubilee" television show in Springfield, Missouri, on Nashville's future dominance of country music television. Wagoner performed as a regular on "Ozark

Jubilee" during the 1950s when Nashville lacked strong ambitions in country music television. Eng states that Nashville did have television "in a local, humdrum way," and "The National Life insurance sales motto, 'We Shield Millions,' insured that millions would be shielded from any kind of regular network country music show emanating from Nashville" (Eng 1992, 82, 84). With two other programs also airing on ABC-TV for a short period, "Springfield," according to Eng, "became the third biggest television origination point after New York and Hollywood" (Eng 1992, 90). Wagoner did return to Nashville and his 20 year stay in television syndication outlasted all others due to his staying within the limits of traditional country music and avoiding the trend to widen his audience by adding a pop music influence. Wagoner had a pivotal influence on the career of Dolly Parton, one of Nashville's most successful crossover artists. Parton's departure and her move from Nashville was not received well by many in the Nashville music industry, including Wagoner (Eng 1992, 83-84, 173, 313).

Alana Nash profiles Dolly Parton during the start of her crossover rise as an international celebrity in Dolly. Parton and others were dissatisfied with how Show Biz produced her syndicated program in an attempt

to create crossover appeal for a broader audience. Parton's experience with that show reinforced her need to look outside Nashville to expand her career (Nash 1978, 194-198).

Dolly Parton reflects on her participation in Nashville television in her autobiography, Dolly: My Life and Other Unfinished Business. Parton notes the "charm" in the casual approach taken in producing Wagoner's show. Her own 1976 Show Biz program, "Dolly," was not the "big-time television" that producer Bill Graham had in mind. She affectionately refers to her program as "my little TV show" in describing its charming, but low budget nature. For Parton, the program had a cartoon feel and producers often scheduled the wrong kinds of guests who did not mix well with her personality (Parton 1994, 166, 189).

Nashville radio and television personality Ralph Emery recalls his experiences before and behind the cameras in his autobiography, Memories. Emery hosted a local morning talk/entertainment show on WSM-TV for many years and points out many top country entertainers who got their early exposure on television. He also hosted "Opry Almanac," using taped performances of major entertainers. Emery was the host and producer for "Pop! Goes the Country," a top-rated Show Biz syndicated

program and TNN's flagship program, "Nashville Now." He felt overworked and unappreciated by Show Biz management and quit "Pop!" with bitter feelings (Emery 1991).

In his follow up book, More Memories, Emery indicates the "Grammy Awards" show airing live from Nashville in 1973 was staffed by a production crew inexperienced in creating a smoke effect for stage performances. The crew used insect repellent which caused singer Curtis Mayfield to cough during his performance and creating a lingering cloud during a portion of the show (Emery 1993, 57).

Big band activity relating to Nashville radio and television programs is covered in Broome and Tucker's The Other Music City: The Dance Bands and Jazz Musicians of Nashville, 1920 to 1970. Both WSM and WLAC radio stations employed staff bands. WSM's "Waking Crew" program was a very popular show featuring the station's band from the late 1940s until 1983. "Noon," airing locally on WSM-TV, had its own band as did Ralph Emery's late 1960s afternoon television show (Broome and Tucker 1990).

Broadcasting Studies

Broadcasting studies shift the emphasis of Nashville production to its relation with national

programming. "The Johnny Cash Show," "Hee Haw," and to a much lesser extent, Show Biz-produced programs, are more likely mentioned as they relate to network or syndication programming in general. The most extensive is Hal Erickson's encyclopedic work, Syndicated Television:The First Forty Years, 1947-1987. Erickson's volume categorizes programs by decade and genre proving very useful in searching for the many country/western titles produced in Nashville. A short history of syndication is included as well as background sketches with each genre and decade. Erickson suggests that the arrival of videotape did more to proliferate country/western and rock and roll shows in the early 1960s. In the 1970s, "Hee Haw" helped country/western syndication widen its appeal from a regional to national level (Erickson 1989, 242).

Two other encyclopedic works provide good descriptive program information: Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh's The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows and Alex McNeil's Total Television: A Comprehensive Guide to Programming from 1948 to the Present. Their lists of Nashville shows are limited, but they offer a reference for air dates, performers, and program content (Brooks and Marsh 1985; McNeil 1991).

Les Brown offers insight to the programming and production strategies of "Hee Haw" and "The Johnny Cash Show" in Television: The Business Behind the Box. Although "Hee Haw" replaced the "Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour" on CBS, it was really the "Leslie Uggams Show" that was being dropped from that Wednesday night schedule. The Campbell show was first moved to Wednesday, replacing the "Leslie Uggams Show" so a perceived Southern all-white show out of Nashville would not replace a predominantly black program.
Brown offers detailed accounts of the development and production of "The Johnny Cash Show." The basic problem of producing the program out of the ill-equipped Ryman Auditorium was compounded by the need to truck a lot of equipment from Hollywood and to construct a functional stage for television. A crew of twelve men would take eight hours to set up the stage and another eight hours to tear it down for the following night performance of the "Grand Ole Opry." Cash wanted to have more country music oriented acts on the show but was restrained by the network's concern to broaden the program's appeal. According to Brown, the show's two producers were intent on controlling the show's slick, variety formula since they would eventually be going back to continue their careers in Hollywood (Brown 1971, 16-33, 37-44).

Robert M. Ogles and Herbert H. Howard profile the Country Music Television network (CMT) and The Nashville Network (TNN) in The Cable Networks Handbook. Ogles and Howard examined the history, programming, audience, and advertising characteristics of the two networks that came to life in Nashville in the span of two days in 1983. The success of the two networks, especially TNN, was a product of successful managerial foresight during the changing technological landscape of the late 1970s (Ogles and Howard 1993).

Lee Varnell's dissertation provides a detailed look of the development and start-up of The Nashville Network in "The Growth and Development of Basic Cable Services, and a Case Study of The Nashville Network." Varnell's study traces the series of meetings WSM conducted with National Life to convince the parent company of the need to move into cable programming. The study also follows the development of the 21 shows needed before the network was launched. TNN was successful in creating low cost country music television programming given the many years WSM had in that area. For Varnell, the accomplishment was ". . . nothing short of phenomenal" within the short time they had to work (Varnell 1993, 378, 409-410).

Nashville Studies

Nashville studies focus less on programs and more on companies involved in the country music industry. In Growing Metropolis: Aspects of Development in Nashville, Richard A. Peterson describes a change in National Life's managerial philosophy that explains why it was not until the late 1960s that it expanded into other areas of entertainment with the Opryland USA theme park (Peterson 1975).

Knoxville, located in eastern Tennessee, was active in country music broadcasting and was the training ground for a number of country music artists who would later find success in Nashville and elsewhere. Herbert Howard examines an often held local belief that the Southern Appalachian city lost an opportunity to be the capital for country music instead of Nashville. In "Country Music Radio Part I: The Tale of Two Cities," Howard concluded that Nashville clearly was the more likely location due to WSM's financial backing, the radio station's clear channel power allocation, and the programming and promotion expertise staffed at WSM and its parent company. All of these factors resulted from the support WSM received from its parent company, the National Life and Accident Insurance Company. Knoxville's two potential radio stations lacked this

kind of backing in their early history and only obtained it much later after WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" was well established (Howard 1992, 105-112).

In The National Life Story, company historian Powell Stamper offers some insight into WSM-TV's utilization of its parent company's deep resources. WSM-TV began Nashville television broadcasting in 1950 with network service although the network coaxial cable did not reach Nashville. WSM built a five-station microwave relay system connecting its studios in Nashville to Louisville, Kentucky, where the network coaxial cable reached (Stamper 1968, 129).

In his doctoral dissertation, Jerry Wayne Rinks examines the development of radio station WSM in terms of its programming and technical achievements on local, regional, and national levels. WSM's success in entertainment, public service, and news was due primarily to the support of its large parent company, The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, which used the powerful radio station to promote its insurance products. WSM's success and impact as a clear channel station, Rinks concludes, demonstrated a need for future clear channel AM service in the United States (Rinks 1993, 144-148).

Rhythm and blues syndication is covered in an unpublished paper, "Night Train: Nashville Rhythm and Blues." Although Nashville was never known as a major rhythm and blues city, several record labels signed on local artists, and radio station WLAC broadcast several rhythm and blues programs reaching a large part of the eastern United States. Station WLAC-TV became active in television production before it moved into new facilities establishing 21st Century Productions. "Night Train" was produced from 1964 to 1967 and was syndicated in 75 to 80 cities. The program featured local talent in the area and notable rhythm and blues entertainers traveling through Nashville (Black 1991).

Don H. Doyle's Nashville: Since the 1920s presents a Southern urban history of Nashville including its economic, social, political, and cultural development. Nashville and other cities in the South were vanguards of change after World War II with a shifting population transplanting from farms and small towns into larger urban areas. Doyle's work profiles a city struggling to balance its regional traditions in the face of modern change. The rise of the country music industry is an example of successfully maintaining that balance. The National Life and Accident Insurance Company and The Life and Casualty Insurance Company played key roles in

Nashville's economic vitality as well as being active in radio and television broadcasting (Doyle 1985).

Scholarship on Nashville television has documented many of the programs produced, especially in relation to the study of country music. Nashville has dominated country music television production since the early 1960s. Nashville became a national center for production in the early 1970s with the construction of the Opryland complex, the success of two network series, and the increased popularity of country music. "The Johnny Cash Show," "Hee Haw," the various "Grand Ole Opry" television programs, Show Biz efforts, and network series and specials have received the most attention. Three areas of understanding need further study. First, a more complete documented list of the television shows produced in Nashville should be constructed since many syndicated efforts have received little, if any, attention. Second, little attention has been paid to the companies and individuals that have been instrumental in Nashville production. The literature reveals a great deal about what programs were produced, but very little about who produced them. And third, a better understanding of Nashville production is needed to fill a void in broadcasting and telecommunications

history. A better overall picture of television history will be gained by examining Nashville's participation in broadcasting and cable programming.

The next chapter addresses the study's methodology including the research questions and the relevant sources of information.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This historical study of Nashville's television production industry was intended to contribute to a better understanding of how Nashville became the important production center it is today, how it contributes as a production center on a national level, and how it might develop in the future. It examines the activities of Nashville-based production companies and of outside companies producing programs in Nashville. Trends in production activity by companies and producers were analyzed, as well as reasons for the rise of Nashville as an important television production center. Of concern is what and how various forces influenced those trends in Nashville's development at the individual, organizational, cultural, political and economic level.

The overriding question of this study: What is the history of the Nashville television production industry? Answers to eight questions relating to this subject will be sought.

1. What TV program genres have been attempted in Nashville? While country music programs became the most prevalent, this question helps in understanding what efforts where made in defining Nashville's

production development. Another way of asking this question is, is Nashville essentially a "niche" TV production center primarily for country music? The question deals with factors that prevented the city from developing more as a production center than it did. Such factors as decisions made by individuals and organizations that may have limited Nashville activity will be examined.

2. What syndicated and network television programs have been successfully produced in Nashville? The second question deals with specific programs. While the study attempts to uncover all the programs produced in Nashville, the answer to the second question will cover the major programs produced.

3. What Nashville-based companies and individuals have been instrumental in producing syndicated and network television programs? A distinction will be kept between those programs produced by outside companies versus those by Nashville companies. This question also centers around the extent of ownership and creative control exercised by Nashville-based companies in contrast to outside producers utilizing Nashville facilities, talent, and production crews. Answering this question will also address the economic goals and intentions of Nashville interests in television.

4. What factors present in Nashville allowed this city to become an important TV production center? The fourth question addresses the underlying conditions that influenced Nashville achievements. Among those factors are the cultural conditions that framed much of the program content along with the individuals, groups, and industries that acted as a foundation for production growth.

5. What landmark events significantly influenced the development of the television production industry in Nashville? The fifth question focuses on the major turning point occurrences that had the greatest effect upon the direction of Nashville's production industry. Those occurrences will include business decisions and developments in the television production and broadcasting industries that had a direct impact on Nashville activity.

6. How may Nashville's success as a TV production center be properly assessed or characterized? The sixth question focuses on explaining Nashville activity in an historical context to broadcasting and production in the United States in terms of its contributions and the unique conditions Nashville brought to that success.

7. By 1983, had Nashville truly developed into a major TV production center somewhat comparable to New York and Hollywood? This question addresses Nashville as a third major national television production center. The study concludes by defining the nature of Nashville's "third coast" function in the national television production effort.

Sources

The study has been conducted through extensive use of primary source materials following the accepted procedures of historiography. Primary sources included historical documents and personal interviews with individuals who played important roles in the development of Nashville's television production industry. These primary sources were externally examined for authenticity to assure their genuineness and internally examined for their credibility as contemporary and authoritative accounts. Conclusions have been based upon evidence from primary sources. Any disputed material or accounts were verified through corroboration of multiple sources.

Although the study was mostly based on primary sources, relevant secondary sources were investigated to gain a better understanding of the subject, to help

identify primary sources, and to establish the subject's previous state of scholarship. Secondary sources--those produced by others and based upon primary sources close to the events and subjects under study--include broadcasting, country music, and Nashville histories; trade journal articles, encyclopedias, and documentaries on Nashville television. Newspaper articles from the period are indexed in Nashville at The Ben West Library and The Tennessean newspaper library. Newspaper clippings from the period are located at the Country Music Foundation Library and The Tennessean newspaper library.

Primary source materials contemporary to events were gathered before personal interviewing began. These primary sources include company newsletters, promotional materials, memos, program rundowns and scripts, production records, letters, and videotape recordings. National Life's newsletters were accessible from The American General Insurance Company archives in Nashville. The Country Music Foundation Library maintains files and videotapes on Nashville television activity and country music television and has the entire collection of Country Music Association's newsletter, Closeup. Station WTVF has archived past newsletters, videotapes, and an assortment of documents.

Interviews were conducted with key management and production personnel. Those interviewed include Elmer Alley, former production manager for WSM-TV and program director for TNN; Harold Bradley, session musician and film and music studio operator involved in early television efforts; Owen Bradley, record producer and film and music studio operator involved in early television efforts; Hillous Buttrum, session musician involved with "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry"; Joe Cates, producer from New York involved with the "Country Music Association Awards" (CMA) programs and network specials throughout the 1970s and 1980s; Harold Crump, former general manager of WTVF; Al Gannoway, producer of "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry," Jane Dowden Grams, former president and co-founder of Show Biz, Inc.; Bobby Greene, production manager of WSIX-TV; Tom Griscom, past general manager of WSM-TV and current vice president of Gaylord Entertainment Co., parent of The Nashville Network and the "Grand Ole Opry"; Robert Hafner, former producer, director, and operations manager for WSIX-TV; Chet Hagan, writer and producer from New York involved with the CMA awards programs and network specials throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s; Sam Lovullo, former producer for Yongestreet Productions including "Hee Haw" and other network series and specials; Harmon

McBride, executive producer and production manager for public station WDCN-TV; Jim Owens, producer of syndicated series and specials; W. Russell McCown, former film director with WSM-TV; Roy Smith, past operations manager of WLAC-TV, general manager of 21st Century Productions, and general manager of Opryland Productions; Bill Turner, former production manager for WSM-TV, Opryland Productions and producer/director of several Show Biz programs; Jo Walker-Meador, executive director of the Country Music Association; and Irving Waugh, former general manager of WSM-TV, vice president of WSM, Inc., and executive producer of the "Country Music Associations Awards." These individuals were directly involved in Nashville production and offer insights into their activities and issues relating to television production.

Nashville companies relevant to the study include Country Music Network, a 24-hour country music video cable network; Jim Owens Productions, production company involved in syndicated specials and series; Life and Casualty Insurance Company, parent company of WLAC-TV; The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, founder and former parent company of WSM-TV, Opryland Productions, and the "Grand Ole Opry"; NLT Corporation, a holding company of National Life, WSM-TV; Noble-Dury,

Inc., advertising agency involved in country music syndication; Opryland Productions, production service located at the Opryland U.S.A. complex; Show Biz, Inc., the largest country music television syndicator; 21st Century Productions, production company owned by WLAC-TV; The Nashville Network, a country music cable network; WDCN-TV (PBS), WLAC-TV/WTVF (CBS); WSIX/WNGE-TV (ABC); and WSM-TV (NBC). The current owner of The Nashville Network, The Gaylord Entertainment Company, was not extensively included since it gained ownership after the network began operation.

CHAPTER V

THE EARLY YEARS: 1950 TO 1958

Television Arrives in Nashville

When television first began in Nashville, it was closely linked to the tradition and past success of local radio broadcasting. WSM-TV signed on within five days of sister station WSM radio's 25th anniversary, on September 30, 1950 ("WSM Brings" 1950, 3). Viewers sitting around the estimated 9,000 television sets in the Nashville area were first presented with a greeting by John H. DeWitt, president of WSM, Incorporated (Sawyer 1970, 3). DeWitt was also present for WSM radio's sign-on in 1925 (Bartley 1982, 25). On that day in September 1950 when DeWitt inaugurated Nashville's entry into television broadcasting, viewers were then offered a variety program sponsored by a local department store followed by their first network telecast on NBC, a football game with Notre Dame and North Carolina. The station continued the evening's programming with network shows, including Milton Berle and an opera. Nashville's first day of television ended at 11 p.m. (Sawyer 1970, 3).

This initial effort by Nashvillians in television production did not go smoothly. Ironically, for a city

in the early stages of a developing music recording industry, sound was the first problem. Elmer Alley, a WSM radio engineer, ran audio on the telecast and was late in bringing up DeWitt's microphone. Alley also was involved with the development of the music industry working as an engineer with the city's first recording studios in the mid 1940s, the Castle Recording Company. He participated in recording sessions for many artists including Hank Williams, Burle Ives, and Red Foley. Alley began with WSM radio in 1939 working as a sound technician on the NBC radio shows "Sunday Down South" and "The Eddie Arnold Show." That audio error did not end his career in television however. He later joined WSM-TV as a producer/director, becoming directly involved in much syndicated production in Nashville and a major contributor to future sweeping changes in Nashville's television efforts (Alley 1993; "Elmer Calls It" 1983, 1).

The second problem, likely more significant to viewers, involved the loss of audio and video during the network football telecast. The network coaxial cable feeding the NBC signal did not reach Nashville in 1950. Louisville, Kentucky was the closest city with the feed. Under DeWitt's direction, a seven-hop microwave relay system was constructed from Louisville to Nashville to

provide NBC programming. The system was the longest privately operated microwave link in the world and its construction and maintenance placed great demands upon WSM-TV's engineering staff (Waugh 1993; Sawyer 1970, 3) (See Appendix F, Note 1). Because of this, and other problems in the coaxial line reaching Louisville, one quarter of the football game telecast lost audio and the next quarter lost video (Teeter 1950, sec. A, 1, 4; Sawyer 1970, 3).

A week later a more formal program involving major public figures commemorated WSM radio's 25th anniversary and dedicated it and WSM-TV's future efforts. The program was produced by Noel Digby, who would later be involved with other major television efforts out of Nashville. Several artists who appeared on the program also had been on WSM's 1925 inaugural radio broadcast. These performers included music director Beasley Smith, band leader Francis Craig, singer Joseph Macpherson, and "The Solemn Old Judge," George D. Hay ("Special Program" 1950, 3-4). It was Hay who started WSM radio's entry into country music broadcasting and coined the name "Grand Ole Opry" (Malone 1985, 70).

Edwin W. Craig, president of WSM Inc.'s parent company, The National Life and Accident Insurance Company, gave a speech dedicating the radio and

television stations. As the son of one of the founders of National Life, Craig was responsible for establishing WSM radio in 1925 and oversaw the station's rise as a broadcasting giant. Craig's comments addressed the radio station more than television in an effort perhaps to assure those concerned about the impact the new technology might have on radio broadcasting: "We are committed to every improvement which may become possible in the art of broadcasting, and we look forward to greater accomplishments in the future than have been possible in the past...we re-dedicate the station to the very highest standards of radio broadcasting." Craig had less to say about television. In describing his feelings about television and its potential, Craig indicated the company was "pleased to inaugurate" the new service and ended his speech setting high goals: "Looking forward with WSM-TV, we will offer the best of which we are capable, and we dedicate this new enterprise to the very highest in public entertainment, information, and service."

It appears evident in his speech that Craig was not as strongly endeared to the television effort: "The technical requirements of television are enormously more complicated than radio, and the amazing fact to me is that it works at all" ("Special Program" 1950, 4). In

fact, Craig was not at all enthusiastic about television broadcasting. One country music star left early for other opportunities. In 1947, "Opry" star Pee Wee King moved to Louisville and hosted a country music program at WAVE-TV because WSM did not have plans at the time for television. Edwin Craig discouraged King suggesting that television was a fad and would not last (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" January 1988, 14; Eng 1992, 84). It was through the efforts of others at WSM including the president of WSM, Jack DeWitt; Jack Stapp, program director; and the commercial manager of WSM, Irving Waugh, that convinced him to make a commitment to television (Honick 1986, 1, 4, 7, 14).

Paradoxically, it was a young Craig who had to do the convincing in the mid 1920s to persuade his father and other National Life officials that the new activity of radio, with a powerful broadcasting signal, would be an "advantageous force" in selling insurance in the 21 states National Life employed agents (Hurst 1975, 71). In his corporate study of National Life and WSM, Richard Peterson notes that Craig's primary policy for WSM radio was programming that would support National Life's insurance sales effort (Peterson 1975, 346). This argument could not be applied to television broadcasting. With an approximately 50 mile

broadcasting range, television would only reach a fraction of National Life's potential market. Irving Waugh recalled Craig's evaluation of television's potential: "He looked at us and said, 'This proposed television station will reach only seven-tenths of one per cent of our field force, the economics of it doesn't make any sense'" (Waugh 1993). It was Waugh, Jack DeWitt, and others at WSM who believed in the future of television.

The dismal economic picture Craig outlined also included the fact that the business of television broadcasting in that early period was not particularly profitable. In fact, a Houston TV station WSM executives examined was losing $35,000 a month. Craig also felt television would take up too much of the executives' time. However, Craig came around, recalls Waugh: "He finally felt, he said 'we pioneered broadcasting in Nashville, I guess we owe it to the community, go ahead and build it'" (Waugh 1993, Sawyer 1970, 3). The coming years would find National Life's enthusiasm for television production as tempered as its decision to enter into television broadcasting.

This was also the formative period of the country music industry in Nashville. The "Grand Ole Opry" was the nation's most popular radio barn-dance program and

was synonymous in many people's minds with country music (Rumble 1978, 22-41; Malone 1985, 205). The late 1940s into the mid 1950s saw music recording take hold with record companies setting up shop and studio musicians establishing a permanent residence. From this activity developed the "Nashville Sound," a style that help popularized country music to a wider audience. Music entrepreneurs including booking agents, artists-and-repertory men, promoters, and publishers settled in Nashville forming the infrastructure of the country music industry (Malone 1985, 210, 256). A growing and lucrative commercial market was developing for country music in record sales and radio air-play. For artists, television was to be an effective new promotional tool for their recording and concert activities (Country Music Foundation, "Television's Role" January 1988, 14). For the Nashville television industry, a unique opportunity existed to turn Nashville into something more than a typical television broadcasting market.

The infant television and country music industries were examples of the growth taking place in Nashville after World War II. Nashville and other cities in the emerging Sunbelt South began a reverse from an economic decline that existed before the war. Nashville's population began a sustained growth with people

migrating from industrial cities in the Northeast and Midwest. Banking, education, publishing and insurance existed well before the war but took on renewed strength in the postwar years. Known as "Wall Street of the South" before the Depression years, Nashville's regional influence in banking continued during this time. Like many cities during and after the depression, Nashville received financial aid from the federal government, including grants for urban renewal and interstate highway construction. The Tennessee Valley Authority provided cheap electric power and Nashville's airport expanded, providing growing transportation service (Doyle 1985, 85, 108-109, 133).

The most important entity within the country music industry in Nashville with sufficient resources to play a major role in country music television production was WSM, Incorporated, the company that signed on the city's first television station. WSM Inc. produced the influential "Grand Ole Opry" program with a roster of country music talent eager to get on television, and its parent company, National Life and Accident Insurance Company, was a multimillion dollar firm with the resources to invest in the television station's development (Doyle 1985, 351). WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" was two shows in one: a radio program and a stage show.

Given that the show was presented to a live audience, it would not appear to be a great adjustment to train television cameras on the Ryman stage. Several other factors, however, deterred an enthusiastic and aggressive approach toward television production.

By the 1950s, WSM and the "Opry" management were more concerned over the negative impact television was starting to have on broadcast advertising sales and tickets sales for the live "Grand Ole Opry" performance rather than any potential gains to be made from developing television programs. Irving Waugh, commercial manager for WSM radio and television at the time, recalls the hesitation they had about scheduling the "Opry" on television: "...we were reluctant because we were afraid it would hurt the attendance. The attendance of all country music shows declined as television began to mature in the 50s...the attendance at the "Opry" began to fall" (Waugh 1993). From a radio viewpoint, this attitude was not unique to WSM nor unfounded as the growth of television directly affected the health of all radio broadcasting in the 1950s. The radio networks cut their rates during this period in an attempt to hold advertisers, but without success. The decline in network radio by the end of the decade ushered in major changes in local radio programming with

the development of a less expensive "formula" radio format utilizing music records played by a disc jockey (Sterling and Kittross 1990, 328).

Part of WSM's motivation in avoiding television was to maintain the health of the "Grand Ole Opry" as a live radio program. In Porter Wagoner's biography, Steve Eng notes another example of WSM's lack of enthusiasm for television. "Opry" manager Jim Denny showed no interest in a suggestion that WSM convert a theater in Nashville into a stage for televising the "Opry." There was no interest in making any adjustments to the "Opry" to include and accommodate television (Eng 1992, 84).

This conservative attitude reflects the kind of resistance to change met within the "Opry" throughout its past. As the "Opry" grew in the 1930s, it attracted more performers from outside the middle Tennessee region who were finding popularity in other areas of the country. A star system emerged that moved away from the string bands that originally were the mainstay on the "Opry." The new approach, reflected by the efforts of Harry Stone and Jack Stapp, was meant to compete with other barn dance shows and increase the "Opry's" popularity beyond its rural appeal. Edwin Craig and Judge Hays were against this more commercially lucrative approach (Hurst 1975, 115-116, 126).

Also, in 1933 WSM created Artists Service Bureau, a booking and promotion service for the "Opry" performers. The agency was dissolved in the mid 1950s over conflict surrounding some stars being fired from the show because of signing with outside agencies. WSM also insisted upon regular appearances by each performer. This became a source of conflict as well as country stars became more in demand for live performances. In 1964, a dozen "Opry" acts were cancelled because they had not performed on 26 week-ends during the previous 12 months. Also, the introduction of electric guitars reflecting a change in musical tastes also met resistance (Hurst 1975, 254; Wolfe 1995, 336). Television represented another challenge to the nature of the "Opry" as it had existed.

Despite it reluctance to move aggressively with live television production, National Life appeared willing to invest in equipment and technical development. Jack DeWitt, the president of WSM, Inc., was a pioneer in broadcast development and instrumental in designing and introducing new technologies to WSM radio and television ("DeWitt Retires" 1968, 1) (See Appendix F, Note 2). Bill Turner, a television director for WSM-TV, indicates DeWitt had a strong influence on WSM's growth; "WSM as a station had always been a

research and development station, always been allowed freedom and experimentation...it was an engineer's station, engineering could do almost anything they wanted" (Turner 1994). Russ McCown, a film director for WSM-TV, notes that in terms of equipment and technology, "National Life never questioned what WSM spent" (McCown 1993) (See Appendix F, Note 3).

As with Pee Wee King, other country music entertainers under the Opry roster were interested in moving into television as soon it was available. In the first few years, WSM could only receive a network signal through its seven-link microwave system from Louisville, but could not feed programming up the line back to the network (Waugh 1993). As a way to satisfy their desire for television exposure, WSM booked Opry entertainers in 1952 on four installments of "The Kate Smith Show" on NBC. Irving Waugh sold and arranged four half hour performances to a management production firm in New York. The Opry stars rehearsed in Nashville and flew to New York for the live performances (Waugh 1993). Those who performed included Hank Williams, Red Foley, Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Rod Brasfield, the Carter Family, the Duke of Paducah, and Moon Mulligan (Sawyer 1970, 3).

A kinescope of Williams performance is the only known existing video recording of the late star (Green 1977, 42) (See Appendix F, Note 4).

"Stars Of The Grand Ole Opry"

It was two years later, in 1954, that the first major television production effort produced in Nashville took place, offering another opportunity for country music entertainers. Flamingo Film's syndicated "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" showcased Opry performers, including Roy Acuff, Webb Pierce, Faron Young, Ernest Tubb, Minnie Pearl, Carl Smith, and Little Jimmy Dickens (Bundy 1956, 63; Gannoway, prod.; McNeil 1991; Plotnik 1954, 78, 100). The program was produced from 1954 to 1956 and was syndicated until 1957 in more than 100 markets, primarily in the South, Midwest, and West Coast. The show reached number six in the top twenty in Pulse rankings among syndicated television film series (Gannoway 1995; Bundy 1956, 63; Country Music Foundation, "Country Music Television" 1987). Sponsored by the Pillsbury Baking Company, "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" was made up of three series, the first composed of 39 shows and the other two made up of 26 programs each (McCown 1993). The program presents unique footage of the major country music stars of the day. It was shot

for theatrical motion picture release as well as for television on high quality 35mm color negative film stock (McCown 1993).

"Stars" was produced by Al Gannoway and distributed by Flamingo Films. Gannoway's production credits included several motion picture, television, and radio projects by the time he arrived in Nashville (Gannoway 1995). According to Gannoway, "Opry" stars were not happy with Hollywood film efforts up to that time, with the character treatments applied to their country roles and the overall formality of the production process. They accepted him, as Gannoway says, as long as "...you won't put a lot of phony make-up on us and rehearsals." Endorsed by 75 of the "Opry" performers and with the rights secured under contract from WSM, Gannoway obtained financing and set upon production (Gannoway 1995).

The first four shows were shot on the stage of the Ryman Auditorium, each showcasing 20 "Opry" performers. These first programs were shot on 16mm black and white film and hosted by Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Little Jimmy Dickens and Carl Smith. They never aired because Gannoway was not happy with the sound generated by the auditorium's acoustics. They were used however, to sell Pillsbury on sponsoring future shows.

The first real series of programs were shot at the Vanderbilt Theater, now the location of the Vanderbilt University Hospital. This time Gannoway used high quality 35mm Technicolor negative film stock. With this film format, "Stars" was released for motion picture theater distribution and printed in 16mm black and white for television syndication. The second and third series were shot at the Bradley Film and Recording Studios. Operated by Owen and Harold Bradley, this Quonset hut studio was later known as an important music recording facility in developing the "Nashville Sound" in the late 1950s and 1960s and in making Nashville a major center for music recording.

The format for "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" centered around a barn dance approach. A typical program might open with entertainers sitting around a barn setting with square dancers performing on center stage. A major star would act as the program's host, both performing and introducing a variety of acts including individual singers, groups, and comedy routines performed in rural settings (Gannoway, prod.; Country Music Foundation "Country Music Television" 1987, 68).

The production crew was gathered from Hollywood, Chicago, and Nashville. Nashville personnel included

Noel Digby as talent coordinator, Owen Bradley as musical director, Harold Bradley and Mort Thomason operating sound, and Russ McCown as still photographer (Bradley, Harold 1995); Gannoway, prod.; McCown 1993). Gannoway brought in experienced West coast film personnel that included credits on "Gone With The Wind," "High Noon," and "The Untouchables" (Gannoway 1995). Production of "Stars" included, at that time, an innovative use of multiple film cameras each attached with a television camera. The director would sit before three video monitors previewing each film camera and determine which would be running. With this system, only one film camera was operating at any one time saving film costs (McCown 1993).

The distribution and marketing of "Stars" was tied to an aggressive cross-promotional campaign involving sponsors and record companies that included point-of-purchase displays in stores and promotion at the WSM disk jockey festival (Plotnik 1954, 54, 78, 100). After its original syndicated run, Gannoway redistributed the series in color in 1966 under the title, "Country Music Caravan," and in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the Time-Life series, "Classic Country." Today, Gannoway has repackaged the footage as a retrospective series of home videos. Current stars and veterans such as Loretta

Lynn and Bill Monroe reminisce over past years interwoven with footage from the "Stars" series ("Syndication" 1966, 42-47).

Many performers saw "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" as an opportunity for television exposure. In paternalistic fashion, WSM reluctantly entered into a contractual agreement with Flamingo to provide Opry stars access on the program. Irving Waugh recalls:

> We made the deal with Flamingo only for the talent because they (the talent) were pressuring us to get on television and some of them were threatening to put up their own money and they didn't know what they were getting involved with and we were afraid they would make bad investments (Waugh 1993).

But many performers and WSM were not pleased with the lack of financial compensation from the program's repackaging over the years (Bradley, Owen 1995) (See Appendix F, Note 5). According to Hillous Buttrum, a musician on the "Stars" program and business associate of Gannoway, lead entertainers received $100 for their participation on the shows and backup sidemen were paid $50 with no royalty provisions (Buttrom 1995). Irving Waugh told Billboard magazine in 1969 that WSM forced Flamingo Films to agree to pay residuals but it did not last long:

> They paid for one year under the agreement that 10 per cent of all net profits would come to WSM, and 80 per cent of that money would be distributed to the artists and musicians. After one year the money slowed to a trickle, and then stopped. We have

> tried unsuccessfully, over all these years to get Gannoway to pay the rest ("'Ozark Jamboree'" 1969, 29, 33).

In the same article, Gannoway claimed he gave $80,000 to either WSM or the Nashville chapter of the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) union. Both Waugh and then AFM president George Cooper denied receiving any money ("'Ozark Jamboree'" 29, 33).

Another source of friction, Waugh later noted, was with the opening animated visual treatment that Gannoway applied to the show's name with the word "Stars" moving on the screen followed by "Grand Ole Opry." WSM believed that approach violated the intended use they originally agreed upon (Waugh 1993). It was only in 1950 that WSM received a trademark for "Grand Ole Opry" for "Radio program broadcasting services; for entertainment services through the medium of radio and personal appearance performances of dramatic, musical, and dramatico-musical programs...." (US Service Mark 1950, 728). No mention is made of television. In 1957 WSM again registered "Grand Ole Opry" to encompass television use (US Service Mark 1957, 31) (See Appendix F, Note 6).

By 1985, WSM took legal action to prevent Gannoway from further using the footage. According to Buttrom, Gannoway and WSM settled on an out-of-court compromise

including the use of the name "Grand Ole Opry" in any future program titles. Gannoway retained rights to the footage and was allowed to conduct more filming; 10% of future profits went to Reunion of Professional Entertainers (ROPE), a retirement organization for musicians; and the title was changed (Buttrom 1995).

Beyond any controversy it generated over the years, "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" was the first major syndicated television effort produced in Nashville, and it is unique for the high quality color film footage captured of country music stars of the day. It was owned and produced by outside interests and was only seen by WSM as another way to satisfy country music entertainers appetite for television coverage. By the time the series ended filming, WSM had become more involved with its own efforts in production, but it would be several years before Nashville would more fully utilize its resources in talent and take the role as the leader in country music television production.

Owen and Harold Bradley

Two individuals who worked closely on "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry," Owen and Harold Bradley, had long-term intentions of developing television production in Nashville. Rather than television however, the

Bradley's would be noted for the pivotal roles they played in developing Nashville's music recording industry and what came to be known as the "Nashville Sound." Part of their influence on the development of that sound was associated with the acoustical quality and experience in recording in the rustic Quonset hut film and music studio they operated in the 1950s. Owen became one of the leading record producers in Nashville, producing for such performers as Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, Bill Monroe, Ernest Tubb, Kitty Wells, Brenda Lee, and others (Green and Ivey, "The Nashville Sound" 1980, 247). Harold Bradley became perhaps the most recorded guitar player in Nashville (McGraw 1991, 1). Their involvement in music recording and record producing coincided at the same time with a growing interest in television film production.

Before their entry into film production and music recording, Owen was, among other things, a band leader and music director for WSM radio and Harold was a guitarist playing in numerous bands. It was television that Owen saw as the future, more than music recording,

> I was Music Director at WSM. I felt like my days were numbered since television was going to wipe us off the face of the earth. We were thinking of something else to get into . . . I hoped to be a film producer (Bradley, Owen 1995).

Owen Bradley's first attempt in the new medium was with Ted Weems, a former acquaintance in the Navy during World War II, who had connections to the New York entertainment industry, and Henry Schofield, the owner of a Nashville still photography studio. With two 16mm film cameras bought by Schofield, according to Bradley, the three filmed approximately 15-20 short musical performances involving Bradley's band and others with the hope of airing on national network television. Weem's brother presented the films to network executives in New York and brought back discouraging news. Rather than having any opinion of their artistic efforts, network executives simply explained there was no longer any place in the programming schedule for 3 minute musical segments as there had been earlier in the network's development. The three disbanded and Owen and Harold bought the cameras from Schofield with the intention of learning from their mistakes (Bradley, Owen 1995) (See Appendix F, Note 7).

Owen's early television film experience demonstrates the distance Nashville was as a hinterland from the production centers in New York and Hollywood. The Bradley's understanding of film technology was as limited as their knowledge of television programming. The cameras they used were of a single-system design

whereby the sound was recorded on the film. A better approach is double-system where audio is recorded separately from the film and offers much greater flexibility in editing and quality control. Owen Bradley describes the challenges and frustrations in learning film technology in Nashville as a problem of isolation:

> We didn't know about double-system or anything, and I must say this, almost, you couldn't find out anything because it was a big dark secret. People in New York were laughing. They had all these secrets they had protected over the years in New York, Hollywood, Chicago, Atlanta, Denver, and I believe, a place in Dallas. But these places outside New York and Hollywood, the quality was a couple of notches down. We found that out the hard way (Bradley, Owen 1995).

The brothers went on to develop a better understanding of film production but at the same time developed their skills in music recording that would have greater lasting effects on Nashville's entertainment landscape.

The Bradleys started music and television film recording in 1952 on the 2nd floor of the Teamster's Union office at Second Avenue and Lindsley Street. They experimented with filming techniques by recording themselves playing music. When their rent was to be drastically raised at that location, they moved to a ground-floor garage on Twenty-first Avenue South in Nashville's Hillsboro Village area. There, they produced

records for Mercury, Dot, and Decca and film productions for Governor Frank Clement and industrial films for the Jarman Shoe Company and Springfield Woolen Mills. The facilities were poor for both music and film production with low ceilings and a sloped floor. Russ McCown, lighting director for the Bradley's, indicates sets had to be constructed on a bias to account for the slope. The Bradleys then moved to a house on 16th Avenue South and expanded their film and music recording activities. This area would later be known as Music Row with the Bradley's as its first residents (Bradley, Owen 1995; Green and Ivey "The Nashville Sound" 1980, 243-244; McCown 1993).

During the Hillsboro Village period, the Bradleys were working on Gannoway's "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" at the Vanderbilt Theater. Through this activity, Owen found an opportunity to improve his own facilities. According to Owen, Gannoway was not happy with the Vanderbilt Theater as a film studio. The barn set for the show used in the theater was a curtain backdrop. The curtain lacked realism; would often shift with people moving about; and as a simple backdrop, offered no flexibility in its use. Owen suggested to Gannoway that he would build a film studio with real wooden sets. For this, the Bradley's purchased their 16th Avenue house

using the basement for their expanding music recording activities and, for filming, they constructed the least expensive studio structure they could, a Quonset hut (McGraw 1991, 25).

The Quonset Hut Productions

The wooden sets built for "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" were constructed around the walls inside the Quonset Hut studio creating the look of a barn with a functional hayloft for performers to sit in and a barn door at one end. As successful as the set was for film production, its more lasting contribution was what the wood did for the studio when it was taken over for music recording. According to Harold Bradley, "It sounded so good we left it in there and never took it out. It made the acoustics as close to perfect as you could get them" (Bradley, Harold 1995). The curtain backdrops from the Vanderbilt Theater were also used to deaden the acoustics (Bradley, Owen 1995). Whether by design or not, the Quonset hut became a much sought location for country performers and record producers.

With limited film experience, the Bradley's hired a WSM news photographer, Sid O'Berry, to run the studio's day-to-day operations. After the "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry," a series of syndicated armed forces

recruiting programs was produced, the most notable being "Country Style USA" and "Community Jamboree." "Country Style USA" was an Army recruiting series hosted by servicemen Private Jody McRea, Charlie Applewhite, and Jerry Fuller. The series starred such country acts as Flatt and Scruggs, Jimmy Dickens, Pee Wee King, Lonzo and Oscar, and with Faron Young as the most frequent performer. Produced in 1957 by the U.S. Army Recruitment Publicity Center, the 15 minute program was developed from a syndicated radio show and made distribution to major television markets. Stars on the program would promote Army enlistment with the slogan, "You get choice, not chance, in today's Army" (Air Training Command; Green 1977, 45; Country Music Foundation "Country Music Television" 1987, 72; Erickson 1989, 77; Bradley, Harold 1995). Similar in its approach, "Community Jamboree" was another recruitment vehicle produced in the Bradley Film and Recording Studio, this time for the National Guard, in 1960 (Country Music Foundation "Country Music Television" 1987, 75).

These, along with the Gannoway series, were the only major television production efforts that came out of the Quonset hut. By the late 1950s, demand for the Bradley's music recording business surpassed film

production, and the Bradleys needed to decide whether to stay in television by investing in the developing video technology. Owen considered purchasing a state-of-the-art remote production videotape truck from the Ampex Corporation, the company that introduced videotape in 1956, but found the price too prohibitive. With the success of their music recording, the Bradleys lost interest in film production. Harold Bradley recalls their work on the Gannoway series was the only lucrative activity, film or music, they made from the Quonset hut efforts until they sold the building to Columbia Records in 1961 (Bradley, Owen 1995; Bradley, Harold 1995; Sterling and Kittross 1990, 321).

"Purina Grand Ole Opry"

The first serious television effort produced by Nashville-based interests was the "Purina Grand Ole Opry" produced by WSM-TV (WSM-TV prod.). The live program aired on Saturday nights from 7:00-8:00 p.m. once a month on ABC in approximately 140 markets from October 15, 1955 to September 15, 1956 (WSM-TV, prod.; "Grand Ole Opry Seen" 1955; McCown 1991) (See Appendix F, Note 8). The thirteen Purina shows were produced from the Ryman Auditorium and featured many top country music stars of the day, including Ernest Tubb, Carl

Smith, Chet Atkins, Marty Robbins, June Carter, Ray Price, Kitty Wells, Faron Young, the Jordanaires, Les Paul and Mary Ford, Jimmy Dickens, the Anita Kerr singers, Lonzo and Oscar, Hank Snow, Minnie Pearl, and Roy Acuff. The program was developed around a different theme such as a general store setting or state fair. The host would interact in those settings with the guests before and after performances (WSM-TV, prod.; Sharborough 1956, 5; Country Music Foundation, "Country Music Television" 1987, 69). The WSM staff included director Fritz Kleibacker whose background included directing theater shows in Nashville. The program was written by Noel Digby who previously worked on Gannoway's series (Hieronymous 1992, sec. B, 5).

The "Purina Grand Ole Opry" began first as a one time pilot program airing live on NBC from the Ryman Auditorium on June 6, 1955. Ernest Tubb and Carl Smith co-hosted the 30 minute program. Production control room facilities were set up in the balcony with the production crew sitting on the auditorium's church pews ("WSM Innovator" 1970, sec. A, 1). From this pilot, Irving Waugh sold the show the next month to the Ralston-Purina Company through the Gardner advertising agency in St. Louis. Waugh indicates that WSM would have liked for the show to be seen on the NBC network,

but although the pilot aired on NBC, the network was not interested in a series. ABC on the other hand, was more open to a variety of program types, including country music. This created the irony of having the 30-year-old "Grand Ole Opry" radio program aired on NBC, with the television show on ABC and seen in the Nashville market on WSIX-TV, the ABC affiliate ("Opry Signs" 1955, 12; Waugh 1993).

High production costs were reported the reason Ralston Purina only sponsored the show for one year. There was an effort to find a new sponsor, with plans to scaled down to one-half hour but with a weekly time slot. No sponsor was found although it was reported the program was rated first in country music television shows, ahead of Red Foley's "Ozark Jubilee." "Ozark Jubilee," beginning approximately 10 months earlier, however, overshadowed the "Purina Grand Ole Opry." "Ozark" aired every Saturday night with the Purina show filling its slot once a month. Foley was a very popular star during this time, having hosted the NBC portion of the "Opry" for eight years and starred in several other barn dance programs including WLS's "National Barn Dance." The Foley effort proved to have the stronger

staying power, lasting on ABC until 1960 (Malone 1985 206; Green, "The Road to Nashville" 1980, 180; Eng 1992, 85).

In Wagoner's biography, Eng mentions that, during this period, Springfield was the center for country music television production. Two other network programs were produced there in the 1950s, and several country stars who got their television start on the "Ozark Jubilee" would later find their own Nashville-based shows, most notably Wagoner. Nashville's overall influence in country music entertainment would eventually bring television production within its realm as those Springfield stars would make their trek back to Nashville. As popular and entertaining as the Purina show was for the period in the mid 1950s, it was not enough to upstage the Springfield efforts (Eng 1992, 83, 90).

"Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry"

One of the longest running syndicated programs produced in Nashville received a local start in the mid 1950s and was to become among the major syndicated country music shows in the next decade. Through their television series, the bluegrass duo Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs opened country music to a wider audience,

contributing to country music's rise in popularity in the mid 1960s. "The Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry" ran during the period when urban folk music became popular with many young people. For those, Flatt and Scruggs were perceived through their bluegrass music as an authentic link to earlier forms of hillbilly string music (Malone 1985, 351). Their program aired starting in 1955 first as a live local show on WSM-TV, soon afterwards in various southern markets, and later in videotaped syndication until 1969 when they disbanded.

Flatt and Scruggs formed their partnership in 1948 after several years as a part of Bill Monroe's seminal bluegrass group, the Blue Grass Boys. They formed their own backup group called the Foggy Mountain Boys and set off performing their own brand of bluegrass music (Malone 1985, 326-330). In 1953 Cohen Williams, the head of Martha White Foods, a Nashville-based flour mill company, was looking for a country act to promote his flour. Williams was very interested in country music with Martha White already sponsoring a segment of the "Opry." Upon the recommendation of one of his salesmen, Williams traveled to Knoxville, Tennessee where Flatt and Scruggs were performing daily on WNOX radio's "Mid-Day Merry-go-round" music program. Williams convinced the two to come to Nashville as regular performers on

his morning radio show on WSM. WSM officials were not enthusiastic over the idea. They had banned Flatt and Scruggs from performing on the "Opry" after their split with Bill Monroe in 1948. Williams only succeeded through convincing Jack DeWitt, WSM's president (Hurst, 1975, 212-213).

In 1955, Williams expanded into television, landing Flatt and Scruggs their own weekly show, "The Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry," airing Saturdays on WSM-TV. The popular response was immediate. Williams convinced WSM to allow the duo back on the "Opry" after presenting them with a large sack of fan mail received from television viewers (Rosenburg 1985, 106-107). Soon Flatt and Scruggs began promoting Martha White Flour on live weekly television shows in several southern markets, conducting a grueling multi-city tour by car over 2,000 miles every week. In Jack Hurst's Nashville's Grand Ole Opry," (1975, 216) Flatt recalls Williams telling him and Scruggs they would perform a lineup of six stations for thirteen weeks, then he would schedule them on another set of stations to avoid burning them out. Until their program went into videotape syndication, Flatt and Scruggs maintained a syndicated show of sorts by automobile in various markets one at time or another including Chattanooga,

Jackson, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville, Tennessee; Bluefield, Clarksburg, Huntington, and Wheeling, West Virginia; Florence, Alabama; Florence, South Carolina; Atlanta and Columbus, Georgia; and Charlotte and Greensboro, North Carolina ("Musical Marathon" 1959, 1; Grams 1993; Waugh 1993; Country Music Foundation, "Country Music Television" 1987, 77).

The program was first videotaped for syndication by a West Virginia station until WSM-TV received videotape machines in 1960 (Waugh 1993; Sawyer 1970, 6). In the early 1960s, Martha White decided to diversify its advertising spending and began sharing sponsorship with Ralston Purina's Pet Milk division (Grams 1993). By 1964, "The Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry" was the biggest syndicated country music program, reaching into 80 markets and ranking into the local top ten in several markets (Brown 1964, 31, 36). By the following year, syndication was handled by Nashville-based Show Biz, Incorporated (Hall 1965, 1, 53). The success of Flatt and Scruggs was evident in the 1960s in other ways. Their song "The Ballad of Jed Clampett" was the theme for the CBS show, "The Beverly Hillbillies," and reached number one on the country charts. They also appeared several times on the program. Their 1949 tune, "Foggy

Mountain Breakdown," was revived in the award-winning movie "Bonnie and Clyde" (Malone 1985, 355).

The show ended when Flatt and Scruggs broke up in 1969 due to a parting of musical styles. Flatt would continue with bluegrass while Scruggs moved toward pop music forming a band with his sons (Rosenburg 1985, 310-311; Malone 1985, 352-353). "The Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry" was a Nashville-based program that featured one of the most innovative and influential country music acts of the 1950s and 1960s. It contributed to the growing popularity of country music and to Nashville's rise as the leading center for country music television production and syndication in the 1960s. During the decade and a half it ran, Nashville developed from a young local television market to a network source for prime time television programming. "The Porter Wagoner Show" then became the longest-running syndicated country music show and its syndicator, Show Biz, Inc., was well established as the leading country music syndication company. Both got their start at the time Flatt and Scruggs were just entering into videotape syndication.

Broadcast Station Production

Live local station production, which was essential in the early days with limited network programming, naturally provided Nashville stations training in developing their production skills. Perhaps not as much as those in the country music industry would have liked, WSM-TV was the most active station in production compared to its broadcast competitors, WSIX-TV and WLAC-TV.

In the early 1950s, the WSM-TV aired variety shows sponsored by local department stores and a musical program, "Tennessee Jamboree," as well as a 20 game schedule of the Nashville Vol's professional minor league baseball team (Sawyer 1970, 3). WSM-TV also took advantage of the microwave relay system installed to Louisville to expand its production and programming. The station was interested in covering Vanderbilt University basketball but had met resistance from Vanderbilt officials until they began covering Western Kentucky State College games in Bowling Green, Kentucky, the location of one of the microwave links. This coverage, according to Irving Waugh, made Vanderbilt talk to WSM-TV, eventually allowing telecasting of Vanderbilt basketball (Waugh 1993). By 1956, WSM-TV boasted 600 remote telecasts since it signed on in 1950;

and it was still the only station in Nashville equipped for remote telecasting ("WSM-TV Passes" 1956, 144). During this period the station also aired a daily local show, "Opry Matinee," featuring various "Opry" talent ("Live C.&W." 1956, 61; "C&W Shows" 1957, 90).

In 1957 WLAC-TV's network affiliate, CBS, requested a pilot from its affiliates for a morning program to compete with NBC's successful "Today" program, hosted by Dave Garroway. The station came up with a country music program centered around a train depot called "Country Junction." Emceed by "Opry" performer Whitey Ford, better known as "The Duke of Paducah," the setting took place in a small town with show guests and performers being dropped off by train. CBS kinescoped the one hour pilot as it played live up to New York on the network lines. According to Roy Smith, WLAC-TV's production manager, CBS was extremely pleased with the show but went instead with "The Jimmy Dean Show" from WMAL-TV in Washington, D.C. (Smith 1993). WMAL-TV was owned by Connie B. Gay, would soon become instrumental in country music's growth as the founding president of the Country Music Association headquartered in Nashville. One important reason CBS went with the Dean program, Smith notes, was due to dedicated network phone lines that

were already established from Washington to New York that kept down the cost of transmitting the show (Smith 1993).

WLAC-TV went ahead with "Country Junction" as a local morning program. The show premiered in March 1958 starring Whitey Ford and with "Opry" performers George Morgan, Anita Carter, and Smiley and Kitty Wilson as regular entertainers. The program featured a variety of musical styles, but emphasized the pop-country sound growing in popularity at that time ("Country Junction" 1958, 1). "Country Junction" lasted through most of the 1960s, mostly with former WSM disk jockey "Smilin'" Eddie Hill as the host, and featured a live band during part of its run ("New Sound" 1966, 1). Hill remained the show's host until he was stricken by a cerebral hemorrhage in July, 1968 ("Eddie Hill" 1969, 1).

Another successful local program produced by WLAC-TV beginning in mid 1950s was the gospel show "The Speer Family." The program was later syndicated in a few markets. This led to other local gospel programs that ran in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, including "Blackwood Brothers Quartet," "Old Time Singing Convention," "Heaven's Jubilee," and "The Jake Hess Show" (Crump 1993; Smith 1993; "Blackwood Brothers" 1958, 1).

A couple of country music programs were produced at WSIX-TV in the mid 1950s. "Home Folks on RFD 8" aired daily at noon and "Tennessee Saturday Night" aired on Saturday evenings ("C&W Shows" 1957, 90).

The year 1958 marked the beginning of an organized effort that would be a key force in further popularizing country music and making Nashville a major television production center. Concerned over rock and roll's rising popularity and its adverse effects on the growth of country music, the Country Music Association (CMA) formed to expand country music's audience and strengthen the business of country music within the entertainment industry (Malone 1985, 264-265; "A Prophetic View" 1978, CMA-18). For the CMA, television exposure would become integral to its strategy that would eventually find great success on a network level, not only in promoting country music, but Nashville as well.

By the late 1950s, television production was slow compared to the growing music recording activity taking hold in Nashville. This period may be seen as a calm before substantial increase in activity that would take place in the next decade. With the arrival of videotape, new companies would form and syndication would take hold. A greater interest and involvement by New York and Hollywood also was manifest in the 1960s,

placing Nashville as the leading center for country music television production. Nashville's developments in television production of network and syndicated shows in the 1960s is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

SYNDICATION GROWTH: 1960-1969

During the 1950s country music was in transition, adjusting to the popularity of rock-and-roll and its own shrinking audiences. Whatever television momentum that had existed during the decade had dissipated. Consequently, little TV production activity of country shows for regional or national consumption occurred in Nashville during the 'fifties. However, a revival of country music television production was in store as the 1960s progressed. As country music became revitalized, television syndication took on a strong effort, followed by a strongly renewed interest in country music by the broadcast TV networks. During the 'sixties, Nashville established itself as a leading center for country music television production.

WSM-TV, Noble Dury, And Show Biz Pioneer Country Music Syndication

WSM-TV produced its first country music syndicated television series in 1960. "Grand Ole Opry" was sponsored by Ralston Purina's Pet Milk division and was syndicated primarily in the Southeast. Pet Milk picked up the program after dropping its sponsorship of the "Red Skelton Show" on CBS while continuing to share

sponsorship of "Flatt and Scruggs" with Martha White. The program was produced from 1960-1963 and only stayed in syndication into the early 1960s. It premiered August 21, 1961, in 12 Southeastern markets and grew to 25-30 markets by the following year. The program featured a living room set with approximately three to six "Opry" entertainers performing each show. Staff director Bayron Binkley produced and directed the thirty minute series from WSM-TV's studios (Country Music Foundation "Country Music Television" 1987, 75; Binkley, prod., 1962; CMA Close-Up September 1961, 1, 3).

This was the fourth series produced in Nashville since 1954 to include "Grand Ole Opry" in its title. None of these series, including Pet Milk's "Grand Ole Opry," was ever an actual presentation of the original live radio show because of National Life's fears of a possible negative impact of TV on its "Grand Ole Opry" radio show. Although the formats and approaches of the past shows might be different, a pattern was established whereby all of the programs headlined the popular "Opry" performers at the time and drew viewers with the use of the "Grand Ole Opry" name.

In 1960, Show Biz began as a media department within the Noble Dury & Associates advertising agency. Working closely with WSM and the "Grand Ole Opry," Show

Biz was instrumental in Nashville's development as the leading center for country music television production and syndication in the 1960s. At the end of 20 years, Show Biz had a record of eleven weekly syndicated shows on the air in 327 markets, plus an inventory of more than 2,000 programs ("Show Biz Purchased" 1979, 8; Cason 1981, 11). The series produced or distributed by Show Biz included "The Porter Wagoner Show," "Flatt & Scruggs Grand Ole Opry," "The Wilburn Brothers Show," "That Good Ole Nashville Music," "Pop! Goes the Country," "Dolly," "Nashville on the Road," and "The Bobby Goldsboro Show." At an organizational level, Show Biz developed other related activities including radio production and syndication, motion picture production, public relations, talent management, mail order sales, commercial production, and music publishing (Satterfield 1971; "We're in Show Biz!" 1971; "Colin" 1968). In a 1973 TV Guide article, critic Neil Hickey dubbed Show Biz as "The General Motors of the country syndication TV business" (Hickey 1973, 14-18). Hickey's declaration was an acknowledgement of Nashville's ascendancy in country music television, a place the city was far from when Show Biz got its start.

A part of Show Biz's success lies in its connection to the country music industry through its relationship

with National Life and WSM. Show Biz was formed from the efforts of two executives with the Noble Dury and Associates advertising agency, W. S. (Bill) Graham and Jane Dowden Grams. Graham was Noble Dury's owner and president and Grams was vice-president in charge of its Media Department. Both worked at WSM before they started with the agency and National Life was among Noble Dury's clients (Williams 1968; Grams 1993). Noble Dury produced WSM-TV's first show, a variety program, when it signed on in 1950 and had previous experience with television advertising in other markets including Los Angeles, Denver, New Orleans, Houston, Birmingham, and Jacksonville ("Television in Nashville?" 1953, sec. H, 10; Sawyer 1970, 3). Show Biz was gradually developed from the television production and media buying activities that started with Noble Dury.

Noble Dury grew to be among the largest advertising firms in the South. Bill Graham had worked in WSM's public relations office developing his media skills before joining the firm (Williams 1968). In the mid 1950s, Graham bought the company from its founder, Abe Nobel, taking on the role of owner and president. According to Jane Grams, Graham was a creative and highly motivated business entrepreneur who closely guided the agency and oversaw some of its biggest growth

during the 1950s and 1960s. One area of new activity included television program production, sponsorship, and distribution. This was a slow period of production activity in Nashville with no significant syndication taking place. The timing was especially right for Noble Dury and with Grams looking for work after a year off from WSM (Grams 1993).

With Show Biz, Jane Grams became among the most successful and prolific television producers in Nashville and, with Graham, led Show Biz's dominance in country music television. She was introduced to television at WSM in 1951 as a sales secretary, a more traditional job for women during that period. Soon afterward she became executive assistant to Irving Waugh, WSM's Commercial Manager. In that role she dealt with network clearances and national commercial sales. She stayed with WSM for four years until her maternity leave and return to work the next year in 1956 with Noble Dury (Grams 1993; Caldwell 1983, 8).

Grams joined Noble Dury as director of a new fledgling media department. It may have been seen as a bold move to place a woman in a position of authority in a primarily male-dominated business, but Dowden points out at that time, the job was not seen as a big prize by her male counterparts:

> I think all the men thought they were too citified to be identified [with show producing] so somehow they pawned it off on me and sent me off to recruit talent and look for talent to do syndicated shows (Grams 1993).

Grams was perhaps better qualified for the position than others. Her background at WSM prepared her for not only the strategy of selling programs to stations and sponsors, but she also had come into contact with country stars and talent that placed her on the creative as well as the business side of show producing.

"Gospel Song Shop" and the Chattanooga Medicine Company

The first syndicated program produced by Noble Dury was "Gospel Song Shop" featuring The Florida Boys, a gospel group from Pensacola, Florida. In the late 1950s, the Chattanooga Medicine Company asked Noble Dury about sponsoring a television program (Grams 1993). Chattanooga Medicine had manufactured and marketed rural self-medicating health products primarily in the South since 1879 (Eng 1992, 141). According to Grams (1993), the Florida Boys, a gospel group, had a successful television show in Pensacola for several years before signing on with Noble Dury. The agency tested the program in Greenville, South Carolina, with Chattanooga

Medicine as the sponsor. The results were good and the following year the 30 minute "Gospel Song Shop" expanded into over 10 markets.

Noble Dury understood the kind of program that would attract the right viewers for Chattanooga Medicine's products. In the case of the Florida Boys, as Grams explains, gospel was very popular in the South and would attract the lower income viewers to these rural medical products. With gospel, however, they were also able to attract substantial viewership among black populations, something country music failed to do (Grams 1993). By 1962, the program expanded to 90 minutes, the name was changed to "Gospel Singing Jubilee," and soon it became the number one rated gospel music syndicated television show. Ten years later the program reached into 60 markets (Turner 1994; "Behind The Scenes" 1970, 36; Willimas 1972, 18). Chattanooga Medicine's initial success with Noble Dury would lead to a long relationship with the agency.

"The Porter Wagoner Show"

Chattanooga Medicine and Noble Dury started another television effort in 1960 that lasted twenty years and became the longest running country music syndicated program (Soelberg February 1972, 27). "The Porter

Wagoner Show" became synonymous with country music television and greatly contributed to the success of Show Biz and Nashville's television industry. By the early 1970s, the show was syndicated in more than 100 markets to an audience of more than 4 million (Soelberg February 1972, 27; Hurst 1970, 7). The success of Wagoner and his program coincided with the growth in popularity of country music that was taking root during this same period. The program helped launch Dolly Parton as a top country star and one of the most successful country crossover artists.

The choice of Wagoner as the host was again centered around Chattanooga Medicine's unique products. The most notable of these included Black Draught Laxative, Soltice Quick Rub, and Wine of Cardui, a medication for menstrual pain. These products were derived from nineteenth century patent medicines and marketed after the Civil War primarily to lower income and rural customers. Chattanooga Medicine needed a convincing personality to promote those products. Several people from Noble Dury attended "Grand Ole Opry" performances for weeks in search for the right country star. Four candidates were chosen to audition for the part, one being Porter Wagoner (Grams 1993).

Wagoner was a successful country entertainer at this time in 1960. Among his several songs that reached the country charts, the most notable was "Satisfied Mind" which stayed no. 1 for four weeks. He also had been a performing member of the "Grand Ole Opry" since 1957 (Eng 1992, 115). But Wagoner was not among the big country stars at this time. Wagoner's early success came in Springfield, Missouri, during the 1950s where he sang on radio station KWTO. KWTO was managed by E. E. "Si" Simon who later landed Wagoner a contract with RCA in Nashville and recruited him to the "Ozark Jubilee" television show back in Springfield. "Ozark Jubilee" was a training ground for Wagoner where he began developing his stage presence under the direction of the show's host, Red Foley. Wagoner learned from Foley how to communicate on camera to an audience:

> He helped me with recitations. Then, I was just reading what was on the paper instead of talking like I was telling a story. He said he always pictured he was talking to just one person, a real slow thinker, and that he wanted to be sure that listener understood it all (Soelberg February 1972, 27).

Wagoner became the "Ozark Jubilee's" no. 2 performer after Foley. Noble Dury executive's were aware of his experience on "Ozark Jubilee" when they chose him for an audition (Soelberg February 1972, 27; Eng 1992, 141).

Wagoner did not impress everyone. Although others had strong doubts, Jane Grams wanted to go with Wagoner. Wagoner came off more shy than would be expected of someone with past network television experience, but Grams convinced owner Bill Graham to sign him on (Eng 1992, 141).

"The Porter Wagoner Show" first aired on September 14, 1961, to the refrain by Wagoner and his band, "Feel fresh and clean inside! Black Draught helps you feel fresh and clean inside!" (Eng 1992, 150). Chattanooga Medicine was pleased with Wagoner and the program. They invested 95% of their advertising budget on the show and in eight years went from having a 1% share of the patent medicine market to 17% (Colley, 107). Wagoner brought a relaxed, sincere style that was effective in promoting the company's products. In 1972, during the height of his show's success, Wagoner noted the difference the show made in his career that was in need of a boost in 1960:

> 1960 through 1964 was like a second start for my career, actually like starting a new one, because I had lost the value of 'Satisfied Mind,' 'Company's Comin',' 'Eat, Drink, And Be Merry,' and 'What Would You Do?' They were all lost in the rock age.
>
> We really felt the impact on record sales in the areas where the television show was on the air. I had only one album out at that time, but the sales in those areas grew by leaps and bounds.

> Just a few months after the show started, I began to get unbelievable amounts of mail from the areas where it was broadcast...as the number of stations grew, the people in each area really turned out to see us in person (Soelberg March 1972, 31).

"The Porter Wagoner Show" started in eighteen markets, jumped to 57 in two years, and by 1964 was airing in 68 cities (Soelberg February 1972, 27; Brown 1964, 31). That same year the number of shows produced also jumped from 26 to 52. Chattanooga Medicine initially sponsored 26 shows a year, scheduled for the fall, winter, and spring months best suited for the sales of its products. The show's early success caused a clamor from the television stations to continue producing it for the entire year rather than their having to replace its time slot with other programming. According to Grams, local station managers first suggested they be allowed to cover the commercials and re-run the programs during the off season even though Chattanooga Medicine's logos were visually prominent in the background of many camera shots. After approximately a year with this approach, Grams began to produce 26 open ended shows without sponsorship along with its regular 26 sponsored programs (Grams 1993).

Wagoner's sincere camera presence and musical style captured the loyalty of many country fans through the medium of television. As a television image, most

notable was his colorful rhinestone studded suits made by Hollywood designer Nudie Cohen that helped further popularize him into a country music icon. Wagoner began wearing Cohen's suits in the early 1950s and continued well after the style, especially popular with country-western acts, went out of fashion (Malone 1985, 271; Eng 1992, 103; Hickey 1975, 63).

Wagoner's band, the "Wagonmasters," included musicians and artists who greatly contributed to the popularity and success of the show. Comedian Speck Rhodes left an indelible mark on viewers as a toothless rube with his many routines using an old country telephone as well as playing stand-up bass in the band. It was Noble Dury that suggested Rhodes for the comedy part during Wagoner's audition (Eng 1992, 143; Soelberg February 1972, 27). Perhaps the most notable musicians were Charles "Buck" Trent, with his 5-string electric banjo that he developed, and fiddler Mack Magaha. Other band member included Little Jack Little, George McCormick, and Don Warden who also closely assisted Wagoner in business matters and as road manager.

Completing Wagoner's band was "girl singer" Norma Jean Beasler, simply known as Norma Jean, or "Pretty Miss Norma Jean" as Wagoner referred to her on the program (Eng 1992, 154). Wagoner was perhaps the first

major country entertainer to include a female as a part of his group (Soelberg March 1972, 40). Beasler was performing on the "Ozark Jubilee" in Springfield when she was asked to join Wagoner's audition for the show. Norma Jean was very popular on the program, projecting a wholesome housewife image. Besides the television show, she and Wagoner successfully recorded several selections including "Let's Go All The Way," which reached the top of the country charts (Wagoner vol 10, no. 1, 13).

"The Porter Wagoner Show" was taped at the WSM-TV studios. Along with this program, WSM-TV was busy in production during this period with Martha White's "Flatt & Scruggs Grand Ole Opry," "Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry," the "Gospel Song Shop," and a local program, "Opry Showcase," hosted by Archie Campbell and featuring major country acts. WSM-TV production manager Elmer Alley and staff directors Baron Binkley and Bill Turner were closely involved in their production. Alley began as the director on Wagoner's show the first several years, followed by Turner who directed the program until 1974 ("Syndicated Country Music" 1961, 1, 3; Turner 1994).

Wagoner's program was representative of the country television shows produced in Nashville in the 1960s--star-headlined and relatively simple in format. With Wagoner's show, one song followed another, broken up by

a Speck Rhodes comedy routine and live commercials for Chattanooga Medicine products often pitched by Wagoner, Norma Jean, and later Dolly Parton (Show Biz, prod.). The programs normally were produced continuously without stopping, if at all possible. For Wagoner, this informal approach was an ingredient to the show's success and was reflective of his personal style. In a 1970 interview, Wagoner explains one reason for the show's longevity:

> I think the main reason (for the show's success) is that it's such an honest show. It's exactly the way it happens. We don't try to dress anything up to make it better than it really is and we don't stop a lot of times, when other people would stop, to make a number (song performance) perfect. We never tried to do a show too perfect. If we make a mistake most people understand that everybody makes a mistake so we just go on unless it's really bad (Soelberg March 1972, 40).

They might videotape four programs in succession and then view them to see areas needing improvement. In another interview, Wagoner noted the kind of values they were looking to impose in the show:

> We improved the show in many ways, mostly by making it a happier show. Happier and faster-moving. Everybody added happiness by smiling more. And informality, instead of it being so formal when introducing a guest or something (Soelberg March 1972, 40).

The program remained true to its values with few format changes made during its twenty year run (Eng 1992, 313).

The early shows were approximately twenty-two minutes long without commercials and often featured about eight songs. Each program cost $700 to $800 dollars, with talent being paid union scale and Wagoner double scale (Eng 1992, 142). Wagoner would leave the selection of the guests to producer Jane Grams and Don Warden, his manager, thereby avoiding conflicts with entertainers wanting to be on his show ("An Interview" 1970, 9). The program began broadcasting in color in October 1966 ("Broadcast Row" October 1966, 5).

Wagoner Introduces New Star: Dolly Parton

A change took place within the show in 1967 that would contribute to the rise of one of Nashville's most celebrated entertainers. That year, Norma Jean Beasler decided to quit the band. Wagoner and Beasler's relationship extended beyond performing into their personal lives which created complications. In Journal of Country Music, Wagoner states that although he was legally separated from his wife, ". . . our affair got to be a problem. She wanted to get married, and I didn't . . . With me, business always comes first; any kind of love affair is much farther down the line."

They both agreed she would leave the show and Wagoner set upon looking for Beasler's replacement (Wagoner, vol 10, no. 1, 13; Eng 1992, 154, 161-162).

Finding a new female singer was not an easy task given Norma Jean's popularity and fan loyalty. His strategy was to look for someone who was different from the middle-of-the-road style Beasler exhibited. According to Wagoner, he spoke with approximately thirty female artists including Tammy Wynette, Connie Smith, and Dottie West but none was satisfactory. As Wagoner accounts, his secretary received a call from Dolly Parton requesting an audition; Parton claims she received a call from Wagoner's secretary. However their meeting came about, Wagoner knew of Parton and considered her a strong candidate (Wagoner, vol 10, no. 1, 13-14; Parton 1994, 162).

Parton had moved from Sevierville, Tennessee, to Nashville three years earlier in 1964 and was beginning to make a name for herself as a songwriter and recording artist. She was signed to Monument Records soon after arriving in Nashville, where she recorded two hit singles in 1967. Both "Dumb Blonde" and "Something Fishy" reached the top 25 on the country charts. A year earlier she and her uncle and mentor, Bill Owen, had received BMI's songwriter of the year award. During the

pre-Wagoner period, she also performed on television shows produced in Nashville, including WLAC-TV's "The Eddie Hill Show," Bill Anderson and the Wilburn Brother's syndicated shows, and Ralph Emery's morning show on WSM-TV. Emery recalls Parton was an "instant hit" on his program and that he gave her rides to the studios whenever she was on (Eng 1992, 183; Emery 1991, 214).

When Parton came to Nashville, she already had some experience in songwriting, recording, and radio and television performing including an appearance on WSM's "Grand Ole Opry." As a child, Parton was guided by Owen into music performing. He landed her first performances on radio and television in Knoxville, Tennessee, not far from her rural upbringing at the foot of the Smoky Mountains. Parton performed regularly at age 10 in Knoxville on "The Cas Walker Farm and Home Hour" on radio station WIVK and later on "The Cas Walker Show" on WATE-TV. She sang on the "Grand Ole Opry" in 1959 and the following year made her first recording in Louisiana. The day after her high school graduation, Dolly Parton boarded a bus to Nashville with clear intentions of becoming a star (Parton 1994, 100-102; Eng 1995, 620-621).

After her audition, Wagoner was certain Parton was the right choice as his new "girl singer." Although she would only make union scale from the television show, he told her she could expect approximately $60,000 a year with road appearances, recording royalties, and "Opry" performances. Aside from money, Parton knew exposure on Wagoner's show carried considerable importance. She watched Wagoner's show with her family while growing up in East Tennessee. For Parton, joining Wagoner's program was a major step in her career (Parton 1994, 162; Eng 1992, 252).

Wagoner was instrumental in Parton's development during this period. In her 1995 autobiography, Parton admits, "It is undeniable that my time with Porter Wagoner had a lot to do with my becoming a star" (Parton 1994, 170). They performed duets as a way of integrating Parton into the group and promoting fan acceptance. He landed her a contract with RCA where she recorded both as a single artist and duet-singer with Wagoner. For the television show, Wagoner worked with Parton in developing her skills in performing before the camera. Wagoner's recollection of his advice to Parton echoes that which he received from his mentor Red Foley years earlier in Springfield. In helping her become more convincing in promoting Chattanooga Medicine's

products, Wagoner tutored Parton to "hold the product up and say it in your own words, like you're saying it to your friend" (Wagoner vol. 10, no. 1, 17; Soelberg March 1972, 40).

In her autobiography, Parton remembers Wagoner's show in a quaint, nostalgic way. Recalling her first appearance on Wagoner's program, Parton admits she did not understand how to behave before the cameras and was interrupted by Wagoner during her last song because the show was running out of time. In contrast to more tightly produced programs, for Parton "there was a certain charm about those old 'anything can happen' days" that reflected the simplicity to the show's production (Parton 1994, 166). Although effective in pitching Chattanooga Medicine products, Parton was never comfortable with the experience:

> "I would have gladly stepped aside to make way for Norma Jean's temporary return when it came to the live commercials...What used to almost kill me with humiliation was to have to do commercials for Cardui. I know the Chattanooga Medicine Company was a loyal sponsor of the show and its support ultimately paid me, but that did not make it any easier for a young woman to go on TV and talk about "menstrual cramps" and "water bloat"...As if that weren't enough, I had to join with Porter in singing the praises (literally) of Black Draught. This was a laxative that made you "Smile from the inside out" according to the song. I hope my colon was smiling sincerely because the smile on my lips was phony as all get out (Parton 1994, 167).

In short time, Parton was well accepted as part of Wagoner's band and as his singing partner. As a duet, audiences found a chemistry between the two that led to several of their songs reaching the top of the country charts. In 1968 they won the Country Music Association (CMA) award for "Vocal Group of the Year" and "Vocal Duo of the Year" in 1970 and 1971 (Eng 1995, 621; Wagoner vol. 10, no. 1, 17).

"The Wilburn Brothers Show"

Grams and Noble Dury repeated their successful formula with Wagoner's show in 1963 during this formative period. The American Snuff Company headquartered in Memphis was interested in sponsoring a show to advertise its tobacco products, including Garrett Sweet Snuff and Bull-of-the-Woods chewing tobacco. Again, the goal for Grams was to find the right country entertainer, and a girl singer, who could promote those products:

> We got the Wilburn Brothers and Loretta Lynn for the same reasons we picked Porter Wagoner. They were warm and personable, and they could sell the product (Hurst 1970, 7).

"The Wilburn Brothers Show" debuted May 4, 1963, in 19 southeast and southwest markets. In most markets, the program aired on Saturday afternoons as a "solid

block" with the Flatt and Scruggs and Wagoner shows, a programming and marketing strategy developed by Noble Dury. Grams noted when they started marketing their programs as a block, "we had nothing to go on but the seat of our pants." They continued this approach successfully with other programs under the Show Biz name (Hall 1965, 1; Williams 1972, 18; "New Wilburn" 1963, 31).

"The Wilburn Brothers Show" was an important break early in Loretta Lynn's career. She had only limited recording experience and had been in Nashville only seven months although one song reached to the top fifteen on the country charts. Director Bill Turner recalls Lynn did not impress everyone at the audition:

> I was sitting on [operating] the board when this girl came in to audition. Bill Graham didn't like her but Jane Dowden [Grams] and Elmer [Alley] said no, she's a female counterpart of Hank Williams (Turner 1994).

Like Wagoner's program, "The Wilburn Brothers Show" popularized the stars headlining the show although Doyle and Teddy Wilburn were not new to the country music field. They began as young members in their family's group, the Wilburn Family, which joined the "Grand Ole Opry" in 1940. The brothers became Opry members in their own right as a duo in 1953 and

accumulated a respectful string of country hits before auditioning for Noble Dury and American Snuff (Hurst 1970, 7; McCloud 1995, 867-868).

The Wilburn's show was first produced at WSM-TV and later moved across town to WSIX-TV. The program presented a variety of country acts including big names such as Ernest Tubb, Roy Acuff, and Red Foley. By late 1965 the show was seen in 40 cities; in ten years the program grew to 70 cities (Hall 1965, 1, 53; Williams 1972, 18; "New Wilburn" 1963, 1; Brown 1964, 31). Like Wagoner, the Wilburn's program was soon produced open-ended for local advertising. Commenting in Billboard at the time, Teddy Wilburn notes, as with Wagoner's show, the benefits their show brought to the performers were indirect:

> The exposure is the main thing for the artists, because the money paid is not that great. We do feel, though, that the artist's record sales and his price for a live show on the road is greater as a result of exposure on our show (Hall 1965, 1).

The pace of production was likewise the same. The Wilburns would tape their shows on the weekends between road tours with approximately three hours of studio time per show including rehearsals (Hall 1965, 1).

Show Biz Outgrows and Separates from Noble Dury

With the early success of "Wagoner" and "Wilburn Brothers," Grams and Graham soon found their media department activities taking on a momentum beyond the scope intended within the Noble Dury agency. Approximately a year into the production of Wagoner's show, with requests by stations to re-run the programs during the Chattanooga Medicine's off-season, Grams convinced Graham to produce a second open-ended version of the show without sponsorship. Grams describes this period as the transition to Show Biz:

> When we actually started Show Biz, I think the first year, maybe '62 or so, I just operated out of my left hand drawer so to speak, and with the assistance of my secretary, we made quite a bit of money, it was very successful. It was my idea and I persuaded Bill (Graham) to let me try these shows open-ended (Grams 1993).

According to Grams, she asked Graham to finance the production of the unsponsored programs with her as producer:

> I said (to Graham) if you will gamble, if you will finance 26 shows, I know we can more that double or triple the investment. He said, 'Are you sure?' I said "I am absolutely positive," but we did even better. So then we incorporated it [Show Biz] and he gave me a small part of the company. I was just sort of running that at the same time I was still vice president of media of Nobel Dury and overseeing a 10 person media department. By 1965, Show Biz was bringing in enough income to basically support me and my assistant, so we began to separate [from Noble Dury] (Grams 1993).

That separation included incorporating the company with Bill Graham as chairman of the board and Grams as its president. Grams and her secretary moved out of the agency, opened up an office, and hired another person (Grams 1993; "We're In Show Biz!" 1971).

The success of Grams and Graham and the formation of Show Biz occurred at the same time country music began a significant rise in popularity and acceptance by more mainstream audiences. By the mid 1960s, country music was rapidly growing in all areas of activity. Within five years, annual country music record sales jumped from $35 million in 1960 to $75 million in 1965. Country stage shows were reported consistently sold-out in most of the top 60 cities and touring artists were breaking attendance record in other countries, especially England, Japan, and South Africa ("Country Music" 1967, 7). Country radio stations likewise saw a dramatic increase. The first radio survey by the Country Music Association in 1961 found 81 radio stations programming country music full time. In four years that number had risen to 208 stations and by the end of the decade there were 606 full time country stations ("Country Radio" 1995).

The explanation for this growth rests mostly with the interaction taking place between country and popular

music. As a way to capture growing audiences favoring rock and roll in the 1950s, country record producers and artists began to modify their musical style by incorporating influences from popular music. Country music has always been in a state of change. The music's image and style has often developed in response to changing audience tastes and in wanting to reach out to a larger and more affluent group. The development of the "Nashville Sound," including smoother melodies and background vocal harmonies, brought a broader, younger, and more urban middle class appeal for the music. The effort was to turn away from the high pitched singing and fiddle string accompaniment associated with "hillbilly music" that country music had been largely referred to since its beginnings in the early 1900s. Likewise, pop, rock, folk, and rhythm and blues artists began recording music with country influences. As country music record sales, radio listenership, and live performances began increasing, so did country music's exposure on television (Brown 1964, 31; "Numbers Mean Dollars" 1966, 36, 44).

In a 1964 Variety article, reporter Les Brown points to the relatively healthy state of country music television noting there were 130 stations nationwide airing country programs with more new programs being

introduced that year (Brown 1964, 31). Earlier, in the 1956-57 season, that number hovered around 75-80 stations when "Purina Grand Ole Opry" and "Ozark Jubilee" were competing on the ABC network with little or no growth indicated (Bundy 1956, 1; Bundy 1957, 80). Brown (1964, 31) referred to the "Big Three" syndicated shows having the most success; the "Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry," "Porter Wagoner Show," and "Wilburn Brother Show." With Noble Dury involved in all these programs, Show Biz led in country music television syndication before it formally became a company. Two years later in a 1966 overview article, the business trade magazine Sponsor referred to the country music genre as "...the Young Turk of syndicated musical shows..." becoming the program of choice over the once popular rock music formats ("Syndication" 1966, 43-44). Show Biz was riding the crest of a wave it had an important part in forming.

"The National Life Grand Ole Opry"

The next program to follow the Wilburn's show was the last to use the "Grand Ole Opry" title but the first to be sponsored by the Opry's owners. The "National Life Grand Ole Opry" was syndicated in 1965 in 13 markets in which National Life maintained district

offices as a way of supporting the company's insurance sales effort. The increased popularity in country music during this period must have been a factor persuading National Life finally to sponsor its own television show fifteen years after first bringing television to Nashville. Also, as National Life's advertising agency, Noble Dury understood that sales agents in the field wanted a televised version of the Opry that would act as the same promotional tool for them as the radio Opry had for so many years ("Opry" 1967, 61, 63).

The "National Life Grand Ole Opry" was produced by Show Biz in cooperation with WSM-TV, with WSM-TV taking on the production responsibilities and Show Biz handling the distribution and marketing functions. This was the first program beginning production formally under the Show Biz name rather than Noble Dury (Alley, prod., 1965). Show Biz usually marketed the show as a Saturday afternoon block along with "Flatt & Scrugg," "Wagoner," and "Wilburn Brothers." Elmer Alley of WSM-TV directed and Noble Dury's Creative Director, Eric Erikson, designed the sets. This was the first program to be produced from the Ryman Auditorium since the Purina series in the 1950s; and like "Purina," it was not a telecast of the radio program. The program was hosted by WSM-TV personality Jud Collins and NBC news anchor

John Cameron Swayze who had been National Life's television spokesman since 1959 ("Opry" 1967, 61-63).

Show production was more involved than the other programs during this time although the overall schedule was still rushed. Set-up began Friday morning followed by camera blocking and rehearsal with taping and wrap-up before the radio "Opry" show began at 8 p.m. One goal was to give the program a live feel as with the radio "Opry." Director Elmer Alley, who also directed Wagoner's program, saw an advantage in producing the National Life show in a similar quick manner. He said, "There are certain advantages to the tightness of our rehearsal time and other limitations...this retains much of the spontaneity that would not exist in an overly produced show" ("Opry" 1967, 63). Alley describes their approach to production as documentary in nature by including the feel of the live radio "Opry" broadcasts where mistakes would get on the air.

"National Life Grand Ole Opry" was a success during its three year run, with generally high ratings nationwide. The program was reported as ranking first in Detroit and a strong second in San Francisco. Although the show was not running on WSM-TV when it first went on the air, National Life later changed its mind because of demand by Nashville viewers. By 1967,

the show reached 18 markets and appeared to have a bright future for the company ("Opry" 1967, 63) (See Appendix F, Note 9). But National Life dropped its sponsorship after 1968, because of dissatisfaction with the program as an advertising vehicle to support insurance sales (Griscom 1994). National Life was not interested at this time in nurturing the "Opry" beyond the bounds of its current radio activities unless it contributed to the insurance sales effort. With the program's healthy ratings however, Ralston Purina, an active sponsor of the radio "Opry" and various Nashville television shows ("Purina Grand Ole Opry," "Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry," and "Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry"), took over sponsorship in 1969 under the new show name "That Good Ole Nashville Music." For National Life, this short involvement in marketing the "Grand Ole Opry" with television was a small prelude to much greater efforts and goals in the next decade.

Show Biz Continues to Expand

Show Biz grew through the rest of the 1960s as a full service company expanding into other activities including sales and distribution, motion picture film production, music publishing and recording, talent management, television commercial production, and radio

syndication. Grams described its expansion strategy in a 1970 article for Country Music Roundup:

> At Show Biz we have a single corporate structure that forms a mosaic of different but related activities...the result is an opportunity to be of maximum service to individual artists and to the total music community in Nashville ("Behind" 1970, 36).

Along with Graham and Grams, Neika Brewer acted as executive vice-president and Elise Stewart as the secretary and treasurer. Tandy C. Rice, Jr. joined in 1967 as vice-president of sales to head the company's new distribution effort, Show Biz Sales, Inc. Rice was very successful in country music public relations in Nashville with his own company when he joined Show Biz. Show Biz Sales acted as the selling arm for the company, replacing Desilu on the west coast. Three years after the division was formed, Show Biz reported a four-fold increase in sales ("Behind" 1970, 41).

That same year the company launched Willis Graham Productions, Inc. for feature motion picture production. Their first effort was "Nashville Rebel" starring Waylon Jennings. The film was financially successful for Show Biz. Portions of the film were shot in the Ryman Auditorium and included performances by Tex Ritter, Porter Wagoner, the Wilburn Brothers, Loretta Lynn, Faron Young, and Archie Campbell ("Hollywood" 1967, 70).

During this period, the company expanded into music publishing and recording, talent management, television commercial production, and radio syndication. Their music publishing effort was headed by Roger Sovine and included two divisions working through the two national music licensing companies. Show Biz Music, Inc. included songs licensed under Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI) and Monster Music for songs under American Society of Composers and Performers (ASCAP) songs. Show Biz Music also included a recording company under the Show Biz label that signed several artists ("Behind" 1970, 40).

In artist management, Show Biz Talent, Inc. booked and promoted performers' personal appearances along with acting as the promotional arm for all Show Biz products. The company formed another division, Show and Sell, to produce commercials for advertising agencies on a national level along with Mail Call, a mail-order service.

Show Biz also expanded show production during the late 1960s, shifting the style of the programs to reach a growing contemporary audience with distinctive program formats. Show Biz began moving away from the quaint, down-to-earth program formulas of traditional country sounds characterized by the Chattanooga Medicine and

American Snuff sponsors. "Music City U.S.A.," produced at WSIX-TV starting in 1967, introduced more talk along with music (Sawyer 1967). In 1968 production began for "Billy Walker's Country Carnival" which changed hosts the following year to "Del Reeves Country Carnival." The program began in 20 markets across the country including San Diego; Wichita; Bangor, Maine; and Grand Rapids, Michigan and doubled in markets by the following year ("Del Reeves" 1969, 3). Grams explained to Nashville Tennessean reporter Jack Hurst the new approach they took, "By 1968, we thought the market was right for a more middle-of-the-road show, so we developed the carnival idea." According to Grams, the show concept was first developed, then a sponsor was found, in contrast to the Wagoner, Wilburn, and National Life programs (Hurst 1970, 7). This was also the case the following year with "The Country Place" hosted by Jim Ed Brown and described as "Music City's newest and perhaps most unique contemporary C & W syndicated half-hour series." "Carnival" attempted to create a quicker pace and energy while "Country Place" worked off of host Brown's smooth personality in developing the appeal of a calm, mountain setting ("Jim Ed Brown" 1969, 4). In distribution, Show Biz sold during this time "The Kitty Wells/Johnny Wright Family Show" and "The !!! Beat," a

half-hour rhythm and blues program ("Nashville Firm" 1968, 1; Hurst 1970, 7).

Nashville's TV Stations Enter Syndicated Field

WSM-TV Begins Syndicating New Shows

While Show Biz was carving out its dominance in country music television syndication, Nashville's broadcast stations also picked up in production activity in the 1960s. WSM-TV moved into its current facilities on Knob Hill in 1963 with more room to produce Show Biz's programs along with their own efforts. The station began producing "The Bobby Lord Show" that year first as a local effort. In 1965 it went into syndication, debuting in 22 markets (Hewitt 1963, 5). "The Stoneman Family" was produced by WSM-TV staff director Byron Binkley and syndicated by Tennessee TV based in Chattanooga. The program started in 1966 in 18 southeastern markets and shared taping facilities over the years between WSIX-TV and WSM-TV. Also taped at WSM-TV and beginning distribution in 1969, "The Kitty Wells/Johnny Wright Family Show" was syndicated by Nashville-based Moeller Talent Agency and Ruboca Productions. Show Biz took over distribution the

following year ("Party Line" 1966, 3; Tennessee TV, prod., show 81; Williams 1968).

WSM radio personality Ralph Emery moved into local television in 1963 and hosted programs allowing new country talent television exposure on Nashville airwaves. Emery was among the most respected and popular of WSM's radio personalities and became a staple figure to Nashville television viewers for two decades until moving on a national level with the creation of The Nashville Network. Emery applied his smooth, comfortable style of radio interviewing to television, providing local exposure for established and young upcoming country performers. Emery's first program, "Opry Almanac," was a live morning show presenting pre-taped country music performances mixed with local news, weather, sports, traffic reports, and conversation. An arrangement was made with the musician's union allowing WSM-TV to videotape artist performances, creating a valuable library of material used on the show (Emery 1991, 121).

After approximately a year, Emery tired of the videotape roll-in format and convinced station general manager Irving Waugh to hire a live band. "The Ralph Emery Show," as it was then called, still included the local news and information but relied more on live

performances rather than tape (Kalodemas, prod.). In his autobiography, Memories, Emery admits he was disappointed his show was passed by for syndication by "The Bobby Lord Show." Emery's show remained on the air in the mornings until 1966 when he moved to an afternoon show, "Sixteenth Avenue." He left television altogether in 1969 but returned in 1972 to another morning show on WSM-TV (Emery 1991, 121; Bird 1995, 270).

WLAC-TV Establishes Syndication Unit

Although the majority of syndication activity taking place at WSM-TV was with Show Biz, the CBS affiliate, WLAC-TV, began to increase its level of involvement that eventually led to serious efforts into syndication and network production. WLAC-TV, Inc. was comprised of a three-way ownership involving one-half control by The Life and Casualty Insurance Company and the other half by Thomas B. Baker, Jr. (now deceased) and Alvin G. Beaman each sharing a quarter ownership. The three initially competed for the broadcast license before consolidating for a group license. All three had previous experience in Nashville radio broadcasting before entering into a joint venture with WLAC-TV in 1954 ("Station Owners" 1954, sec. E, 1).

The Life and Casualty Insurance Company was Nashville's second largest insurance firm behind National Life, operating in 13 southern states. The company owned radio station WLAC, which transmitted with 50,000 watts into approximately 28 states. The company's board chairman and chairman of WLAC-TV, Paul Mountcastle, Sr., owned radio station WROL and partially owned WATE-TV, both in Knoxville, Tennessee. Guilford Dudley, president of Life and Casualty, served as president of WLAC radio and WLAC-TV ("Station Owners" 1954, sec. E, 1; Doyle 1985, 130).

Thomas Baker and Alvin Beaman co-owned radio stations WKDA in Nashville and WCOP in Boston. They sold their interests in both before their involvement with WLAC-TV. Beaman acted as WLAC-TV's secretary and treasurer and was president of a soft drink bottling company and car dealership in Nashville.

Thomas Baker was the station's executive vice-president and general manager and was responsible for the station's operation. Through WKDA, Baker claims he pioneered a now common radio format consisting of music, news-on-the-hour, and sports. For five years, WKDA was ranked among the top five stations in the country. Also, according to Baker, WCOP was the first radio

station in Boston to play country music ("Station Owners" sec. E, 1; "WLAC-TV News Release").

Thomas Baker provided the vision and leadership for the station's success. Harold Crump, who succeeded Baker as WLAC-TV's general manager, described the business atmosphere that existed within the station and with the television industry in Nashville during this time:

> "The reason we were doing this was, TV was still young. Tom Baker was an innovator from the word go. We had done things from the beginning that nobody else would do. It was a business where you were still, at that point, allowed to try almost anything that would make sense to anybody or that you could sell to an advertiser (Crump 1993).

WLAC-TV increased its production activity in the 1960s culminating with a new multimillion dollar facility that was designed to function as much as a production house as it was as a broadcast station. A new division, 21st Century Productions, was formed at the same time for production and syndication. The division's greatest success was landing a new prime-time CBS country music series, "Hee Haw."

The next program syndicated by WLAC-TV after "The Speer Family" from the mid 1950s was another gospel program, "Heaven's Jubilee." Originally starting as a local half-hour Sunday morning program, "Heaven's Jubilee" expanded to a full hour in 1962 and was later

syndicated in approximately 75 markets (Smith 1993; "Good Shows" 1962, 1). Another musical program began during this time, though never syndicated, stayed in production at WLAC-TV over twenty years. "The Carl Tipton Show" began in 1963 and featured many country, bluegrass, and gospel performances. The show occasionally headlined major acts over the years including Bill Monroe, Dottie West, Johnny Cash, Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and Loretta Lynn ("Bluegrass TV" 1989).

Beyond gospel, bluegrass, and country, WLAC-TV ventured into a unique musical program in the mid 1960s. The rhythm and blues show "Night Train" was produced from 1964 to 1967 reaching 75-80 markets through syndication including overseas. The program showcased local and regional talent along with nationally recognized acts (Church 1990). "Night Train" hosted familiar names such as James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, B. B. King, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding, Little Richard, and Joe Tex. Redding made one of his last television performances on the program and WLAC-TV supplied CBS News footage of Redding's performance of "Dock of the Bay" after his death (Blackwell 1990).

The mid 1960s was a transitional period when rhythm and blues had matured as a musical art form. Billboard magazine no longer published an R & B chart by the end of 1963 since the R & B and pop charts were duplicating each other. Detroit's Motown Records was turning out hits aimed at a more mainstream audience (Shaw 1978, 525). Country music-based Nashville might not appear the most likely city to produce such a program compared to New Orleans, St. Louis, Memphis, Chicago, or New York which had established music industries active in jazz, blues, and rhythm and blues. However, there was some activity in rhythm and blues and black gospel music in Nashville during this period.

Radio station WLAC exerted a strong influence in rhythm and blues growth on a national level. WLAC-AM reached 8 to 12 million listeners at its peak transmitting with 50,000 watts to approximately 28 states. The station began airing rhythm and blues in 1946 when black college students handed over some "boogie and blues" records to disc jockey Gene Nobles. Randy Wood, an appliance store owner based outside Nashville in Gallatin, first began selling these "race" records on WLAC in 1947. By 1950, WLAC played rhythm and blues music from 8 p.m. until 3 a.m. on mail-order shows including "Randy's Record Mart," "Ernie's Record

Mart," and "Buckley's Record Shop." Through their eccentric on-air personalities, WLAC disc jockeys Gene Nobles, John "R" (Richbourg), and Hoss Allen generated hits from the songs they aired while selling them by mail order. WLAC played rhythm and blues and soul music on a regular basis until the early 1970's and black gospel into the mid 1980s (Allen 1990; Foy 1989, 244-245; Wood 1980, N-35).

Recording activity also exerted a strong rhythm and blues influence in Nashville. According to "Hoss" Allen, several rhythm & blues disc jockeys were also record producers. Allen had artists signed under his Hermitage label and Gene Nobles had an interest in Dot Records, owned by Randy Wood of Randy's Record Shop (Allen 1990). Jimmy Church, a regular on "Night Train," recorded his first record on the Excello label (Church 1990). Excello, owned by Ernie Young of Ernie's Record Mart, was primarily a rhythm and blues label that produced a number of hits (Shaw 1978, 489-491). These and other record companies in Nashville signed black artists to their labels. Although rhythm and blues recording was, as Allen put it, "a drop in the bucket," compared to country music, the recording industry had a positive effect on the overall rhythm and blues activity in Nashville (Howard 1990).

A third rhythm and blues influence was an active nightclub scene. Frank Howard of the Commanders, also a regular act on "Night Train," described it as "a time that anything could happen . . . the rhythm and blues scene in Nashville was wide open." Such clubs as the New Era, Del Morocco, Baron and Stealaway hosted professional local and regional acts (Howard 1990, Oermann and Goldsmith 1988, sec. D, 1). These clubs provided a talent pool for "Night Train."

The program was produced initially through the efforts of General Manager Tom Baker, Operations Manager Roy Smith, and Noble Blackwell, salesman for radio station WVOL (Smith 1990). Blackwell originally thought of doing a gospel program, but Baker wanted something that would have a broader entertainment appeal (Blackwell 1990). All three were aware of the success and influence that radio station WLAC was having with rhythm and blues. The format for the show was drawn up with Blackwell as the host, introducing pre-taped song performances (Smith 1990). The name for the program, Blackwell recalled, was inspired by the Jimmy Forrest version of the song "Night Train" and the fact that the show would air late at night (Blackwell 1990).

The mid 1960s was a time of racial unrest all over the United States, including Nashville. Smith indicated

another goal Baker had for "Night Train" was to act as a "leveling influence" for the community (Smith 1990). Among the markets it aired included Detroit where racial tensions existed during this period (Erickson 1989, 151; Smith 1993). During the 1960s, broadcasters were under mounting pressure by the Federal Communications Commission, interested groups, and organized associations to address the needs of minorities in their programming and hiring practices. Although not marketed as such, "Night Train" was sold to southern stations, "solving their problem" as Smith puts it, who resisted hiring blacks and engaging in black-oriented program production (Smith 1993).

Musical director Bob Holmes and Blackwell conducted rehearsal sessions in community centers provided by the Nashville Housing Authority. Many local performers made their first television appearance on "Night Train." Regular performers from Nashville or the southeast region included The Avons, Jimmy Church, The Commanders, Earl Gaines, Peggy Gaines, Gorgeous George, Lillian Hall, The Hytones, Johnny Jones, Ironing Board Sam, Roger Martin, and The Spidells. Johnny Jones' band acted as the backup band for the show (Blackwell 1990; Video Music Productions, prod.) (See Appendix B).

Nashville's central location made it a stopping point for many nationally known performers touring the country. Big name entertainers coming from cities such as New Orleans, Atlanta, St. Louis, Memphis, Chicago, and New York would make unscheduled appearances in Nashville night clubs. According to Jimmy Church, even for these artists, "Night Train" was a rare opportunity for national television exposure during this period (Church 1990).

In Nashville, acceptance of the program quickly spread even to the white country clubs which had their television sets tuned to the program. The show was fully sold with a backlog of clients waiting to buy on. Baker was interested in broadening the awareness and influence of WLAC-TV through syndication. He and Smith syndicated the program through a partnership in Video Music Productions Company. The program was initially sold by phone to 15 to 20 stations, but later, Video Music Productions signed "Night Train" and "Heaven's Jubilee," with Warner/Seven Arts. Under Warner/Seven Arts, stations paid $50 to $100 per program of a 26 episode series with the profits being split 40% to Warner/Seven Arts and 60% to Video Music Productions. Performers received a small royalty including payment for syndication (Smith 1990; "Syndication" 1966, 44).

"Night Train Revue" became a spin-off Blackwell organized as a live stage show with the regular performers traveling by bus to area towns. The show would act as a fund-raising vehicle by performing at schools, fairs, and youth groups. The "Revue" traveled in areas of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee (Blackwell 1990).

"Night Train" ended when the syndication with Warner/Seven Arts began to fall off (Smith 1990). WLAC-TV moved to new facilities in 1967 and along with this move, the station created 21st Century Productions as a new source of revenue. As successful as the show had been, Smith said it was never intended to be a major source of income, and therefore, it was not a station priority with the start-up of 21st Century (Smith 1990). According to Blackwell, there was some discussion of the possibility of re-starting "Night Train" at a later date and telecasting in color, but those plans never got off the ground (Blackwell 1990).

As an all-black, disc jockey-style musical program in Nashville, "Night Train" was a unique program for its time. Blackwell recalled similar shows in Jacksonville and Miami in Florida. Hoss Allen of WLAC radio began hosting a rhythm and blues television program called "The !!! Beat" in 1965 at WFAA-TV in Dallas, Texas. And

there was Dick Clark's "American Bandstand" on ABC featuring black acts (Allen 1990; Blackwell 1990).

"Night Train" and "Heaven's Jubilee" were WLAC-TV's two successful production efforts that preceded the company's major commitment toward syndication and network production. Blackwell moved on to become general manager of WVOL in Nashville, then the Director of Broadcasting for WCAU-TV in Philadelphia, and later, the Director of Community Relations for the CBS network's owned and operated television stations ("Night Train Reunion").

As operations manager, Roy Smith provided much of the momentum behind WLAC-TV's production efforts. His and Baker's unique syndication partnership, Video Music Productions, is reflective of a close relationship that began when Smith joined Baker's WKDA as radio announcer and program director (Smith 1990). Smith became WLAC-TV's operations manager in 1956 after first starting with the station as an on-air personality ("WLAC-TV Appoints" 1966, 1). He was co-founder of the National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE) and its second president in 1965. Smith conducted a NATPE developmental meeting with several top program mangers at WLAC-TV in 1963 ("Roy Smith"; "Four Merit Top" 1965, 1; Smith 1993). NATPE quickly became the leading

broadcasting association addressing programming and production issues. By the mid 1960s, Baker planned on new growth for the station and Smith would play a leading role.

Baker wanted to push WLAC-TV beyond the scope of day-to-day broadcasting into major production activity attracting business that might normally use east and west coast facilities. Within several months in 1966, the station announced the construction of a new station building, the formation of a new production division, and the investment of new color cameras that would all coincide with the move into the new facilities (Baker, 1966; "WLAC-TV Plans" 1). Baker also reorganized the company, appointing vice president positions to several of his top managers including Smith and Harold Crump, who would later succeed Baker as general manager ("WLAC-TV Appoints" 1966, 1).

WLAC-TV's new building design was obviously meant to project an unique, futuristic image. The $3 million, three story building only exposed a sleek first floor profile with a seamless white roof tapering down as support columns contrasting with black glass walls. The 60,000 square foot building included two 3,500 square foot studios. The station was equipped with a rotating turntable built into one of the studio floors able to

support an automobile. The facility also included five videotape machines, a Mitchell 35mm film camera with double-system sound, a Moviola film editor, and a master control facility with a station break automation system allowing an operator to preset the commercial breaks and have the switching occur automatically ("The Mind's the Limit"; "Nashville's Hollywood Center").

Festive grand opening celebrations for the new facility occurred in September 1968 composed of several live broadcasts, official opening ceremonies with a marching band and showering balloons, and an open house tour of the building. Politicians on hand included the governor of Tennessee and Nashville's mayor as well as several CBS stars including Jim Backus of "Gilligan's Island," and George Lindsey of the "Andy Griffith Show" as well as a number of country music performers.

Baker was clear in his goals for the production effort. A year and a half before moving into the new building, he announced the formation of the new Commercial Production Division to produce commercials and syndication programs. In a staff memo Baker stated, "I anticipate that this Division will became a major contributor to our income. It is imperative that we continue to grow in order to justify the magnificent new plant which we will occupy" (Baker 1966).

In the building's opening ceremonies, Baker stated a two-fold purpose for the facilities, "'WLAC-TV is determined not only to provide the top programming on television today, but provide for future growth and advanced programming concepts'" ("WLAC-TV To Stage"). The station was clearly promoting its facilities for almost any type of production. Titled "WLAC-TV the South's largest and most complete Videotronics Production Center," a full color brochure claimed the facility was "unequaled this side of Hollywood or New York!" and that "WLAC-TV has the capacity to produce everything from the shortest spots to a full length feature movie" ("WLAC-TV the South's"). With the development of a new production division and a state-of-the-art facility, WLAC-TV was entering the production field that had been dominated locally by Show Biz and WSM. WLAC-TV's management was clearly investing in the belief that Nashville was the alternative location to the east or west coast for serious television and motion picture production.

In 1968 before the building's official opening, the Commercial Production Division changed its name to 21st Century Productions, Incorporated, under the direct responsibility of Roy Smith as its general manager. This division within WLAC-TV, Inc. spearheaded the new

effort, heavily promoting its personnel and facilities for television network and syndication, theatrical motion picture, and television commercial production (Cason, May 1968, 1, 9). As with the new building, 21st Century Productions also marketed itself as a Nashville alternative for production. Nashville's location apart from the two coasts played into a strategy that promoted a style of doing production as well as the programs themselves. The company referred to itself as "Nashville's Hollywood Center" and "Nashville's Feature Film Production Center" creating "The Nashville Look" coinciding with the Nashville Sound ("Nashville's Hollywood Center").

But country music was not as highly profiled in 21st Century's promotions as one might expect. Unlike Show Biz which centered around country and gospel, 21st Century targeted a broader range of productions and genres. The alliance between Show Biz and WSM dampened 21st Century's involvement in Show Biz's efforts. Also, "Opry" performers were discouraged from appearing on local competitors' programs. Harold Crump, the general manager of WLAC-TV after Tom Baker, noted the problem they had with their morning show that featured Eddie Hill, "...we had talent time and again that was told if they appeared on the program they would not be allowed

on the "Grand Ole Opry" (Crump 1993). The same thing happened with WSIX-TV's local effort, "The Stu Phillips Show," in 1965. The Nashville Tennessean quoted Ott Devine, manager of the "Opry," saying WSM had a "long established policy" of forbidding "Opry" stars from appearing on local competitor's programs ("WSIX-TV Can't Use" 1965). As competitors of WSM, 21st Century needed to diversify and go after musical elements outside the central core of country music and the Grand Ole Opry talent located in Nashville.

21st Century also set itself apart through the programming of its shows. Whereas Show Biz country programs were aimed toward fringe-time slots in a station's program schedule, often on Saturday afternoons, 21st Century went for more broader-based shows that would air prime-time in the evening. Smith refers to developing "in-between" programs with a "mid-America" appeal ("WSIX-TV Can't Use" 1965). However, their most notable production was a network prime-time program beginning in 1969 that very much included country music. For "Hee Haw," 21st Century provided facilities and crew for a Hollywood-based production company with previous network experience. 21st Century's own efforts in syndication and specials, while

not as notable as "Hee Haw," tended to lean more toward their mid-America programming strategy.

Within a year of its beginning, 21st Century Productions was producing two syndicated musical series programs. "The Stan Hitchcock Show" ran for three years. Hitchcock was a Nashville recording artist who regularly performed on WLAC-TV's "Country Junction Show" ("'Stan Hitchcock Show'" 1969, 1). "The Ray Anthony Show," produced in Miami Beach, was an example of the broader based programs 21st Century was looking to develop. The hour long 26 episode series featured band leader Ray Anthony who previously hosted a series on ABC in the late 1950s. The program aimed toward a pop music appeal and regularly featured pop singer Vicki Carr. The Anthony show proved burdensome being produced from such a distance; and 21st Century Productions pulled away from this kind of effort after the first series to concentrate on production closer to Nashville ("Ray Anthony Show" 1969, 1; Smith 1993; McNeil 1991, 625).

A number of specials were produced by 21st Century for network and syndicated airing. The home appliance manufacturer Bissell sponsored three specials from 1969 to 1971. Two revolved around saxophonist Boots Randolph. The first, "The Nashville Sound of Boots Randolph," was syndicated in 135 markets and the second,

"Star Spangled Boots," aired on NBC and featured Doc Severstein and Chet Atkins ("21st Century" 1969, 1; "Boots Randolph" 1971, 1; Hurst 10 September 1971, sec. A, 1). Another special, titled "Sound America," starred Eddie Arnold, John Davidson, Marty Robbins, and Roy Clark and aired in 75 markets. The program utilized personnel from "Hee Haw" which was in production at WLAC-TV's studios during this time. "Hee Haw" director Bill Davis directed the programs and writers Bud Wingard and Hollywood-based Jim Carson wrote the script for "Sound America" ("'Sound America'" 1971, 1; Hurst 10 September 1971, 1). Also into the 1970s, 21st Century produced a special for NBC, "Tennessee Ernie Ford's White Christmas" in 1972 and "John Davidson With Love" in 1974 which was syndicated in 94 markets ("Network Christmas" 1972, 1; "'John Davidson'" 1974, 1).

Motion picture production appeared to stall at the beginning. Within months of 21st Century's formation, Baker and Smith entered into a series of talks with Hollywood-based writer/producer Mickey Spillane over the production of Spillane's latest novel, "The Delta Affair," as a made-for-television movie. The initial meetings were reported as "positive and productive" and that a deal could be finalized within weeks. In a Nashville Tennessean report, Spillane said the new

facility "...exceeds our expectations. If this deal comes off, they'll have to expand. Once the word gets out, they'll be more where we came from" (Haun 1968, 1, 12). Smith agreed that it would have been a "sensational break" for 21st Century to land the deal, but the talks broke down over issues of financing and control. According to Smith, Spillane was interested in 21st Century financing the project while Spillane maintained control of production (Smith 1993). No other major motion picture production efforts came to 21st Century. Its main focus would be on television commercials, programs, and specials.

WSIX-TV Becomes Factor in Syndicated Production

Nashville's third broadcast station, WSIX-TV, began to pick up production activity in the mid 1960s mainly as a facility provider for other producers. This more concerted effort into production occurred when the station was bought by General Electric in 1965 ("GE Buys" 1965, 1; "Sales and Transfers" 1992, A-1466; Hafner 1994). WSIX-TV was originally owned by Louis Draughon and his brother Jack Draughon. The Draughons began broadcasting in Nashville when they moved their radio station, WSIX, from Springfield in 1936. Louis Draughon acted as the president and general manager of

WSIX-TV since the station's sign-on in 1953 ("Draughons Kept Pioneering" 1953, sec. H, 1). One goal for General Electric was to produce syndicated shows and supply them to their other stations. Ray Shouse was hired in 1966 as program manager from WTAR-TV in Norfolk where he produced and directed. Shouse was instrumental in attracting production business to WSIX-TV (WSIX-TV Gets Program" 1966, 16; Hafner 1994).

That same year the engineers and studio crew of WSIX's AM, FM and television stations voted the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) union as their bargaining representative. This became the first entry by a union into Nashville's broadcasting industry ("Technicians at WSIX" 1966, 46). Robert Hafner, a WSIX-TV producer and director during the time, recalled (1994) the successful unionization was partially due to fear over the size of General Electric and that GE's two other stations in Schenectady and Denver were also unionized. The effect of union entry on other stations was minimal. No other television station became involved with unions until the 1980s when WTVF's (formally WLAC-TV) employees, voted to reject a NABET offer.

General Electric bought "The Bill Anderson Show" from Poole Productions based in Charlotte, North

Carolina, and produced that program until 1971 when it was taken over by DMK Films ("A Widening Market" 1972; Hall 1965, 1, 53). In 1965, "The Ernest Tubb Show" was produced at WSIX-TV by A. O. Stinson and Hal Smith for Hal Smith TV Programs, Inc. The program was contracted for 156 shows and ran in 15 markets in its first year. Tubbs' program lasted into the late 1960s ("Smith Syndicates" 1965, 4; Hall 1965, 1; Country Music Foundation, "Country Music Television" 1987, 83). Also by the late 1960s, "The Stonemen Family" and "The Wilburn Brothers" moved to WSIX-TV after starting production at WSM-TV (CMA Close-Up April 1966; Hurst 1970, 7). Show Biz also used their facilities in 1967 with "Music City U.S.A." (Sawyer 1967).

Country Music Shows Land on Network Schedules

Interest in country music, and Nashville, began to pick up on a network level once again in the latter half of the 1960s. The first significant development involved the Country Music Association (CMA) landing its one year old awards program on NBC in 1968. The CMA awards program became among the CMA's most successful efforts in promoting country music and Nashville and in developing Nashville as national television production center. Beginning as a one hour taped telecast, the

"CMA Awards" has grown into a three hour live show consistently drawing significant ratings throughout its 29 year run.

The launching of the awards program was the achievement of a goal slowly developed by the CMA ten years after the association's beginning. For many years, according to Jo Walker-Meador, CMA's long time executive director, radio air play was the central focus and area of concern rather than a network awards program or television activity (Walker-Meador 1995). However, from the start the CMA addressed all areas touching the music, radio, and television performance, production and broadcasting industries.

Television was an interest early on as a promotions tool for country artists and country music. CMA's first president, Connie B. Gay, became an aggressive promoter of country music beginning after World War II and was heavily involved in country television syndication and broadcasting. Gay owned up to nine radio stations and through his television station in Washington D.C., WTOP-TV, produced country television shows, among them, the "Jimmy Dean Show" airing on CBS beginning in 1957 ("Profiles" 1965, 1-2; McCloud 1995, 314; Malone 1985, 272). Gay pushed for network television programming in the form of specials and series early in CMA's history

("Board Meeting" 1960, 1; "Country Music Roundup" 1963, 2). Also, in 1962 the CMA began conducting surveys of television stations relating to country music programming. In the early 1960s they produced a Tennessee tourism film using country stars. The CMA coordinated the production of programs for the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network in 1967 for worldwide distribution. The organization grew in its first ten years, establishing the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1961 and constructing the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, operated by the Country Music Foundation, in 1967 ("C & W Exposure" 1962, 1, 3; Wood 1978, CMA-3, 8; CMA-Close-Up November 1978, 6; "Establishment of the Country" 1995, 2). An awards program might appear as a natural step in the CMA's development but required some persuasion to get it started and the right New York connections to land it on the network.

The CMA board had been reluctant, according to Walker-Meador, to establish an annual awards program because of some concerns about possible hard feelings that would develop from those not awarded. Those anxieties were overcome in 1966 partially through the efforts of Hal Cook, the publisher of Billboard magazine and the chairman of the CMA board. Several music trade

magazines including Billboard, Cash Box, and Record World, already issued their own awards (Walker-Meador 1995). Billboard began an annual presentation called "Country Music Awards Night" in 1965. This first program aired in conjunction with the "Jimmy Dean Show" on ABC as a part of Billboard's 18th Annual Country Music Poll ("Awards To Be" 1965, 3). Cook suggested awards presented by the CMA would have more meaning to the recipients and that the trade magazines pass on that function to the CMA. The CMA board agreed and the first CMA awards were presented October 20, 1967 in Nashville's downtown Municipal Auditorium as a part of CMA's Ninth Anniversary Banquet and Show ("First Annual" 1967, 1-2; Wood 1978, CMA-3).

The CMA hoped a network would pick up the show. This first awards presentation was produced by Mark Goodson and Bill Todman, two experienced producers based in New York. The program failed to be accepted but the CMA continued working toward that goal with CMA president Roy Horton correctly forecasting in CMA's Close-Up newsletter at the time,

> "...the annual CMA Awards will be every bit as important to our industry as the Oscars are to the movie industry and that within a year the CMA will be on network television presenting the awards before the entire nation" ("First Annual" 1967, 2).

In February of the following year, Bill Denny, chairman

of the CMA Awards Program committee, updated the CMA board of progress being made in negotiations with Goodson and Todman over producing the 1968 awards for network television. Close-Up reported "The New York firm [Goodson and Todman] has indicated a tremendous interest in the show from both potential sponsors and networks" ("CMA Board Met" 1968, 1). As primarily a game show producing team, Goodson and Todman go back to the 1950s and their credits include many of the most successful game shows on network television including "Beat The Clock," "What's My Line," "To Tell The Truth," "I've Got A Secret," "The Match Game," and "The Price Is Right" (McNeil 1991, 310). But Goodson and Todman did not bring the awards to the networks. According to Jo Walker-Meador, the networks lost interest with Goodson and Todman because of their lack of experience in producing awards programs (Walker-Meador 1995).
With the second awards presentation to take place in October, the CMA needed to try a different strategy.

In July 1968, CMA president Hubert Long invited Irving Waugh, president of WSM, Inc., to attend a CMA luncheon to discuss the possibility of presenting the Country Music Awards on one of the networks. Waugh thought it was rather naive to hope to make the network for the fall awards presentation, "I felt it was too

damn late to go to New York to try but anyway I finally said, 'OK, give me Stapp and two days'" (Waugh 1993). Jack Stapp was then president of highly successful Tree Publishing and the former program manager of WSM radio and manager of the "Grand Ole Opry." He had hired Irving Waugh as an announcer for WSM in 1941 and was among the founders of the CMA. Before his move to Nashville, Stapp worked for CBS. He was instrumental in convincing the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency to pick up the awards show (McCloud 1995, 761-762).

Among Thompson's clients was Kraft Foods, which sponsored its weekly variety program "Kraft Music Hall" on NBC. By that time in July, 1968, Kraft already had the October 30th show planned around the Texas State Fair hosted by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. Kraft agreed to replace the state fair show with the CMA awards but needed to keep Rogers and Evans as hosts due to contract obligations. The program was taped on October 18th but did not air on the scheduled air date of October 30. At the last moment, NBC's standards and practices department cancelled the show. NBC had recently been reprimanded by the Federal Communication Commission concerning practices relating to the Golden Globe Awards and some quiz shows that aired over its network. Although they had no indication of any irregularities

with the CMA awards, they were sensitive to any potential problems with this new awards show special (Greeley 1968, 31, 48; Hagan 1989, 267-268; Walker-Meador 1995).

Once cleared, "Kraft Music Hall's" presentation of "The Second Annual Country Music Association Awards" aired on November 20th. The ratings for the show were very strong with a 20.9 rating and 32 share especially considering that promotion had gone into the original October 30th date. This was double the ratings for the previous Kraft show and it outrated other programs that evening including a Peggy Fleming special, a Hallmark Hall of Fame special, and "Green Acres" ("Kraft Music Hall" 1969, 1-2).

The awards were presented at the Ryman Auditorium but not without major modifications to its interior. To increase the stage size, a new one was built over the original Ryman stage and several rows of seating were removed. As Chet Hagan notes in Grand Ole Opry, the Nashville Tennessean cynically reported the abusive approach taken to setting up the network show within the revered sanctuary of country music:

> The Grand Ole Opry House played Eliza to NBC's Henry Higgins . . . The old hall obediently sucked in her waist, put on her shoes and did not speak unless spoken to, while sober faced aliens hustled on and around her stage removing-for an evening-her accent . . . The backdrops advertising work pants and pipe

> tobacco were masked by more sublime solid blue; the orchestra played behind white gauze hangings; and there were sprinklings of white lights everywhere, like a starlet's mirror (Hagan 1989, 268).

In Nashville, this was the beginning of new transformation for country music to broaden its appeal to a national audience. The desire to reach larger audiences would prompt dramatic changes within the following years to craft a more palatable modern look to country music on television.

The CMA awards signaled a new interest by the networks for country music programming. The producers for "Kraft Music Hall" were Gary Smith and Dwight Hemion of Yorkshire Productions. Both were experienced network program producers, especially musical specials, but had limited exposure to Nashville's country music industry. For someone with a better Nashville connection they hired a former NBC news producer, Chet Hagan, as their line producer and writer working closely with the CMA to develop the show.

Hagan left NBC in August of 1968 after nineteen years as a news producer and in the final years producing documentaries. Hagan's last major work was a documentary on country music called "Music From The Land" that aired as a part of NBC News' "American Profile" series in February of that year. "Music From

The Land" addressed country music's history and its current growth and was Hagan's first major contact with Nashville's music industry. The program featured scenes from the opening of the Country Music Hall of Fame and "Grand Ole Opry" performances from the Ryman Auditorium. The CMA aided Hagan in its production, and to Hagan's knowledge it was the first major network prime time exposure on the subject of country music (Hagan 1994; "Films Boon" 1967, 23, 26, 42). "Music From The Land" was also reflective of a new interest by the networks for country music and led Hemion and Smith to hire Hagan when they needed someone with network credentials and a background in Nashville's music industry. Hagan also formed his own production company, The Colin Group, after leaving NBC and soon signed a co-production pact with Show Biz. This was the beginning of his involvement with country music, and Nashville in particular, that would continue into the 1990s (Hagan 1994; "Colin & Show Biz" 1968; "Hagan in Production" 1968).

The following year the CMA awards grew in scope. Under Hemion, Smith, and Hagan, "Kraft Music Hall" ran the awards program again but this time it aired live. The "Third Annual Country Music Association Awards" attracted a larger audience than the previous year,

almost six rating points higher, and substantially outdrew viewers from programs competing against it that evening ("Annual Awards" 1969, 4; "Cash is a Smash" 1969, 1-2) (See Appendix F, Note 10).

Country artists in Nashville were now exposed to a different approach to television production. In the past the production philosophy often embraced a casual level of spontaneity that allowed the unexpected to manifest itself as an honest, unassuming presentation. For network production broadcasting to a larger audience, the approach was more conservative and methodical. Artists were now required to rehearse more than they were used to in the past. Whereas several Porter Wagoner programs would be taped in succession in a relatively relaxed and improvising fashion, artists would now be expected to adhere to a strict schedule for camera blocking and rehearsal. Chet Hagan found though most artists were able to adapt, the transition was not so smooth:

> . . . and along comes this television guy and he says we are going to rehearse and they say, rehearse what? Well, we are going to rehearse the "Wabash Cannonball." [The artist would respond] 'I don't need to, I've done it a million times.' It took a long time to convince them that the rehearsal was not for them, it was to get it on camera and make them look good (Hagan 1994).

The "phony make-up and rehearsals" complained to Al Gannoway by country artists in the 1950s was back in a

permanent form. Network producers and directors brought a new style to doing production in Nashville that, although not always successful, introduced a new level of professionalism to that city.

Nashville's Status at the End of the 'Sixties

Toward the end of the decade, Nashville was developing as a major center for country music television production and was beginning to find activity on the network level. Show Biz, the CMA, WSM-TV, and 21st Century Productions had broken new ground in production activity. As the popularity of country music continued to grow, they would play a major part in further expanding Nashville's role as a national television production center. The next chapter covers the growth of network production in the form of series and then specials, production facilities, and finally the transformation of Nashville into a cable network origination center.

CHAPTER VII

NETWORK PRODUCTION: FROM BROADCASTING TO CABLE, 1969-1983

Toward the end of the 1960s, Nashville was beginning a sharp growth in country music television production following an increase in country music's popularity. The period from the late 1960s to 1983 would see the most dramatic changes take place in Nashville's television industry. Into the 1970s, developments took place establishing Nashville as the recognized center for country music television production. Major construction of new complex housing the "Grand Ole Opry" would surpass the other modern television facility in the city operated by 21st Century Productions and WLAC-TV. Along with further syndication activity, the period would be marked by network production, first in the form of prime-time series programs, and later as an almost continuous output of prime-time specials. As the landscape in mass communication began to shift toward cablecasting in the late 1970s, Nashville again made major changes to establish a leading presence there with country music. The first development toward all this change occurred in the late 1960s with WSM taking advantage of the "Grand Ole Opry's" entertainment potential.

The Development of Opryland USA

The motivation for expanding the "Grand Ole Opry's" potential beyond a weekly radio show came primarily from two of WSM's newest managers. WSM's distinguished president, Jack DeWitt, Jr., retired in 1968 and chose Irving Waugh as his replacement. Waugh, now president and chief executive officer of WSM, Inc., picked DeWitt's executive assistant, E. W. (Bud) Wendell, as the new manager of the "Grand Ole Opry." Waugh and Wendell felt a need to improve the "Opry" and take advantage of country music's surge in popularity. Wendell came to DeWitt's service through National Life as an insurance manager rather than as a broadcaster ("DeWitt Retires" 1968, 1; "Profile" 1981, 3). In Chet Hagan's Grand Ole Opry, Waugh explains his reason for placing Wendell in such direct control of the broadcast effort:

> It [the "Opry"] needed a businessman, it needed someone to start courting the music industry and try and get us back into the swim. The music industry in Nashville thought the "Grand Ole Opry" was a real backwater. And that was reason enough to send Bud down there (Hagan 1989, 265).

Along with improving attendance, Wendell notes they began entertaining the potential the "Opry" would bring for new endeavors:

> "And we felt an opportunity there for a tour business. Up to that point, I guess, the "Opry" had not been perceived as a potential base for a huge tourism industry. . . . We were sensing some desire on the part of television people to do more with country music. We hadn't been getting any national exposure on TV up to that time (Hagan 1989, 267).

For tourism and television, the Ryman Auditorium itself presented them with difficult decisions in adjusting to a new vision for the "Opry."

Although affectionately referred to as the "Mother Church of Country Music," the Ryman was barely adequate for the radio program and as country music popularity grew it became more of a problem for performers and audiences with its downtown location, overcrowding, inadequate air conditioning, and fire safety. With the long association the "Opry" had with the Ryman and the emotional attachment associated with it, WSM considered renovating the structure but decided the building's drawbacks where not easily overcome. Of paramount concern was fire safety. WSM looked at making the building fire proof but found the expense too prohibitive. Another problem was location. The Ryman was situated in a rundown part of downtown Nashville becoming more concentrated by bars and adult book stores. In the past this environment may have been tolerated but not for the kind of tourism WSM was wanting to nurture (Waugh 1993; Hurst, 1975).

Things were just as bad for television. National Life's syndicated "National Life Grand Ole Opry" was relatively successful being produced from the Ryman but the facilities were burdensome. Elmer Alley, WSM-TV's production manager involved in many Show Biz programs and producer of National Life's syndicated show, understood first-hand the problems in creating television from the Ryman:

> It was unbelievable. We wanted to do it [National Life's show] in color and we were using old TK44 cameras and they required 500 foot candles of light. So you were pouring the light in there and you had no air conditioning and it was as much as 120 degrees on the stage. If a singer was singing and you cutaway. . . you had a whole bunch of makeup people with ice water to dab their faces to get the perspiration off (Alley 1993).

The building also lacked room needed for television production equipment. Chet Hagan, line producer for the first several CMA awards shows produced at the Ryman, characterizes the building as "very, very crude" with the need for using a truck parked in the back as a control room. The "Johnny Cash Show" beginning production for ABC in 1969 likewise used a similar setup (Hagan 1994).

In 1968, Alley suggested to Irving Waugh the concept that became Opryland USA. When Waugh came back to the TV station from looking over the Ryman one day, Alley brought up the idea:

> I was talking to Irving and I said, 'Irving, its no place to do TV, there are no wings [for backdrops], there is no depth to the stage, you can't fly stuff, its just a waste of money. Why don't we go out, find a typical piece of Tennessee country side, build a new Opry house, and then theme a park around it featuring the various ingredients that have gone into country music.' And he [Waugh] said, 'Well, put that on paper.' And I did and he took it upstairs [National Life management] and it was a hard sell but he spear-headed it. He made it happen (Alley 1993) (See Appendix F, Note 11).

Waugh was further inspired after touring the Astrodome in Houston as guests of its creator, Judge Roy Hofheinz:

> I became interested in it [Opry complex] feeling that Disney had the castle as a centerpiece, Hofheinz had the Astrodome as the centerpiece, and I could think then that the Opry House could be the centerpiece for a complex that maybe could generate enough profit to justify what I thought would be a 5 million dollar investment-it turned out to be about 15 million in the Opry House. In any event, that's how it got started (Waugh 993).

October 18, 1968 was an important day for Nashville's entertainment industry with Irving Waugh at its center. CMA's first network awards program was taped for CBS in the Ryman that evening. Earlier that morning, Waugh announced plans for studying the possibility of building a new home for the "Opry." WSM hired Economic Research Associates (ERA) from Los Angeles to draw up a feasibility study including a possible location. ERA was involved in the development of Disneyland and Sea World in San Diego. When the study was announced, the main idea for an Opry House

with a theme park and a hotel was already set along with the name, Opryland USA. WSM appreciated the opportunity this presented to expand television production. Waugh reportedly had discussed "informally" with NBC on possible uses for the new facility, adding, "we want it available for any form of network operation" (Cason and Haile 1968, 1-2; "Opry Celebrates" 1968, 14-15) (See Appendix F, Note 12). Within a week of the announcement, Waugh elaborated in National Life's newsletter of the possibilities:

> A facility of the right kind would also enable us to originate some of the big network television shows from Nashville. Not necessarily on a regular basis, but as a special origination. For example, we could invite the Dean Martin show here for a special. We could invite the Johnny Carson show down for a week in residence. . . . Nashville has also become a major production center for television programs for syndication . . . With network-type studio facilities, we could turn out an even finer finished product ("WSM Will Study" 1968, 1, 6).

Beyond syndication, it is clear Waugh's future goals for television and the facilities centered around short-term network projects and not for producing the kind of programs that would be in continuous production, such as series. This kind of activity would generate television business and bring national exposure to Nashville and the "Opry."

But although television was an integral part of the Opryland vision, there was disagreement between National

Life and WSM what extent television should play a role. Tom Griscom, WSM-TV general manager during this time, describes National Life management as unwilling accomplices more focused with financial concerns:

> They were dragged into it kicking and screaming. . . It wasn't a matter that they saw this as a great vision from their standpoint, it was the fact they were sold on the vision. And then they didn't say, 'Hey, this is going to be great,' they said, 'Hey, go find some way to find some money so we can buttress what might happen out here [Opryland] and we will see how it goes' (Griscom 1994).

Beyond the main Opry House auditorium being equipped for production, WSM also wanted a fully furnished studio. According to Waugh, National Life's president, Bill Weaver, was not warm to the idea of investing in new studio facilitates beyond the main Opry stage and auditorium:

> The studio in the rear of the building was the greater problem in getting a go-ahead there then any other bloody thing we built out there all together. Weaver, for example would say, 'Irving, I don't care what it costs, you can build it but you must show me return on the money.' Well, you couldn't show a return on the money so we argued and argued and argued. Finally we had the go ahead to build the structure but not equip it, and after we built it, we gradually got permission to equip it because we were buying 7 cameras to use in the Opry House and so, it was like sneaking up on them a little bit with that studio. Bill Weaver's attitude was, 'You [WSM-TV, channel 4] got studios on Knob Hill, why do you need studios out here?' Well, of course they were older and smaller-we need the studio. You all at channel 5 had come in later and channel 2 came in later so our facilities were not modern at channel 4 (Waugh 1993) (See Appendix F, Note 13).

From Waugh's perspective, getting the go-ahead from Weaver and Brooks of National Life was a result of working the two against each other:

> . . . one would fight me when the other one wouldn't and because of that peculiar personality situation at the time I think it [Opryland] became possible and without that I don't think would have ever happened (Waugh 1993).

In September of the following year, G. Daniel Brooks, chairman of the board of National Life and WSM, and Irving Waugh announced the approval for Opryland USA. The ERA's 170 page report concluded the complex "a sound financial venture." The complex would include themed rides, exhibits, shops, a motor lodge-restaurant, and as the focal point, a 4,000 seat theater as the home for the "Opry" and as a television production center. In a report on the announcement, Waugh stated the Opryland complex was "a logical and creative extension of a growing institution." Publicly, the insurance company threw in its full support and expressed a proactive attitude for what the "Opry" had to offer. For Brooks the new effort not only appeared to be financially sound but was ". . . an unusually promising one. We think we have a rare opportunity to make a major contribution to Nashville's forward thrust" ("WSM Directors" 1969, 1).

The interest in expanding television activity rested within the broader interest of creating tourism from the popularity and appeal of the "Grand Grand Ole Opry." What started as a need to fix the problems with the aging Ryman Auditorium ended with a new multimillion dollar auditorium for live radio and television, a theme park and a state-of-the-art television studio. That motivation came from WSM and more specifically from Irving Waugh and Bud Wendell who convinced a reluctant National Life of the feasibility and potential success for the new venture.

In country style, ground was broken for construction by two mules and a plow on June 30, 1970 and actual construction of the new Opry House began November 12, 1971. The location was in the Pennington Bend area along the Cumberland River outside of downtown Nashville ("Ground Is Broken" 1970, 1; "Backgrounder" 1992). The new complex would bring much network-level television activity. By the time of the ground breaking however, that type of activity was already taking place elsewhere in the city.

"The Johnny Cash Show"

Two weekly, prime time, television series produced from Nashville began airing on the networks within a

week of each other in June 1969: "The Johnny Cash Show" on ABC and "Hee Haw" on CBS. The arrival of these Nashville-based programs on the networks was reflective of the broadening interest in country music and the increased level of production activity taking place in Nashville. Like the CMA awards show, both were produced by production companies with previous network experience based outside of Nashville. With the arrival of these two programs on the networks along with the CMA awards and the building of the Opryland complex, future television network series activity in Nashville may have appeared unlimited. Within three years however, and before construction on the Opryland complex was complete, the two shows would be off the networks and any future promise of series production less clear (Hall 1969, 25; Hurst and Hale 1969, sec. A, 1).

Although both shows were centered around country music, they were very different in their content, their production process, and how they arrived in Nashville. "The Johnny Cash Show" landed on ABC as a regular program in January 1970 after a successful run as a summer replacement in 1969. The one-hour program was produced by Bill Carruthers for Screen Gems in Hollywood. Carruthers had experience producing and directing a number of network programs for Chuck Barris

Productions, including "The Dating Game" and "The Newly Wed Game." According to Variety reporter Les Brown in Television: The Business Behind the Box, Cash worked with Carruthers on another Barris program, "Operation Entertainment," and it was through that association that Carruthers thought of Cash for a show when ABC needed a summer replacement in 1969 (Brown 1971, 21).

Cash insisted he would only do the show if it came from the Ryman in Nashville and Carruthers agreed. But producing a network series from Nashville had not happened since the 1956-57 Purina "Opry" show. The three networks take a conservative approach to production and programming and, according to Brown, ABC was not comfortable with producing the show in Nashville:

> The networks found it hard to imagine programs of professional quality coming from anywhere but New York, Hollywood, or London; besides that, they had resident executives on the scene in the first two cities who could control what was happening in a show (Brown 1971, 21).

Brown notes, economics convinced ABC otherwise. Summer shows had smaller budgets and John Mitchell, the president of Screen Gems, argued the show would be cheaper to produce from Nashville (Brown 1971, 21).

Producing out of the Ryman was not an easy task. As with the CMA show, some changes were necessary. A

temporary stage was constructed above the original and a truck was parked in the back to act as a control center. Nashville Tennessean reporter Kathy Sawyer wrote of the obstacles:

> Just before the first show was to be taped, a heavy boom camera made a habit of falling through the stage, slowing the proceeding considerably. There were problems with the sound system, problems with the lack of space, . . . and problems with the lack of air conditioning.
>
> And the whole array of sets had to be removed for Grand Ole Opry performances each weekend and set up again afterward (Sawyer 1 June 1969, suppl. 3).

It was suggested during the summer production the show would be moved to either New York or Hollywood if it was renewed for the winter but that ". . . Cash balked at any such move" (O'Donnell 24 September 1969, 5). As Brown notes, "the old auditorium brutally punished the staff and crew," and more changes were in store when the show was renewed for a full run on the network the following winter. According to Brown, "A summer show is only a filler, but a winter series on the networks is big business and not to be trifled with, so something had to be done to get the Ryman into shape." Some of those changes included installing electrical pipes, a lighting board, and other equipment. The equipment was brought in from Hollywood as well as the show's lighting consultant, as Brown says, ". . . since very little of it was available locally." A specialist was hired to

deal with the auditorium's poor acoustics. A crew of twelve took eight hours to set up and eight more to strike the temporary stage before the weekend "Opry" radio broadcasts. Brown states, "'The Johnny Cash Show' would have a difficult birth week after week" (Brown 1971, 23-24).

The problems did not stop the show from getting off to a strong start but the program's life span was short-lived. The summer series received strong reviews across the country and aired in 218 markets in the U.S. and 11 in Canada, more than any other ABC show (Hurst and Haile 1969; Sawyer 1 June 1969, 3). It premiered again as a mid-season replacement in January of 1970. The show generated a 33% share of homes watching television the first four months but declined from there, ending with a 24 share during its last period, January to March in 1971 (Danker 1973, 124-144; Brown 1971, 45) (See Appendix F, Note 14). ABC decided then not to renew the show for the following fall season. Part of the reason, according to Brown, was a change in programming strategy by ABC. Along with Cash, two other variety musical programs, the long running "The Lawrence Welk Show" and "The Pearl Baily Show," were dropped and the network would concentrate on other formats ("ABC-TV To Drop" 1971, 1; Brown 1971, 362). Along with other factors,

the explanation for the show's slip in ratings may be traced to the network's philosophy and insistence on what made for a successful musical variety show. This insistence was based on a lack of confidence in staging a variety show completely around country music.

Cash's show presented performers from not only country music, but folk, pop, and rock music along with other entertainers. Along with country music artists, the program included such guests as folk singers Joni Mitchell and Bob Dylan, pop group The Cowsills, Pat Boone, comedians Soupy Sales and Fannie Flagg, and actor Dan "Hoss" Blocker (Sawyer 25 May 1969, 127). Writing in "Popular Music & Society," Frederick E. Danker examined the network's philosophy in staging Cash's country music style to a mass network audience. Both Danker and Les Brown argue Cash was fit into a variety format the network believed would safely attract a wide audience rather than producing a show solely around Cash's musical style and influence. This included a 27-piece orchestra to accompany musical performances, something not used extensively in country music at the time.

Clearly, Cash was not happy with the arrangement. Speaking to Brown, Cash explained the limitations imposed upon him by his producers:

> You [Brown] said you didn't know why we had to have these pop names on a country music show. I didn't know why we had to either and still don't, . . . the network people said it was important to have popular names to build up the audience. This show-it's very important to me, and we have very good producers who know how to put on a television show, but I wanted to do more country music with the people down here. We're doing part of the show the way we want and part the way the network wants it. I'd say it was fifty-fifty.
>
> There were three things I wanted in the show that had to be mine, the "Ride This Train" segment, the concert with June [his wife] and the family, and then the closing talk and song. If they gave me that I'd go with their judgement on the rest (Brown 1971, 42).

In his autobiography, Man In Black, Cash reveals how differences between he, the producers, and the network left him resigned to whatever fate was decided over the show's future:

> "But a little too much outside influence from the East Coast and the West Coast crept into the format of the show. I found myself with a few guests with whom I had nothing in common: cabaret and cafe society people that I felt and looked out of place with. My audience knew it also.
>
> "Orders from headquarters" was the cop-out answer I got when I questioned the reason for bringing some of these people on my show.
>
> Then they decided to cancel the "Ride This Train" segment. That and the hymns were the only things left I thought were really worthwhile.
>
> "Tell headquarters I'm going to Australia," I told my producers toward the end of the second season. "If I can't keep in things of substance with the truth and down-to-earth dialogue like we've done in 'Ride This Train,' if I can't choose my guests and most of them from the country music community from here in Nashville, and if I can't continue to do the

> shows from Nashville, tell headquarters that it's just fine with June and me if the TV show isn't renewed for next year" (Cash 1975, 199).

Whether formatting the show more in-line with Cash's musical tastes would have made a difference to its ratings and longevity is a matter of conjecture. As Danker points out, that very thing was attempted during the program's final months but did not make enough impact on the ratings. Danker notes a number of problems the producers felt worked against them. One was, they believed, variety shows have a difficult time when headlined around one performer. It was also pointed out country music was in a lull during this time. This was true. CMA's radio station surveys showed for the first time a 14% drop in stations programming country music full-time. Danker goes with the notion that Cash may best be suited for a periodic special that can showcase his style to the fullest (Danker 1973, 140-143; "Country Radio"). This is the direction Cash would take in the 1970s.

Cash's network program utilized producers and key personnel with past experience in network production. The fact the show took place in Nashville was upon the insistence of Cash wanting to do the show in the "Mother Church." Although local people were a part of the show's production crew, "The Johnny Cash Show" more

reflected the expectations and experience of those outside of Nashville with values shaped by past network experience.

A certain amount of network control and influence over production is expected regardless of where the production takes place. Network production was relatively new in Nashville and compromising the presentation of country music was not something Cash felt a need to do nor was comfortable with. Cash's short-lived show demonstrated a clash between the network's expectations with televising country music and how country music had been televised from Nashville in the past. The failure of the show to make a long-term run at the network level still left Nashville-based syndication as the proven vehicle for country music. Another network experiment with country music television however, was taking place across town during this same period. "Hee Haw" would take a very different format approach and although only lasting as long as Cash on the network, would find long-term success.

"Hee Haw"

The most successful program to originate from Nashville, "Hee Haw" was a contradiction with its longevity given its formalistic country buffoon

stereotyping that drove a good part of its content. The program initially received a negative reaction from many in Nashville's music industry and television critics alike. Country music historian Bill Malone notes the program was ". . . hillbilly to the point of grotesque parody; its commercial success was indeed strange" and reluctantly concludes, "The show's appeal suggested that the humor of country music was more traditional than its music" (Malone 1985, 273-274). Although less than universally received with open arms, "Hee Haw's" success firmly established Nashville as a city capable of network-level television production.

"Hee Haw" lasted as a network show for two relatively successful years before becoming the longest running syndicated show ever. It began as a summer replacement on CBS in 1969 and finished in syndication 589 episodes later in 1993 (Lovullo, 1994). It was conceived as a "country music 'Laugh-In'" composed of a quick-paced format combining short comedy sketches and one-liner jokes with a variety of country and gospel music performances (O'Donnell 23 May 1969, 1).

Entering into syndication in 1971 already popular on a national level and taking advantage of the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) recently imposed by the FCC, "Hee Haw" was able to uniquely market itself to stations

as a barter deal with a majority of the program's commercial time already sold by the show's producers to national advertisers and stations receiving the program free with the remaining commercial time available to sell (Lovullo 1993; Moore 1979). "Hee Haw" held to a consistent format until its last year when major overhaul changes were made in an unsuccessful attempt to attract a younger audience (Smith 1992, 13-14). "Hee Haw's" beginning was due to the same rise in interest the networks developed in the late 1960s that landed the CMA and Johnny Cash national exposure.

"Hee Haw" Comes to Nashville

In early 1969, Roy Smith, vice-president of 21st Century Productions and operations manager for WLAC-TV in Nashville, received a call from CBS in Los Angeles. On the other end of the line was Sam Lovullo, business manager for CBS West Coast operations (Smith 1993; "Profile" 1 May 1975, 1-2). Lovullo was making an exploratory call to the CBS affiliate in Nashville to find a suitable taping location for "Hee Haw," a new country music program in development for the network. Lovullo knew nothing of Nashville's television production capabilities and just by chance was calling the most modern production facility in the city. Smith

explained about 21st Century Productions and assured Lovullo he had called the right place. The conversation was brief and Lovullo indicated he would call Smith back again soon (Lovullo 1993).

Lovullo was also finishing work as associate producer on "The Johnathan Winters Show" since CBS decided to cancel the program after its run ended in the summer. Canadians Frank Peppiatt and John Aylesworth, writers on the show, approached CBS vice-president in charge of programming Perry Lafferty on the idea of starting up a program centered around country music. Lafferty had a strong track record bringing in such programs as "Mission: Impossible," "The Carol Burnett Show," and "Mannix," all successful shows on CBS. According to Lovullo (1993), Peppiatt and Aylesworth were becoming aware of country music's popularity including television on the network and from Nashville:

> Towards the later part of the 60s it was happening, it was there. . . Some of the rural shows like Andy Griffith's "Mayberry," "Green Acres," Jim Nabors. Some of those shows were doing quite well on the network, so there was just something there that was telling us.
>
> Going back to that period of time, we saw the indicators that something was happening in the South. Country music, folks who were selling number one country music records needed exposure and they didn't have it. We also did take note that there were some shows that were trying to get started [in Nashville]. I'm talking about Show Biz Incorporated who had "The Porter Wagoner Show" and they had those little shows syndicated around the country. All you

> did was throw a camera up there and they sang and did their thing. So we saw some of that. We saw some of the country comedians. We felt they were not used correctly. We thought that maybe what we ought to do in our preparation for a country show; how can we restage say a Archie Campbell, a stand-up comedian, in a setting so that the comedy spot could come off well (Lovullo 1993)?

From a two page presentation, Lafferty eventually picked up Peppiatt and Aylesworth's "Hee Haw" as a summer replacement for "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" under their newly formed company, Yongestreet Productions. The Smothers' program was being dropped by CBS due to the program's controversial approach with social and political subjects. Lafferty made Lovullo the network's representative on "Hee Haw" as associate producer (Lovullo 1993; Profile 1 May 1975).

On the Winters program Peppiatt, Aylesworth, and Lovullo gained some experience with country music artists and a feeling for country music's popularity. The Winters show did not generate strong ratings in the South in spite of some of the southern characters Winters portrayed. Aware of country music's growing popularity, they booked country acts in another attempt to attract southern audiences and their experience there directly manifest itself later with "Hee Haw":

> We booked George "Goober" Lindsey, he was on "Mayberry." We booked Roy Clark, Buck Owens as guests on "Johnathan Winters." [also] Minnie Pearl, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. Those were the five sort

> of country-flavored acts that we booked. And we noticed when these people were on the show our ratings went up. So it was an indication that something was there. So if you look at it now and put it all together, you will note that four of those five acts found themselves as regulars on "Hee Haw" (Lovullo 1993).

In Nashville, Roy Smith had no intention of just waiting around for Lovullo to call back with the possibility of 21st Century Productions landing a network show. He contacted a WLAC-TV sales representative who happened to be in Los Angeles at that time and urged him to make a personal visit to Lovullo's office. Smith called Lovullo back to inform him of the impending visit and also offered to mail him production rate cards (Smith 1993). More important to Yongestreet and Lovullo was to visit 21st Century's studios. By West coast standards the WLAC-TV studio was small and they were concerned if the program could be produced the way they were accustomed. The "Laugh-In" approach with short segments able to be shot out of sequence and later edited together worked well in what Lovullo called the "matchbox" studio:

> I came in with John Aylesworth and the director Bill Davis. We looked at the facilities and we liked what we saw. We currently said, "Hey, we need something, let's get it done, let's do it here. I think its workable." And believe it or not it was one of the finest studios. I think it was just right for what we had in mind. In fact it even helped us in certain ways because you always want to

> think big but because we had limitations, we thought small. But there again, by thinking small "Hee Haw" was just perfect for what we had (Lovullo 1993).

With limited knowledge of country music Yongestreet hired Gordy Tapp as a writer who was working with a country show in Canada. Upon Tapp's recommendation they hired recording artist Archie Campbell by mid- April and the two brought the country music expertise that was lacking to the production staff (Lovullo 1993; "Cambell in Dual" 1969, 3).

Nashville was an ideal taping location with many established country stars in residence and other performers attracted there for recording. As Smith notes, taping in Nashville would make production more flexible and economical:

> He [Lovullo] did not have to pay air fare for Chet Atkins. He didn't have to pay him a per diem if he wanted to book him, Atkins drove in from West Meade [Nashville suburb]. Grandpa Jones if he wanted him as a regular, he didn't have to fly him out there [West coast] and keep him in a hotel for a month, he drove in every morning (Smith 1993).

Videotaping was conducted at WLAC-TV in Nashville with post-production editing on the West coast. 21st Century provided facilities and a production staff including set construction. There was some concern over whether 21st Century could properly construct the sets. But when Smith and others looked at the blueprints, they

felt confident since ". . . every piece of lumber, every nail, every screw, every sample of paint was something you could purchase off the hardware store shelves." Additional people were hired for construction and painting (Smith 1993).

Summer Series Production

Taping began in early May, five weeks away from its first air date on June 15. Studio production lasted 25 days and in that period approximately 3,500 recorded takes were created for twelve summer shows. Yongestreet returned to the West coast for editing with 20 days left to compile the first program (Hurst 27 May 1969, 14).

The initial summer programs were hosted by Buck Owens and Roy Clark with a combination of established artists and newcomers as a regular ensemble cast that included Archie Campbell, Gordy Tapp, Grandpa Jones, Junior Samples, Sheb Wooley, Jeannine Riley, Lulu Roman, Don Harron, and Cathy Baker. Guest artists that appeared included Connie Smith, Jerry Lee Lewis, Sonny James, Loretta Lynn, Waylon Jennings, George Jones, Tammy Wynette, Wynn Stewart, Conway Twitty, Bonnie Owens, Charlie Pride, Minnie Pearl, The Hagers, and String Bean. Buck Owen's group, the Buckaroos, acted as

the staff band (Hurst 27 May 1969, 14; "Hee Haw Premieres" 1969, 1; "CBS Network" 1969, 1).

Cathy Baker, originally a WLAC-TV employee, landed a regular position on the show playing "Miss Hee Haw," a wholesome, down-home, girl-next-door character performing in skits and group songs and introducing acts. She was perhaps best known signing off the end of every show with her signature, "That's all!" She was originally hired by the station to work on set construction and was doing so when director Bill Davis was conducting auditions for the "Miss Hee Haw" part. After conducting approximately forty auditions, Davis indicates "we didn't find what we were looking for, then suddenly, we turned around and here's Cathy right under our noses." According to Baker, "One minute I was down on my hands and knees painting the sets and the next I knew someone asked me to stand up. I obliged and the next I knew I was on camera" ("Hee Haw" Premieres, 1969, 1).

"Hee Haw" borrowed from the old barn-dance look with set designs suggesting small town and rural settings. The program's visual imagery and characterizations were often a mix between "Lil'Abner" and "The Beverly Hillbillies." Costumes, sets, and characters often suggested an exaggerated caricature of

reality. Bright color settings had cartoon-like designs or emphasized an earlier, simpler time with antiques in place of modern conveniences. Whether it was Junior Samples often the butt of many jokes with his naivete and lack of education, or the plank fence ready to spank the unsuspecting, its humor was simple and predictable and often self-deprecating, having fun with country stereotypes.

In contrast to its humor, music performances were handled in a more straight-forward fashion. The program presented all the major acts in country and gospel music performing a range of traditional and contemporary songs. For the most part, music performances and comedy were kept separate but musical performers were more likely included in comedy skits with the regular cast. The hour long program presented a variety of settings, people and situations edited together with less need for continuity and more focus on overall pacing and flow (Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 198; Lovullo 1993).

Like "Laugh-In," "Hee-Haw" used repetition to develop a number of memorable sight-gags and slogans. Viewers came to expect the many familiar show elements such as the opening with the entire cast sitting in a barn setting singing together and telling jokes; Roy Clark as the clerk of the Empty Arms Hotel with his

various misfit guests; Grandpa Jones describing in savory detail "What's for supper!," the "Hee Haw" Gospel Quartet; and the corn field and hay stack.

For Lovullo, the proper combination of comedy and music explained the show's success and longevity compared to "Laugh-In" from which it was inspired:

> "Laugh-In" went off the air because they could not keep up with all those one-liners. . . You sit there and watch these one-liners come in at you for 52 minutes. Before you think of that one, the next one just hits you. It was just exhausting. But we were different, we had music. Every eight or ten minutes we give you a song. We had some sing alongs [ensemble singing], we had some corny jokes. You laughed with us, we laughed at ourselves, and along comes your favorite artist; Buck Owens, Roy Clark, or Charlie Pride, or Loretta Lynn.
>
> . . . I maintain today that a successful show has got to have some form of comedy, and it takes an art, and it takes a little artistic feeling and approach. If you have that knack or that ability to mix music with comedy, your a winner (Lovullo 1993).

"Hee Haw" did receive considerable criticism locally, from within the country music industry, and outside of Nashville. Much criticism centered primarily on the program's treatment of country music in terms of the comedy written around it. The show's hayseed approach was the very style and image many in country music had been moving away from, especially since the threat of rock and roll in the 1950s. According to Lovullo, during the initial production period they were surrounded by either rejection or doubt:

> The very first shows were highly criticized. This town pooh-poohed us. Nobody. The CMA didn't want to even talk to us. They didn't want any part of what we did. So we functioned independently with everybody in this town. And even to some extent, I believe Channel 5 [WLAC-TV] had some reservation [wondering] what the hell did they get into (Lovullo 1993).

Criticism was evident before the initial taping was finished. Two weeks into production, Perry Lafferty visited the Nashville studios and was positive over the program possibly being picked up in December after its initial summer run despite criticism being expressed. In a Tennessean newspaper article covering the visit, Lafferty said, "I sincerely think 'Hee Haw' is going to be an interesting, amusing program. It is no 'put down' of country music." Playing into that very theme however, the front-page article included a photo of Junior Samples, a regular performer who plays a slow-witted yet lovable country bumkin, eating an hors d'oeuvre out of Lafferty's hand. And in "Hee Haw's" vein of humor, the article ended with a quote from the network vice-president noting that Samples thought he was Spiro Agnew (O'Donnell 23 May 1969, 1, 4).

Before the first program aired, a Billboard article reported criticism centered around the show's title. "Despite many comments" about the title according to the report, Peppiatt and Aylesworth defended the name and

assured the show would have high entertainment value ("Hee Haw Show" 1969, 62). When the show premiered, Billboard praised the music segments but concluded "The corny quick takes and the bad taste things. . . left little chance for the music to have any impact" (Hall, 1969, 25). In the same issue, another article quoted anonymous music industry sources critical of the program and concluded "A consensus of the country music industry here described 'Hee Haw'. . . as something of an abomination." A "noted" songwriter said, "It makes all country music look like barnyard material again." A "Nashville publisher" added, "It makes all of us in the music industry want to hide our heads." An artist not available for the show's taping was relieved, "I had an opportunity to be on the show, but had a conflict. . . Right now I'm glad I couldn't make it" ("Hee Haw is Called" 1969, 44).

Jack Gould writing in The New York Times was especially hostile to the new program, laying blame upon "Some sick producers from the West Coast." The article's subheading stated, "Nashville and Country Music Are Victims," and Gould's review clearly sketched a program imposing an illegitimate approach at comedy upon Nashville and its musical culture:

> "Hee Haw" is ghastly, and the city of Nashville should not hesitate to bring suit against the hicks of Hollywood.
>
> Roy Clark and Buck Owens, respected figures in the country music world, were among the stars trapped in the Channel 2 [New York station] fiasco, which also should pay reparations to Minnie Pearl and a few others (Gould 1969, 95).

Less contemptuous but still not impressed, Gould found fault with the music as "poorly and unexcitingly done." With a better alternative, he suggests, "Thank heaven for Johnny Cash, who can be seen on Saturday nights on the American Broadcasting Company network. He's with it" (Gould 1969, 95). Negative reaction did little to temper the public's support for the program and given the show's high caliber of talent, was obviously not universally accepted within the music industry. "Hee Haw's" tweleve-show run became one of the most popular programs CBS aired that summer. The show was renewed as a second season replacement for that December ("Hee Haw Ready" 1969, 60).

Beyond initial hesitations, Yongestreet was very satisfied with their experience in Nashville. For Lovullo, 21st Century personnel worked well with a network production company coming in to its facilities:

> When we got there we were very impressed not only with the studio but we were impressed with manpower. They were good, they took a personal interest in us. One of the things they did was they listened to us. I came in with two or three supervisory people;

> somebody that knew the lighting, somebody that knew the videotaping area, somebody that knew the sound. Remember now, this is CBS' dollars, so CBS was very concerned and had great interest not only in the final product but [wanted to] be sure that we were giving the best engineering treatment as possible. So they sent some key people.
>
> Everything just fell into a slot. We came in, we got the shows going, the shows got on the air (Lovullo 1993).

In a Nashville Tennessean article after the initial taping was over, director Bill Davis noted the production crew:

> performed as well as their counterparts in New York and Los Angeles and were willing and even enthusiastically willing to work longer hours than would have been possible at all in New York or Los Angeles (Hurst 27 May 1969, 14).

When CBS renewed "Hee Haw," Yongestreet did return to WLAC-TV in November for taping as a regular CBS program starting in December.

"Hee Haw" Returns

"Hee Haw's" December return replaced "The Glen Campbell Show" on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. with the Campbell program moving to Sunday nights. Programs beginning as a permanent series in the second season often start in January but it was reported the show was brought back a month earlier on December 17 in hopes of recapturing the popularity it enjoyed in the summer. The first show did just that, producing a 39 Arbitron

rating, the largest for a returning CBS series ("Hee Haw Ready" 1969, 60; "Hee Haw Rates" 1). While still not finding it funny, The New York Times acknowledged the program's success and explained its comedic approach in a socio-political context occurring on the network level:

> For the television networks adapting to the climate of the Nixon era, do seem at times to be pursuing their own version-conscious or unconscious-of a Southern strategy. And "Hee Haw" is a key element. One might call it the Spiro Agnew of the CBS line-up, the key to the heart of the "silent majority" (Harrington 1970, sec. 2, 17).

Enough material for ten programs was taped during the session in November and taping resumed again in January to complete the season to June. With the show becoming a regular CBS program, Peppiatt and Aylesworth became executive producers with Lovullo and Davis moving in as producers. Lovullo went on a leave-of-absence from his duties at CBS for this position and Davis also continued as the show's director. No great changes took place in the show's format. Minnie Pearl became a semi-regular, being taped for ten shows during this session. Over the years format changes were gradual with new skits and segments replacing others and the regular cast lineup evolving. By 1979 there was more emphasis on music. In spite of its returning success, it was subject to one programming change. The show was moved

in the fall for the start of the 1970-71 season to Tuesday nights at 8:30 to replace the cancelled "Red Skelton Show" (Hee Haw Ready 1969, 60; "Hee Haw Continues" 1970, 3; Erikson 1989, 246). The Skelton cancellation was the beginning of CBS's strategy to rid itself of programs, many long-established, now attracting older viewers. Within the following year significant changes would take place on a network level widening that strategy to include "Hee Haw."

Strong popular reaction for "Hee Haw" created related spin-off activities soon after the program went on the air. Many regular and guest artists produced records connected with "Hee Haw's" name and the music performed on the program. Junior Samples, Grandpa Jones, and Archie Campbell released records by the end of 1969. During this period a "Hee Haw" stage show was designed for fairs and concerts including merchandise and concessions. The package included many of the regulars from the show except Buck Owens. Also, Lovullo announced the possibility of other television programs produced in Nashville including a live nightly talk show and a weekly variety program ("Hee Haw Prompts" 1969, 46).

Network Cancellation

"Hee Haw" lasted on CBS only through the 1970-71 season and then was cancelled. Its short-lived existence on the network was primarily a consequence of changing attitudes in programming that were taking place, not only at CBS, but the other networks during this period. By the late 1960s, networks and advertising agencies began relying more on the demographic makeup of a program's viewership in determining advertising rates. Rather than just being satisfied with a program's overall rating or share as used to be the case, now advertisers wanted the more lucrative 18-49 year-old urban audience and it was the viewing numbers in that category that now mattered (Brown 1971, 112-113; Bedell 1981, 34-36; Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 228). CBS had been the leading network for the past twenty years with many variety and sitcom programs that were now holding on to loyal aging viewers but failing to attract newer, younger ones. Its leadership was now challenged by NBC which was in close pursuit of becoming number one and claimed it already attracted more of the right viewers. CBS was also referred to as the "Country Broadcasting System" with its high number of rural-oriented shows that like-wise did not generate the right audiences. When Robert Wood

took over as CBS president in 1969, he quickly became convinced the network needed to rid itself of its aging and rural image, an opinion not shared by the network's long-time successful programming chief, Michael Dann. When CBS dropped Red Skelton in 1970, it also cancelled "The Jackie Gleason Show" and "Petticoat Junction," shows still bringing in overall acceptable numbers but not the younger 18-49 demographic. This was the first move and a second was due for more shows the following year (Brown 1971, 112; Bedell 1981, 34-36, 55; Castelman and Podrazik 1982, 216).

Although "Hee Haw" performed well during the 1970-71 season, more changes took place within CBS and the broadcasting landscape that insured its cancellation. Within a year of Wood's ascendancy to president, Dann quit the network and was replaced by Fred Silverman, someone more aligned to Wood's views. Also, in the network programming race CBS and NBC became virtually tied and ABC made strong gains in the last half of the season. This placed a greater priority on CBS to refine its programming. Another issue CBS needed to deal with was the FCC's adoption of the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) that would take effect in the fall at the start of the 1971-72 season. As a part of the Rule, all of the networks needed to drop three and one-half hours of

programming a week from their prime time schedules, turning the broadcast time back to the station affiliates. Although these elements would hasten "Hee Haw's" removal, they were only critical issues on a network level and would either benefit or make little difference in syndication (Bedell 1981, 55; Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 228).

Primarily, "Hee Haw" was a victim of timing. Its content and the audience it attracted were no longer acceptable to the network right at the very time it started and CBS was motivated more than ever to either drop or make changes in its programming. Roy Smith sensed an immediate cultural bias against the program within the ranks of CBS with the first show:

> I made a point of being in New York for its debut and knowing the people at CBS management, I was over there the next morning 10 feet tall walking down the halls of CBS because how great that country music show was last night. And the comment was, "The audio was bad, I could not understand what they were saying." No, the audio was not bad, the audio was perfect. That was the language those people spoke that you could not understand. They could not understand the jokes, they did not understand a chicken crosses the highway to get to the other side, that did not impress them as being funny.
>
> I realized right then, for New York, this was not the program they were looking for. Lo and behold it was in the top ten nationwide but an "also-ran" in New York. Well, CBS just can't stand an "also-ran" on Channel 2 in New York that they own. So its quite obvious then this thing is not going on forever in New York regardless of its popularity (Smith 1993).

The kind of urban-oriented programming starting to be developed for prime time was different from the safe formulaic content of "Hee Haw." In September of 1970, CBS began airing "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," a sitcom that dealt more directly with the realities of a contemporary single working woman than other comedies up to that time. In the following January, CBS broke even greater ground with "All In The Family," another sitcom addressing even more head-on issues dealing with changing social attitudes (Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 223-228).

This was the direction Wood and Silverman were looking in their efforts to shore up CBS's image and place the network on a more competitive cutting-edge. The cancellations effective by the summer of 1971 were the greatest CBS ever undertook. "Hee Haw" was in good company falling along with "The Ed Sullivan Show," "Lassie," "Mayberry RFD," "The Beverly Hillbillies," "The Jim Nabors' Hours," "Hogan Heroes," and "Green Acres" (Bedell 1981, 55; Castleman and Podrazik 1982, 228). In the beginning of April, within a month after "Hee Haw's" cancellation was announced, Yongestreet announced the show would go into syndication (O'Donnell 1971, 1).

Syndication

The decision to syndicate, however, was not immediate upon the news of cancellation. Lovullo, Peppiatt, Aylesworth, and Nick Vanoff, who owned a part of Yongestreet and acted as its spokesperson, came primarily from a network background and the immediate thought was whether they should focus their attention on other network ventures. Lovullo, still technically on CBS's payroll, decided to quit the network and join Yongestreet and spoke in favor of keeping the show going in syndication. Part of Lovullo's argument was that "Hee Haw" had captured the imagination of many in Nashville by this time and that if they did not continue the show, someone else would. That a turnaround in attitude toward "Hee Haw" took place in Nashville was evident by an article in the Country Music Association's newsletter that summer the show was in taping for syndication:

> The country music industry's faith in the "Hee Haw" series was exemplified by the fact that over 30,000 letters were sent out through the joint effort of "Hee Haw" co-stars Roy Clark and Buck Owens and the Country Music Association, urging fans to voice their objections to the network move ("Broadcast Row" 1971, 1).

Another reason supporting syndication was PTAR, one of the very things that helped propel the program off the network. One of FCC's intentions for PTAR was to

created a greater variety of original programming on the local station level not controlled or directly influenced by the networks; first-run syndication was a primary strategy in that plan. But syndicating "Hee Haw" worked against the FCC's intentions since, in content, it was perceived lacking innovation typical of many network shows. The FCC rule actually discouraged stations from investing in new programming ideas since the commission suggested PTAR was an experiment when it first went into effect. This was on top of an economic downturn for stations with the loss of lucrative cigarette advertising imposed by Congress at the beginning of the year. In a study of the Prime Time Access Rule, Barbara Moore sketches the motivation of station programmers at this time:

> Buyers had little incentive or desire to use innovative programs. Since the FCC did not seem wholly committed to the access concept and broadcasters lacked enthusiasm, producers of syndicated material had no reason to expend large amounts of money on untried projects. The result in 1971 was that for the most part, distributors offered some updated versions of former network shows and some low budget "experiments" in programming (Moore 1979, 128).

In this environment Lovullo and the others saw the opportunity:

> It hit us just right because along with the movement in country music and we were very successful with our show, we were 13th in the complete line up of

> television shows in the nation. That's pretty damn good. We knew there was room out there for us, so Prime Access really helped us (Lovullo 1993).

A business move rather innovative at the time was selling "Hee Haw" to stations in a barter arrangement. In most syndication arrangements, the distributor sold the show to a station and the station then sold the commercial time to advertisers. With barter, the producer or distributor would sell some, or all, of the time to advertisers and then provide the show to stations free of charge. In the past those shows bartered into syndication were ones stations lacked confidence in to buy outright as in a normal syndication exchange. Bartering was therefore associated with programs perceived as lacking audience appeal and was not an approach producers and distributors often took after making an substantial investment in a new program with an unproven track record (Erickson 1989, 13; Blumenthal and Goodenough 1991, 32-33; Moore 1979, 148-149; Smith 1993; Lovullo 1993).

But stations would accept barter in lean economic times when they were short on cash which was the case in 1971. And with the uncertainty surrounding PTAR, barter was attractive (Moore 1979, 107-108, 133). Yongestreet was able to barter "Hee Haw" because it was a successful program attractive to stations, national advertisers

were eager to sign on, and stations were willing to accept it during the uncertainty surrounding PTAR. As Lovullo puts it, "I had it all the way around. Got a commitment for X number [of shows] from here [advertisers], got a commitment from the stations, X number there" (Lovullo 1993). The program was sold to stations with eight commercial positions, four already sold by Yongestreet and four open for stations to sell (Hurst 19 September 1971, 3-S). "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom" and "The Lawrence Welk Show" were cancelled by NBC and ABC at this time and, like "Hee Haw," survived well into syndication as bartered shows (Moore 1979, 136-137; McNeil 1991, 430, 834-835; Howard, Kievman, and Moore 1994, 258).

One strategy decided upon was to maintain as much program continuity as possible with the viewers. Costs were cut by reducing the staff and working out salary arrangement with the performers in ways that did not affect the on-air look. The staff reduction was partially natural with a number of personnel gone who had been associated with the network. Salaries were reduced but talent were now guaranteed payment for two airings of a single performance in contrast to the

network system of paying for one airing with an option for a second (Lovullo 1993; Smith 1993; Blumenthal and Goodenough 1991, 242-245).

Another way to maintain continuity, Lovullo was advised, was to sign up with as many CBS affiliate stations as possible instead of trying to contract with the top station in each market. The number of markets that "Hee Haw" reportedly reached is inconsistent and varied over the years, but the show stabilized between 200 and 250 markets. It went into syndication in more markets than it aired on CBS. When it was cancelled, the show went into 186 CBS markets (Hurst 23 May 1971, sec. B, 1, 3; Lovullo 1993). The list (Hurst 23 May 1971) shows the network affiliate break down across the 196 stations "Hee Haw" aired on when it went into syndication.

"Hee Haw" Network Affiliate Distribution

September 1971

CBS	102
NBC	48
ABC	36
Independent	10

Also, in an innovative procedure for syndication, the program aired as a network, playing back from WLAC-TV in Nashville over the phone lines to about one-half

of these stations just as was traditionally done with the major broadcasting networks. This not only gave a sense of continuity to the viewers but Yongestreet was able to maintain programming and quality control as well since stations did not individually play videotape of the program. Roy Smith publicly and prophetically referred to it at the time as a "Nashville Network." Lovullo had a slightly different version indicating they posted a map in their office titled the "Hee Haw Network" (O'Donnell 2 April 1971, 10; Lovullo 1993; Smith 1993).

Lovullo was able to arrange the syndicated network due to PTAR freeing up the network phone lines in the evenings but with the networks still paying for them. According to Lovullo, the arrangement was good for everyone:

> Because there was some bitterness on behalf of the network people because I was no longer a part of them, I got involved with AT&T and said, 'Look gentlemen, I tell you what, I know for a fact that [phone] line is open and I know that CBS is paying you X number of dollars. Let me make a deal with you. Let me use that line. I will pay you for its use and [you] refund it through your book process back to the network.' So, the network liked it because they weren't using the line. It was available to them but they had no product but because I was using it and I had to pay AT&T, it was a good business move (Lovullo 1993).

"Hee Haw" went into syndication on the "network," airing on Saturdays from 6-7 p.m. CST. Stations mostly

in the Western states received the program on tape (Lovullo 1993). This arrangement lasted several years until AT&T's rates became prohibitive. Lovullo and several others with Yongestreet then bought a post production facility in Los Angeles and began their own editing and duplication business called Complete Post to assemble and bicycle "Hee Haw" to the stations. In most normal bicycling arrangements before satellite distribution, videotape copies were mailed directly to several of the syndicated stations. Each station first receiving the tape would air the show, or make a copy, and then mail (bicycle) the tape to another station. An average circuit for a tape might be eight stations. This did not necessarily insure the program would air at the same time on all stations (Hurst 23 May 1971, 3; Head, Sterling, and Shofield 1994, 309). To insure a uniform programming schedule, "Hee Haw" was placed on a three station bike circuit. This was a challenge according to Lovullo, "It did put pressure on the stations because of this vicious biking arrangement. Sometimes we were pretty close to missing the air date" (Lovullo 1993).

Yongestreet settled into a pattern of producing in Nashville for two-six week periods in the spring and fall, videotaping enough material for 13 programs each

time. With the show made up of a variety of short segments, they benefited by the development of computerized videotape editing that developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. When they went on the air in 1969, they first used electronic timecode editing which allowed them to accurately assemble the program content together. Before this, videotape editing was either physically spliced which performed poorly and severely limited program editing or was electronically edited but without complete accuracy. After timecode editing, they used computerized editing. With computers, they had far greater control over the process, developing edit sequences with the opportunity to make changes with their many short segments. In 1973, "Hee Haw" won an Emmy Award for electronic editing (Anderson 1993; Lovullo 1993).

Other Production Efforts

From their success with "Hee Haw," Yongestreet became involved in other production activities. The most direct spin-off was the 1978 syndicated situation comedy "Hee Haw Honeys." Taped at WTVF, the half hour sitcom mixed comedy and music in a small Nashville restaurant setting called Honey's Club. Country music guest artists would visit and perform. The show starred

"Hee Haw" regulars Kenny Price, Lulu Roman, Misty Rowe, and Gailard Sartain. Kathie Lee Johnson, now Kathy Lee Gifford of the syndicated "Live with Regis and Kathy Lee," played a waitress and sang. The show lasted two seasons in 1978-79 (Lovullo 1993; Erickson 1989, 246; McNeil 1991, 338).

Other production efforts by Yongestreet included a 10th anniversary special in 1979 on NBC and a 20th anniversary special in 1988 for syndication. "Orange Blossom Special" aired on CBS in 1982 and featured Loretta Lynn and George Lindsey. That year Yongestreet also produced the syndicated special, "Happy New Year from Opryland USA." Sam Lovullo produced a short-lived second network series called "Nashville Palace." Taped before a live audience at Opryland's Acuff Theater, the country music variety program lasted through part of the 1981-82 season on Saturday nights at 8 p.m. on NBC before being quickly cancelled. It appeared again briefly as a summer replacement in 1982 (Lovullo 1993; "Country On The Tube" October 1981, 10; McNeil 1991, 538; Gallagher 1978, 9).

Two pilots hosted by Archie Campbell were produced for potential series syndication in 1973 called "Skeedaddle." Produced by Hollywood-based Peter Marshall and Bill Armstrong, formerly with the game show

"Hollywood Squares," "Skeedaddle" was claimed to be first country oriented television game show. The pilots were produced at WSM-TV ("Archie Campbell" 1973, 7; "First Country Game" 1973, 6).

"Hee Haw" Moves to Opryland

"Hee Haw" continued at WLAC-TV and 21st Century Productions until 1980 when the station announced it was dropping out of major production activity ("WTVF No Longer" 1980). Production then shifted to Opryland Production's facilities that fall. By 1980, conditions at the station had changed. These conditions involved its organization and the broadcasting landscape that affected its operation. The reasons for the move actually began several years after the show went into syndication. Effective December 1, 1975, WLAC-TV was sold to Houston-based Channel Two Television Company and changed its call letters to WTVF. With the sale, Tom Baker was replaced by station manager Harold Crump as vice-president and general manager. Another important development had already occurred in January of that year when Roy Smith resigned from the station to become the manager for Opryland Productions ("WLAC-TV To Become" 1975, suppl.; "Changing Ownership 1975, 2; "WLAC Exec" 1975, 29). Although the station's sale had no direct

affect upon "Hee Haw's" activities and the new station owners and management had no intentions of changing WTVF's production efforts, 21st Century was now without the two people who had the greatest hand in its formation.

Another important change took place with 21st Century because of Smith's departure. Baker announced the station would "reabsorb" the division by cutting back its national production effort and focus on regional and commercial production. In a newspaper article reporting the change, Baker was quoted, "This effort has not been productive for several years and we did not think it could be so in the future." Baker made it clear 21st Century was not being phased out and would continue its current productions including "Hee Haw." In the same article, Smith framed his decision as a natural career move:

> I felt that I had done all that I could do. . . I had carried it as far as I could carry it.
>
> At the other place [Opryland] I can go further with both my career and with the productions. It is the bigger opportunity and the greater challenges that appealed to me (WLAC Exec" 1975, 29).

The article also reported that with 21st Century to be reorganized, Baker had offered Smith new duties within the station. In 1993, Smith placed a different

perspective of what was going on with 21st Century, the station, and his motivations for moving to Opryland:

> At the time the article was written, I was doing about as much as I had ever done and the station was doing as much as it had ever done before. . . But I knew the station was going to be sold and he [Baker] would not be there much longer, so I had no reason to have a continuation [with the station].
>
> The deal hadn't been made for the station to be sold at that point, but it was close, and I had received word thru a round about sort of way that Irving Waugh wanted to talk to me and I responded to that word. Waugh made me an offer, I took the job. . . But the station was pretty well on its way to being sold and Mr. Baker would be out. I didn't know what the future would hold, I knew what Waugh was offering (Smith 1993).

21st Century's reorganization and the loss of Baker and Smith did not signal the end of new production efforts. On top of production activity already in progress, new programs would be signed on, but by 1980 "Hee Haw" was the only major production effort still in progress under the guise of 21st Century Productions. The decision to terminate "Hee Haw" and lay 21st Century Productions to rest was also due to changes in priorities that took place during the 1970s in local television broadcasting that shifted the direction of WTVF's production efforts.

By 1980, television news was the primary production effort engaged by most local stations. News production developed and matured on the network level in the 1960s

and in the following decade, local news became central to the stations' profit motive with increased investment in their news divisions and programming. As news took over more of a station's resources, other production efforts declined (Howard, Kievman, and Moore 1994, 74-75, 81-82; Sterling and Kittross 1990, 570-571). Roy Smith places into perspective the changes between production and news, and how "Hee Haw" fit into the picture:

> The TV philosophy now is that who ever has the highest rated newscast is dominate in town. Therefore, the TV station is so dependant upon the news effort totally, it has got to put all of its eggs in one basket and that philosophy began before I left Channel 5. I saw it coming. By 76 and 78 it was dyed-in-the-wool. No TV station would ever buy helicopters to do production, never buy cars to do production, but they would do it to do news.
>
> "Hee Haw" was a good money maker for the station for the amount of effort and time we spent. Just doing the production on it, we had no worries about producing the thing. Just scheduling the crew and doing it. It had been so routine and commonplace by '75 that it was like doing "The Carl Tipton Show" [low budget local show], but it was a real money maker, almost all of it in clear profit (Smith 1993).

WTVF general manager Harold Crump agrees the station's news effort was central to his decision to terminate production in 1980, but suggests it was also due to change in the syndication industry:

> I had to tell them, "I'm sorry, we're out of the production business". . . It was like the tail wagging the dog. It was great, it was fun, it was wonderful for us and for our people, but we had to get back into the TV business.
>
> You could not afford to break your concentration. You had to go where the big bucks were. What we found was, that the local news image was the image of the entire station and if somebody liked your news, they'd watch you all day long just because of the news so you could not afford to let the news be second to anything.
>
> Syndication companies had mushroomed and now the product that was out there for them to choose from was much, much greater than it had been. Therefore we had a much more competitive marketplace to work in and yet we weren't devoting full time to it like a syndication company was so we couldn't do as good as job as they did. We weren't willing to take the risk that they were because we had to devote part of our time to other endeavors (Crump 1993).

Lovullo believes another reason the "Hee Haw" show may have had to leave dealt with WTVF employees having gone through a failed union vote for labor representation. Even though WTVF was a non-union station, "Hee Haw" writers were union members because Yongestreet was based on the West coast. As Lovullo puts it:

> Its not because we were a bad influence but because of what we represented. Certainly it was not only going to give them a headache today, it could give them a headache in the future, so they decided to get out of the facilities business (Lovullo 1993) (See Appendix F, Note 15).

It was clear WTVF was moving away from production with "Hee Haw's" exit. Eight jobs had already been eliminated when the announcement was made ("WTVF No Longer" 1980).

Gaylord Acquisition

Yongestreet had been satisfied with its arrangements at WTVF and was not happy about leaving even though the Opryland complex was a larger and more up-to-date facility. As with the transition from network into syndication, no on-air changes were made when they started producing from Opryland in 1980 but production rates were higher there so it cost them more. The following year, Yongestreet sold "Hee Haw" to Dallas-based Gaylord Broadcasting Company, a subsidiary of the Oklahoma Publishing Company of Oklahoma City. No immediate changes occurred with the new ownership but it would have a significant impact two years later not only for "Hee Haw," but for the "Grand Ole Opry," Opryland, and The Nashville Network (Lovullo 1993).

In 1982 the American General Corporation in Houston bought NLT Corporation including the Opryland complex. The new owners made it clear its would sell off the theme park and the "Opry" since it was only interested in the National Life insurance holdings. The head of

Gaylord Broadcasting, Edward L. Gaylord, and his wife were big fans of country music. When the Gaylords were visiting a "Hee Haw" taping at the Opry complex, Sam Lovullo spoke to them about the "Opry's" need for new owners. Lovullo then approached chairman Bud Wendell and suggested to consider Gaylord as possible owners (Lovullo 1993). Gaylord did make a good prospect. Along with "Hee Haw," his family-run company included television stations in seven markets and two newspapers in Oklahoma City. The New York Times reported what influenced Gaylord's motivation:

> What attracted Gaylord to the "Opry," he [Gaylord] said, 'was not the return on the investment but the people here.' If not for Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl and the people in "Hee Haw," he said, . . . 'we wouldn't be here' (Berg 1983, 31).

Gaylord's purchase in 1983 included the Opryland USA theme park, the 1,100 room Opryland Hotel, WSM-AM and FM, and TNN (Berg 1983, 37). The TNN facilities included not only studio and editing capabilities but also a duplication service. Lovullo felt those facilities might create a conlfict of interest with the Complete Post facilities from which they presently were editing and distributing. They sold Complete Post and the show's entire operations moved to Nashville (Lovullo 1993).

With its longevity and appeal, "Hee Haw" certainly played a positive influence for country music's popularity and for Nashville as a television production center. Nashville's role was primarily as a content provider with country music stars and musicians located there and as a facilities provider with 21st Century Productions and later Opryland Productions. Like the other two recent network efforts coming from Nashville, the CMA awards show and Cash's show, outside producers with network experience produced the program. For his part however, WLAC-TV's Tom Baker demonstrated foresight in creating the studio facilities and production operation necessary for network production. He and Roy Smith were ready to cater to the network's production needs when it called.

At the start, the program's corn-fed stylistic approach ran against the current opinion within the Nashville industry but attitudes quickly changed when the show found success. By the time "Hee Haw" went into syndication in 1971, there was excitement growing over television opportunities in Nashville. Nashville began attracting more people with ambitions in television production.

Pre-Opryland Production Growth: 1969-1974

Beyond the Cash program and "Hee Haw," the period before the opening of Opryland Production's facilities from 1969 to 1974 saw a further increase in production, especially different were new companies forming to move into country music television. It was an enthusiastic period with activity ranging from pilot proposals and projects to syndicated and network programs. There was the potential for further network series production on all three of the main networks that never got beyond the pilot stage. When Opryland Productions and the new Opry House opened in 1974, the promise for network series programs had peaked. Syndication and network specials would become the main staple of production for the rest of the decade.

The reasons for the this growth and enthusiasm came from several conditions existing in Nashville at the time. Show Biz was continuing to increase its program line-up with new shows and corporate expansion into related areas. The CMA awards on the network continued to develop. Johnny Cash's program, although short-lived, was highly respected and made more people take notice of country music's potential on television. "Hee Haw's" successful transition from network to syndication attracted attention. Not lost in all of this was the

awareness of PTAR and the need for new programming. With the construction of Opryland USA and a new Opry House, the promise for television was bright and the perception existed that Nashville was going to, at last, become a real alternative to the East and West coast centers.

Cates, Hagan and Miller

The CMA awards program went through important changes in the early 1970s. In 1971, the awards got its own show sponsored by Kraft Foods and was no longer a part of "Kraft Music Hall." Also that year, production went to Phillips Productions out of New York when the production team of Dwight Hemion and Gary Smith went to England for work ("Country Music Association" 1971, 1; Waugh 1993; "CMA Fact Sheet" 1995). Hemion and Smith would later do more producing in Nashville and the arrival of Phillips Productions was the beginning of another New York involvement with Nashville television.

Phillips Productions was owned by Joe Cates. Cates experience included producing, directing, and writing for network and Broadway stage production. He first began in television in 1947 with the DuMont network and his credentials includes Jackie Gleason's "Cavalcade of Stars"; "Stop the Music," with Burt Parks; "The $64,000

Question"; and several of Pat Weaver's spectaculars for NBC. He recently won an Emmy in 1970 for Outstanding Variety and Musical Programs and would repeat that in 1972. For the 1971 CMA awards, Cates hired Chet Hagan, who worked with Hemion and Smith as writer and line producer, and Walter C. Miller, an experienced live network television director. The production team of Cates, Hagan, and Miller would produce the CMA show for the next several years. Miller and Cates previously worked together at NBC and Miller later worked for several years for Cates before starting his own company (Cates 1993; McNeil 1991, 969, 973; Terrance 1995, 87, 398, 412).

Hagan, on the other hand, did not know Cates until the time the CMA show was looking for a new producer. Hagan's Colin Group put in a bid to produce the show but lost out to Cates. At the time, Hagan thought that was the end of it:

> I bought a horse farm in Virginia and I'm stomping around the farm moaning to myself and got a phone call from Joe Cates in New York. He said "How would you like the same deal you had with Dwight and Gary?" I said "I wouldn't." He said "Why not?" I said "It wasn't enough money." He said, "Oh hell, I'll pay you more money," and so we became partners (Hagan 1994).

With Hagan's previous CMA awards experience and his work with Show Biz and "Music From The Land," he was ideal as

Cate's primary writer. Miller director the show and he and Hagan acted as producers with Cates as executive producer ("Awards Show Talent" 1971, 8). The following year in 1972, the awards program moved to CBS where it has remained. In 1973, the show was taped in the Ryman Auditorium for the last time before the completion of the Opry House ("CMA Awards Show" 1972, 1; "Johnny Cash" 1973, 1).

On the heels of their success with the awards show, CMA TV Committee co-chairmen Irving Waugh and Jack Stapp landed another network show with Phillips Productions and the team of Cates, Hagan, and Miller. "Country Music Hit Parade" showcased current and past hits performed on the Opry stage. Cates licensed the concept from the program, "Your Hit Parade" ("Country Music Hit" 1973, 1; Cates 1993). "Your Hit Parade" was a successful musical show on NBC, and briefly on CBS, in the fifties. It was then revived for a short time in 1974 on CBS (McNeil 1991, 854). The hope for "Country Music Hit Parade" was to become either an annual network special or weekly series with the notoriety of the CMA awards show. The shows did well in the ratings with the first special receiving a 39 share. However, the show

never reached the longevity of the CMA awards but became a series of specials running in 1973, '74, '75, and '77 (Bailey 9 February 1973; Cates 1993).

Grammy Awards

The increased popularity of country music was evident by 1973 when the "Grammy Awards Show," the music industry-wide awards given by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), was televised from Nashville along with Los Angeles and New York in March 1973 ("Music City Joins" 1973, 2). In his autobiography More Memories, Ralph Emery suggests the reason for Nashville's involvement was partly due to Wesley Rose, part-owner of the Nashville-based Acuff-Rose music publishing firm, who was president of NARAS during this time. Nashville became involved in the telecast to help bolster the Southern branch of NARAS. However, Nashville's image as a television production center did not fare too well. Emery recalls the program and how an inexperienced Nashville crew used bug spray to create a fog effect creating singing problems for rhythm and blues artist Curtis Mayfield and viewing problems for television viewers as well:

> Mayfield struggled on and kept trying to sing, but soon handkerchiefs started flying in the audience like butterflies, and the bug spray billowed over

> national television. It was a production disaster that quickly became apparent to the millions watching the show (Emery 1993, 57-58).

The occurrence reflected the lack of experience with such special-effects techniques during the time.

New Companies

Interest in country music television in Nashville by outside people led the creation of several new companies. Upon the heels of "Hee Haw's" initial taping in June 1969, Nashville-Video Incorporated was formed with the intention of participating in network, syndication, and motion picture production. The company's initial announcement indicated plans for taping a network pilot titled "Nashville" at the WLAC-TV studios. Both Bobby Goldsboro and Del Reeves were signed for the show. Three principals with the company were based out of Atlanta and a fourth was an arranger for Goldsboro (Hurst 28 June 1969, 1).

Upon the cancellation of Johnny Cash's show in 1971, three people associated with that program formed a production company. Myles Harmon, Larry Murry, and Jack Thompson signed with Nashville businessmen Bill Ward and E. J. Preston to form Nashville Tele-Projects to produced prime-time syndicated programs. Harmon and Murry had worked on an effort to produce a 26 show

series for Hank Williams Jr. for Metro Goldwyn-Mayer the previous year. Their programs, according to Harmon, were to meet the needs made by PTAR for first-run syndication. During their announcement, Harmon noted since the networks were going to be allowed a choice of what local time they gave to their affiliates, their syndicated programs would run against network shows and therefore must be of a high quality to compete. The company set up a Nashville office and announced three pilots in the works. One was a show hosted by Mel Tillis to be produced at WSIX-TV (Hurst 18 May 1971, 1, 8; "Ex-Cash" 1971, 70; Grimsley 1970, 1-2; "Party Line" August 1971, 9).

At the same time Jack Thompson also signed an agreement with Bill Walker, the musical director for Cash's show, and four producers with the ABC-TV's cancelled "Tom Jones Show" to form Jerry Lee Lewis Productions. They produced a special starring Lewis at WSIX-TV that summer and intended to produce more (Hurst 23 May 1971, 1-3).

The "Bill Anderson Show" changed ownership in 1971. Formerly with General Electric Broadcasting, the program was now owned by DMK Films, which increased it markets from 30 to 125 in three years. It continued to be taped at WSIX-TV in Nashville ("A Widening Market" 1972).

Martin Leeds, formerly a vice president with Desilu Productions and with CBS on the West Coast, joined with singer Jim Kearce, who hosted a local show in Bowling Green, Kentucky, to produce a pilot. The show was produced at WLAC-TV in March 1973 and was titled "Pop Goes The Country." Curiously, this pilot was not connected to Show Biz's syndicated "Pop! Goes The Country" which began the following year (Lynch 1973, 24).

Pre-Opryland Specials

Other network specials were produced in Nashville during the period. Walt Disney Productions produced a film made for television, "The Nashville Coyote," airing on NBC in 1972. "Marjoe Country" was produced in 1973, depicting rural life in Middle Tennessee. It aired on "ABC's Wide World of Entertainment." The following year a special was taped for NBC, portraying the Ryman's past and hosted by Dinah Shore ("Disney CM Shows" 1972, 3; "Majoe Country" 1973, 3; "NBC-TV Special" 1974, 4).

Jimmy Dean announced the intention of producing and hosting a country music show for syndication in 1973. Dean found success hosting a couple of network shows in the 1950s on CBS and 1960s on ABC, but none were based

out of Nashville. The plans were to tape at WSM-TV and air in approximately 100 markets ("Dean Has New" 1973, 3).

Potential for Network Series Production

This production activity was indicative of the heightened interest and notoriety Nashville and country music was receiving during this time. The press was taking note of this as well with overview reports. In a 1971 Nashville Tennessean article headlined "Television's 'Golden Door' May Be Opening in Nashville," for example, Jack Hurst covered the activity taking place, referring to the "Golden Door" as the opportunity provided by PTAR and the success country music was finding on television. Hurst noted:

> Perhaps Music City--and with it the rest of that wide and un-influential Mid-American vista separating Hollywood flash from New York snobbery--does instead have a place on the American tube's big-time screen (Hurst 23 May 1971, 1).

In a 1972 Billboard article "Nashville Center For Syndications," Bill Williams wrote, "Someone once suggested that Nashville is really 'syn' city, if that stands for syndication" (Williams 1972, 18, 23). That same year, a Broadcasting article stated, "It's becoming

an adage in Nashville that country music on television is better off in syndication than it was on the networks" ("A Widening Market" 1972).

That last comment was true in 1972, but the next year saw a greater hope for more network series production. Another attempt at a network series began in 1973 with "Dean Martin Presents: Music Country." That effort became the barometer for other potential series productions possibly occurring in Nashville. Martin's "Music Country" was a summer replacement for NBC's "The Dean Martin Show" produced by Martin's show producer, Greg Garrison. The program was videotaped in Nashville and aired from July to September. The show was very successful, averaging a 36 share. It became the top rated program for a two-week period in August. There were no expectations of turning the summer replacement into a regular program according to Garrison. However, as a result of its strong performance, the show, retitled "Music Country U.S.A.," was brought back on NBC in January of 1974, much like Cash's show and "Hee Haw" ("Dino's 'Music Country'" 1973, 3; "Country Music On T.V." 1974, 4; "Country Music U.S.A." 1973; Dyer 1974; McNeil 1991, 525). Once again, the increasing popularity of country music was a driving factor in the network's interest as

expressed by Lawrence R. White, vice president of programs for NBC-TV:

> "The sharp growth of country music is one of the major stories in show business today. By presenting 'Music Country U.S.A.' as a weekly series, we are not only reflecting that growth but we are also contributing to it by making country music available to a national audience on a regular basis ("Country Music U.S.A." 1973).

Toward the end of the 1973 summer season all three major networks began signing contracts for country music program specials and pilots with the potential for developing series. The finishing construction of the new Opry House played into their consideration. On the heels of his successful efforts with the CMA awards and the recent "Country Music Hit Parade," NBC approached Joe Cates to produce two 90 minute pilots with plans for more. The first programs would be taped in New York but, according to Cates at the time, NBC was looking at the potential of developing them into series, "The thought around here [New York] is that this is the beginning of a regular weekly network series." And Nashville would later have direct involvement, "It is my hope that if the pilots go to a series, the show will come from Nashville later on." Cates discussed with Bud Wendell, manager of the "Grand Ole Opry," the idea of originating the show from the new Opry House which would be available the following spring (Bailey 5 September

1973, 1). The two pilots were produced in a stage concert format under NBC's "Saturday Night Special" banner. The first, hosted by Mac Davis, aired in October of 1973 and received a 34 share. The second, hosted by Johnny Cash the following February, generated a 37 share (Hurst 1974).

At the same time NBC and Cates announced their intentions, CBS approached Sam Lovullo about producing a country music variety show with the hope of developing a series. Like Cate's efforts, Lovullo said the pilot would be taped in Los Angeles but might move to Nashville if it became a series. The pilot never aired but Lovullo would have better luck several years later (Bailey 26 September 1973, 36).

In a Nashville Tennessean article covering Lovullo and CBS's pilot announcement, reporter Jerry Bailey noted not only Cates with NBC, but also ABC was looking at a Nashville-based series with its "In Concert" producer Don Kirchner. Like the others, Kirchner noted he had been negotiating with "Opry" officials over a possible series when the new Opry House opened (Bailey 26 September 1973, 36).

But no new series ever materialized. "Music Country U.S.A." was cancelled at the end of its run in May 1974 due to low ratings leaving no Nashville-based

series on the networks for another seven years. At the time, an optimistic Jo Walker, the executive director of the CMA, conceded the cancellation did not help the chances of catching a network series, but added, "I still believe we'll have a weekly series coming from here before much longer." The optimism was due to the airing a month and a half earlier of "Country Comes Home" on NBC, the inaugural telecast special debuting the new Grand Ole Opry House at Opryland U.S.A. (Hurst 1974).

When the Opryland complex opened for business, much attention and production activity had already been taking place. It was already clear that any network program coming out of Nashville was going to have at its control those with a previous successful network track record. The production team of Joe Cates, Chet Hagan and Walter Miller had created a presence that would increase for the rest of the decade. Many new eyes were on Nashville as well during this time looking for opportunities in country music production. Show Biz continued to produce as well with more ambitions toward broadening its base of acceptance, especially into the urban northeast.

With network series as a benchmark for defining Nashville's production potential, this period saw that

promise come and then vanish. On a network level, the lack of pull of country music to attract enough and the right kinds of audiences that created the short-term runs of Cash's show and "Hee Haw" still was in effect. "Dean Martin Presents: Music Country" was the last hope series production would come from Nashville. With its cancellation, specials became the staple for network programming.

Opryland USA

Early Activity

Television production actually occurred on the Opryland site before the Opry House was ready. The Opryland USA theme park opened to the public in May 27, 1972, approximately two years ahead of the new Opry House and its television facilities. An NBC special aired three days later showcasing a variety of country and pop performers at the park. The program was produced by Bob Wynn and Digby Wolfe with Mellodan Productions of Burbank, California ("A Dream Comes" 1972, 2-3; "Opryland Medium" 1972, 44, 55). Wolfe would later produce more shows at Opryland.

In October, Show Biz produced two segments for "The Porter Wagoner Show" at the park. Opryland General

Manager Mike Downs noted this was the first syndicated taping to take place there. Show Biz would become a main customer for Opryland moving many of its productions to the new studio ("Porter Wagoner Debuts" 1972, 11).

"The Grand Ole Opry" first aired to radio listeners from its new home on March 16, 1974. President Richard Nixon, embattled by the Watergate crisis at the time, participated in the event, becoming the first president to visit the "Opry" ("WSM Grand Ole Opry" 1974). On April 26, "Country Comes Home" introduced the new facility to a national television audience. The taped NBC prime-time special was produced by the Cates, Hagan, and Miller team (Hagan 1989, 300). As the writer for the show, Hagan notes in his book, Grand Ole Opry, the opening lines host Johnny Cash spoke, "Hello . . . and welcome to an emotional experience--the first nationwide television special from the new home of the "Grand Ole Opry" (Hagan 1989, 299). The show did very well in the ratings, generating a 40 share, the highest rated show that night (Hurst 1974).

During the show's taping, Hagan related to a reporter the same experience director Bill Davis was having with "Hee Haw," that it was not necessary to bring in an outside crew to work in Nashville:

> It's much easier to work here, and the efficiency is the best I've seen anywhere. The WSM-TV staff is handling the taping of this show. A couple of years ago, we had to come in with a full crew. Now there's about four of us out-of-towners who are really necessary (Hance 1974, 10).

The New Grand Ole Opry House

The new Opryland complex was well designed to compete with the east and west coasts. WSM claimed the new 45,000 square foot Opry House was the world's largest radio and television broadcasting studio. Construction of the new facilities, which cost $13.5 million, consisted of the Opry House auditorium and a television studio. The 4,400 auditorium seats were traditionally designed as wooden church pews reminiscent of the Ryman Auditorium but covered with carpeting for sound absorption and comfort. The seating was fan-shaped with balcony seats that partially wrap around a thrust stage. The main stage measured 110 feet wide by 68 feet deep. For better television camera angles, the depth could be increased to 81 feet by a hydraulic lift located in the orchestra section. As a symbol of continuity to its past, a six foot diameter circular section of the Ryman stage was inserted in its center. The television studio Waugh had trouble equipping surpassed the capabilities at WLAC-TV in size and

technology. The 90 square foot studio accommodated seating for 300 people. The entire facilities were equipped with seven cameras and a state-of-the-art computer editing system ("WSM Grand Ole Opry" 1974).

Opryland Productions

Opryland Productions was created to handle television production activity in the new complex. At first the staff came mainly from existing WSM-TV employees. For a period, a secretary was the only one on the staff full time. Bill Turner, then WSM-TV production manager and one of its directors, first took on the responsibility of managing the Opryland efforts while continuing his duties at the station. Soon after Opryland Productions was in business, Turner sketched in general terms the kinds of efforts they were going after, "It was built with the idea of luring network, syndicated and commercial production here. We're here to compete with both coasts" (Hurst 1974).

The level of competition WSM would wage against the two coasts with their new complex would be limited, however, by the goals they were looking to achieve with that type of production activity. The main purpose of the television facilities was to promote "The Grand Ole Opry" and Nashville's country music. Keeping interest

high in those ingredients was essential to the success of the Opryland theme park. National television programming would help generate that interest and create tourism. Tom Griscom, vice-president of broadcasting of WSM-TV during this time, notes the promotional function of the television facilities:

> It was established to promote the complex. We felt we had good production people at the TV station, we had these people we could move out here. We had the park opening. We had the "Grand Ole Opry" coming out here. And if we could produce programs out of this complex, it would sell what was going on in Middle Tennessee. Nobody knew we had this oasis out here, the world did not know that. If we could get network shows originating out here, if we could sell people on coming into the park, and doing syndicated and network programs from the park, I mean, that was publicity you couldn't buy. So that was the concept in starting the production company (Griscom 1994).

From the start, there was no ambition on the part of WSM management to generate network series production. As Waugh proposed in 1968 when feasibility plans for the complex were announced, network programs would be produced "Not necessarily on a regular basis, but as a special origination" ("WSM Will Study" 1968, 1, 6). As the hoped for series production died during the early 1970s, the trend through the decade would be centered around network specials and syndication production, as Waugh had forecast in 1968.

In February 1975, approximately nine months after the television facilities were opened, Roy Smith was

hired away from WLAC-TV and 21st Century Productions to become the first full time general manager of Opryland Productions ("WLAC Exec" 1975, 29). He remained there until he resigned in mid 1977. Publicly, his leaving was reported as "for personal reasons," with the intention of starting up his own production company. In 1993, Smith explained the reason he left to start his own production efforts was due to the limited approach toward production imposed upon him:

> I quit Opryland because we were at a stalemate position where I was wanting to go nationwide, networking and nationwide cable . . . other people didn't buy that approach because in doing so it got out of their control (Smith 1993).

According to Smith, the kinds of productions he wanted to do would not always have the promotional element WSM was looking for. Losing creative control to outside producers meant a program might not have the promotional value the facilities were designed for. For Smith, WSM placed self-imposing limitations on the kinds of production activity taking place at the Opryland facilities.

Smith went on to form Davida Productions. By the end of 1977, Davida Productions had co-produced two syndicated specials from Opryland, "Lynn Anderson Country Welcome" and "Wayne Newton Special," in association with Los Angeles-based Syd Vinnedge Company

and the J. Walter Advertising Agency in New York. The company later moved into broadcast consulting and designing station feasibility studies, eventually settling in Atlanta (Eipper 15 November 1977; Smith 1993).

When Smith resigned, Opryland Productions was very active in production. In local news accounts however, an evening Nashville Banner report connected Smith's resignation to a $150,000 deficit in Opryland operations (Hance 1977, 4). This was countered by a statement from Irving Waugh the following morning in The Tennessean,

> ". . . drawing any connection between the loss and Roy's resignation is the wildest kind of speculation. His resignation was for personal reasons and has nothing at all to do with the financial status of Opryland Productions.
>
> "First quarter losses are almost always traditional, and certainly something we expect.
>
> "We're highly enthusiastic about the company right now. It's growing, and we're expecting it to expand a great deal. Business is good" (Eipper August 1977, 23) (See Appendix F, Note 16).

Bud Wendell, general manager of the "Grand Ole Opry" and Opryland USA, said in the same report, "It was always supposed that Opryland Productions would a take a considerable time to show a substantial profit. Nothing has happened to change our mind" (Eipper August 1977,

23). Looking back, Griscom noted that in its promotional role, profit was not the first priority for Opryland Productions,

> It never particularly profited as a production company. It didn't lose money but it's value was to the complex and the fact that we were producing all these shows that were coming from Opryland and the "Grand Ole Opry (Griscom 1994).

Thomas Griscom officially took over Smith's duties from August until December in 1977 when David Hall filled the position. In contrast to Smith's production background, Hall brought a greater expertise in technology and facility operation which perhaps better fitted Opryland's mission. Hall had been Opryland's chief engineer since 1975 and was directly involved in the construction of the park's lighting and sound systems and headed construction of the Opry House and its television facilities. He began with WSM's engineering department in 1966 while still in high school and worked there as he earned his degree in electrical engineering at Nashville's Vanderbilt University (Hall 1994; "New Opryland Productions" 1977, 31; "David Hall" 1989, 79; Eipper August 1977, 23).

In June, two months before Smith's resignation, another major shake-up in management was announced. Irving Waugh announced his retirement starting December 31 after 30 years with WSM. In his place, Bud Wendell

would become president and chief executive office of WSM, Inc. Also, Tom Griscom was promoted to vice president of broadcasting, expanding his responsibilities beyond the television station ("WSM Inc. Tells" 1977, 1, 12). WSM and Opryland would continue in the direction established for the next few years but the new managers would later bring about yet another drastic change for WSM--a change as drastic for the television operation as WSM radio and the "Opry" had experienced moving out of the Ryman Auditorium under Waugh.

Up to the time of Hall's appointment in 1977, Opryland Productions had been engaged in some efforts to produce its own products along with many syndicated programs and network specials produced by others. Working with Viacom, Opryland Productions developed and produced one syndicated variety series, "Music Hall America," in 1976. The 26 weekly hour programs reached 155 markets and featured many major country artists with rotating hosts. The executive producer, Lee Miller, and director, Lee Bernhardi, came from the west coast with established network credentials ("Music hall America" 1977, 2; Rector 1977). That same year another 26 series program was proposed with Viacom, "Opryland U.S.A.," but it never reached production. Viacom was

reportedly having trouble selling the show due to clients' lack of knowledge of the new complex ("Viacom Goes" 1976; Smith 1993). Also that year, Opryland Productions was awarded three Emmys for its videotaping and editing in ABC's coverage of the 1976 Montreal Olympics ("Country On The Tube" September 1978, 11; "Milestones" 1992). In January 1978, Opryland Productions began syndicating for a short time "The Nashville Scene," a half-hour early morning country music talk show. The program included live and taped performances from the Opry House ("Nashville Scene" 1978, 3).

WSM's "That Good Ole Nashville Music," developed from National Life's "Grand Ole Opry" syndicated series in the mid 1960s, began production for a period first at WSM studios in 1969, and again in 1971. It later moved to the Opryland complex produced by Opryland Productions. The program edited in scenes from the Ryman to give the feel of continuity from its past. Later the show changed its named to "That Nashville Music" to attract more contemporary audiences and reached into 137 markets by 1977. It remained in syndication to 1983 ("That Good Ole" show #11; Hurst 1970, 7; Country Music Foundation, "Country Music Television" 1987, 83, 92).

A rare non-country syndicated effort began at this time at the Opryland complex. Allen Funt brought his base of operations to Nashville for syndication of "The New Candid Camera" in July 1975. The show started on network radio in 1947 for one year before going to television on ABC-TV. "Candid Camera" moved around on all three networks until 1967. In Nashville syndication, "The New Candid Camera," as it was now called, began production first at Opryland before later moving to WTVF's 21 Century Productions studios. The program ended syndication from Nashville in 1978 (Hance 1975, 7; Smith 1993; McNeil 1991, 128).

CMA quoted in its newsletter a Billboard magazine report sketching the state of production activity during this period,

> "1975 was a record year for network and syndicated TV show originations in Nashville. More than 300 shows came out of Nashville--the city's strongest national impact since the days of the weekly Johnny Cash variety show.
>
> "The facilities of the new 'Grand Ole Opry' House and the availability of the Nashville talent pool spurred the growth of the TV industry in Nashville" ("Nashville Grows" 1976, 2).

Variety reported in the beginning of 1977 that television was the second largest entertainment industry in Nashville, second to music. The Opryland facilities were used for many syndicated series and other services

such as providing remote facilities for network programs and sports coverage. According to Hall, the goals for the complex changed after he became manager. A greater emphasis was placed on generating profit from production rather than the facilities just acting as a promotional vehicle for the park and operating under a deficit. A sales staff was developed and activity moved into national commercial production. At its height, Hall recalls commercial production accounted for more than one-third of all of Opryland Productions revenue. Show production for a national audience, however, was Opryland Productions main focus. It was most likely the network and syndicated specials that provided the most television exposure for the Opryland facilities and Nashville (Rector 1977; Hall 1994).

Growth of Specials

As intended, the Opry House became a successful venue for country music network specials and as Marty Robbins has noted, this kind of television was important to any country artist wanting to expand their popularity. The proliferation of specials produced from Nashville that began in the mid 1970s was reflective of country music's widening appeal. In the wake of Parton's and other's crossover success, Nashville-based

agencies were ready to step up their efforts to take advantage of that activity. In a 1978 Billboard article, "TV Beckons Nashville," Sally Hinkle notes:

> It's been a long and hard battle for Nashville talent agencies to get Nashville acts exposure on television, but with the popularity country music is assuming now and the success network television is having rating-wise with country programs, the doors are opening and the talent is ready, willing and able (Hinkle May 1978, 4, 40).

An example of the added effort Nashville agencies were taking to present their artists to larger audiences, Parton's former agency, Top Billing, formed a special services division to target television work for its artists and reported recent appearances for its artists on twenty-six network and nationally syndicated shows. Specials originating from the Opry House were often among those programs Top Billing, and other agencies, targeted for their artists (Hinkle May 1978, 40).

This activity was marked by mostly producers, writers, and directors based on the East or West coasts with previous network experience. The programs most often presented a variety of contemporary country artists to appeal to a national audience. (See Appendix for complete list of shows.) The most active production team on the network level was Joe Cates, Chet Hagan and Walter Miller who were producing the CMA Awards, for a

period, and who produced the special, "Country Comes Home," which introduced the new Opry House on network television. Like the "Country Music Hit Parade" series of specials, they later repeated the "Country Comes Home" concept from 1981 to 1984. With these and other shows, it was often Cates' production company that produced many of the shows with Cates acting as executive producer and at times sharing producing with Hagan, Miller, and Marty Klein. Hagan along with Frank Slocum were often the writers and Miller directed (Terrance 1995, 103-104, 106, 223-225; Cates 1993; Hagan 1994).

Johnny Cash Specials

Cates, Hagan, and Miller's greatest activity revolved around their association with Johnny Cash in the mid 1970s that led, to Cates' account, 26 specials into the 1980s. Cash was left bitter after his ABC show ended in 1971, and he was not interested getting involved in another network series until he worked with Cates on "Johnny Cash and Friends," a four week summer replacement for CBS. Cates had produced a late night special with Cash earlier in New York titled "Johnny Cash's Country Music." He also worked with Cash on

coming back on the network for a brief time. According to Cates, this summer replacement series led them to producing many specials:

> In order to get him [Cash] to do it [summer replacement], I got the network to guarantee him a Christmas special in '76. Johnny didn't want to do a summer replacement without that. That's when we started that whole sequence of Cash shows (Cates 1994).

Cash became a country Christmas fixture on television from 1976 into the mid 1980s from Nashville, including "The Johnny Cash 10th Anniversary Christmas Special" in 1985. According to Hagan, the contract between Cates and Cash at one point called for two specials a year, one in the Christmas season and the other in the spring. Other Cates/Cash specials included "Johnny Cash and His Friends," "Johnny Cash: Spring Fever," "The Johnny Cash Spring Special," "Johnny Cash: The First 25 Years," "Johnny Cash and the Country Girls," "Johnny Cash Silver," and "Johnny Cash: Cowboy Heroes" (Hagan 1994; Cates 1994).

Cates, Hagan, and Miller produced a number of other efforts during this period beyond Johnny Cash. One of their larger efforts aired on NBC at the beginning of 1978 with the three hour special, "50 Years of Country Music." It received a 37 share and was rated one of the top 10 shows for that week. The success of this led

them to produce two more similar two-hour specials for NBC that year titled "Country Night of the Stars." A two-hour edited version of these shows aired again in 1980. Also, in 1978 Hagan joined his former CMA awards partners, Dwight Hemion and Gary Smith, as a co-writer for "Merry Christmas From The Grand Ole Opry." They repeated that effort again the following year.

CMA Acquires Awards Show Ownership

While their activity in network specials increased, by 1976 Cates and Hagan's relationship with the Country Music Association (CMA) awards show ended. Hired in their place as producer was Bob Precht of Ed Sullivan Productions in New York and the son-in-law of Ed Sullivan. The show also expanded from 60 minutes to 1 1/2 hours in length ("Tenth Annual CMA Awards" 1976, 1-2). Although one East coast production company was replaced by another, a big difference existed. Now the CMA owned the copyright to the show with Irving Waugh as executive producer instead of Joe Cates. Therefore, more direct control of the program shifted to Nashville.

Roy Smith recalls, Waugh and the CMA began questioning their financial arrangement with Cates when they heard the fees Pierre Cosette paid for the rights to the Grammy awards show was substantially greater than

they were receiving from Cates. To their understanding, according to Smith, Cosette was paying $150,000 for the Grammys and Cates was paying the CMA $50,000. At that point, Smith notes:

> So one of the first things I was asked by Waugh to do at Opryland was to budget out the CMA show eliminating the executive producer's fee. I did. He got Joe Cates to do the same thing. He then, after seeing both of these, asked me to go to New York and try to find another producer to do the same and I went and I got Bob Precht. . . There was only $10,000 difference in any of the three budgets that was dreamed up (Smith 1993).

Knowing what CBS paid to have the show produced, Waugh and the CMA decided to end their association with Cates and take over the executive producer responsibilities along with retaining copyright ownership of the program. Hagan and Miller were individually approached about staying on with Precht as the producer. Miller continued as the director but Hagan chose not to since Cates was no longer going to be involved (Smith 1993; Hagan 1994).

Cates and Hagan later formed a Nashville-based production company in 1980 called Cates/Hagan, Incorporated. Their intention was to branch together into motion pictures, theater, and record production. Cates was involved at the time with his brother, Gilbert Cates, as executive producer of "The Last Married Couple in America," starring Natalie Wood and George Segal.

The Cates/Hagan partnership never made progress and was disbanded ("Country Music Producers" 1980; Hagan 1994; Cates 1994).

Celebrity Specials

Network specials from Nashville would often utilize established entertainers from other areas in an effort to create a broad appeal. Dinah Shore headlined what must have been one of the last programs to come out of the Ryman in 1974 ("NBC-TV Special" 1974, 4). Perry Como hosted a special in 1975 directed by Walter Miller (O'Donnell and Hance 1974, 17). "Alan King Goes To Nashville" aired in 1977 as well as "Ann Margaret: Rhinestone Cowgirl" ("TV Specials" 1980, N-32). Lucille Ball starred in a 1978 special, "Lucy Comes To Nashville" ("Lucy Comes" 1978, 4). Dolly Parton's growing success was evident with a special she co-starred with Carol Burnett in "Dolly and Carol in Nashville" in 1979 (Dolly and Carol). "George Burns In Nashville" aired in 1980 and "Ray Charles: A Man And His Soul" in 1983 ("Country On The Tube" December 1980, 7; "1983 Film/Video" 1984, 9).

Nashville Public Broadcasting Production

An important series of specials aired beginning in the late 1970s that was perhaps surprising it took so long to happen in Nashville's production history. It was perhaps surprising also from whom and how the production originated. For the first time, WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" radio program aired live on television in its entirety. The program aired annually from 1978 to 1981 on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) network as a part of its fundraising drive. The local PBS affiliate, WDCN, was directly involved in the effort working with WNET, the PBS affiliate in New York. This was not WDCN's first attempt at national production, but it was reflective of changes that had taken place with the station only a few years earlier that gave them the resources to become an active player in production efforts. Though not only focusing on music, like Nashville's commercial stations, WDCN took advantage of the region's country music heritage and industry.

WDCN began broadcasting in Nashville on channel 2 in 1962 and for the first 10 years saw little production activity. They did work on a country music program with the CMA in 1967 primarily for the military airing on the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network (AFRTS) in Europe. The program profiled the CMA's Hall of Fame and

included interviews with CMA executive director Jo Walker. Besides airing on AFRTS, the program was shown on the Canadian CMC network and WNYC in New York (Directory of Television 1992, B-59; "CMA Coordinates" 1967, 6).

In 1971, the station produced a 13-part series on Nashville's music industry titled "Off The Record." The program focused on the people working behind-the-scenes in the industry, including songwriters, managers, disc jockeys, promoters, producers, engineers, and performers. WDCN received a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for its production; but it is not clear what distribution it received besides airing locally ("Net TV" 1971, 5).

A big development came for the station in 1973 when WDCN agreed to a channel assignment swap with WSIX-TV, the ABC affiliate in Nashville, which was broadcasting on channel 8. But more important, the deal also included $3 million of public construction funds for a new station building. Also, WSIX-TV paid $755,000 for the channel exchange. Previously, the station was operating in WSM's old facilities. The new money enabled WDCN to construct a new building, begin color telecasting, and expand its overall operations (Whitt, 1973, 1, 8; "3, 2, 1" 1973, 1, 14).

From its new facilities, WDCN began producing more programming for regional and national distribution. In 1975, it produced "Hometown Saturday Night" at the Opry House with Opryland Productions. The musical program was distributed nationally on PBS that December. The following year WDCN finished a documentary that ran on PBS, "Hill Country Sounds," tracing the history of country music. The program was in production for three years, beginning for a period in 1973 under the working title "From Out of the Hills: An American Legacy," and then continued production in 1975 (CMA Close-Up August 1973, 3; McBride 1993). Bill Anderson was the host and the program presented a wide range of country performers. This program was a serious effort for the station, reflecting the direction it wanted to take in production. Corinne Franklin, the program's associate producer, indicated at the time the program was hoped to open more doors in production for the station:

> WDCN should be a major production center for educational TV in the southeastern area because of Nashville's geographic location, its country music industry and its colleges and secondary schools. We are hoping this film will do it (Brady 1976).

In 1977, the station produced "Hank," a profile of Hank Williams starring songwriter and performer Jim Owen who developed a one-man stage show based on Williams. The program was distributed through the Southeastern

Educational Communications Association (SECA) and won SECA's award for "Best Show of the Year on Public TV" ("Hank" 1977, 2; McCloud 1995, 609). In 1978, WDCN produced "Reunion Show" and "The Cajun Show" from the annual country music Fan Fair in Nashville for regional distribution. WDCN also taped three local programs from Opryland, "Eight Days in August," as a part of their fund raising drive ("CMA Shows Aired" 1978, 3; "Country on The Tube" September 1978, 11; McBride 1993).

PBS's "Live From the Grand Ole Opry"

WDCN's major effort in 1978, however, started when PBS held its national conference at the Opryland Hotel. The idea for televising the "Opry" received a boost when employees from PBS affiliates witnessed an "Opry" show. Although there had been several television programs styled after the "Opry" and using the "Grand Ole Opry" name, WSM had always been reluctant to televise the actual radio show. Beyond the worry over losing revenue from declining radio and show audiences that television might bring, there was the concern over how effective the show would visually translate to the screen. The "Opry's" radio show operation and presentation had always been styled in an unstructured manner with many people; performers, staff, and onlookers, crowded on the

stage and the on-air presentation casually executed. With the performance only happening for the microphone and a seated audience, WSM was always concerned this "organized chaos" would not create a positive image on television. Television producers likewise suggested altering the radio show to give the program a camera presence but "Opry" officials and many performers were against the idea of changing the "Opry" for television. The "Opry"-styled television shows of the past, whether from the Ryman stage or a television studio, were as close as viewers got to the original radio show (Brown 1978, 14; Peterson 1978).

By 1978, thinking had changed about the matter. New York's PBS affiliate WNET-TV produced "Live From The Grand Ole Opry" the first year with WDCN acting as the host station and producing taped stories to run during the "Opry's" commercials. The program lasted three hours, from 6 to 9 p.m. on a Saturday evening and ran as a part of the network's "Festival '78" fund raising drive. Walter Miller was brought in to direct. The approach would be to present the "Opry" as it happened, covering behind the scenes as well. The show's producer, Dave Griffiths with WNET-TV, noted at the time the aggressive approach they went for:

> We are planning to cover it as an event. We've adopted the ABC "Wide World Of Sports" format and we plan to cover what's going on on-stage as well as visiting the dressing rooms and doing interviews with some of the performers (Brown 1978, 41).

A turnaround in thinking obviously occurred on everyone's part. The "Opry" was not the influential force in country music it once was. As a one time or once-a-year event, televising the "Opry" would be a strong promotional vehicle that most likely would help attendance and ratings. Also, presenting the "Opry" now at the Opryland complex was an effective way to promote the park. Another reason for the change may have been a rethinking of style in considering good television compared to the past. Before, the "ABC Wide World of Sports format" of covering multiple locations was neither technologically practical without small mobile cameras nor was it necessarily considered the proper style for a television show, at least for presenting the "Opry." Irving Waugh was retired from WSM by the time the PBS shows were produced in the 1970s, but he agrees with the approach taken. In considering how it might have been done in the past, Waugh stated:

> If we had done it, I guess we would have looked in on the "Grand Ole Opry" performance rather than staging the "Grand Ole Opry" for television. The Purina shows [1955-56] were staged. In that era, we would do them as we thought television should be done. We would do all sorts of silly things such as

> a mike could not be seen. Well, everyone uses mikes of course. [As an example] We could see mikes in bouquets of flowers, so we attempted to use booms (Waugh 1993).

Now the "Opry" was able to remain essentially as it was and a far less formal and more documentary approach was acceptable.

PBS was pleased with the show's results. WDCN's promotional director, Linda Nix, noted at the time the ratings results were "exceptional" for a show on public television with New York reporting a 3.9 rating and a 6.6 share. In Nashville, the station raised twice the amount of money than it had in the past. "Live From The Grand Ole Opry" was produced the following three years. WSM took over the show's production the following year with WSM's Elmer Alley and Hee Haw's director Bob Boatman as the producers with Boatman directing. The show last aired in 1981. "Live From the Grand Ole Opry" came back as a regular weekly program on TNN in 1985 airing an hour of the radio program (Russell 1979; "Opry Telecast" 1980; McBride 1993; Oermann 1985).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, WDCN continued with other programs making national and regional distribution. "America Now '79" was another Fan Fair show that was distributed in Europe. WDCN produced a "gospel opera" called "Make A Joyful Noise," according

to WDCN's executive producer Harmon McBride, airing on PBS starring local gospel singer Bobby Jones and his group New Life. A 13-part series called "Funny Business: The Art of Cartooning" found regional distribution on public stations (McBride 1993).

Another series airing on PBS in 1981 was the 11 part documentary "Southbound." The series, produced by Sol Korine and Blaine Dunlap and based in rural Arrington, Tennessee, covered the evolution of Southern music. It included interviews and performances shot on location by a variety of filmakers ("Southbound"; "Southbound Series" 1981, 13).

Show Biz

Show Biz Sold

Show Biz went through important changes and continued to develop during this period. Interested in expanding their operations, Memphis-based Holiday Inn acquired controlling interest in Show Biz through a stock swap in March 1971. Holiday Inn exchanged less than $1 million worth of stock for 1,968 shares in Show Biz, which gave Holiday Inn 80% of Show Biz shares outstanding. No management changes were made as Bill Graham remained as chairman and Jane Grams as president.

By this time, the Show Biz had reduced some of its other activities. Tandy Rice bought the talent division to start his own company, Top Billing (Richert 1971; Turner 1994). With the announcement, Holiday Inn board chairman Kemmons Wilson noted, "Show Biz will operate as it has. The only change we foresee is in its expansion of projects" ("We're In Show Biz" 1971).

Three months later Show Biz produced a live country music stage show at New York's Madison Square Garden. It produced a second show the following year in 1972 and videotaped it for syndication. Ed Sullivan Productions acted as the production company. According to Graham, one purpose of the programs was to alert New York advertisers of the popularity and drawing power of Nashville music. And with this television program, according to Graham, Show Biz signified its interest in more than the fringe-time programming slots many of their shows received:

> "It will be a network-type show, that means it is going to be a prime-time show, and we want to get it in the best possible time slot we can (Hurst 1972, 5, 7).

Sam Lovullo's networking scheme was creating some inspiration, as Graham noted:

> If it looks as if a network might put it into a slot where we'll get clobbered in the ratings, we may try to put together our own network--like the syndicated "Hee Haw" show has done--to do it (Hurst 1972, 7).

Graham and Grams decided to syndicate and scheduled the program, "Nashville at the Garden," to air that November (O'Donnell June 1972, 4).

Also in 1972, Show Biz produced a Hollywood-based effort syndicating the "Bobby Goldsboro Show." Show Biz utilized West Coast personnel producing the series at CBS Television City in Hollywood. The variety program, composed of music and light comedy, met with initial success. It was shown in prime time in most of the 100 major markets it aired. Goldsboro had several pop hit records at that time and the guests were mostly pop-country performers such as Jim Nabors, Mac Davis, the Lennon Sisters, Jerry Reed, and B.J. Thomas. Perhaps most memorable was the puppet frog announcer, Calvin Calaveras. The bartered program was fully sponsored by General Mills but only ran in 1973 (O'Donnell August 1972; "Bobby Goldsboro" 1973, 58; McNeil 1991, 100; Terrance 1986, 66).

Show Biz Program Efforts, 1974 to 1977

"Pop! Goes the Country"

Show Biz moved its productions out to the new Opryland studios when Porter Wagoner's show first permanently settled there. In 1974, Show Biz began

producing "Pop! Goes The Country," a program emphasizing the influence between country and popular music. Show Biz was aiming for higher production values compared to their past programs. In announcing the new show, a press release stated it would be produced "with the most demanding set of criteria ever set up for a country music television production" ("For Immediate Release"). The show was marketed as a prime and prime access show in over 100 markets including New York, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angles. Selected markets received the show as a barter transaction for Sterling Drugs, the makers of Bayer Aspirin. J. R. "Reg" Dunlap, who came on with Show Biz as executive vice president the year before, was the producer. WSM's Ralph Emery acted as host and was primarily responsible for lining up country performers. Show Biz also distributed Emery's daily radio show to 170 markets. Bob Boatman was assigned as director but dropped out before production started. Boatman had recently taken over directing "Hee Haw" and had a production background on the West Coast with network television and major theatrical films. WSM's Bill Turner, who worked on many Show Biz programs, became the show's first director. For set design, Show Biz hired Rene Lagler, whose network credits include set

design for "Sonny & Cher" and the "Glen Campbell Show" (For Immediate Release"; "Pop Goes The Country" 1975, 22).

"Pop! Goes The Country" was one of Show Biz's most successful shows. It remained in more than 100 markets for most of its eight year run. Emery remained as host until 1980. In his autobiography, Emery was dissatisfied over the show's production, coming into conflict over scheduling guests. He claimed the show's "producers" were "narrow-minded" and quit the show in frustration. Emery hand-picked Tom T. Hall as his successor. Under Hall, the show's name was changed to "Tom T.'s Pop! Goes The Country Club." Comedian Jim Varney, later known for his "Ernest" movies, took over as host during the show's last year in 1982. That year the show was taped at Opryland's Gaslight Theater (Carter 1980; Country Music Foundation "Country Music Television" 1987, 95; Emery 1991).

"Nashville on the Road"

In 1975, Show Biz began another weekly syndicated show, "Nashville On The Road." The half-hour program was hosted by Jim Ed Brown until 1981 and singer Jim Stafford until 1983. Stafford had hosted a couple of shows on ABC for a short time before this time. Country

comedian Jerry Clower also performed some co-hosting duties. According to Clower, Reg Dunlap came up with the idea of wanting a family show. The program would travel across the country to various vacation sites as a backdrop for country artists. The show reached into more than 100 markets and was effective in attracting tourists to the locations it taped ("Nashville On The Road"; Rector 1977, 100; Country Music Foundation "Country Music Television", 95; McCloud 1995, 757).

In April, 1975, Jane Grams left Show Biz to become the vice president and general manager of WTVC, the ABC television affiliate in Chattanooga. As with her role in Show Biz, this was a management position unique for a female at the time. According to her biography, the station was in third place behind the other two network affiliates in the Chattanooga market when she arrived. In two years the station moved to first position (Grams 1993; "Profiles" 1983, 83).

"Dolly"

In 1976, Show Biz produced one of its most successful but shortest-lived shows, "Dolly," starring Dolly Parton. Dolly's program reflected major developments and changes taking place with her career since she was chosen as the "girl singer" by Porter

Wagoner in 1967. The program's short life represents a limitation for Show Biz in producing a program for someone who found a need to look to the west coast with greater ambitions.

Partially through Wagoner's direction, Parton became a major songwriter and recording artist. She was first most successful as Wagoner's duet partner in the late 1960s and early 1970s through recordings, stage shows, and her performances on Wagoner's syndicated program. As a duet, they won CMA awards in 1968, '70, and '71; and Grammy nominations every year from 1969 through 1973. Their professional relationship was complex, including Wagoner as her record producer, co-ownership in a recording studio, co-ownership in her publishing company, and a contractual obligation for Parton to compensate Wagoner for future efforts if she left his show. As time went on and her popularity increased, their professional relationship became more strained with Parton wanting more creative control. Her solo career began to pick up with number one hits in 1971 and 1973. She received the CMA "Female Vocalist of the Year" award in 1975 and 1976. By 1974, Parton quit Wagoner's road show and as a regular on the television program, and by 1977 she was recording independently from Wagoner. By this time, Parton was on her way to

greater success, crossing over as a pop music artist (Eng 1995, 621; Parton 1994, 173). Her own syndicated show was part of that strategy. Parton's decision to drop it after one year reflected her frustration with how the show was produced and how she was presented.

Bill Graham intended for "Dolly" to appeal to a wide audience. It was seen in 130 markets including New York City and was sold to air in prime time or prime access. Investing $85,000 to $100,000 in each program, the show was, according to Graham, "to be first-rate production" (Nash 1978, 194). Rene Lagler designed the sets as she had for Show Biz's "Pop! Goes The Country" (Rector 1977; "Parton TV Show" 1976, 2). A director was hired but dropped out before production began and Bill Turner, who had directed many Show Biz programs, stepped in. Later, Turner quit WSM and joined Show Biz full time as vice president in charge of production.

For Show Biz's executive vice president Neika Brewer, Nashville production looked stronger than ever during this period. She said at the time,

> It's been a year that Nashville's television product has gone into more markets and into a far greater percentage of U.S. television homes than ever before. This to a very large degree is due to the success of "Dolly." I believe Nashville is now number two for syndicated TV, and number one for syndicated TV shows of a music orientation (Rector 1977).

By 1977, Show Biz's main shows were "Dolly," "Pop! Goes the Country," "Nashville On The Road," and "The Porter Wagoner Show." All were produced at the Opryland studios, twenty-six shows per year.

"Dolly" was Show Biz's last big effort in syndicated production growth. At the time of the show's announcement, Graham sketched the program's approach,

> This is a show structured entirely around Dolly. Just as she is a country singer with appeal in both big cities and small towns, so is our program ("Dolly Parton Makes" 1976, 4).

But Parton was not pleased with the way that strategy was implemented. The program featured a wide range of artists covering country and pop music and others providing light entertainment including Ronnie Milsap, Jim Stafford, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris, Kenny Rogers, Captain Kangaroo, Anne Murray, The Hues Corporation, K. C. and the Sunshine Band, Rod McKuen, and Tennessee Ernie Ford. The idea was to place Parton in a wide variety of musical settings but, for Parton, this worked against her strengths as a country singer. In her 1978 book, Dolly, Alana Nash notes a couple of examples where the approach to variety went too far,

> Certainly she looked foolish dancing with Hues Corporation in a white Afro wig and singing "My Funny Valentine" to a basset hound. And she had absolutely nothing in common with some of the guests, nor could she sing some of the material well enough to do so on TV (Nash 1978, 196).

Parton accepted some of the responsibility, telling Nash at the time,

> I think I would take more of the blame for the show not being what I wanted more than anybody. It was prematurely done, and it was too time-consuming, leaving me very little time to be creative, to write. And I was in the middle of health problems and business changes. Doin' a weekly television show is real hard. Plus, I think their idea [Show Biz] of what would be good for me was different from my idea of what would be good for me. But since they own the company and since they are the ones supposedly in the know, I didn't feel it right for me to keep bringing up what I thought. But it wasn't capturing me the way I really am. It seemed senseless to continue something like that. I just had a different idea of what I should do. It was misunderstood.
>
> So, yeah, it was really bad for me, that TV show. It was worse for me than it was good because the people that who really didn't know me who liked the show thought that's how I was . . . And the people who did know me thought I was crazy. They knew that wasn't me. Including me. I didn't know that woman on TV! (Nash 1978, 197, 198).

Later, in her 1994 autobiography, Parton felt this was the best effort Graham was capable,

> He had big plans to do big-time television with me. He was a wonderful man with the best of intentions. But the difference between the kind of show he wanted to do and the kind that could actually be produced in Nashville at that time sometimes made for funny situations (Parton 1994, 189).

At the end of its one year run in 1977, Parton asked to be relieved from her contract. That same year, Parton made one of the biggest breaks with her ties to Nashville, hiring a Los Angeles management agency. Performer Marty Robbins told Nash, Parton

needed to move beyond Nashville to expand her career and a key ingredient was television exposure different from her syndicated show,

> "What Dolly says is right -- there probably wasn't anyone in Nashville who could help her do what she wanted to do," says Marty Robbins. "People in Nashville don't have the contacts the people on the West Coast or in New York have. And the contacts she needed are the contacts she didn't have. It's been proven. She's gettin' all the television exposure she needs and that's what it takes. A lot of television. And evidently, they couldn't do it in Nashville" (Nash 1978, 209).

With "Pop! Goes the Country" and "Dolly," Show Biz was attempting to grow as a production company and reach more broad-based audiences outside of mainstream country music with greater detail upon production quality. Parton's program, however, reflected the best Show Biz had to offer and that effort came up short. Graham and Dunlap miscalculated the scope of Parton's abilities in crafting a variety show. The show, truly Nashville-based, became a failed opportunity to make an important contribution to Parton's rising career. The failure reflected a limitation for Nashville as a production center. In the future, Parton's involvement in Nashville television would primarily be with network specials.

Final Years, 1978 to 1983

Show Biz produced one of its last major syndicated series efforts at WTVF's (formally WLAC-TV) 21st Century Productions. "Marty Robbins' Spotlight" ran from 1978 to 1979 with Robbin's profiling country music performers through taped segments and musical performances. The program used a "This Is Your Life" approach, looking back upon the guest's past (Erickson 1989, 248).

In 1979, Show Biz went through another major organizational transition. Holiday Inn sold the company for nearly to $3 million back to three of its primary managers: Bill Graham, board chairman and founder; Reg Dunlap, president; and Elise Stewart, executive vice president. Besides syndicated production and distribution, the company was involved in music publishing with four companies under one division. Under Holiday Inn's ownership, Graham and Stewart provided continuity for the company's operation with Grams leaving and Dunlap coming on. By 1979, Show Biz was responsible for eleven weekly shows running on 327 stations nationally. No changes were planned with the sale. Graham said Show Biz would continue with its current work and continue to look for more production opportunities (Cason March 1979, 1; "Show Biz Executives" 1979, 1; "Show Biz Purchased" 1979).

In 1980 Show Biz and Opryland Productions joined together in producing and syndicating "Backstage At The Grand Ole Opry," referred to as "the first regularly scheduled TV show to carry the name and the 'seal of approval' of the Grand Ole Opry." The 30 minute program featured performances and interviews by country performers. Chet Hagan produced the program's pilot but could not come to an agreement in contract negotiations and did not continue with the show. It reached 125 markets when it began and stayed in syndication until it was picked up by TNN when it signed on in 1983 ("Country On The Tube" July 1980, 13; "Country On The Tube" October 1980, 9; Hagan 1994).

In 1981, Multimedia, Inc., became more involved in Nashville country music television, purchasing Show Biz, Inc. for $4.4 million. Show Biz chairman Bill Graham stepped down from directly running the company and acted as a consultant with the new organization. Reg Dunlap and Elise Stewart stayed on with Show Biz as the top managers. Multimedia chairman Walter E. Bartlett claimed that with the Show Biz acquisition, Multimedia became the largest national producer and distributor of country syndicated television programming (Cason March 1991, 11).

In 1981, Show Biz was still perhaps the largest syndicator of country music but the company was in a period of decline at this time. As an operation, Show Biz lost momentum under Multimedia ownership. By the end of 1983, Show Biz's syndicated series were all out of production. Porter Wagoner's show ended in 1981 after a twenty year run and "Nashville on the Road" and "Tom T.'s Pop Goes the Country Club" ended syndication by 1983. Wagoner's ratings had been slipping since the early 1970s. Long-time sponsor, Chattanooga Medicine, dropped sponsorship in 1973 and moved away from the patent medicine market. Steve Eng notes in his Wagoner biography that the pop influence in country music by the late 1970s made Wagoner's traditional style less relevant and fewer big name acts appeared on the show. Past segments from Wagoner's show were revived in 1981 for a short period under the title "Porter and Dolly." Bill Turner, who directed many of Wagoner's shows and worked for Show Biz, points to the decline of fringe syndication, brought on by the increase in network weekend sports programming where Show Biz's programs aired, along with competition with other syndicated shows (Eng 1992, 398; Hall March 1981, 6; Turner 1994).

Show Biz turned away altogether on series production and focused only on specials when it joined Multimedia in 1981. In 1982, Dunlap announced a major series of nine country specials titled "Country Comes Alive" for production and airing that year. Eight of the nine working titles were announced with Jim Owens signed to produced five and Dick Clark and Bob Precht to produce the other four specials. Proctor and Gamble was signed as the sponsor. Multimedia budgeted $5 million for the 17 1/2 hours of programs and claimed the budget was "the largest ever in TV syndication" (O'Donnell January 1982, 24; "Media" March 1982, 8). The specials were not all produced in 1982 and by September the following year, Show Biz was no longer mentioned as a part of its production. Multimedia Entertainment was listed as the series syndicator in July 1983 when "Country Gold" was produced and later that year Multimedia Program Productions produced "Ray Charles--A Man And His Soul 40th Anniversary Celebration" ("Media" September 1983, 12; "Media" November 1983, 12).

Jane Grams left her general manager position in Chattanooga in 1982 and was hired as a consultant for Multimedia until she joined Gaylord Syndicom in 1984. She had advised Bartlett back in 1981 not to buy Show Biz, feeling the company was not worth the investment.

One problem, according to Grams, was Show Biz had always been run closely by a few individuals as a type of "mom and pop operation" and did not fit well into Multimedia's corporate culture (Grams 1996).

Multimedia sold the Show Biz program archives in 1988 to Act III Broadcasting based in Atlanta, a subsidiary of Act III Communications Inc., owned by network producer Norman Lear in Los Angeles. Bert Ellis, the head of Act III Broadcasting, then sold the program inventory to performer Willie Nelson with the intention of Act III and Nelson starting The Cowboy Network. Act III also bought WZTV, an independent station in Nashville, that same year from Multimedia. Plans called for WZTV to be the base of operation for the network (Oermann and Schweid 1989, sec. D, 1; "Changing hands" 1988, 62).

Nelson acquired more than 4,000 shows including "Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry," "Nashville on the Road," "Dolly," "The Porter Wagoner Show," Marty Robbins Spotlight," "The Country Place," "The Wilburn Brothers Show," "Billy Walker's Country Carnival," "The Flatt & Scruggs Show," "Music City U.S.A.," and "Pop! Goes the Country" (Oermann and Schweid 1989, 1). The network never materialized and the former Show Biz properties remain with Nelson.

Show Biz made Nashville the leading center for country music television syndication. The founders, Bill Graham and Jane Grams, created a business in television production at a time in Nashville when little was being done. They started by creating simple-formatted programs aimed at mainstream country music fans and later developed their productions on a larger scale and toward more diverse audiences. Beyond television production, they built a upon previous successes working to creating a full-range of services related to country music entertainment. Along with an aggressive entrepreneurial effort, at the heart of Show Biz's success lay WSM. Through Graham and Grams's former connections with WSM as employees and with Noble Dury, Show Biz maintained a special relationship with the station that provided it studio facilities and, more important, access to "Opry" talent. For approximately twenty years, Show Biz became synonymous with Nashville country music television. With the growth in production activity in the 1970s however, another company would take over that role for a short time before the arrival of the cable networks.

Jim Owens and Multimedia

By the end of the 1970s, another company began to take on the role of Nashville's leading producer. Ironically, if Multimedia represented the end for Show Biz, it also represented the rise of Jim Owens. With aid and collaboration from Multimedia, Jim Owens Productions became Nashville's largest program producer, shifting the emphasis from syndicated series that was Show Biz's staple activity, to focusing on syndicated specials. By the time WSM made the decision to move into cablecasting with The Nashville Network (TNN), Jim Owens was prepared to move in that direction and would eventually become one of TNN's primary program providers.

Jim Owens' involvement with Nashville television first began through his work with country artist Jerry Reed and Owens' Atlanta-based production company. Owens' and Reed formed a company in 1975 to produce a country music pilot as a network series starring Reed. Owens began his involvement in television production broadcasting in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1965 he syndicated his first show, a music and dance program reaching 50 markets. After one year with Jefferson Productions in Charlotte, North Carolina, he moved to Atlanta and formed two companies, Television Productions

International and Mini-Color, Incorporated. Owens then sold his companies and moved to Nashville with the intention of entering into network programming ("A Company History" 1993, 13-14).

From Atlanta, Owens saw a need and opportunity in Nashville television for something more than had gone before involving the approach taken to producing television and country music:

> What attracted me to Nashville, I felt like there had been network specials that took country music a little bit broader than what had been done [in the past]. In syndication on television, you had Show Biz which was doing shows like Porter Wagoner, "Nashville On The Road," Jim Ed Brown, things like that. And I felt like that in Nashville, the time was right to broaden it out some and to do music and specials that were much wider than was being done.
>
> Show Biz was vulnerable because their programs were beginning to lose ratings, their popularity was falling. The shows had been on the air for so long. People were looking for something new and we felt like putting the orchestras and strings and horns to the music, which has been in country music for a long time, although they don't like to admit it. It would give us a much broader base (Owens 1994).

Owens and Reed produced two pilots starring Lynn Anderson, Chet Atkins, Burt Reynolds, Tammy Wynette, and Ray Stevens, targeted as a series for a Saturday late night network position. Reed was doing well in his performing career including hosting his own network prime time show, "The Jerry Reed When You're Hot You're Hot Hour," which acted as a summer replacement for "The

Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour" on CBS in 1972. During the pilots' production however, NBC was gearing up production of "Saturday Night Live," their seminal live comedy program. This eliminated their network chances so they combined the two pilots and sold it in syndication in 1976. Owens direct association with Reed ended at this time. Reed sold his interest in the company to Owens and became more involved in motion pictures on the West Coast (Owens 1994).

Owens remained in Nashville and opened his own office. In 1977 he produced his first independent effort, "A Barbie Doll For Christmas," as a syndicated one hour special. During this period, Owens met with Betty Cox of the Music City News country music magazine over the idea of producing a new country music awards show ("The Jim Owens Companies" 1994, 9; Owens 1994). This collaboration would lead Owens to a greater producing momentum.

In Los Angeles, a West Coast-based country music industry organization with much the same goals as the CMA called the Academy of Country Music (ACM) began in the early 1960s. It soon began issuing awards with network coverage first beginning on ABC in 1974. Likewise, the Nashville-based Music City News (MCN) magazine, covering various facets of the country music

industry, has issued fan-voted awards since 1967 based on readership polls published by the magazine. Started by performer Faron Young in 1963, the publication was owned by Multimedia when Owens and Cox first discussed televising the awards (Malone 1985, 483; McCloud 1995, 1-2, 967). With MCN, Owens saw an opportunity for a different kind of country music awards show other than the two which were more industry controlled:

> I just felt that country music was fan-driven and you know how the fans feel about country music. And I felt like there were two industry awards out there and the fans really needed their voice, needed a show of their own (Owens 1994).

What Owens did not count on was the amount of resistance he would encounter.

According to Owens, Betty Cox went against her superior's wishes at Multimedia when she signed a contract with Owens to produce the show. With two awards shows airing on the networks, Multimedia management did not believe there was room enough for another program and advised against it. Owens also notes, a fan-based awards show was not warmly received by industry insiders. He contracted with WSM to produce the event from the Opry House and here he also ran into problems:

> I did not know this wasn't going to be a popular decision with the industry. You got to understand the record labels and a lot of executives did not

> want to see another awards show, especially one the industry did not have any control over. It was quite a battle because what we did was lease the Opry House and I had a lot of pressure put on me and so did the Opryland complex, a lot of pressure by the CMA and other executives in this town to try to squash this before it started. And I was notified that my contract for the Opry House was cancelled. So it took quite a lot of talking and threatening and so forth to get that first show on the first year in 1978 (Owens 1994).

The "12th Annual Music City News Country Awards" aired on June 6, 1978 via syndication on the Hughes Television Network. The two hour live special aired from the Opry House but ran into a technical problem with the televised signal feed between the Opry House and the telephone company where the signal was distributed (Hinkle June 1978, 38; "The Jim Owens Companies" 1994, 9). Owens was suspicious of what occurred:

> We lost almost 30 minutes of our feed that night at a pick up point between the Opry House and downtown AT&T where I will always believe that the plug was pulled on it (Owens 1994).

The program itself did make it on the air, however, and received strong positive reactions. The sponsors, Proctor and Gamble, were interested in trying to get the show on one of the networks the following year but without success, airing instead again on the Hughes Television Network to 124 markets (Hinkle June 1979, 54). According to Owens:

> The show was a very big hit and the syndicated stations that carried it nationally stayed with it and did very well in the ratings and it got launched. I had support by many country music artists that also believed the same, [that] the fans needed to speak (Owens 1994).

Owens continued producing the MCN awards show. In 1990 it was combined with "TNN Viewer's Choice Awards" that began airing on TNN for the past two years to become the "TNN/Music City News Awards." By this time, Owens had shifted much of his programing from syndication to TNN ("A Company History" 1993, 14).

Multimedia's management was pleased with the awards program and became more interested in investing in television production. Starting with the awards show, Owens' association with Multimedia developed allowing him to expand his production activity:

> When Multimedia saw how well the show did and how well it was produced, they then came to me and we formed an alliance to do a series of specials from Nashville for country music because all they had at the time was "Donahue". Multimedia had not ever done anything for prime time until they got tied in with me.
>
> They funded them. They were very good. Multimedia had the deep pockets I did not have at the time. Everything I had to do pretty much had to be financed from the hip pocket, I could not afford to loose money unless you have that tremendous resource of cash to make mistakes like the networks do. I did not have that so it gave me the opportunity with their bankroll (Owens 1994).

The same year he launched MCN' awards show, Owens

produced the syndicated special, "A Concert Behind Prison Walls," starring Johnny Cash, Linda Ronstadt, and Roy Clark. In 1980 he produced seven hours of programming and Billboard called him "Nashville's largest producer of syndicated prime time programming." By 1983 he was producing approximately 10 hours of syndicated country music specials a year ("The Jim Owens Company" 1994, 7).

That same year he launched his first weekly syndicated series, "This Week In Country Music," starring two Nashville television and radio personalities, Lorianne Crook and Charlie Chase. In 1984, Owens remodeled RCA's old recording studio into a television facility and offices. The success of "This Week" led to a "Crook and Chase" in 1986, a daily syndicated country music news program. By this time, TNN was on the air and "Crook and Chase" also aired on TNN for several years before running exclusively on the network. Owens relationship with TNN culminated in 1993 when Crook and Chase became the hosts for TNN's live flagship program "Music City Tonight," replacing "Nashville Now" starring Ralph Emery ("A Company History" 1993, 14; Smith July 1993, 1A, 2A).

The move by Owens toward cable was reflective of the next major development in Nashville's television

broadcast and production industries that took place in the early 1980s. Nashville's production activity began shifting from syndicated production to become the origination center for two cable networks in 1983. The first network to appear did so rather unannounced and struggled in its early years. The second was born with much fan fair and was an immediate success. Together they made a major impact on Nashville's role in the ever-changing mass communications scene.

Television From a Third Coast

In a 1981 Tennessean newspaper article titled, "Cable Television May Turn Nashville Into 'Third Coast' For Producers," production company executives expressed an optimistic outlook for Nashville's future. In light of WSM's recent announcement to start up a cable network, Opryland's David Hall noted:

> We are right in the middle of an exploding entertainment market and within the next three to five years Nashville will be the third coast as far as television production is concerned (Hall August 1981).

The idea of comparing Nashville to the east and west coast television production centers was nothing new. The tendency to do so began with Show Biz's domination of country music syndication during the 1960s and reached a greater level starting in the early 1970s with

network series activity occurring during construction of the new Opryland complex. And the term "third coast," according to Hall, was used during the Opryland Production days before the start of TNN:

> We used to promote ourselves, "If you don't need a coast, why go there?" We had a slogan that went something like "the third coast" and we promoted ourselves as a cost effective place to produce quality television.
>
> In the business you always talk to them [producers] about having to go to the coast, "got to go to the coast." In LA they got to go to New York or in New York they got to go to LA. Our real mission was to say well, we are really a coast too (Hall 1994).

In the early 1980s, several conditions were developing in broadcasting and video technology creating the "exploding entertainment market" and causing those in the Nashville music and television industries to rethink how television might be used and how they might contribute to that development. The most important of these was the growth of cable television. By the end of the 1970s, the cable industry was on a sharp rise in terms of systems and programming as a result of government deregulation and the establishment of new cable networks (Picard 1993, 1-3; Head, Sterling, and Schofield, 1994, 76-77, 490). For the music industry, cable was another outlet to promote artists either

through traditional musical programs or through the developing art form of music videos.

Along with cable, developments in consumer video technology during this period raised interest as a new outlet for programming. The development of the VHS and Beta consumer videocassette formats starting in the mid 1970s and the marketing of the laser videodisk by Philips and Magnavox in 1978 and RCA in 1981 were seen as new media for program distribution that would work well with music programming. During this period, the market had yet to settle on which products would succeed, and high expectations existed that both tape and disk would find a place in the home (Sterling and Kittross 1990, 456-458; Erickson 1981; Inglis 1990, 440, 444-445).

Changes had been taking place in the 1970s with professional video production technology as well that opened television production activity to more people. For many years, high quality electronic video production in Nashville was centered around the lucrative television broadcast stations since television equipment was expensive, cumbersome, and required constant maintenance. Individuals or small companies engaged in television production with their own equipment most often worked with film because it was more portable,

required less engineering support, and produced a desirable aesthetic look different from electronic video. During the 1970s, video cameras became more compact and mobile and suitable for field recording freeing video production from the studio and making field production less costly than film. The smaller and cheaper 3/4" U-Matic videotape format developed by Sony at this time was well designed not only for broadcast news but for corporate video production which did not require the highest degree of recording quality. WLAC-TV was among the first stations in the country to adapt the new technology to its news operation. For high quality recordings, the more efficient one-inch videotape format was also designed during this time taking the place of the larger two-inch tape format which existed since the late 1950s (Browne 1989, 5-6; Inglis 1990, 461; England 1992).

By the start of the 1980s, Nashville's television production industry was ready to respond to those technological developments and new possibilities in cable and consumer video. The most dramatic development occurred in early 1981 when WSM announced in February it was going to move into cable network programming and the emerging consumer video market. The next month, WSM announced it would sell off its television station as a

way to raise capital for the new venture. This occurred one year before American General's acquisition of National Life as discussed earlier. In its announcement, the plans called for going on the air in two years with six hours of original programming. In the next 14 months $5 million would be spent on satellite installations and a potential $50 million on overall initial expenditures within three years. Included in the cost was planned construction of a new 40,000 square foot building (Browning February 1981, 1; O'Donnell February 1981). As a third coast, no longer would Nashville be just a center for production but an origination center for a television entertainment network. In the announcement, Bud Wendell compared WSM's production capabilities to the east and west coasts:

> The sale of WSM-TV is a part of our recently announced plans for a major expansion of our Opryland Productions Division into national production and distribution. WSM, Inc. has an excellent reputation for quality production and we have proven we can provide quality programming on a level with the major communications centers in both New York and Los Angeles. WSM plans to move into national videocasting and networking and wants to commit 100% of its management, talent, and resources to this end ("NLT Immediate Release").

The combined effect of technological development and the new possibilities in cable produced optimism in the production industry. Production companies and producers were willing to jump into music video

production as well as cable programming. David Hall was positive for the future in context to the changing media landscape:

> The relationship between record companies and video grows every day. As the video disc develops, along with the expansion of home entertainment systems, record companies are beginning to provide video for that service. Its all growing together. With Warner-Amex and MTV channels available, there's going to be a real void of artists' tapes, whether it be the artist, a scene, a setting, a book illustration, or animation set to music. There's got to be more video for artist promotion (Mercedes 1981, 65-66).

Nashville film companies that started in the 1970s and early 1980s such as SMS Film Productions, Thom 2, Imagemaker, Film House, and Cascom continued to thrive primarily with commercial and corporate production but looked to new opportunities as well. Imagemaker made plans to produce programs for cable and SMS had already produced a pilot for cable. United Methodist Communications maintained a film studio primarily for institutional production and mostly small budget feature length films since the late 1950s. Video South, later Southern Productions, began in 1977 on a modest level with small facilities, expanding to computer editing by 1983 and further growth in the 1980s. Celebration Productions, designed video facilitates for Bullet Recording sound studio during this time to accommodate video production as well. One film company, Scene Three

Film, made a big commitment to video production in 1981 when it designed a state-of-the-art video editing facility and changed their name to Scene Three Video & Film. By 1983, other companies had been formed including, Studio Productions and Media Productions, active in music video production. That year Nashville Audio Video Productions Inc., started 18 months before, invested in $2 million studio and equipment for music video and cable production (Mercedes 1981, 65, 67; Backous 1996; Algee 1996; Routson 1996; Gregory 1983; Furnace 1995).

TNN did not run music videos in its programming when it was launched in 1983, however, and it would not air a music video program until two years later. Another network began the groundbreaking task of providing country music with a permanent outlet for music videos. Despite the rise in production activity in Nashville, however, it would take several years for the art form to develop as it had with rock music.

Country Music Television

The first cable network to begin from Nashville was the Country Music Television network (CMTV), but only in a technical sense. On Saturday, March 5, 1983, CMTV began transmitting country music programming 24 hours a

day by satellite from Hendersonville, ten miles north of Nashville. This was two days before TNN's grand Monday night launch. This may have been a publicity stunt since there were no cable operators signed up for the service and few even knew of the venture including Nashville's Viacom cable system. Within a few weeks, the network was formally established as a three-way partnership located in three states. Video World International in Hendersonville was the center of operations, handling the production, programming, and technical details; Telstar Corporation, located in Beverly Hills, dealt with marketing; and Blinder-Robinson & Company investment bank of Denver acted as the underwriting firm. Telstar and Blinder-Robinson had also been involved in other cable and pay-TV ventures with hotel chains. By July, Glen Daniels, president of Video World, claimed CMTV reached close to four million households and was signed with 13 of the top 20 multiple system cable networks (Bartley March 1983; Girard 1983, 1, 17; "Telstar Unveils" 1983; "Perspective" 1983, 6).

But there were relatively few country music videos available for airing in 1983. In the Cable Networks Handbook, Robert M. Ogles and Herbert H. Howard note there were approximately 20 videos available when CMTV was launched (Ogles and Howard 1993, 59). The Music

Television network (MTV), beginning in 1981, gave the music video art form a lasting start but for rock music and not for mainstream country music (Mercedes 1981, 63-67). Country music videos were slower to develop in production quality and in numbers compared to rock music videos. Record companies usually invested in the production of music videos, and they were hesitant to do so with country music. RCA record executive Joe Galante expressed the tentative nature for country music at the time:

> Until now, there really haven't been any markets. Warner-Amex [cable network] and MTV are just getting involved with us. I don't think country is what they are really looking for; I think they're really looking for rock and pop. So country is confined to certain cable channels and sometimes has an outlet on special programs, clips, foreign markets and in-store presentations (Mercedes 1981, 67).

Another concern with those in Nashville's record industry during this early period in country music video's history was the lack of knowledge of a video's worth compared to its investment. CBS Records vice-president Roy Wunsch noted, "It's hard to say what it's really worth in terms of [record] sales; we don't really know. We just know the feelings are good and that it enhances the image of an artist" (Mercedes 1981, 66).

Mary Ann McCready, director of development for CBS Records in Nashville, was likewise tentative over country music videos:

> It's really hard to tell right now how effective video is, because it's still in such a state of infancy. There are negotiations going on between the unions, the directors and the performing rights societies about payment, for example. But video is obviously a technology that is developing so rapidly we can't ignore it--as a possible alternative to radio" (Mercedes 1981, 66).

When CMTV began, it actually ran a combination of music videos and country music programs made for syndication. Glen Daniels produced full length syndicated programs from his Video World Productions studios in Hendersonville well before his CMTV venture. In 1981, he announced the completion of a variety of six country music pilots including guest appearances by Bobby Goldsboro, Floyd Cramer, and Micky Gilley ("Video World Completes"). It was necessary for CMTV to produce its own videos for airing rather than receiving them from record companies. Daniels said during this period, "There is now a shortage of material but by early next year we should have a rotation consisting of 100 tapes" ("Perspective" July 1983, 6).

CMTV slowly grew during the rest of the 1980s and went through several ownership changes. It was sold to Music Village U.S.A. in 1985 and then to Caribou Communications in 1986 under Jim Guercio and Nyhl

Henson. Henson was one of the founders of the children's cable network Nickolodeon in 1979, MTV's parent channel, owned by Viacom, Inc. Upon Caribou's acquisition, the "V" was dropped becoming CMT to differentiate its image from MTV, and it premiered on Nashville's Viacom cable system with a large reception involving entertainers, politicians, and music industry executives. Shortage of country music videos remained a problem during this time. Jeff Walker, with Aristo Video Promotions that services and tracks music videos for record companies, noted the state of country music videos in 1987,

> For country, it's been slower but steadier growth, compared to the rock music, MTV situation. Because there are fewer country videos available, it's just now getting to the point where a programmer can put reels together and have a consistently good show (Weeks, 1987, 27).

During this time, CMT was running an inventory of about 400 videos, according to Henson, which was about the same number MTV had in its second year. CMT improved under Caribou, who upgraded its programming and saw some growth. By 1986, CMT reached 6 million homes. The network was purchased by Opryland in 1991 for approximately $30 million. At the time, it had grown to

11.5 million households (Weeks 1987, 27-29; Bartley October 1986, sec. B, 7; "Opryland To Buy" 1990, 30; "Information For Release" 1992).

In the long run, CMT provided an important entry for country music into music videos, but it was WSM's move into cable that created the most significant development. With the Nashville Network, undertaken by WSM, country music attained an important new venue on television and Nashville won a new position as a television production and communications center. The Nashville Network became an immediate success story in Nashville's television production history. The development of TNN reflects a continuity of WSM's vision and leadership as a mass communicator as well as its need to maintain a controlling role in country music.

The Nashville Network

The Nashville Network displayed some impressive numbers when it was launched on March 7, 1983. It started with approximately seven million homes subscribed to its service, the most to that point for a new cable network, beating the Cable Health Network with 4 million homes when it began the previous year. TNN began with six hours of daily original programming involving twenty-one different shows. WSM's initial

investment was estimated at around $50 million over the first three years; and Group W, handling the sales and marketing, spent approximately $20 million. The inaugural five hour broadcast cost close to $1 million and involved remote telecasts from five major cities. In ten years TNN's subscriber base grew to approximately 54 million households, close to seven times more when it began (Bartley 6 March 1983, 6; Bartley and Oermann 1983, sec. D, 1; "Nashville Goes Cross-Country" 1983, 146). Creating a national country music cable network was a major gamble for WSM, which had already made a risky move building the Opryland complex ten years earlier. WSM management saw a need to move away from television broadcasting and into production and programming, something they already had a good deal of experience with.

Formative Period

In the early 1980s, Griscom was a believer among those who forecast not only the rise of cable but the demise of the broadcast network/affiliate station relationship. With further development of satellite technology, homes would receive programming directly from the networks and need local stations only for local news and programming. In 1981 Griscom predicted,

> I think we will be in the midst of massive change within five years. . . . For a long time, television broadcast stations were the only video distribution game in town. That won't be true in the 1980s. Broadcasters were the only programmers--that also is no longer true. . . . Ultimately, each house may have its own earth station to pick up signals directly from a satellite (Barker 1981).

He also noted the importance of videodisk technology,

> Video disc could rival television on its impact on set use and programming. Based on the public appetite for feature film, it appears that the video disc market will grow faster than color TV did (Barker 1981).

Videodisks did not gain a permanent hold in the consumer market but the growth of VCRs in the 1980s closely fit his prediction. And although the network/affiliate relationship is still intact, for Griscom and others at WSM, it was clear local television broadcasting was no longer the growth industry it once was and there were other opportunities to seize (Head, Sterling, and Schofield 1994, 97-98).

WSM's motivation to create a cable network lay not only with the new opportunities opening with cable and consumer video technologies that have already been discussed. Another reason existed similar to the need for building the television facilities in the Opryland complex in the first place; promotion of the Opryland park and the "Grand Ole Opry." While network and syndication production were beneficial, Griscom pointed

out limitations with WSM's broadcasting efforts. WSM's clear channel AM station was no longer drawing listeners as it once had,

> The network was started mainly because Bud Wendell realized we were not reaching out far enough to attract customers to the park and the complex. When the radio station went out, it was covered by drop-ins. Radio was losing listenership. TV stations went out 110 miles and went around a circle and we were drawing people 400, 600 miles away. So why not start a cable network that can reach the whole country and be on the forefront of the new cable viewing habit? So that was the vision out here (Griscom 1994).

As the broadcasting company that created and nurtured the "Grand Ole Opry," Griscom and Wendell felt it was WSM's place to make the dominant national presence with country music on cable. WSM had always been protective of the "Opry" and its image of country music and wanted to have control of that image for cable. In 1994, Griscom noted the concern over competition in driving their motivation:

> We were pursuing the idea that we wanted to have the franchise on country music, which is still our goal, in any area whether it be country music, country lifestyle, any activity regarding country, we want to own it or be a part of it and during this development period of the 70s that's when we came to that vision. And as early as 78 or 79 we felt somebody was going to put up a country music network. There were rumblings that Sears was going to start a network and we said, "Hey, this is our business, we don't want anybody else doing this." So we felt we had to be the first out there and to be that we needed right away to crank up even though it wasn't profitable at this period of time, nor would it be for many, many years. But why let somebody

> else take away your core business so we decided we ought to do this and that's when Bud [Wendell] and I started putting together presentations to the NLT board to try to convince them, let's get out there and do this (Griscom 1994).

With a need to keep the park and attendance growing and the lucrative potential in cable and home video entertainment before them, WSM set upon to convince their parent company, NLT, to approve the idea. During this period, WSM-TV's program director Elmer Alley was called in to play another important role. Alley, who ran audio during WSM-TV's sign-on in 1950, conducted many of WSM-TV's production efforts, and helped conceptualize the idea for Opryland U.S.A., now was asked to draw up a plan for the new network:

> Tom Griscom came in on a Monday morning and told me he wanted me to program The Nashville Network and I said "What in the hell is The Nashville Network?" So he came in on a Monday and said, "I need 12 hours of programming, I need descriptions of the programs, I need a schedule and a rough budget and I need it by Wednesday." Wednesday afternoon I handed it to him. That was the total research for TNN (Alley 1993).

WSM made a move toward cable production that year when Opryland Productions worked with superstation WTBS owned by Turner Broadcasting in Atlanta. WTBS was one of the few broadcast stations in the country that distributed its signal through satellite to cable systems across the country. Through cable, WTBS reached

17 million homes at the time. Opryland Productions produced "Nashville Alive," becoming Nashville's first live weekly cable series. The one hour program aired on Saturday nights on WTBS from the Stagedoor Lounge of the Opryland complex. Elmer Alley was the executive producer, WSM's Bayron Binkley produced and directed, and WSM radio and television personality Ralph Emery was the host. The program ran for a 20 week period and was the forerunner to TNN's flagship program, "Nashville Now," also hosted by Emery ("Nashville Alive!" 1981; Emery 1991, 167-168). With the gearing up of the new network, TNN would have to focus all of its resources on its own show production.

In the fall of 1981, NLT acquired the needed start-up money by selling WSM-TV for $42 million to Gillett Broadcasting. Based in Wausau, Wisconsin, Gillette owned three other television stations across the country and a variety of other businesses. The station changed its call letters to WSMV-TV, and NLT retained ownership of the AM and FM stations. At the time of the sale announcement, some WSM-TV employees were given the choice of working with the new cable effort or staying with the television station. With the network's success being uncertain, some remained with the station instead

of risking their future employment on the new cable venture ("Changing Hands" October 1981, 46; Turner 1994).

Formation of TNN

In January 1982, NLT announced a joint working agreement with Group W Satellite Communications (GWSC) for the formation of The Nashville Network. WSM would provide the programming through its Opryland Productions division while GWSC, a division of Westinghouse Broadcasting Company, would handle sales, marketing and distribution. GWSC was a co-partner with the ABC network in marketing the Satellite NewsChannel at that time and brought the marketing expertise WSM lacked. In 1981 Opryland Productions ceased as an operation except as a duplication service. The production staff and facilities fell under TNN with David Hall as general manager ("Country-Music Cable" 1982; "David Hall" 1989, 79; Hall 1994).

A big part of WSM's $50 million initial investment went toward building construction, equipment, staffing and program production. The television facilities at Opryland were expansive but not enough to operate and produce programming for a new network. The buildings housing the television facilities were basically the

same as when they were first constructed in the early 1970s with the main Opry House, one 70 x 80 ft. studio with editing facilities, and a 47 ft. truck for remote productions. Construction on new office headquarters at the Opryland complex were finished in March 1984, one year after the network began its operation. By this period, two more 70 x 80 ft. studios were in operation, one beginning in June 1983 and the other at the start of 1984, as well as another 47 ft. truck and a smaller van. Equipping the operation was impressive as well, with 30 cameras, 35 one-inch videotape recorders, and computer control editing using CMX 340X systems (Levine 1984, 28-33; "Nashville Now" 1983, 12; Foti 1983, 4). But this would not all come together for another couple of years when WSM was gearing up the network. Until that time WSM had to work under very limited and challenging conditions in a rush to get TNN launched.

Gearing Up for Production

The program proposals Alley drew up in a period of three days were further developed and changed over time, but his initial ideas where accepted. Under Griscom's mandate, Alley devised a collection of programs within

the framework of country music (Alley 1993; "The Nashville Network" 1983, 4). David Hall describes the network's focus:

> The Nashville Network's base is broader than a fine narrowcast of country because we also present gospel, blue grass, game shows, situation comedies and sports. TNN is a themed programming service that can be described exactly, unlike a lot of other programming services that can't be identified when you hear the name. If you say TNN, you're talking about middle America, the blue collar, middle management person that loves country music (Levine 1984, 30).

The planned programs covered a variety of formats including music performance, talk and interview, game show, situation comedy, outdoor sports, variety, and movies. As program director, Alley was responsible for getting the shows produced (Alley 1993).

Office space was in such short supply at Opryland that Alley began in a temporary office away from the complex in early 1982. Until the new headquarters were ready, trailers were also set up on the complex to handle the extra demand. Alley hired Buddy Regan, then the station manager for WNGE-TV, as production manager. The two first worked on planning, budgeting, and hiring before production began. These hirings plus the administrative and engineering needs for the network increased the original staff from 40-50 that existed for

Opryland Productions to 150-200 personnel when the network was on the air (Varnell 1993, 341-343; Hall 1994; Levine 1984, 28).

Another challenge faced by TNN during this time was booking talent. Ralph Emery notes in his autobiography that many stars were hesitant with a wait-and-see attitude about appearing on his show since it was not yet on the air (Emery 1991, 207). According to Alley, pretaping in advance was the biggest problem:

> Well, it was hard to book talent. We were taping a year in advance and nobody was seeing it. They would come out and do shows but wouldn't see it on the air. It wasn't going to happen for a year and managers don't want to put songs on that aren't going to be current.
> I think it was just not very prestigious. I mean here was this fledgling little thing that Waylon Jennings said there was no way it was going to work. They were all wanting to be on the national networks, not TNN. We had no stature (Alley 1993).

Production began in June 1982. With the extra hiring, TNN still did not have the facilities and staff to create all the programming. Many programs were produced in-house but during that nine month period of production leading to launch, it was necessary to utilize remote sites and other production facilities as well as contracting with outside producers and purchasing programs. Many shows were produced live-on-tape, a quicker approach rather than editing them together (Bartley 6 March 1983; Varnell 1993, 354, 358-

359; Hall 1994). Producer/director Bill Turner recalls the frantic pace of production that existed at the time,

> Very spastic. We were producing shows like crazy. I know I had 100 and some odd shows produced that no one had seen except me and I went in to ask Elmer if someone would like to review those shows. He said, "Are you happy with them?" I said "Yea." he said, "Well, I don't have time to look at them." So the year before we went on the air, there was a lot of taping going on (Turner 1994).

In November 1982, during this busy period, another corporate event occurred as great as moving the "Grand Ole Opry" to the new Opryland complex or selling WSM-TV. NLT, the holding company for National Life and WSM, Inc., was bought by American General Corporation. The Houston-based insurance company indicated immediately it had no interest in keeping the WSM properties and would be looking for a buyer (Berg 1983, 31). Now the "Grand Ole Opry" was under the ownership of a company based outside Nashville with future ownership and stability uncertain. Under these conditions, the personnel at TNN and WSM continued the challenge of getting the network ready to go on-line.

Programming

When TNN went on in March 1983, Alley and Reagan generated a reported 500 hours of programming covering 21 different shows. The daily network schedule

consisted of 6 hours of original programs and then two repeats of that schedule to make up an 18 hour programming day. The weekday first-run programming ran from 7 p.m. to midnight and 1:30 to 2:30 a.m. The weekday shows included "Dancin' USA," "I-40 Paradise," "Fandango," "Nashville Now!," "Yesteryear in Nashville," "Nashville After Hours," "Offstage," and "Opryland on Stage" (Bartley 6 March 1983; "Nashville Goes" 1983, 146).

The weekend programming took on subjects relating more to outdoor sports and included "Country Sportsman," "American Sports Calvacade," "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry," "Bobby Bare and Friends: Songwriter Showcase," "This Week in Nashville," "Tumbleweed Theater," "Performance Plus from Popular Hot Rodding," "Fire on the Mountain," "Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry," "Gospel Country," "The Tommy Hunter Show," "That's Country," and "Phantom of the Opry" (Bartley 6 March 1983; "Nashville Goes" 1983, 146).

The Launch of TNN

The morning before TNN's start, some cable viewers were presented an added attraction. Appearing by satellite on the channel TNN would be signing-on that evening were WSM and GWSC officials ready to take

questions for what was supposed to be a national closed-circuit press conference. By mistake, some cable operators put the Nashville signal onto their systems allowing viewers a chance to participate. In populist fashion, viewers were able to phone in with questions and comments and TNN was able to get a sense of the anticipation. One viewer from Seattle, Washington, identifying himself as a transplant from Alabama, said "This is like a blessing out of the sky," and added "It's going to be a relaxin' environment around my house" (Bartley and Oermann 1983, 1).

That day TNN and GWSC were in the final countdown preparations for an 8 p.m. sign-on. The network's premiere would consist of a special five-hour live edition of "Nashville Now!" hosted by Ralph Emery at Opryland Hotel's Stagedoor Lounge with concerts at the Grand Ole Opry House and by satellite from New York's Savoy Club, the Palomino Club in Los Angeles, the Park West in Chicago, Denver's After The Gold Rush, and Austin's KRLU-TV, home of PBS's successful country/western/folk program "Austin City Limits." The idea for the five-city remote actually came from GWSC's marketing vice president Ron Castell. The approach was to use current satellite technology on a national level to generate interest among the cable and advertising

industries (Bartley and Oermann 1983; "Nashville Goes" 1983, 146; Varnell 1993, 398-399).

The Opry House concert was hosted by Roy Acuff and Patti Page while the five city concerts were conducted by Roseanne Cash, T.G. Sheppard, Bill Monroe, Emmylou Harris, Lynn Anderson, George Lindsey, Tanya Tucker, Hoyt Axton, Tammy Wynette, and Don Williams. Also performing on the show were Minnie Pearl, Chet Atkins, Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers Band, Ray Stevens and The Nashville Network Concert Orchestra ("Nashville Goes" 1983, 146).

Bob Boatman, whose network credits from Nashville includes "Hee Haw" and PBS's "Live From The Grand Ole Opry," produced and directed the program. The production staff grew to approximately 900 for the premiere with a production cost of around $1 million. TNN estimated 5,000 to 5,500 people were on hand for the various concerts ("Nashville Goes" 1983, 146).

Part of the definition of the Nashville Sound has been not only the sound or style of the music, but also the casual and less formal approach taken by the musicians and producers in creating the music during recording sessions. Producers Owen Bradley and Chet Atkins, both central to its creation, have noted it was the people and the way it was put together as much as

the sound itself ("The Unseen Hand" 1987, 2-3; Morthland Vol. XII, no. 2, 4-6; "Owen Bradley" Vol XII, no. 2, 9-10). On the pressure of opening night with so much at stake, TNN was able to benefit from that legacy. In the control room preparing for the start was TNN's program director Elmer Alley, someone who had experience with Nashville music recording. Alley also brought a continuity to the launch, having participated in WSM-TV's sign-on in 1950 as well as his involvement in many of WSM's productions and in the formation of the Opryland complex. That night Alley was confident:

> The opening night we had the Nashville Symphony and Ralph Emery in the Hotel and five remote locations around the country. Bud Wendell came in about a half-hour before we were to go on and I was sitting with my feet on the desk and he said "Are you sure we're ready?" I said "Sure we're ready Bud, just go on out and take care of the crowd." They had this wonderful party for everyone. And about 10 minutes before air, he said "Are you sure you're ready?" I said "Bud, I've been working on this for a year, you've never asked me that before." Bud and Tom [Griscom] are the type of management people who will give you an assignment and leave you alone. Tom never asked me if we had the programming finished, we just did it. It's wonderful to work for somebody like that (Alley 1993).

At 8 p.m. Ralph Emery started TNN off saying: "Welcome to the opening night of The Nashville Network. It's a coast-to-coast party and we've invited 20 million people

to join us" (Bartley and Oermann 1983). The premiere of TNN went off without any major troubles giving the network a healthy start.

The network's future was further solidified three months later when American General announced in July it had found a buyer for the WSM properties. As already discussed, Edward Gaylord, chairman and chief executive of Oklahoma Publishing and Gaylord Broadcasting, owned "Hee Haw" which was videotaped at the Opryland facilities. His contact with Opryland brought about his decision to purchase WSM, Inc. Along with TNN, the sale included WSM's AM and FM stations, the "Grand Ole Opry," the Opryland U.S.A. theme park, the Grand Ole Opry House and the Opryland Hotel. The sale took effect in September, 1983. The Opryland USA division was created to operate the properties (Berg 1983, 37).

Through the efforts of Bud Wendell and Tom Griscom, WSM risked another major transformation, this time from broadcasting into cable networking. The development of TNN was brought about by the same ambition and thinking that started in the late 1960s with the building of the Opryland complex. WSM management saw themselves less as broadcasters and more as providers of country music entertainment. The greatest importance was placed on maintaining the level of control and influence they had

over country music. TNN was an extension and outgrowth of the "Grand Ole Opry" and of the Opryland USA theme park. WSM management decided to take a risk with the future that was starting to take shape in mass communications and remain on the front of that development.

Nashville by the Early 'Eighties

By this time on a national level, Nashville's future as an entertainment center was well established in its role as a third coast. The Tennessee Film, Tape and Music Commission, established in 1979, reported in 1982 that Tennessee ranked third in the country in television production. Budgets for film and video totalled more than $36.2 million. The following year the commission reported a three-fold increase to $120 million ("News From The Office" 1984, 30; "Thriving Film/Video 1983, 11; "1983 Film/Video" 1984, 9). As the apparent growth and popularity of country music increased, so did Nashville's role in creating and promoting it. First in radio broadcasting, then with music recording followed by television syndication and specials, and last with cable networking, Nashville often remained the first coast with the one activity that remained at its core, country music.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will summarize the findings of the study, address the seven research questions presented in Chapter I, reflect on Nashville's future as a media and entertainment center, and conclude with suggestions for further research. See Table 1 for a timeline of major developments.

Summary

The Early Years: 1950 to 1958

From the very beginning, country music was the content driving television production activity and defining Nashville as a television production center. All of the shows produced during Nashville's first decade of activity for either syndication or network were country music in nature and there is no indication that any other genre was given a serious effort. Country music television was possible in the beginning for the same reason country music recording picked up during this time; the "Grand Ole Opry," as the most influential country music radio show of the time, provided a base of country music talent. The Bradley's

Table 1. Timeline of major developments.

Year	Event
1950	WSM-TV signs on the air.
1952	Owen and Harold Bradley begin film production.
1954	"Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" begins production.
Late 1950s	Chattanooga Medicine Company approaches Noble Dury for a television program sponsorship, "Gospel Song Shop" results.
1960	Noble Dury produces "The Porter Wagoner Show" for Chattanooga Medicine.
1965	Show Biz separates from Noble Dury. General Electric buys WSIX-TV, production increases.
1966	WLAC-TV announces the formation of what would become 21st Century Productions and the building of new facilities.
1968	Jack Stapp and Irving Waugh land the CMA awards presentation on NBC. Irving Waugh promoted to President and CEO of WSM, Inc. E. W. "Bud" Wendell promoted to manager of "Grand Ole Opry." WSM announces feasibility study for Opryland, U.S.A.
1969	National Life approves construction of Opryland. "Johnny Cash Show" begins production. "Hee Haw" begins production.
1971	"Hee Haw" cancelled by CBS, goes into syndication.
1973	WDCN receives $3 million for station upgrade.
1974	The new Grand Ole Opry House and Opryland Productions opens.
1975	Jim Owens and Jerry Reed form a production company in Nashville.

Table 1. Timeline of major developments.

Year	Event
1978	"Live From the Grand Ole Opry" airs on PBS. Jim Owens and Multimedia syndicate the Music City News awards presentation.
1981	NLT sells WSM-TV and plans for entry into cable TV programming. Gaylord Broadcasting Company buys "Hee Haw." Multimedia buys Show Biz.
1982	WSM announces TNN venture with Group W. American General Corporation buys NLT Corporation.
1983	TNN launched. CMT launched. American General sells WSM, Inc. to Gaylord Broadcasting. Sale includes Opryland theme park, WSM-AM and FM, "Grand Ole Opry," and TNN.

simultaneous efforts in music recording and television film production were motivated by the resources in country music available in Nashville.

Three series stand out during this period. The most notable of these was the first program syndicated out of Nashville, "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry." Because the program was filmed during the pre-videotape era, "Stars" preserves unique footage of many "Grand Ole Opry" performers during this time. The footage is even more valuable since it was shot in color during the predominant black and white television days and on the higher quality 35 mm film stock. The producer, Al Gannoway, has taken advantage of this, repackaging and distributing the footage ever since.

Gannoway was the most important figure during Nashville's early period of television production. He was responsible for the creation of "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" and must be given credit for the valuable documentation of the many country music performers of that era. He took the greatest advantage of the assets Nashville had to offer as a source for television programs.

With his control over the use of the "Stars" footage, Gannoway is a somewhat controversial figure in Nashville history. The fault for this must partially be

placed at the feet of Nashville-based interests. Many "Opry" performers where eager to be on television, but the company most capable of stepping in to fill that need, WSM and its parent National Life organization, were either too slow or concerned over television's impact on radio. The opportunity existed and it was only natural for someone in entrepreneurial fashion to step forward.

Another important program was the only network series produced in Nashville during this period, "Purina Grand Ole Opry." Produced by WSM-TV, the program revolved around different themes and settings rather than just presenting one performance after another and was highly rated among the 140 markets it aired. The "Purina" show, after a slow start, reflected the first serious effort at national television production by WSM-TV since the station began broadcasting five years earlier. Although it presented stars from the most popular country music radio program, the "Grand Ole Opry," the Purina "Opry" was not the dominant country music television show. Only airing once a month, it was shadowed by Red Foley's "Ozark Jubilee," which aired three times monthly. The "Opry" only lasted a year in contrast to "Ozark's" five year run. The Purina "Opry" also was ten months behind "Ozark" getting on the air.

Foley's strong personal appeal also may help to explain "Ozark's dominance. Foley had been very popular on the "Grand Ole Opry" before he moved to Missouri and the "Ozark Jubilee."

The third series, the "Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry," got its start during this period and became one of the longest running syndicated shows out of Nashville. Interested in further promoting his Nashville-based Martha White flour company with country music, Cohen Williams was responsible for bringing Flatt and Scruggs to Nashville, to television, and back to the "Opry." Partly due to their show, Flatt and Scruggs were instrumental in drawing new audiences to country music in the 1960s.

The success of these three significant programs and the other activity that took place during this period reflect both the strengths and the weaknesses of Nashville's early efforts in becoming a television production center. Country music certainly had a place in the new medium and Nashville, as the home to the popular WSM "Grand Ole Opry," was country music's leading center. But WSM fell into a split personality of sorts when it signed television on in 1950. It was a broadcasting giant in the field of radio under the leadership of its founder Edwin Craig, but Craig was not

endeared to television the same way. The much smaller coverage area of television transmission rendered television as a local rather than national medium and ineffective as a tool to sell insurance.

Another problem was the approach WSM took toward the emergence of television as the primary broadcast entertainment medium. WSM's management was concerned over the decline in the "Opry" attendance and the slowdown in commercial sales that were thought to be caused by television's surge in popularity. The WSM management was initially hesitant to promote the "Opry" on television for this reason. This reluctant attitude led to WSM playing a reactionary role to "Opry" performers who found other means to perform on television. Performances on "The Kate Smith Show" and "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" are examples of WSM's grudging acceptance of artists' demands for TV exposure. WSM became involved in these efforts primarily because of motivation of country stars wanting exposure.

The efforts by Owen and Harold Bradley illustrate an interest that took place during this early period in developing television activity in Nashville around a growing country music industry. Their marginal success demonstrates the undeveloped nature of Nashville as a production center at this time. They faced a big

challenge learning film production from the ground up, with a lack of film production expertise existing in the area. Their biggest success was as studio operators for the production of "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry."

Another explanation for the Bradley's limited success was their growing involvement in music recording that was going on at the same time. They were both already experienced in music performance and as demands for their music recording expertise increased, their interest in video production waned. More than television, their greater achievement lies in the contribution they made to reshaping country music to appeal to broader audiences being pulled toward pop and rock and roll during this time. Their part in developing the "Nashville Sound" included the acoustics of the Quonset Hut studios originally built for production of "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry."

By the late 1950s, television production was slow compared to the growing music recording activity taking hold in Nashville. This period may be seen as a calm before substantial increase in activity that would take place in the next decade. With the arrival of videotape, new companies would form and syndication would take hold.

Syndication Growth: 1960-1969

The period from 1960 through 1969 saw Nashville become established as the leading center for country music television syndication. Its development coincided with the rising popularity of country music during this time after a lull beginning in the 1950s. A great amount of new production took place with the establishment of new companies and facility construction. The landing of the CMA awards on NBC at the end of the decade signaled a new and lasting interest by the networks for country music.

Nashville's rise in syndication was primarily brought about through the efforts of Show Biz, Inc. and its co-founders, Bill Graham and Jane Dowden Grams. Show Biz, actually Noble Dury from where it developed, began producing country music programs at a time little production activity was happening in the city. Its success was partly attributed through its connections with WSM and National Life. Graham and Grams were past WSM employees and Noble Dury was National Life's advertising agency. Those relationships opened the opportunity for using "Opry" talent on television and working with WSM-TV's staff and facilities. Show Biz served a need for television production National Life resisted and WSM-TV was not meeting. Show Biz became

synonymous with country music television, selling its programs to most markets as a block often on Saturday afternoons.

"The Porter Wagoner Show" was the most successful and notable syndicated show produced during this period. Its success allowed Graham and Dowden to separate from Noble Dury and launch Show Biz as a self-supporting company. Wagoner's show was representative of many shows produced by Show Biz and others in Nashville during this time. The program was headlined by an established star and was structured around a simple format allowing straight tapings of the show and multiple programs produced in one taping session. Wagoner was chosen for his honest and traditional country style that best fitted promoting the rural products of the show's sponsor, Chattanooga Medicine Company. Wagoner and his show were instrumental in boosting the career of Dolly Parton who would become one of Nashville's most successful cross-over artists.

Like Wagoner' program, Show Biz first began producing shows aimed at mainstream and traditional country music fans including "Gospel Singing Jubilee," "The Wilburn Brothers Show" and "National Life Grand Ole Opry." These programs where first conceptualized around a sponsor whereas by the end of the decade, programs

were developed with a more contemporary style to attract a broader audience. Such shows as "Music City U.S.A.," "Del Reeves' Country Carnival" and "The Country Place" represented a more speculative approach in its creation whereby the show concept was first designed, then a sponsor was found.

WSM-TV was the busiest facility in Nashville providing studio facilities, staff, and crew for many of Show Biz's productions while engaged with its own syndicated and local broadcast production efforts. Major syndicated programs included the "Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry," "National Life Grand Ole Opry," "That Good Ole Nashville Music" and "The Bobby Lord Show." The "National Life" program was significant being the first time the insurance company sponsored its own "Opry" series. As with the radio station and the "Opry" radio broadcast, National Life was interested in using the television program to support its insurance sales efforts and the show was syndicated into cities with National Life district offices. But branching into television utilizing the popularity of the "Opry" was not a main goal for the company and it dropped sponsorship after four years since no insurance sales benefits were evident. The show's short life span is an example of National Life's lack of commitment to

television. The program then became "That Good Ole Nashville Music" sponsored by Ralston-Purina.

The next major effort beyond Show Biz and WSM-TV was the establishment of 21st Century Productions and new studios by broadcast competitor WLAC-TV. 21st Century was another example of an effort to take advantage of Nashville's entertainment potential. Station general manager Tom Baker and 21st Century general manager Roy Smith created a television and film production company with the intention to be a major player on a national level and compete with the East and West coasts. Although 21st Century was quite active, its efforts never reached the level reflected by its goals and marketing. The company produced a few of its own series and specials for network and syndication. Even less, motion picture production never gained any significant momentum. Part of the challenge for 21st Century was not having the access to country music talent that was available to WSM-TV and Show Biz. Its biggest success was as a facility provider for Yongestreet Production's "Hee Haw."

The third television broadcaster, WSIX-TV, became more active during this period when it was bought by General Electric (GE) which was interested in expanding into production. GE bought "The Bill Anderson Show" and

produced that program into the 1970s. For the most part, WSIX-TV acted as a facility provider as well for Show Biz and other producers.

The arrival of the CMA awards to network television in 1968 signaled Nashville's next major development in television beyond syndication and a new interest by the networks for country music programming. Billboard publisher Hall Cook was instrumental in convincing the CMA to begin issuing awards. In a parochial sense, the CMA had been reluctant to issue awards out of concern over creating conflict and tension by an awards competition. The CMA's turnaround was perhaps indicative of the country music industry's growth and maturity that created the need for a forum of recognition. Irving Waugh and Jack Stapp successfully found a network program for the awards presentations and were instrumental in the awards show's development.

The CMA awards program were produced by those with previous network experience, the first being Dwight Hemion, Gary Smith, and Chet Hagan. This network activity brought a new level of production to Nashville that emphasized more rehearsing and discipline to the production process. Producing out of the Ryman Auditorium necessitated major expensive modifications that, like the experience with the National Life

syndicated show, demonstrated the inadequacies of the old building for television production.

Toward the close of the 1960s, Nashville was the leading center for country music syndication and was now beginning to see an interest by the networks. During this decade, country music began a growth in popularity and new respect as an art form. Nashville's television industry began to meet the needs of country artists and provide them an important medium for exposure and promotion. With the arrival of the CMA on NBC, network television production would become a permanent expectation in Nashville and development in that area would be insured in the following years.

Network Production: From Broadcasting to Cable, 1969-1983

The period from the late 1960s up to 1983 saw the most dramatic developments take place with Nashville's television production industries. High interest and expectations were generated by the announcement of WSM in 1968 for the construction of a new auditorium for the "Grand Ole Opry" and a major theme park for tourism development. The start-up of two country music prime time network series further fueled expectations. Soon, network series activity subsided but the Opryland

complex attracted syndication production and many network specials.

Two network programs originating from Nashville, "The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw," began airing within a week of one another. Along with the CMA landing an annual network special program, these two shows demonstrated further evidence of the growing interest on a national level by those outside of Nashville in country music television production. The two programs were produced by companies with previous network experience and in different ways provoked negative reactions in how country music was presented on television. Cash was displeased with the variety imposed on the show's country music content. For "Hee Haw," many in Nashville's country music industry favored a more contemporary style and were publicly critical, at least in the program's early stage, of the show's heavy rural caricature.

The Cash program was produced in Nashville primarily on the insistence of Cash who wanted to produce the show out of the Ryman Auditorium. For ABC network management, Nashville was a distant location for network production but were convinced since production costs would be lower. The program was cancelled after two years due to mediocre ratings and Cash's

disillusionment with the show's direction.

"Hee Haw" was the most successful program to originate from Nashville as either a network series or in syndication. Its more than twenty-year run was symbolic in defining Nashville as a center for quality production in national television programming. Its success was based on the efforts of its producer, Yongestreet Productions, and the facility provider in Nashville, 21st Century Productions.

With Yongestreet, Sam Lovullo brought organizational and financial skills developed from his background with CBS. Frank Peppiatt and John Aylesworth crafted a successful format for the program centered around predictable humor and a combination of traditional and contemporary country and gospel music. The show was the kind of network programming Tom Baker and Roy Smith were looking to develop with 21st Century Productions and its studio facilities, which were the only state-of-the-art facilities existing in Nashville when "Hee Haw" started in 1969. That, along with being the home for so many country music stars, made Nashville an ideal location for the show's taping.

"Hee Haw's" network cancellation after two years was a result of changes in programming philosophy that took place with CBS in its effort to attract younger,

more affluent audiences. "Hee Haw," which then continued in first-run syndication, benefited from the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) reaching more markets in syndication than it did on CBS. Yongestreet was careful to keep the on-air look the same and sell the show to CBS affiliates instead of the common practice in syndication of selling to the largest station in the market. They uniquely distributed the program in syndication much like the networks by way of phone lines for several years. "Hee Haw's" move to the Opryland facilities in 1981 caused no immediate effect upon show's production but it did officially signify the end of 21st Century Productions. By that time WTVF (WLAC-TV) management had been focusing more attention on local broadcasting efforts, especially news, since the mid 1970s and decided to quit national production altogether.

The biggest factor in drawing production to Nashville was the opening of the Opryland facilities in 1974. The combination of the new Grand Ole Opry House auditorium and television studio attracted many network specials and syndicated series as well as the establishment of new production companies. Newly appointed WSM president Irving Waugh and "Opry" manager E. W. "Bud" Wendell demonstrated innovative thinking and

risk-taking not typically displayed by WSM in its past. Spurred by the need to deal with the degradation of the Ryman Auditorium in face of country music's growing popularity, Waugh and Wendell set upon to build a new home for the "Opry" and expand into tourism with a theme park. Television activity was primarily meant to act as a promotional vehicle for both and for country music in general. In typical fashion, National Life showed no interest in the project and it was through the efforts of those like Waugh and Wendell that the complex was built.

The promise of the Opryland complex and the airing of "Music Country USA" on NBC in 1973 generated interest by others for further network series coming from Nashville. The quick cancellation of "Music Country USA" signaled the end of that momentum. Likewise, the presence of the Opryland facilities did not help generate more Nashville-based network series production partially because that was never the goal for the facilities in the first place. Syndication, specials, and commercial production were the staples of production activity. National Life and WSM did not create or own much of what was produced. For television, the Opryland operation acted mostly as a facility provider for other producers. Network special production was marked by

producers with previous network experience. The production team of Joe Cates, Chet Hagan and Walter Miller was the most prolific in Nashville during the 1970s.

Of unique importance in the area of specials was the airing of "Live From the Grand Ole Opry" on PBS in 1978. For the first time the "Opry" radio broadcast aired live on television in its entirety in contrast to numerous past syndicated shows that borrowed its name. Beyond WSM's fear of television competing with the "Opry's" radio audience and ticket sales to the show, another reason for not allowing television cameras to train their lenses on the program was the concern of how the "Opry" would be perceived visually with its inherent unstructured activity taking place around the microphones. WSM was now interested in using television to attract people to the Opryland park and to the "Opry." A change in perception now existed in how the "Opry" could be televised. Part of the philosophy behind the program was to cover the "Opry" as a radio program event and not to drastically alter it for television. Activities behind the scenes were covered as well as performances. These changes were, however, taken with a conservative approach. The program special only aired as an annual event and although trying to

impart the feeling of the "Opry" as a radio show with its chaotic nature, the presentation was still refined to an extent for television.

Nashville's local PBS affiliate, WDCN, assisted WNET out of New York with the show's production. WDCN's effort was reflective of its growing production activity beginning in the mid 1970s. WDCN became involved in production of educational and cultural programs for PBS and regional educational networks. Many of these programs dealt with music and Nashville's country music industry.

During the 1970s Show Biz began investing more in production values for their new shows and targeting them for prime access. This was a contrast to their earlier programs in the 1960s that were quickly produced with little scripting and were intended for fringe afternoon periods on the weekends. Among their more successful shows included "Pop! Goes the Country," "Nashville on the Road," and "Dolly." Although successfully sold in syndication, "Dolly" was short-lived because Dolly Parton was not happy with the show's varied content and how she was portrayed. Her show began two years after she left Porter Wagoner's show and was part of her early efforts to develop as a crossover artist beyond traditional country music. Her frustration with Show

Biz's production of the program reinforced her need to look outside Nashville to expand her career and reflected a limitation existing with Nashville's entertainment industry competing on a national level.

Show Biz continued in program development through the 1970s but experienced major organizational changes, transferring ownership three times during this period. Holiday Inn bought the company in 1971. In 1979, Show Biz was bought back by three of its top executives and then in 1981 was bought by Multimedia, Inc., which was expanding in country music production. Show Biz lost momentum with the sale to Multimedia and within three years was no longer active.

Multimedia was supporting another company who, by this time, had become Nashville's leading producer. With Jim Owens, Nashville production shifted from syndicated series to specials. Among Owens' most notable productions was the "Music City News Awards" which gave country music and Nashville another national television outlet and began Multimedia's involvement in Nashville country music.

The growth in the cable industry and, to a lesser extent, with home consumer technologies in the late 1970s and early 1980s fueled the establishment of two national cable networks in Nashville in 1983, The

Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Television network (CMT). The success of the Music Television network (MTV) developing the art of music videos for pop and rock songs influenced the start of CMT. Based outside Nashville, CMT began with a low profile with little, if any, promotion. Record companies were hesitant to invest in music videos for country music at this time, and it would take several years before production and CMT would gain momentum.

WSM executives Tom Griscom and Bud Wendell saw these new developments as opportunities for further growth and in addressing their specific needs with the Opryland theme park. While being a source of profit in its own right, TNN was seen as providing the same function as television production had performed at Opryland since it began in 1974, promoting tourism for the park and the "Grand Ole Opry." Also, WSM was motivated to remain a leader in country music entertainment and saw a need to establish a presence in country music on cable television ahead of any competition. The establishment of TNN was the most significant development in Nashville's mass communication and entertainment industries since the construction of the Opryland park and moving the "Grand Ole Opry" to a new venue. In television, it changed

Nashville's role as a production center into an origination center for national television programming.

Conclusions

The seven questions in this study will be addressed in analyzing Nashville's role as a national television production center.

1. What TV program genres have been attempted in Nashville? Country music variety programs were the only type of programming produced in Nashville to any significant extent. Outside of country music, a few other musical variety programs were produced such as "Night Train" presenting rhythm and blues, "The Ray Anthony Show" highlighting pop music and "Music Hall America" showcasing a variety of styles.

Another element, comedy, made its way into several shows. "Hee Haw"; "Hee Haw Honeys," a rare situation comedy; and "Candid Camera" relied upon and were defined more by comedy than other programs. Other shows including "The Porter Wagoner Show," "Dolly," and "The Bobby Goldsboro Show" incorporated comedy or humor as a secondary show element to the music presentations. "I-40 Paradise" was the next situation comedy to appear after "Hee Haw Honeys" with the debut of TNN.

The weekly series program was the only significant format produced during the first two decades, most being sold in syndication. Only a handful of series programs produced from Nashville aired on the networks. The "Purina Grand Ole Opry" was an early program, airing monthly on ABC for one year until the arrival of "The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw" from 1969 to 1971. In the early 1970s, there was the hope for more series production coming out of Nashville once the Opryland facilities completed construction but it never happened on a significant scale. Beyond those three, the only other network series program produced or filmed in Nashville was the short-lived 1977 action drama "Nashville 99" by 20th Century Fox and "Nashville Palace" by "Hee Haw's" Yongestreet Productions in 1981. The annual CMA awards show beginning in 1968 forecast a rise in the special program format. The construction of the Opryland complex provided a venue for many one-time or annual country music specials, often airing on a broadcast network. Until the start of TNN and CMT, Nashville production settled mostly into series syndication and network specials. With the country music video network, CMT, music video production did not gain momentum until several years later. The arrival of

TNN created the need for country music series production to fill the cable network's program schedule.

2. What syndicated and network television programs have been successfully produced in Nashville? As would be expected, the approach and complexity of program production varied a great deal. Some notable efforts were accomplished in the 1950s. "Purina Grand Ole Opry" aired live using multiple television cameras with each show written around a different theme and performers having scripted dialogue between music performances. "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry" was recorded with an innovative system using multiple high quality 35mm color film cameras reducing the time spent editing the program.

Production for syndication grew a great extent beginning in 1960 led by Show Biz, Inc.'s "The Porter Wagoner Show." The program ran for twenty-three years becoming television's longest running country music show until "Hee Haw" eclipsed that record by one year. Besides boosting his own professional career, Wagoner's show helped launch one of Nashville's most successful crossover artists, Dolly Parton. The show exemplified the production style and approach of many programs produced in Nashville in the 1960s being recorded in

quick fashion with limited scripting and little rehearsal. Many of these programs presented a traditional style of country music and although distributed nationally, were most popular in the southeast region. These shows included "Flatt and Scruggs Grand Ole Opry," "Pet Milk Grand Ole Opry," "The Wilburn Brothers Show," and "National Life Grand Ole Opry."

The Country Music Association's (CMA) annual awards program found immediate success on NBC in 1968. It demonstrated there was a substantial audience for country music television on a national level and represented the beginning of continuous interest and activity by the networks for country music television in Nashville. Jim Owens, in collaboration with Multimedia, brought another awards show to Nashville with the "Music City News Awards" beginning in 1978.

"The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw" came on the heels of CMA's awards show in 1969 and were moderately successful series airing for two years in prime-time on the networks. Although short-lived on the network level, both shows contributed to the expansion of Nashville television production. The Cash show was critically acclaimed and "Hee Haw" found a long-term

popular following in syndication reaching more markets than it did on CBS.

Many network specials were produced in Nashville in the 1970s, especially at the Opryland complex. "Country Comes Home," "50 Years of Country Music," a series of "Country Music Hit Parade" specials and a number of Johnny Cash specials are examples of the many successful programs produced at Opryland. PBS's "Live From the Grand Ole Opry" aired three years in a row beginning in 1978 and was the first airing of the live radio "Opry" on television.

In syndication, Show Biz's efforts in the 1970s emphasized a more contemporary style and greater investment in production. Two of those more popular shows were "Pop! Goes the Country" and "Nashville on the Road" both running for eight years. Alan Funt's "The New Candid Camera" ran for four years during the 1970s but a number of other new syndicated shows lasted little over one year including "The Bobby Goldsboro Show," "Dolly," "Music Hall America," "Hee Haw Honeys," "Marty Robbins Spotlight" and "Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry."

Of the twenty-one new shows airing with the sign-on of TNN, the most notable was "Nashville Now" hosted by Ralph Emery. The ninety minute show was cable

television's first live nightly entertainment program and TNN's most popular program.

3. What Nashville-based companies and individuals have been instrumental in producing syndicated and network television programs? One company has remained as a central player throughout Nashville's television production history, WSM, Incorporated. Through its long-running radio program, the "Grand Ole Opry," WSM had the most available access to a large pool of country music talent. Through foresight and aggressive leadership beginning in the mid 1960s, new WSM management began to expand the entertainment potential of the "Opry," something the company had stubbornly refused to do in the past. They accomplished two major achievements making Nashville a national television production center; the construction of the Opryland complex with a new location for the "Opry" and television production facilities, and the start-up of The Nashville Network. Their aggressiveness was in part needed to overcome the resistance by WSM's parent company, National Life, that saw less value in its local television station effort than its clear channel radio station. National Life's primary activity was centered

around insurance and was more focused on profit motive than development in mass communications or country music entertainment.

WSM-TV produced its own programs but was busiest providing production services for other producers, the main customer being Show Biz in the 1960s. When the Opryland complex opened, WSM created Opryland Productions which, likewise, produced a few of its own programs but primarily provided facilities and crew for outside producers. The facilities and talent provided by Opryland Productions attracted many network and syndicated programs as well as commercial production.

Within WSM, Irving Waugh stands as a pivotal figure in Nashville's entertainment development, including television production. WSM's role in television production increased drastically when Waugh became president in 1968. Shortly thereafter, he spearheaded the development of the Opryland complex that not only included a modern venue for the "Grand Ole Opry," but also a theme park and television studio with video post-production facilities that could attract production business in the past had only occurred on the East and West coasts. Waugh was also a key figure in landing the CMA awards presentation as an annual televised network special. He and long-time associate Jack Stapp

successfully established a Nashville connection with network television that has continued and developed ever since.

E. W. "Bud" Wendell began playing a key role in WSM's development at the same time as Waugh. Wendell was assigned to manage the "Opry" and address the need to modernize and expand upon its past success. He was also central to the next major development by WSM in the late 1970s with the establishment of The Nashville Network. As with the Opryland complex with its television efforts in the past, Wendell looked at a cable network in further developing WSM's overall entertainment potential with the "Opry" as its foundation.

WSM-TV's general manager Tom Griscom was instrumental in the development of TNN. Griscom saw the shift from broadcasting to cable taking place as an opportunity for WSM expand and further profit from its leadership position in country music entertainment and tourism. Griscom was willing to risk abandoning WSM's television broadcasting efforts and take on a new cable network venture.

Show Biz, Inc. must be given much credit for establishing Nashville as the leading center for country music television production. The name of the company

itself became synonymous with country music television during the 1960s. Bill Graham and Jane Dowden Grams were instrumental in the company's creation and development. From their past association with WSM and National Life, they created a television production and a distribution company, taking advantage of Nashville's leading position in country music recording and the country music talent residing there.

Al Gannoway was instrumental during Nashville's early period of production in the 1950s with "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry." Gannoway came into Nashville and filled a need by "Opry" artists for television exposure when little production was happening. His use of 35mm color negative film insured a lasting record of country music stars of that time.

Associated with Gannoway at the time were Owen and Harold Bradley. The Bradleys made some successful efforts at film production for television but it was Owen Bradley's decision to build a Quonset Hut film studio as a location for Gannoway's "Stars" series that made a lasting impact on Nashville's music industry. When converting the studio to music recording in the late 1950s, Bradley became one of the few producers who

successfully crafted the "Nashville Sound," a merging of country music with pop music influences, and keeping country music popular.

Yongestreet Productions, based on the West Coast, made an important contribution to Nashville television with the production of "Hee Haw." Frank Peppiatt and John Aylesworth created a formula of country music and comedy that found long-term success for 24 years. Sam Lovullo brought organizational and producing skills that insured the show's longevity. Beyond "Hee Haw," Yongestreet produced several other series and specials on a syndicated and network level from Nashville during the 1970s.

21st Century Productions, WLAC-TV's production division, represented another serious Nashville-based effort at syndicated and network production. Tom Baker and Roy Smith expanded WLAC-TV from local television broadcasting to include video and film production with the intent to compete on a national level with New York and Los Angeles. Although finding little success with film, the company was moderately successful in video production producing several syndicated series, commercials, and network and syndicated specials. Most notable was their involvement with Yongestreet and "Hee Haw," providing facilities and crew for the show's

studio recording. Baker's decision to build new facilities and create 21st Century provided the opportunity for Yongestreet to work in Nashville. "Hee Haw" would have likely remained with 21st Century if the station had not decided to scale down production in order to focus on their local broadcasting efforts.

The network specials originating from Opryland were primarily produced by those with previous network experience. Of those, Joe Cates, Chet Hagan, and Walter Miller were the most prolific. First producing the CMA awards program, they then created a variety of country music specials including a long list starring Johnny Cash. Network producers Dwight Hemion and Gary Smith also worked in Nashville with the early CMA awards and later with a few specials at Opryland.

By the end of the 1970s, Jim Owens became the largest Nashville-based producer of syndicated prime-time programs. His most notable achievements were the "Music City News Country Awards" specials and "This Week in Country Music" syndicated series produced in partnership with Multimedia, Inc. The awards program is recognized as among the three national televised country music awards along with CMA's awards and the Academy of Country Music's awards presentations based in Los Angeles.

Oklahoma-based Gaylord Enterprises became central in Nashville's communication industry, first with it acquisition of "Hee Haw" and later in buying WSM and its Opryland properties in 1983. No major changes were made with management, insuring TNN's smooth transition into cablecasting and the continuity of the "Grand Ole Opry" and Nashville's tradition in country music.

4. What factors present in Nashville allowed this city to become an important TV production center? The most important factor acting as a foundation for the growth and development of Nashville television production was the country music recording industry located there. As the leading center for country music recording, Nashville was either the home for many country music stars or constantly attracting performers for recording. This base of country music talent made Nashville an ideal location for television production, and it can be seen as the primary reason facilities were constructed and producers were attracted there.

Although acting as an influence, there was little direct connection between the music recording and television production industries. Owen Bradley's early efforts were an exception since he was involved in both at the same time, and Show Biz did develop its own

publishing and music recording activities. But overall the record labels remained directly outside of television production and television companies and producers generated programs independent from music recording.

5. What landmark events significantly influenced the development of the television production industry in Nashville? The sign-on of WSM-TV represented parent company National Life's commitment to television broadcasting and established an opportunity for country music artists to find an outlet on television. From WSM-TV facilities, many syndicated programs would be produced and from an outgrowth of that company, the Opryland complex and TNN were established. The promotion of Irving Waugh from WSM-TV general manager to president of WSM. Inc. in 1968 was an important part of that development. With his promotion, WSM became progressive in utilizing the assets of the "Grand Ole Opry" and in convincing National Life to make the necessary deep investments.

The decision to build the Opryland complex ushered in a significant growth in television production. The Ryman Auditorium would not have served the demand for production and the modern complex allowed for a

contemporary presentation. The decision by WSM and National Life to move into cable programming and distribution in the late 1970s represents the continuity in development that began with the establishment of Opryland. TNN was next step for WSM in electronic communications and in further capitalizing on their entertainment base in country music.

The early success of "The Porter Wagoner Show" insured the development of Show Biz and the establishment of Nashville as the center for country music television production. Bill Graham and Jane Grams developed Wagoner's show beyond the needs of its original sponsor and eventually established a new company, Show Biz, to focus not only on program development, but other related activities associated with country music.

The building of the Quonset Hut by Owen Bradley for television film production not only provided a studio for "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry," it inadvertently created an appealing acoustical recording environment that had an important impact on country music's development.

The construction of new facilities by WLAC-TV and the establishment of 21st Century Productions also

raised the level of production in Nashville, most important being the producing of "Hee Haw."

The landing of the CMA awards on network television by Irving Waugh and Jack Stapp was an important development for country music exposure on a national level and in bringing network production to Nashville. Many network programs produced in Nashville in the 1970s can be traced to network producers, writers, and directors who worked on the CMA program.

6. How may Nashville's success as a TV production center be properly assessed and characterized? From the beginning, Nashville created a niche for itself as a center for country music television production. Beyond commercial production, no other type of program content or genres were attempted on any consistent basis. In the 1950s, Nashville was behind other locations in country music production such as Springfield, Missouri, and was not meeting the needs of "Opry" artists. In the next decade, Show Biz, Inc. became the leading television syndicator of country music and placed Nashville on the map for that kind of production. With the CMA awards on the network, the building of the Opryland complex, and the production of "The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw," network production established itself in Nashville on a

regular basis. With the sign-on of TNN and CMT, Nashville went from being primarily a production center to a national network origination center for country music.

Country music television acted primarily as promotional vehicle for the recording careers of country music artists'. As country music's popularity expanded, so did the demand for it on television. The rise of Show Biz and the interest in the networks for country music occurring in the 1960s is an example of that increased demand. Several country music series programs including "The Johnny Cash Show" and "Hee Haw" from Nashville aired on the networks but country music did not sustain itself in this form on the network level for long. Nashville program production settled into syndication and network specials by the mid 1970s. Nashville-based companies primarily produced syndicated programs, while network series and specials were produced most often by companies and individuals based outside of Nashville with previous experience in network production. For these network shows, Nashville provided the country music talent, facilities, and production and engineering crew. WSM imposed self-limitations to its main goals for the Opryland facilities. The television efforts at the Opryland complex were to act primarily as

promotional support for the "Grand Ole Opry" radio show and for attracting visitors to the theme park. The Show Biz syndicated programs also served that purpose well as did the network specials. Long-term network series production was never intended with the complex nor was program content that did not relate to country music.

21st Century Productions, on the other hand, intended to compete with New York and Hollywood in both video and film. Although providing facilities and crew for "Hee Haw" and producing a number of syndicated series and specials, the company never matched the level of production reflected in its promotional marketing. Country music talent was not as accessible as it was for WSM or Show Biz and required looking outside of Nashville for performers. Also, 21st Century found it more difficult to focus on that level of production as its news effort for WTVF began to require more resources to remain competitive on a local broadcasting level. It is obvious the level of competition 21st Century could have given Hollywood would be limited given it was functioning as a broadcast station as well as a production house.

7. By 1983, had Nashville truly developed into a major TV production center somewhat comparable to New York and Hollywood? For country music, Nashville became the primary television production center with country music talent, state-of-the-art facilities, and professional production and engineering support personnel. Since the 1960s, Nashville has been the leading center for country music television production in whatever form found success--syndication, broadcast network specials, and cable network programming.

In that context, Nashville has always been a second tier television production center at best compared to the East and West coasts. The talent and facilities to produce a variety of other programs such as producers, directors, writers, actors, and set designers experienced in dramatic programs existed primarily in the New York and Hollywood industries. The amount of facilities was limited as well. Each Nashville broadcast station as well as Opryland had one primary studio to devote to production. "Hee Haw" producer Sam Lovullo referred to WLAC-TV's new 3,500 square foot studio as a "matchbox" compared to studios on the West Coast, and it was the largest in Nashville until Opryland built its 5,600 square foot studio facility.

This remained the basic studio offering in Nashville until Opryland/TNN expanded with two more studios in 1983.

Implications of the Study

Nashville television programming's influence upon the broadcasting and music industries and its audiences should not be overlooked. For the broadcast networks, Nashville provided a valuable source of entertainment programming for national audiences. Also, the construction of WLAC-TV's studios and to a greater extent the creation of the Opryland complex offered network producers alternative locations outside the two major coastal centers for that production. As well, an additional appeal drawing producers to the city has been the lower costs of production compared with New York and Hollywood.

Through syndication, Nashville has provided an abundance of programming for local broadcast television stations. Starting well before the arrival of videotape, Flatt and Scruggs began their own circuit riding syndication of sorts by automobile to stations in the southeastern region. Later, Show Biz became the programming source for many stations in their Saturday

afternoon schedules; and as a syndicator, Show Biz was unique in marketing its products with a block programming strategy.

For country music performers, Nashville's growing momentum in the 1960s as a television production center provided a valuable outlet for promoting their careers. Through television, Nashville production certainly exposed new audiences to country music that would normally not tune to a country radio station, purchase a record, or attend a concert. Likewise for established country music fans, Nashville programming provided an alternative source for their needs not otherwise met by the television networks. In this context, Nashville was ahead of developments in broadcast regulation taking place in the early 1970s by already providing programming diversity to the broadcasting landscape.

Also, beyond serving an entertainment function in its own right, television production in Nashville served an important supporting role to the city's music industry infrastructure. Television production became an industry in its own right, joined with the music recording industry and other related activities in composing an overall Nashville entertainment industry.

Nashville's country music television industry played a role in the South's cultural development that

served to both reinforce the region's traditional values and myths, while promoting contemporary changes taking place. The South began emerging after World War II from an isolated condition that included economic poverty, racial segregation, and parochial attitudes by southerners and stereotyping by those outside the South. The shift of rural populations to urban centers and of populations across the North and the South beginning in the depression of the 1930s and accelerating during the war period created a homogenizing effect that helped to break down that isolation. The region benefited with the rest of the country from the post World War II economic resurgence that contributed to the development of positive cultural growth. When television signed-on in 1950, the South was experiencing a turnaround in social perception and acceptance of southern values that made country music more acceptable and commercially successful. Country music began to be less identified only with the South and now appealed more to urban audiences and addressed the problems of those adjusting to modern urban life.

Nashville's television industry was a part of the South's economic and technological growth and its success reflects country music's broadening popularity. Nashville country music programs exported southern

values to receptive audiences more geographically dispersed. Country music's development has always been characterized by a trend to abandon some of its traditional roots and commercially broaden its appeal to larger audiences. Nashville television programs were no exception and the approaches were not always successful. Show Biz began to create programs with a more contemporary style in the late 1960s and the CMA network awards program likewise was careful to craft a program with little rural flavor. The conflict within the ranks of Johnny Cash' show, however, demonstrates the tension between marrying traditional values with broader contemporary forms, resulting in a mediocre response with audiences. The success of "Hee Haw," on the other hand, reflects audiences now more embracing of the South and more widely accepting parody of southern culture and country music. In effect, Nashville has been an important testing ground in merging southern culture with mainstream appeals.

Nashville's Future

This study has examined Nashville's role as a national television production center. Nashville's production activity is part of an overall entertainment industry consisting of music composition, publishing,

and performance; broadcast and cable network production; and vast entertainment complexes, all owing their development to a simple beginning with a single radio program on a powerful Nashville radio station. The result has been an artistic and economic development of major proportions in the form of a thriving tourism and entertainment industry of Middle Tennessee.

Since 1983, Nashville has remained the leading center for country music television. TNN has further refined its programming over the years focusing more on music and events and less to shows conceptualized around country music. Gone are the situation comedies and game shows that reflected a broadcast network model when TNN first signed-on. Country music videos became a major source of production activity for Nashville-based producers. The growth of country music videos was reflected by the acquisition of CMT by TNN in 1990. Earlier that year, TNN substantially increased its own programming of music videos from 3 and one-half to 31 hours per week.

The TNN network's flagship program, "Nashville Now" hosted by Ralph Emery, lasted ten years until it was updated to attract more contemporary audiences. Crook and Chase hosted the show as "Music City Tonight" from 1993 to 1996 when West Coast-based Dick Clark

Productions took over the program as "Prime Time Country." In 1995, TNN was reported the 10th most watched basic cable network in prime time. It has remained unique among the cable networks by filling its schedule mostly with original programming ("Special Report" 1996, 40; Holley and Morris 1990, 1, 77; Smith July 1993, 1, 2; Carr 1996, 72).

Another change has occurred since 1983 that has directly challenged Nashville as the primary tourist destination for country music. As a tourist location, Nashville has offered the Opryland theme park with rides and shows including the "Grand Ole Opry," TNN programs, and themed music shows performed in the park. The city has offered a number of other attractions including the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum; tours of Music Row where recording companies are located, the Ryman Auditorium, and homes of country music celebrities; as well as a number of other attractions within and outside the city.

One entertainment attraction closely related to Nashville's television industry, but not found in abundance has been live stage performances by country music stars. Beginning with a couple of local country music jamboree shows in the early 1960s, Branson, Missouri grew to become the number one tour bus

destination and the number two automobile destination behind Orlando, Florida. "Hee Haw" star Roy Clark's new theater in 1983 gave a boost to the industry and began attracting other stars and theaters. By the early 1990s, Branson had become a major tourism center offering an abundance of live musical performances in more than 30 theaters with country music making up a large part of that activity (Salomon, 1994, 55; Mannix, 1994, 64-68).

Branson has not been Nashville's only competitor in country music tourism. Pigeon Forge located in East Tennessee has long maintained a tourist business being located at the entrance to the popular Smoky Mountain National Park. Since the late 1980s, Dolly Parton's Dollywood theme park has led the area in bringing top country acts for live performances. The park opened another major theater and the area is now attracting other developers. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina is another example, developing its tourism to now offer country music shows including an $8 million 2,200 seat theater and several other theater facilities (Boehlert 1993, 40).

Nashville has recently responded to the challenge in maintaining its status as the leading country music attraction. Opryland is now offering more live

performances with major country acts within the park including "Hee Haw Live" as a takeoff of the old series. New venues are opening up within the city as well to attract tourists. The most important development perhaps has been Gaylord Entertainment's $8.5 million renovation of the Ryman Auditorium that now offers regular concerts including television shows on TNN as well as broadcast network specials. The area of downtown Nashville around the Ryman, once in urban decline, is experiencing a growth in clubs and restaurants, as well as a major new sports and entertainment arena (Mannix 1994, 64-65).

Television is an important component to the success of Nashville's entertainment industry and is an area in which the city has a commanding lead compared to other locations. As country music entertainment has become more geographically dispersed, so must Nashville's offerings if it is to remain the "mecca" of country music it so long has held. Through television, as long as Gaylord recognizes the need to promote all of Nashville's offerings and not only its own parochial interests, the city will have a platform that will enable it to maintain that status.

Nashville must be careful with any future trends or it may find itself waking up too late. As an example,

the seemingly ubiquitous and industry-altering affects of digital interactive communications is an area Nashville interests must respond to. Our digital media future in whatever form it continues to develop is going to require innovative thinking from those who wish to play a leading role. Nashville's past suggests the city is capable of that kind of response.

Also, the development of digital technologies and interactivity suggests a further decentralizing of program production, content development, and distribution. Here, Nashville will find itself caught before a double-edge sword. Its role as a niche production center plays very well for the future with consumers having more control over the form and content of what messages they want to experience. Nashville's history of media production provides a rich archive of country music's past for any avid fan to recall at his or her leisure. As well, the production expertise built upon that history can insure a leading role in future content production.

On the other hand, digital media production allows more people to have the tools necessary to produce content that was once only economically feasible for organizations with deep pockets. Nashville can be viewed as one of the past monolithic centers of mass

communication that new technologies promise to break down. The idea of what it means to command a leading role in communications is changing. Nashville may want to think of itself as a "coast" not as a third largest center but more like Owen Bradley's description of the Nashville Sound, "a way of doing things," and a place where ideas begin and change is not only expected, but welcome (Hemphill 1970, 75).

Suggestions For Further Research

Among the comments by outside producers working in Nashville was the idea that production costs were less in Nashville than on the East or West coasts although it is not clear how important that was in determining where of the three locations to produce. A better understanding of Nashville's place in national television production can start with a close examination of the economics of program production and distribution. An effective study of this type should be comparative in nature to both New York and Hollywood and would necessitate the examination of those two centers. An economic study may clarify how feasible it would have been for Nashville to have expanded beyond its country music niche in any significant way.

In line with this kind of study is the issue of how the lack of a strong organized union base played into Nashville's growth. With the East and West coasts operating in a strongly controlled union environment, what impact would a unionized production industry in Nashville have played into its interaction with the two coasts? To expand further with network-level production, Nashville needed to develop the kinds of creative talent that network producers kept importing such as directors and writers. Would that talent have developed and would producers coming from union-based industries be more likely to hire from Nashville if they were hiring union personnel? Answering that question would help further understand Nashville's potential and limitations.

Another goal sharing Nashville's concept of being a "third coast" is that of film production. A more complete understanding of Nashville's role as a media center must take into account what role the city has played on a national level with motion picture production. Nashville has been the primary shooting location for several popular full-length feature films. As an actual film production center however, more low budget films have been produced in the city. A study examining Nashville's role in motion picture production

would give a better perspective on its contribution to that New York/Hollywood-based industry.

There is a void of research bringing together the variety of programs produced in the various markets in the United States. Nashville has not been the only city outside the East/West coast axis producing television programming on a national level. Chicago's contributions as an early network production center and its later efforts warrant a more indepth look as well as many other cities such as Boston; Philadelphia; Washington, D.C.; Miami; Dallas; Houston; San Francisco; Los Angeles. Beyond a direct contribution, such a study could also help focus on what influence other cities may have had to national programming with their purely local efforts.

Lastly, Show Biz Inc. holds a special place in Nashville's past and in the growth of country music. Although television acted as a promotional device for country music, it is not clear just how direct a contribution television made towards country music's success and growth. A closer examination of Show Biz's program distributions along with other growth factors such as record sales, radio air play and live concert

bookings in those markets would aid in understanding the effects of television programming in country music's rise in popularity during the 1960s.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Interviews

Algee, Amy, business manager for Thom 2 Productions. Telephone interview with author, 16 July 1996.

Allen, Hoss, WLAC radio disc jockey. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 13 July 1990.

Alley, Elmer, former executive producer for TNN. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 23 June 1993.

Backous, Ann, controller for Southern Productions. Telephone interview with author. 16 July 1996.

Blackwell, Noble, former producer and host of "Night Train." Telephone interview by author. Tape recording, 17 July 1990.

Bradley, Harold, musician and film producer. Telephone interview by the author. Tape recording. 13 July 1995.

Bradley, Owen, record producer. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 12 July 1995.

Buttrom, Hillous, musician. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording, 14 July 1995.

Cates, Joe, producer. Telephone interview with author. Tape recording. 23 November 1993.

Church, Jimmy, musician. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 6 July 1990.

Crump, Harold, former general manager of WTVF. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 1 June 1993.

Furnace, Bob, production staff member with United Methodist Communications. Telephone interview with author, 8 August 1995.

Gannoway, Al, producer of "Stars of the Grand Ole Opry."

Telephone interview by author. Tape recording, 12 June 1995.

Grams, Jane Dowden, former president of Show Biz, Inc. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville Tennessee, 22 July 1993.

Grams, Jane Dowden, former president of Show Biz, Inc. Telephone interview by author, 9 June 1996.

Griscom, Tom, president of Gaylord Broadcasting. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 13 May 1994.

Hafner, Robert, former production manager of WNGE. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 15 July 1994.

Hagan, Chet, producer. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 8 March 1994.

Hall, David, general manager of The Nashville Network. Telephone interview with author. Tape recording. 22 August 1994.

Howard, Frank, musician. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 9 July 1990.

Lovullo, Sam, former producer of "Hee Haw." Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 11 December 1993.

McBride, Harmon, executive producer for WDCN. Telephone interview with author. Tape recording. 28 June 1993.

McCown, W. Russell, former film director of WSM-TV. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 17 June 1993.

Owens, Jim, producer. Telephone interview with author. Tape recording. 11 March 1994.

Routson, Ron, chief operating officer, Film House. Telephone interview with author. 16 July 1996.

Smith, Roy, former general manager of 21st Century Productions. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Norcross, Georgia, 29 June 1993.

Smith, Roy, former general manager of 21st Century Productions. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 20 July 1990.

Turner, Bill, former WSM-TV director. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 15 June 1994.

Turner, Bill, former WSM-TV director. Telephone interview with author. 15 August 1994.

Walker-Meador, Jo, former executive director of the Country Music Association. Telephone interview by author. Tape recording. 24 August 1995.

Waugh, Irving, former president of WSM, Inc. Personal interview by author. Tape recording. Nashville, Tennessee, 30 December 1993.

News Releases

"Country Radio." Media Information, Country Music Association news release, 6 February 1995, country radio station survey from 1961 to 1995.

"For Immediate Release." News release announcing the production of "Pop! Goes The Country," Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

"Information For Release, Milestones In The History Of Opryland USA Inc." Opryland news release, 1992.

"NLT Immediate Release." National Life news release announcing WSM-TV for sale, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

"News From The Office Of The Governor." State of Tennessee news release announcing media production activities, 8 February 1984, 30.

"Night Train Reunion." News release, WTVF archives, Nashville.

"Southbound." News release announcing production of show, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

"The Jim Owens Companies Production Credits." Jim Owens Companies news release, 1994, 9.

"Video World Completes 1981 Pilots." Total Concept Representation, Inc. news release, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

"WLAC-TV News Release," Baker biography, WTVF archives, Nashville.

"WLAC-TV To Stage Giant Open House." News release, WTVF archives, Nashville.

Newsletters

"1983 Film/Video Business Booms As Tennessee Market Expands." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, April 1984, 9.

"21st Century Productions Will Produce Boots Randolph Show," WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, August 1969, 1.

"A Dream Comes True, Opryland Is Dedicated." The Shield News, National Life newsletter, 29 May 1972, 2-3.

"Annual Awards Show on Live TV." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1969, 4.

"Archie Campbell To Host His Own TV'er." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, January 1973, 7.

"Awards Show Talent Confirmed." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1971, 8.

"Awards To Be Presented Nationwide." CMA Close-Up newsletter, August 1965, 3.

"Backgrounder: The Grand Ole Opry House." Opryland USA: Information For Release, 1992.

"Blackwood Brothers Join Channel 5 Sunday Lineup." Impact WLAC-TV 4, no. 2, newsletter, August 1958, 1.

"Board Meeting," Close-Up, newsletter, 26 February 1960, 1.

"Boots Randolph Hits Nation Top 75 Markets." WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, March 1971, 1.

"Broadcast Row." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, October 1966, 5.

"Broadcast Row." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, July 1971, 3.

"C & W Exposure High." Close-Up, newsletter, October 1962, 1, 3.

"CBS Network Show From WLAC-TV." Impact Magazine, WLAC-TV newsletter, vol. 14, no. 12, May 1969, 1.

"CMA Awards Show Peaks TV Ratings." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, date unknown, 4.

"CMA Awards Show Scores On CBS." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, November 1972, 1.

"CMA Board Met In Nassau." CMA Close-Up newsletter, March 1968, 1.

"CMA Coordinates AFRTS TV." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, November 1967, 6.

"CMA Shows Aired in Nashville." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1978, 3.

Cambell in Dual Role in 'Hee Haw' Production." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, June 1969, 3.

"Cash is a Smash at Awards Show." CMA Close-Up newsletter, November 1969, 1-2.

"Country Junction! New Success in Country Music!" WLAC-TV Impact 3, no. 9, newsletter, March 1958, 1.

"Country Music Association Awards Show Set Oct. 10." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, July 1971, 1.

"Country Music...Country Wide...World Wide." Close-Up, CMA newsletter, February 1967, 7.

Country Music Foundation for Group W Communications, "Television's Role in Country Music, 1948-1987." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, January, February, March, May, June, August, 1988; January, February, March 1989.

"Country Music Hit Parade." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1973, 1.

"Country Music On T.V. Airwaves." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1974, 4.

"Country Music Roundup-Word From and About CMA'ers." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, November 1963, 2.

"Country On The Tube." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1978, 11.

"Country On The Tube." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, July 1980, 13.

"Country On The Tube." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, October 1980, 9.

"Country On The Tube." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, December 1980, 7.

"Country On The Tube." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, October 1981, 10.

"Dean Has New Country Syndie." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, June 1973, 3.

"Del Reeves to Host 'Country Carnival'." CMA Close Up, newsletter, October 1969, 3.

"Dino's 'Music Country' To Premiere July 26." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, July 1973, 3.

"Disney CM Shows Airs Oct. 1." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1972, 3.

"Dolly Parton Makes TV Pilot." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, January 1976, 4.

"Eddie Hill Benefit Show Huge Success." Impact Magazine WLAC-TV 14, no. 8, newsletter, February 1969, 1.

"Elmer Calls it a Wrap." The Wrap Sheet 1, no. 3, TNN newsletter, 2 May 1983, 1.

"First Annual C & W Awards Planned." CMA Close-Up newsletter, August 1967, 1-2.

"First Country Game Show." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1973, 6.

"Four Merit Top Honors In Their Field." WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, July 1965, 1.

"Good Shows Are 'Bustin' Out All Over On WLAC-TV." WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, vol. 7, no. 12, June 1962, 1.

"Ground Is Broken For Opryland, USA." The Shield News, National Life newsletter, vol. 6, no. 30, 22 July 1970, 1.

"'Hank' Rated Top Public TV Show For Southern Network." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, June 1977, 2.

"'Hee Haw' Continues on CBS-TV in 1970." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, December 1969, 3.

"'Hee Haw' Premieres on Channel 5 June 15." Impact Magazine, WLAC-TV newsletter, June 1969, 1.

"'Hee Haw' Rates High Again!" Impact Magazine, WLAC-TV newsletter, 1.

"Jim Ed Brown Debuts Own Series." CMA Close Up, newsletter, September 1969, 4.

"'John Davidson With Love' Airs on 5. " Impact Magazine, WLAC-TV newsletter, April 1974, 1.

"Johnny Cash Hosts CMA Awards--October 15." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1973, 1.

"Kraft Music Hall CMA Awards Tops." CMA Close-Up newsletter, January 1969, 1-2.

"Lucy Comes To Nashville." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, December 1978, 4.

"'Marjoe Country,' To Air on ABC TV." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, July 1973, 3.

"Media." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1982, 8.

"Media." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1983, 12.

"Media." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, November 1983, 12.

"Music City Joins Grammy Telecast." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1973, 2.

"Music Hall America." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, January 1977, 2.

"Musical Marathon." Newsletter, Country Music Association, 24 August 1959, 1.

"NBC-TV Special Taped At Opry House." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1974, 4.

"Nashville Grows ... And Grows ... And Grows ..." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, February 1976, 2.

"'Nashville Scene' TV Debut." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, February 1978, 3.

"Net TV Airing 13-Part Series." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, March 1971, 5.

"Network Christmas Show Taped at 5." Impact Magazine, WLAC-TV newsletter, December 1972, 1.

"New Sound For 'Country Junction'." WLAC-TV Impact 12, no. 4, newsletter, October 1966, 1.

"New Wilburn Brothers TV Show Beams into 19 SE, SW Markets." Close-Up, newsletter, June 1963, 1.

"Opry Celebrates 43rd Anniversary." Our Shield, National Life newsletter, 28 October 1968, 14-15.

"Parton TV Show Set For 71 Stations." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, August 1976, 2.

"Party Line." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, April 1966, 3.

"Party Line." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, August 1971, 9.

"Perspective." CMA Close-Up, July 1983, 6.

"Porter Wagoner Debuts Syndicated TV At Opryland." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, October 1972, 11.

"Profiles: Connie B. Gay," CMA Close-Up newsletter, January, 1965, 1-2.

"Profiles: E. W. Wendell." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, July 1981, 3.

"Profiles: Sam Lovullo," CMA Close-up, newsletter, May 1975, 1-2.

"Ray Anthony Show Distributed Overseas," WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, March 1969, 1.

"Smith Syndicates Tubb." CMA Close-Up newsletter, September 1965, 4.

"'Sound America' Taped for Fall Showing." WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, June 1971, 1.

"'Southbound' Series Premieres." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, May 1981, 13.

"Special Program Commemorates WSM's 25th Anniversary and Dedicates Television." Our Shield 29, no. 38, National Life newsletter, 16 October 1950, 3-4.

"'Stan Hitchcock Show' Begins Third 13 Week Series." WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, April 1969, 1.

"Syndicated Country Music Shows to Star Grand Ole Opry Talent." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, September 1961, 1, 3.

"Tenth Annual CMA Awards Show A Huge Success." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, November 1976, 1-2.

"The Nashville Network To Highlight Cable TV's First Live Nightly Entertainment Programming." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, April 1982, 7.

"Thriving Film/Video Business turns Profit for Tennessee." CMA Close-Up, newsletter, June 1983, 11.

"We're in Show Biz!!!" Holiday City Times, Holiday Inn newsletter, 2 April 1971.

"WLAC-TV Appoints Four Vice Presidents." WLAC-TV Impact, newsletter, October 1966, 1.

"WSM Brings Television to Nashville for First Time." Our Shield, National Life newsletter, 9 October 1950, 3.

"WSM Directors Approve Plans For Opryland Complex; M. J. Downs Named General Manager." The Shield News, National Life newsletter, vol. 5, no. 41, 13 October 1969, 1.

"WSM Will Study Feasibility Of 'Opryland USA'." The Shield News, National Life newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 45, 28 October 1968, 1, 6.

Published Documents

US Service Mark Registration 571,588, Class 104, Communication, April 18, 1950, US Patent Office, 728.

US Service Mark Registration 527,589, Class 106, Material Treatment, March 5, 1957, U.S. Patent Office, TM 31.

Unpublished Documents

"A Company History." JOA Employee Handbook [Jim Owens and Associates], July 1993, 13-14.

"A Look Behind 'The Nashville Look'." 21st Century Productions promotional literature, WTVF archives, Nashville.

Country Music Foundation for Group W Communications, Inc. "Country Music Television Programming, 1948-1987: A Preliminary Survey." TMs, March 1987, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

David Black. "Night Train: Nashville Rhythm and Blues." TMs, August 1991.

Dolly and Carol In Nashville. Show program, photocopy. Country Music Hall of Fame and Library.

"Nashville's Hollywood Center." 21st Century Productions promotional literature, WTVF archives, Nashville.

"Roy Smith, 1965-66." Three Decades of NATPE International: A View From The Top, NATPE publication.

Russ McCown. "1955-1956, Purina Grand Ole Opry." List of show dates and stars, 9 March 1991.

T. B. Baker, "Present & Future Expansion Plans," WLAC-TV Inter Office Memo, WTVF archives, 11 March 1966.

"The Mind's The Limit." WLAC-TV promotional literature, WTVF archives, Nashville.

Tim England. "Project X: The Beginning of the ENG Revolution." TMs, 1992.

"WLAC-TV the South's largest and most complete Videotronics Production Center." WLAC-TV promotional literature, WTVF archives, Nashville.

WSM Grand Ole Opry. 16 March 1974. Show program for the debut of the new Grand Ole Opry House.

Videotape Recordings

Kalodemas, Demetria, prod. 40 Years on Channel 4. Videotape dub, WSMV, Nashville.

Air Training Command, prod. Country Style USA. United States Army at Bradley Studios, show #5, videotape dub, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

Binkley, Bayron, prod. Grand Ole Opry. Ralston Purina sponsor, show 33, 22 February 1962, videotape dub, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

Alley, Elmer, prod. National Life Grand Ole Opry. July 1965, videotape dub, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

Video Music Productions, prod. Night Train. Videotape dub, WTVF, Nashville.

WSM-TV, prod. Purina Grand Ole Opry. Show #2, videotape dub, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

Lovullo, Sam. "Hee Haw" producer. Interview on syndicated program Vicki!, aired 26 May 1994 on WNWO-TV, Toledo.

Gannoway, Al, prod. Stars of the Grand Ole Opry. Flamingo Films, videotape dub, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

WSM-TV, prod. That Good Ole Nashville Music. Show number 72-73-11, videotape, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

Show Biz, Inc., prod. The Porter Wagoner Show. Various programs, videotape, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

Tennessee TV, prod. Those Stonemans. Show # 81, videotape dub, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Anderson, Christopher. Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

Anderson, Gary H. Video Editing and Post-Production: A Professional Guide, 3rd ed. White Plains: Knowledge Industries, 1993.

Barnouw, Erik. The Image Empire: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Volume III-from 1953. New York: Oxford, 1970.

Baughman, James L. "Television in the 'Golden Age': An Entrepreneurial Experiment." In Media Voices: An Historical Perspective, ed. Jean Folkerts, 403-417. New York: Macmillian, 1992.

Bedell, Sally. Up The Tube: Prime-Time TV and the Silverman Years. New York: Viking, 1981.

Bird, Janet. "Ralph Emery." In Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers, ed. Barry McCloud, 270. New York: Perigee, 1995.

Blumenthal, Herbert, and Oliver R. Goodenough. This Business of Television. New York: Billboard, 1991.).

Boddy, William. Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

Broadcasting and Cable Yearbook 1993. New Providence: Bowker, 1993.

Brooks, Tim, and Earle Marsh. The Complete Directory to Prime Time TV Shows, 1946-Present, 3rd ed. New York: Ballantine Books, 1985.

Broome, Paul, and Clay Tucker. The Other Music City: The Dance Bands and Jazz Musicians of Nashville, 1920-1970. Nashville: American Press, 1990.

Brown, Les. Television: The Business Behind the Box. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.

Browne, Steven E. Videotape Editing: A Postproduction Primer. Boston: Focal, 1989.

Castleman, Harry, and Walter J. Podrazik. Watching TV: Four Decades of American Television. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982.

"Directory of Television Stations in the U. S.," in Broadcasting & Cable Market Place, B-59. New Providence: Bowker, 1992.

Doyle, Don H. Nashville Since the 1920s. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985.

Emery, Ralph, with Tom Carter. Memories: The Autobiography of Ralph Emery. New York: Macmillan, 1991.

Emery, Ralph, with Tom Carter, More Memories. New York: G. P Putnam's Sons, 1993.

Eng, Steve. "Dolly Parton." In Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers, ed. Barry McCloud, 620-621. New York: Perigee, 1995.

Eng, Steve. Satisfied Mind: The Country Music Life of Porter Wagoner. Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1992.

Erickson, Hal. Syndicated Television: The First Forty Years, 1947-1987. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1989.

Foy, Jessica. "WLAC." In Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, vol. 3, ed. Charles Reagan and William Ferris, 244-245. New York: Doubleday, 1989.

Green, Douglas B. "The Road to Nashville." In The Illustrated History of Country Music, ed. Patrick Carr, 184-186. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980.

Hagan, Chet. Grand Ole Opry. New York: H. Holt, 1989.

Head, Sydney W., Christopher H. Sterling, and Lemuel B. Schofield. Broadcasting in America: A Survey of Electronic Media, 7th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

Hemphill, Paul. The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.

Howard, Herbert H., Michael S. Kievman, and Barbara A. Moore. Radio, TV, and Cable Programming, 2nd ed. Ames: Iowa State University, 1994.

Hurst, Jack. Nashville's Grand Ole Opry. New York: Abrams, 1975.

Inglis, Andrew F. Behind the Tube: A History of Broadcasting Technology and Business. Boston: Focal, 1990.

Ivey, William, and Douglas B. Green. "The Death of Rock, The Rise of Country." In The Illustrated History of Country Music, ed. Patrick Carr, 266. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979.

Ivey, William, and Douglas B. Green. "The Nashville Sound." in The Illustrated History of Country Music, ed. Patrick Carr, 244. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979.

MacDonald, J. Fred. One Nation Under Television: The Rise and Decline of Network TV. New York: Pantheon, 1990.

Malone, Bill C. Country Music USA. Austin: University of Texas, 1985.

McCloud, Barry, ed. Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers, New York: Perigee, 1995.

McNeil, Alex. Total Television: A Comprehensive Guide to Programming from 1948 to the Present. New York: Penguin, 1991.

Nash, Alana. Dolly. Los Angeles: Reed, 1978.

Nord, David Paul. "The Nature of Historical Research." In Research Methods in Mass Communication, 2nd ed., ed. Guido H. Stempel III and Bruce H. Westley, 308-315. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989.

O'Conner, John E. "Introduction: Television and the Historian." In American History/American Television, ed. John E. O'Conner, xiii-xlii. New York: Ungar, 1983.

Ogles, Robert M., and Herbert H. Howard. "The Nashville Network." In The Cable Networks Handbook, ed. Robert G. Picard, 59-61. Riverside: Carpelan, 1993.

Parton, Dolly. Dolly: My Life and Other Unfinished Business. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

Peterson, Richard A. "Single-Industry Firm to Conglomerate Synergistics: Alternative Strategies for Selling Insurance and Country Music." In Growing Metropolis: Aspects of Development in Nashville, ed. James F. Blumstein and Benjamin Walter, 349. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1975.

Picard, Robert G. The Cable Networks Handbook. Riverside: Carpelan, 1993.

Rosenburg, Neil V. Bluegrass: A History. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.

Shaw, Arnold. Honkers and Shouters: The golden years of rhythm and blues. New York: Macmillan, 1978.

Sloan, W. David. Perspectives on Mass Communication History. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1991.

Stamper, Powell. The National Life Story. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968.

Sterling, Christopher H., and John M. Kittross. Stay Tuned: A Concise History of American Broadcasting, 2d ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990.

Stevens, John D. and Hazel Dicken Garcia. Communication History. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980.

Terrace, Vincent. Encyclopedia of Television Series, Pilots and Specials: 1937-1973. New York: Zoetrope, 1986.

Terrace, Vincent. Television Specials: 3,201 Entertainment Spectaculars, 1939-1993. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1995.

Wolfe, Charles K. "Grand Ole Opry." In Definitive Country: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Country Music and Its Performers, ed. Barry McCloud, 336. New York: Perigee, 1995.

Wolfe, Charles K. Tennessee Strings: The Story of Country Music in Tennessee. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1977.

"WSM-TV Passes Another Milestone," 1956 Television Age Yearbook, 1956, 144.

Dissertations

Moore, Barbara Ann. "Syndication of First-Run Television Programming: Its Development and Current Status." Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 1979.

Rinks, Jerry Wayne. "We Shield Millions: A History of WSM, 1925-1950." Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, 1993.

Varnell, Lee. "The Growth And Development Of Basic Cable Services, And A Case Study Of The Nashville Network." Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 1993.

Journal Articles

Colley, John Scott. "The Sound Seen: Country Music on Television." Journal of Country Music 3, no. 3-4 (Fall-Winter, 1972): 107.

Danker, Frederick E. "Country Music and the Mass Media: The Johnny Cash Television Show." Popular Music and Society 2, no. 2, (1973): 124-144.

Howard, Herbert H. "Country Music Radio Part I: A Tale of Two Cities." Journal of Radio Studies 1 (1992): 107.

Morthland, John. "Changing Methods, Changing Sounds: An Overview." Journal of Country Music 12, no. 2 (1987): 4-6.

Nielsen, Ted. "Television: Chicago Style." Journal of Broadcasting 9 (Fall 1965): 305-312.

"Owen Bradley: The Way We Were," Journal of Country Music 12, no. 2 (1987): 9-10.

Rumble, John. "The Emergence of Nashville as a Recording Center: Logbooks from the Castle Studio, 1952-1953." Journal of Country Music 3, no. 3 (December 1978): 22-41.

"The Unseen Hand: How Producers Shape The Country Sound." Journal of Country Music 12, no. 2 (1987): 2-3.

Newspapers

"3, 2, 1 Zap And Station Switch Done." The Tennessean, 12 December 1973, p. 1, 14.

"ABC-TV To Drop Cash, Welk for Next Season." The Nashville Tennessean, 20 March 1971, p. 1.

Bailey, Jerry. "Country Hit Parade Just That." The Nashville Tennessean, 9 February 1973.

Bailey, Jerry. "Country Music Program Also Planned by CBS," The Nashville Tennessean, 26 September 1973, p. 36.

Bailey, Jerry. "NBC Country Music Series Called Possible." The Nashville Tennessean, 5 September 1973, p. 1.

Barker, George. "He Pushed NLT Into Tomorrow," Nashville Banner, 19 March 1981.

Bartley, Diane. "'All Systems Go' For TNN." The Tennessean Showcase, 6 March 1983, p. 6.

Bartley, Diane. "Country Music Television's Singing A New Tune On Viacom." The Tennessean, 21 October 1986, sec. B, p. 7.

Bartley, Diane. "Hendersonville's CMTV: A Well-Kept Cable Secret." The Tennessean, 12 March 1983.

Bartley, Diane. "Jack DeWitt's Career Spans Broadcast History." The Tennessean, 13 May 1982, p. 25.

Bartley, Diane, and Robert K. Oermann, "Nashville Network Makes Cable History." The Tennessean, 8 March 1983, sec. D, p. 1.

"Bluegrass TV, Radio Host Dies." The Tennessean, 11 September 1989.

Brady, Mary Jo. "Country Music Topic Of Documentary," The Nashville Banner, 9 January 1976.

Brown, Mary Jane. "Saturday Night's Telecast Of Opry By WDCN A First." Nashville Banner, 2 March 1978, p. 14.

Browning, Graeme. "WSM Plans Its Own Net Of Cable TV." The Tennessean, 12 February 1981, p. 1.

Carter, Walter. "Tom T. Hall Takes Ralph Emery's Place As 'Pop' TV Host." The Tennessean, 4 March 1980.

Cason, Albert. "Show Biz Inc. Joining Multimedia." The Tennessean, 17 March 1981, p. 11.

Cason, Albert. "Show Biz Inc. Purchased By Three of Its Executives." The Tennessean, 13 March 1979, p. 1.

Cason, Albert. "WLAC Forms Film, TV Firm." The Nashville Tennessean, 5 May 1968, p. 1-9.

Cason, Albert, and John Haile, "Starday Buys King Records." The Nashville Tennessean, 19 October 1968, p. 1-2.

"Changing Ownership." The Tennessean, 2 December 1975, p. 2.

"Country Music Producers Form Nashville Company." The Tennessean, 17 February 1980.

"'Country Music U.S.A. Joins Prime Time Lineup." The Wheeling News-Register, 2 December 1973.

"DeWitt Retires As President of WSM." The Nashville Tennessean, 20 February 1968, 1.

"Draughons Kept Pioneering." The Nashville Tennessean," 29 November 1953, sec. H, p. 1.

Dyer, Bob. "Garrison's An Evangelist For His 'Music Country'." The Phoenix Gazette, 19 January 1974.

Eipper, Laura. "Roy Smith Plans TV Work Here." The Tennessean, 4 August 1977, p. 23.

Eipper, Laura. "Roy Smith Forms TV Production Company." The Tennessean, 15 November 1977.

Erickson, Michael. "Future Records May Be Mixture of Sight, Sound." Nashville Banner, 12 October 1981.

Gallagher, Kathleen. "'Hee Haw!' After 10 Years Country Show Has Last Laugh." The Tennessean, 18 October 1978, p. 9.

"GE Buys WSIX For $9.5 Million." The Nashville Tennessean," 1 October 1965, 1.

"Grand Ole Opry Seen Over 130 TV Stations." The Nashville Tennessean, 16 October 1955.

Gregory, Ed. "Music Businessmen Poised To Leap Into Video Future." The Tennessean, 11 August 1983.

Grimsley, Weldon. "Hank Williams Jr. TV Series Slates July Filming." The Nashville Banner, 25 July 1970, p. 1-2.

Hall, Allan. "Cable Television May Turn Nashville Into 'Third Coast' for Producers." The Tennessean, 30 August 1981.

Hance, Bill. "Candid Camera Relocation Here." The Nashville Banner, 23 May 1975, p. 7.

Hance, Bill. "NBC's 'Country' A 'Model' TV Show." The Nashville Banner, 16 April 1974, p. 10.

Hance, Bill. "Opryland Productions $150,000 In Red." The Nashville Banner, 3 August 1977, p. 4.

Harrington, Stephanie. "Who's Got the Last 'Hee Haw' Now?" The New York Times, 4 January 1970, sec. 2, p. 17.

Haun, Harry. "Movie Talk Results 'Productive'." The Nashville Tennessean, 25 September 1968, 1-12.

Hewitt, Shirley. "Local TV: It's Big Time At WSM!" The Nashville Tennessean, 15 September 1963, suppl., p. 5.

Hieronymus, Clara. "Services held for Fred Kliebacker," The Tennessean, 6 December 1992, sec. B, p. 5.

Honick, Bruce. "The 'Luckiest' Man in Town?" Nashville Scene, suppl., 26 November 1986, p. 1, 4, 7, 14.

Hurst, Jack. "Bissell Plans 4 TV Specials." The Nashville Tennessean, 10 September 1971, sec. A, p. 1.

Hurst, Jack. "'Hee Haw' Has its Own Private Network." The Sunday Showcase, The Nashville Tennessean, suppl., 19 September 1971, p. 3-S.

Hurst, Jack. "Nashville Is Emerging As TV Production Center." The Blade, 2 June 1974.

Hurst, Jack. "Nashville Is The Place For Syndicated Shows," The Nashville Tennessean, 4 October 1970, p. 7.

Hurst, Jack. "Nashville's Film Performances Excites 'Hee Haw' Producers." The Nashville Tennessean, 27 May 1969, p. 14.

Hurst, Jack. "New TV Show To Film Here." The Nashville Tennessean, 28 June 1969, p. 1.

Hurst, Jack. "Show Biz Plans Country Music Special at Madison Garden." The Nashville Tennessean, 27 April 1972, pp. 5, 7.

Hurst, Jack. "Television's 'Golden Door' May Be Opening in Nashville." The Nashville Tennessean, 23 May 1971, sec. B, pp. 1, 3.

Hurst, Jack. "TV Show Company Formed Here." The Nashville Tennessean, 18 May 1971, pp. 1, 8.

Hurst, Jack. "WSM 'The Place' for Syndicated Shows." The Nashville Tennessean, 4 October 1970, suppl., p. 7.

Hurst, Jack, and John Hale, "Praises Heaped on Cash After 1st Show." The Nashville Tennessean, 8 June 1969, sec. A, p. 1.

Lynch, Harold. "TV Program To Prove Music 'Visible'." The Nashville Banner, 21 March 1973, p. 24.

"'Nashville Alive!' Showcases The 'Real' Music City." Nashville Banner, 14 August 1981.

"Nashville Firm, N.Y. Group Schedule Video Programs." The Nashville Tennessean, 20 September 1968, p. 1.

"'Nashville Now' to Move into New Opryland Studio." The Tennessean Showcase, 19 June 1983, p. 12.

"'Nashville On The Road' Taping Here Provides Tourism Boon and Good Time for Local Residents." newspaper article, title and date unknown, Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville..

"New Opryland Productions Head Named." The Tennessean, 13 December 1977, p. 31.

O'Donnell, Red. "Hee Haw Party Held for TV VP." The Nashville Banner, 23 May 1969, 1.

O'Donnell, Red. "Johnny Cash Will Be On Again This Winter." The Nashville Banner, 24 September 1969, p. 5.

O'Donnell, Red. "'Hee Haw' Alive, Well At WLAC." The Nashville Banner, 2 April 1971, p. 1.

O'Donnell, Red. "Country Stars Win Crowd," The Nashville Banner, 5 June 1972, p. 4.

O'Donnell, Red. "Bobby Goldsboro Set For 26 Weeks." Nashville Banner, 26 August 1972, "Amusement Week" section.

O'Donnell, Red. "WSM Expanding To Supply Cable TV." Nashville Banner, 12 February 1981.

O'Donnell, Red. "Showbiz-Multimedia Planning 9 Country Music TV Specials." The Nashville Banner, 19 January 1982, p. 24.

O'Donnell, Red, and Bill Hance, "Como, Weaver To Tape Two TV Shows At Opry." The Nashville Banner, 4 December 1974, p. 17.

Oermann, Robert K. "Opry's Transition To Live TV Smooth," The Tennessean, 14 April 1985.

Oermann, Robert K., and Richard Schweid, "Willie Nelson Creates Cowboy TV Network." The Tennessean, 7 September 1989, sec D, p. 1.

Oermann, Robert, and Thomas Goldsmith. "R&B Reigned in Nashville Music of the '50s." The Tennessean, 17 February 1988, sec. D, p. 1.

"Opry Signs For TV Network Show." Nashville Banner, 23 June 1955, 12.

"Opry Telecast Set Saturday By Channel 8." Nashville Banner, 28 February 1980.

Peterson, Bettylou. "The Opry: Live on TV At Last." Detroit Free Press, 26 February 1978.

Richert, Lindley. "Holiday Inn Buys Into Nashville's Show Biz, Inc." The Commercial Appeal, 25 March 1971.

Russell, Peggy. "2 Grand Ole Opry Shows to be Aired Back-To-Back." The Cleveland Plain Dealer, 2 March 1979.

Satterfield, LaWayne. "Ability, Hard Work Pay Off for Jane Dowden." The Nashville Banner, 13 February 1971.

Sawyer, Kathy. "'Music City U.S.A.' Does Some Creating." The Nashville Tennessean, 17 September 1967.

Sawyer, Kathy. "A Parable of Rose and Her Many Talents," The Nashville Tennessean, 25 May 1969, p. 127.

Sawyer, Kathy. "Cash and Co. Say Hello-Goodbye." The Nashville-Tennessean, 1 June 1969, Showcase suppl., p. 3.

Sawyer, Kathy. "How WSM Brought TV to Music City." The Nashville Tennessean, suppl., 4 October 1970, p. 3.

Sharborough, Jacqueline. "Headliners Feature Opry Finale." The Nashville Tennessean, 12 September 1956, p. 5.

"Show Biz Purchased From Holiday Inns." The Nashville Banner, 13 March 1979, 8.

Smith, Sandy. "New Flagship, Old Captains." The Tennessean, 16 July 1993, p. 1A, 2A.

"Station Owners Bring 'Know How' to Video." The Nashville Tennessean, 8 August 1954, sec. E, p.1.

"Technicians At WSIX Vote To Join Union." The Nashville Tennessean, 8 December 1966, p. 46.

Teeter, H. B. "Eager Public Welcomes TV." The Nashville Tennessean, 1 October 1950, sec. A, p. 1, 4.

"Television in Nashville?" The Nashville Tennessean, advertisement, 29 November 1953, sec. H, p. 10.

Whitt, Wayne. "TV, Police Station Funds Get Council Approval." The Tennessean, 16 January 1973, p. 1, 8.

"WLAC Exec Heads Opryland Unit." The Tennessean, 29 January 1975, p. 29.

"WLAC-TV Plans To Go 'Full Color'." The Nashville Tennessean, p. 1.

"WLAC-TV To Become WTVF Tuesday Morning." Tennessean Showcase, The Tennessean suppl., 30 November 1975.

"WSIX-TV Can't Use Opry Stars." The Nashville Tennessean, 16 September 1965.

"WSIX-TV Gets Program Chief." The Nashville Tennessean, 10 August 1966, p. 16.

"WSM Innovator in Programming." The Nashville Tennessean, 4 October 1970, sec. A, p.1.

"WSM Inc. Tells of Personnel Changes." The Tennessean, 16 June 1977, pp. 1, 12.

"WTVF No Longer Filming 'Hee Haw'." The Tennessean, 11 January 1980.

Periodicals

"A Prophetic View of CMA." Billboard, suppl., 18 March 1978, CMA-18.

"A Widening Market for Country Music Via TV Syndication." Broadcasting, 31 July 1972.

"An Interview With Porter Wagoner." Country Song Roundup, May 1970, 9.

"Behind The Scenes: Show Biz, Inc." Country Song Roundup, 19 May 1970, 36.

Boehlert, Eric. "Branson and Beyond." Billboard, 2 October 1993, 40.

Brown, Les. "C & W 'Explosion' in Television." Variety, 26 August 1964, 31, 36.

Bundy, June. "C & W Shows Hold At Local TV Level." The Billboard, 23 March 1957, 80.

Bundy, June. "Country & Western Music Holds the Line on the Video Front." The Billboard 3, March 1956, 1, 63.

"C&W Shows Hold at Local Level." The Billboard, 23 March 1957, 90.

Caldwell, Emmie. "Profiles, Jane Dowden Grams." Advantage, December 1983, 8.

Carr, Patrick. "The Final Note: Lost in the Flickering Glow." Country Music, January/February 1996, 72.

"Changing Hands." Broadcasting, 5 October 1981, 46.

"Changing Hands." Broadcasting, 21 March 1988, 62.

"Colin & Show Biz Enter 3-Level Production Tie." Billboard, 28 September 1968.

"Country-Music Cable Network To Start In '83." Adweek, 25 January 1982.

"David Hall: The Nashville Network's Country Gentleman." Broadcasting, 20 February 1989, 79.

"Films Boon to Country Music & Hall of Fame," The Billboard, 5 August 1967, 23, 26, 42.

Foti, Laura. "New Nashville Net Shows Near." Billboard, 19 November 1983, 4.

Greeley, Bill. "'Preempt' of Kraft Country Music Awards an NBC-TV Act of Caution." Variety, 6 November 1968, 31, 48.

Green, Douglas B. "Country Music's Big On The Tube...Again." Country Music 5, no. 4, January 1977, 42.

"Hagan In Production Pact With Nashville's Show Biz," Broadcasting, 14 October 1968.

Hall, Claude. "Country Television Programs Enjoying Coast-to-Coast Hayride." Billboard, 13 November 1965, 1, 53.

Hall, Claude. "2 Shows Riddled By Bad Writing." Billboard, 28 June 1969, 25.

Hall, Douglas E. "TV Execs Pick Over Music Shows." Billboard, 28 March 1981, p. 6.

"'Hee Haw' is Called Hayseed." Billboard, 28 June 1969, 44.

"'Hee Haw' Prompts Gusher of Records." Billboard, 20 December 1969, 46.

"'Hee Haw' Ready for Return Dec. 17." Billboard, 22 November 1969, 60.

"'Hee Haw' Show Puts Down Critics." Billboard, 31 May 1969, 62.

Hickey, Dave. "Porter, The Last Great Hillbilly?", Country Music 3, no. 8, May 1975, 63.

Hickey, Neil. "Direct to You from Tin Pan Valley." TV Guide, 11 August 1973, 14-18.

Hinkle, Sally. "3 Awards To Kenny Rogers." Billboard, 16 June 1979, 54.

Hinkle, Sally. "Music City News Awards 14 Country Acts & Viewer." Billboard, 24 June 1978, 38.

Hinkle, Sally. "TV Beckons Nashville." Billboard, 13 May 1978, 4, 40.

Holley, Debbie, and Edward Morris. "TNN Sets Deal To Buy CMT, Its Vid Rival." Billboard, 4 August 1990, 1, 77.

"Hollywood Calls...Nashville Answers." suppl., The Billboard, 28 October 1967, 70.

Levine, Carl. "Television Production Country Style: Nashville Network." VideoPro, May 1984, 28-33.

"Live C.&W. Shows Cut Big Slice of Local TV." The Billboard, 3 March 1956, 61.

Mannix, Margaret. "Nashville's Comeback Try." U.S. News & World Report, 4 July 1994, 64-68.

McGraw, Margie. "The Windsors of Nashville: The Bradley Dynasty." Nashville Business & Lifestyles, July 1991, 1.

Mercedes, Carmen. "Music Row Discovers Video." Advantage, October 1981, 63-67.

"Nashville Goes Cross-Country." Broadcasting, 14 March 1983, 146.

"Opry in Living Color." Billboard, suppl., 28 October 1967, 61, 63.

"Opryland To Buy Country Music Television." Broadcasting, 30 July 1990, 30.

"'Ozarkland Jamboree' Fuels Old Controversy." Billboard, 2 August 1969, 29, 33.

Plotnik, Gene. "Big Push Due On 'Opry' TV." The Billboard, 13 November 1954, 78, 100.

"'Pop Goes the Country' Builds Solid Following." Billboard, 22 February 1975, 22.

"Profiles: Jane Dowden Grams." Advantage, December 1983, 83.

"Round-The-Clock MTV Vid Network Has New Country Cousin In CMTV Service." Variety, 28 April 1983, 1, 17.

Salomon, Alan. "More Tour Buses Than Residents." Advertising Age, 25 April 1994, 55.

Soelberg, Paul W. "The Porter Wagoner Story...Part I, The Early Days." Country Song Roundup, February 1972, 27.

Soelberg, Paul W. "The Porter Wagoner Story...Part II, The Making of a Legend." Country Song Roundup, March 1972, 31.

Smith, Hazel. "Hee Haw-Different Faces, Same Jokes." Country Music, March 1992, 13-14.

"Special Report: Original Cable Programming, TNN." Broadcasting & Cable, 19 February 1996, 40.

"Syndication: Con Brio." Sponsor 20, no. 17, 22 August 1966, 42-47.

"Telstar Unveils Country Channel." O.T.C. Review, October 1983.

"TV Providing Nashville With Another Special Sound: Product For USA, Paced By Syndication." Variety, 5 January 1977.

"TV Specials." Billboard, 26 April 1980, N-32.

"Viacom Goes With 'Opry' & 'Question'." Variety, 10 March 1976.

Weeks, Timothy. "Video Static." Advantage Magazine, February 1987, 27.

Williams, Bill. "Nashville Center For Syndications." Billboard, 15 April 1972, 18.

Williams, Bill. "Show Biz for Country on TV." The Billboard, 19 October 1968.

Wood, Gerry. "Jo Walker: CMA's Lucky Accident," Billboard, suppl. 18 March 1978, CMA-3, CMA-8.

Wood, Gerry. "Nashville! Music City No Limits." Billboard, 26 April 1980, N-35.

APPENDIX

Appendix A.

SYNDICATED PROGRAMS FROM THE 1960s

Program (Yrs. Syndicated)	Producer	Sponsor	Where Prod.	Markets
Grand Ole Opry (1960-63)	WSM-TV	Pet Milk	WSM-TV	25-30
Gospel Song Shop	Show Biz	Chatt. Medicine	WSM-TV	60
Porter Wagoner Show (1960-81)	Show Biz	Chatt. Medicine	WSM-TV	
Wilburn Bro. Show (1963-69)	Show Biz	American Snuff	WSM-TV & WSIX-TV	70
Nat. Life Grand Ole Opry (1965-1968)	Show Biz/ WSM-TV	National Life	Ryman	18
That Good Ole Nashville Music (1969-1977)	WSM-TV	Ralston-Purina	Ryman & Opry House	
Music City USA (1967-?)	Show Biz	Various	WSIX-TV	
Billy Walker's Country Carnival (1968-?)	Show Biz	Various	WSM-TV	20
Del Reeves' Country Carnival (1969-?)	Show Biz	Various	WSM-TV	20
The Country Place (1969-?)	Show Biz	Various	On Location	20+
The Kitty Wells/ Johnny Walker Family Show (1969-?)	Moeller Talent/Ruboca	Various	WSM-TV	
Bobby Lord Show (1969-?)	WSM-TV	Various	WSM-TV	22

SYNDICATED PROGRAMS FROM THE 1960s

Program (Yrs. Syndicated)	Producer	Sponsor	Where Prod.	Markets
The Stoneman Family	Tenn. TV	Various	WSM-TV WSIX-TV	18
Heaven's Jubilee	WLAC-TV	Various	WLAC-TV	75
Night Train (1964-67)	Video Music Prod.	Various	WLAC-TV	75+
Stan Hitchcock Show (1968-?)	21st Cent.	Various	WLAC-TV	85
Ray Anthony Show	21st Cent.	Various	Miami	
Bill Anderson Show	Poole/ WSIX-TV/ DMK Films	Various	WSIX-TV	125
Ernest Tubb Show (1965-?)	Hal Smith TV Programs	Various	WSIX-TV	15

APPENDIX B.

"NIGHT TRAIN"

The only known existing videotape of "Night Train," located in the WTVF archives in Nashville, is understood to be an early show. The following is a rundown of the artists and songs in the order that they appeared on the program:

Buddy and Stacy	"Shotgun" Jimmy Hendrix plays guitar with backup band.
Jimmy Church	"Until the Midnight Hour"
Peggy Gaines	"Just One Step"
Eddie Hill	"Baby I Cry"
Ray Pollard	"My Girl and I"
The Avons	"Back in My Heart Again"
Jackie Shane	"Walkin' the Dog"
The Hy-Tones	"Come Fly With Me"
James Crawford	"If You Don't Work, You Can't Eat"
Pamela Rutherford	"CC Ryder"
Tony Clark	"The Entertainers"
Joe Matthews	"She's My Beauty Queen"
The Spidells	"So Nice to Fall in Love"
Julia Turner	"Make Someone Happy"
Jimmy Church	"Ease My Troublin' Mind"
The Commanders	"Shout"

APPENDIX C.

SYNDICATED PROGRAMS FROM THE 1970s

Program (Yrs. Syndicated)	Producer	Where Prod.	Markets
Hee Haw (1971-93)	Yongestreet	WLAC-TV	215
Hugh X. Lewis Country Club (1968-?)	Heil Quaker	WSIX-TV	31
Off The Record (1971-72)	WDCN	WDCN	
Bobby Goldsboro Show (1972-73)	Show Biz	CBS Hollywood	100+
Pop! Goes the Country (1974-82)	Show Biz	Opryland	123
The New Candid Camera (1974-78)	Allen Funt	Opryland & WTVF	
Nashville On The Road (1975-83)	Show Biz	On Location	46 states
Dolly (1976-77)	Show Biz	Opryland	130
Music Hall America (1976-77)	Opryland/ Viacom	Opryland	155
Hee Haw Honeys (1978-79)	Yongestreet	21st Century	
Marty Robbins Spotlight (1978-79)	Show Biz	21st Century	
Nashville Scene	Opryland	Opryland	

SYNDICATED PROGRAMS FROM THE 1970s

Program (Yrs. Syndicated)	Producer	Where Prod.	Markets
Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry (1980-81)	Show Biz/ Opryland.	Opryland	125
This Week in Country Music	Jim Owens	Jim Owens	125

APPENDIX D.

NETWORK AND SYNDICATED SPECIALS FROM THE 1970s and '80s

1971

Jerry Lee Lewis special (title unknown)

1972

Nashville at the Garden

1973

Country Music Hit Parade, also in '74, '76 and '77
Marjoe's Country: Nashville

1974

Country Comes Home
Dinah Shore special (title unknown)
Orange Blossom Special
From Out of the Hills
Mac Davis: I Believe in Music

1975

Grand Ole Opry at 50
In Concert

1976

Hill Country Sounds
Johnny Cash Christmas, also in '77, '79, '80 and '84
Johnny Cash and Friends

1977

Alan King Goes To Nashville
Ann Margaret: Rhinestone Cowgirl
Bluegrass Live
Hank
Lynn Anderson Country Welcome
Nashville Scene
Wayne Newton Special
Barbie Doll Special

1978

50 Years of Country Music
Christmas at the Grand Ole Opry
Christmas Special with Glen Campbell
Country Night of Stars
Live From The Grand Ole Opry, also in '79, '80
Hee Haw 10th Anniversary Show
Lucy Comes to Nashville
Merry Christmas From the Grand Ole Opry, also in '79,'80
Oral Roberts Christmas

1979

Bluegrass Spectacular
Carol and Dolly in Nashville
Grand Ole Gospel Country
Johnny Cash Rid'in the Rails
Johnny Cash Spring Special
Nashville Salutes America
Teen America
The Great American Gospel Sound
The Unbroken Circle
Truck'in to Nashville
Tennessee Ernie Ford and That Good Ole Gospel Sound

1980

Classic Cash
Country Gold
Country Music: A Family Affair
Crystal Gayle Special
Elvis Remembered: Nashville to Hollywood
George Burns in Nashville
Good N' Country
Hank Williams Special

1981

A Tribute To Chet Atkins From His Friends
Country Galaxy of Stars with Mel Tillis
A Country Music Celebration
Johnny Cash and the Country Girls
Loretta Lynn...The Lady
Opryland Night of Stars & Future Stars
Roy Acuff:50 Years of Country Music

1982
- Conway Twitty: Delta King
- Country Comes Alive
- Country/Rock
- Jerry Reed and Special Friends
- Tennessee and Texas

1983
- Alabama And Friends
- An Evening with the Staler Brothers
- Bright Lights and Country music
- Christmas legends of Nashville
- Janie Frickie: You Ought to be in Pictures
- Louise Mandrell: Diamonds, Gold and Platinum
- Ray Charles: A Man and His Soul
- Ronnie Milsap: In Celebration

APPENDIX E.

TNN CHARTER PROGRAMS

"Dancin' USA"

Referred to as a countrified "American Bandstand," this 60 minute program began the primetime lineup. It covered country and western dances and presented dancing lessons. The program was produced on location in cities throughout the country. Bill Turner was hired as producer and director. Before this, Turner left his employment with Show Biz when it was sold to Multimedia and worked a short time with Glen Daniels.

"I-40 Paradise"

Claimed to be the first made-for-cable situation comedy. Produced by Cinetel Productions in Knoxville, Tennessee, this was the among the most ambitious programs produced for TNN. Reminiscent of Yongestreet's "Hee Haw Honeys," the 30 minute program was set at a roadside diner/tavern in Crab Orchard, Tennessee, where country music artists would stop by and perform. According to Cinetel president Ross Bagwell, up to 10 sets would be used for each program. They took a nontraditional approach in finding actors for the Knoxville production using professional dinner theater actors as the regular characters.

Varnell's study sketches the trouble TNN had in producing the program's pilot. Bagwell, who had previous broadcasting network experience, was contracted to produce the show after TNN ran into big problems with the show's original producer, Coke Sams. Sams' company, which was mostly experienced with single-camera film commercial production, had difficulty adjusting to multicamera video shooting and took three weeks to complete the pilot. This trouble reflects the production limitations found in Nashville with little experience in producing long-form situation comedies. Bagwell's Cinetel company rented a warehouse in Knoxville for a studio and produced a pilot in 36 hours. The early success with "I-40 Paradise" created a spin-off series the following year, "Pickin' at the Paradise."

"Fandango"

As a quiz game show set around country music, this was another program format new to Nashville and contracted to Reid/Land Productions. Reid/Land would become an active program producer in TNN's future.

"Nashville Now!"

As TNN's signature program, this 90 minute variety/talk show was cable's first live nightly entertainment program. Hosted by Ralph Emery, the show combined interviews, music performances, and viewer call-ins. The show started in Opryland park's Stagedoor Lounge for three months before moving into one of the new studios. The studio was added to the park's Gaslight Theater and Opryland claimed it was the only theme park in the world providing a live television show as an attraction.

"Yesteryear in Nashville"

A retrospective 30 minute program on country music's past using old film and video clips.

"Nashville After Hours"

A 30 minute program shot on remote covering a variety of talent playing in Nashville night clubs including jazz and rock.

"Offstage"

An interview program with country performers hosted by WSM's Teddy Bart. Bart worked both with WSM radio and television as an announcer and personality as well as an entertainer before moving to WNGE as a news anchor.

"Opryland on Stage"

To cover the various jobs in the park, Opryland was hiring approximately 300 teenagers during the summer months. A 60 minute variety show presenting Opryland entertainers produced on remote in the park.

Some weekend programming included outdoor sports themes appealing to men.

"Country Sportsman"

The first program to start the Saturday schedule. A 30 minute fishing show hosted by Bobby Lord.

"American Sports Calvacade

Produced by Diamond P Productions based in Hollywood, the 90 minute show covered "Grassroots sports" such as car racing, and tractor pulls. The series was claimed as one of the largest sports packages produced for cable by one producer. Diamond P developed a long working relationship with TNN.

"Stars of the Grand Ole Opry"

A 60 minute program featuring "Opry" members in a concert setting from the Opry House stage. A contemporary

program different from Al Gannoway's syndicated series from the 1950s.

"Bobby Bare and Friends: Songwriter Showcase"
This 60 minute program featured performances and interviews with country performers in low-key setting of Bullet Recording studios.

"This Week in Nashville"
This program reviewed past activities and news in country music and Nashville.

"Tumbleweed Theater"
A 90 minute program featuring old cowboy movies with stars such as Tex Ritter, Gene Autry, John Wayne, and Roy Rogers.

"Performance Plus from Popular Hot Rodding"
This program started the Sunday schedule, presenting interviews with racers and profiles of hot rod vehicles.

"Fire on the Mountain"
A 30 minute show featuring bluegrass and mountain music.

"Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry"
This 30 minute program presented a look behind the scene of the "Opry" with interviews and performances. It was first syndicated in 1980 by Opryland Productions and Show Biz. The show reached 125 markets in syndication.

"Gospel Country"
A 60 minute gospel program presented in a concert setting from the Opry House stage.

"The Tommy Hunter Show"
A 60 minute program bought by TNN, it aired on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation network for the previous 18 years.

"That's Country"
Program featuring country artists from New Zealand and Australia.

"Phantom of the Opry"
A program featuring horror and suspense movies. This show was modeled after a similar program hosted many years

locally by vampire Sir Cecil Creep, played by WSM-TV's film director Russ McCown.

Program information came from "Nashville Goes Cross-Country," 146; Levine; Bartley, "All Systems Go"; Turner interview; Varnell; Gerry Wood, "TNN's Five-Year Success Story: A Strong Ship That Stays the Course in Uncharted Waters," Billboard, 23 April 1988, TNN 3-20; "'Nashville Now' 19 June 1983; "Media," CMA Close-Up, February 1983, 11; "Media," CMA Close-Up, newsletter, August 1982, 15 "Thriving Film/Video Business"; "Country On The Tube," CMA Close-Up, newsletter, October 1980, 9; Bartley, 6 March 1983; and McCown interview.

APPENDIX F

NOTES

1. The seven tower locations were The Courier-Journal newspaper building in Louisville; 13 miles south of Louisville; Elizabethtown, Ky.; Bonnieville, Ky.; Pilot's Knob, Ky.; Rockridge, Tn.; and the WSM-TV tower.

2. As a teenager, DeWitt built Nashville's first radio station, WDAA, in 1922 and the nation's first commercial FM station. Along with his accomplishments at WSM, DeWitt served as a consultant during World War II to the Department of Defense directing a project that bounced radar signals off the moon for the first time and invented a system for spotting mortar fire that was used in the detection of intercontinental missile launches.

3. As an example, McCown mentioned the single-side band transmitter, a film chain, and cameras as the types of equipment developed at WSM-TV.

4. Irving Waugh indicates WSM gave a copy to Williams' widow, Mrs. Audrey Williams, and either she or Williams' son, Hank Williams, Jr., gave the copy to the Country Music Foundation. WSM possessed their own copy but it was lost.

5. Both men indicated Gannoway properly paid them and for the use of the Quonset hut facilities.

6. The patent states, "The title of entertainment services in nature of dramatic, dramatico-musical programs and/or musical programs performed through the medium of television and personal appearances."

7. It is not clear what year Owen Bradley got started with Ted Weems, Bradley indicates it was 1949 or 1950.

8. Russ McCown archived kinescopes of the program for WSM at the time and later possessed kinescopes of his own of all the programs from which he made this list.

9. Other markets included Los Angeles, Atlanta, Indianapolis, Louisville, New Orleans, St. Louis, Kansas City, Dayton, Oklahoma City, Pittsburgh, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Francisco.

10. Rating was 26.7 and a 40 share with "ABC Wednesday Night Movie" receiving a 28 share and CBS's "Medical Center" a 24 share. Estimated audience for the awards show was over 70 million viewers.

11. Portions of Alley's personal account also appeared in the TNN newsletter announcing Alley's retirement from TNN in 1983, "Elmer Calls It a Wrap," The Wrap Sheet, TNN newsletter, Vol. 1, no. 3, 2 May 1983, 1.

12. It was Edwin W. Craig, founder of WSM and the "Grand Ole Opry" and now honorary chairman of National Life who first made the announcement public before that day.

13. The reference to "you all at channel 5" was addressing the author conducting the interview since Waugh knew the author was a former employee of channel 5 (WLAC-TV). Waugh recalls a similar struggle with Weaver over the TV studio in Chet Hagan's Grand Ole Opry. According to Waugh, "I remember Bill Weaver jumping up and saying loudly, 'I'll say this to you!' And he stuck his finger down in front of my face. 'You better sell a heluva lot of popcorn!'," p. 281.

14. Danker and Brown note, Cash's show was safe from immediate cancellation with a 33 share since networks are satisfied with programs when they make at least a 30 share. Also see Herbert H. Howard and Micheal S. Kievman, Radio and TV Programming (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1983) p. 230 and Susan Tyler Eastman, Sydney W. Head, and Lewis Klein, Broadcast Programming: Strategies for Winning Television and Radio Audiences (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1981), p. 171.

15. The author was employed with WTVF during this period and participated in the union vote. I do not recall hearing any suggestion that Yongestreet's presence influenced the idea of unionization. Lovullo is only suggesting it may have played some part in WTVF management's decision.

16. The Nashville Banner report does not further elaborate on the Smith/deficit connection and mentions that neither Waugh, Griscom, or Wendell were available for comment. Quotes in the report came from an "Opryland spokesman" who even said the $150,000 loss was not comparative to last year's figures and was due to increases in the staff.

VITA

David Black was born in Louisville, Kentucky on May 22, 1953. He attended parochial and public schools in Elizabethtown, Kentucky where he graduated from Elizabethtown High School in June, 1971. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Mass Communications in June 1976 from Western Kentucky University. He worked in television production at WTVF in Nashville, Tennessee from 1976 to 1989, eleven of those years as a production director. In 1989, he entered the doctoral program in Communications at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The doctoral degree was received December 1996. He is presently on the faculty with the Department of Telecommunications at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.