



The Roy Acuff gang broadcasting. Poison to some, hillbilly music is relished by so many others that six important radio stations now offer elaborate programs of these bucolic singers and bands.

Hillbilly Boom

By MAURICE ZOLOTOW

IN MARCH, 1942, Art Satherley, a courtly white-haired gentleman of fifty-two who is employed by the Columbia Recording Corporation for the sole purpose of roving around America and taking down on wax the homespun music of the hillbilly and cowboy troubadours, found himself in Dallas, Texas, while on his annual recording pilgrimage. Satherley had set up his portable recording apparatus in a suite in the Adolphus Hotel and he was interviewing various talents from the Panhandle and the plains, when in strode a tall chunky chap attired in chaps, boots and a ten-gallon hat.

The newcomer was Albert Poindexter, a sometime house painter from Troup, Texas, who was convinced he had the gift of tongues. Poindexter brought

Uncle Art Satherley seeks out country music in the bayous, canebrakes and hills, and brings it back twangin' and sobbin' to 25,000,000 addicts.

along a six-piece band and also submitted thirty-five original ditties which he had composed in his spare time.

Like most of the Texas Tschakowskys, Poindexter's lyrics were of a melancholy nature—dealing with the death of close friends, the desertions of cowboys by their sweethearts, conversations with herds of dogies, and the well-known fact that a cow hand's best friend, if not his only friend, is his faithful horse.

Now, Satherley had at various times recorded some of Poindexter's lamentable chansons, but they had not set on fire the world of hillbilly fandom, this world being a very enthusiastic and emotional group of some 25,000,000 admirers of the lonesome Texas plaint and of the mountain melancholy, which latter flourishes in the Southeastern States. The legion of admirers is headed by President Roosevelt.

PHOTOS BY JOHN FABER

On that historic morning in March, Satherley, a scholarly and dignified man who speaks with a British accent and looks somewhat like an Oxford professor of Greek history, placed his pince-nez on his nose and patiently listened as Poindexter and his companions dreamily strummed and thrummed and twanged their way through the thirty-five lays of despair. Finally, Satherley selected twelve to be recorded. The best of the twelve, thought Satherley, was a lilting love song called Rosalita. Another of the twelve was a ballad having to do with a husband who is having a wild time in a night club in the company of a blonde when his wife catches him in *flagrante delicto*, she forthwith drawing a revolver, shooting out the lights and beating him gently about the face. Although he was not particularly impressed by this saga of marital infidelity, Satherley recorded it because he liked its steady, insistent rhythm. He was otherwise unimpressed, however, because he says that in hillbilly circles it is very common to hear songs about men and women who are unfaithful to each other, and who are always shooting it out with guns.

"To be honest about it," Satherley recently confided, "I never dreamed it would be the hit it turned out. We only released it because we needed a contrast to put on the other side of Rosalita."

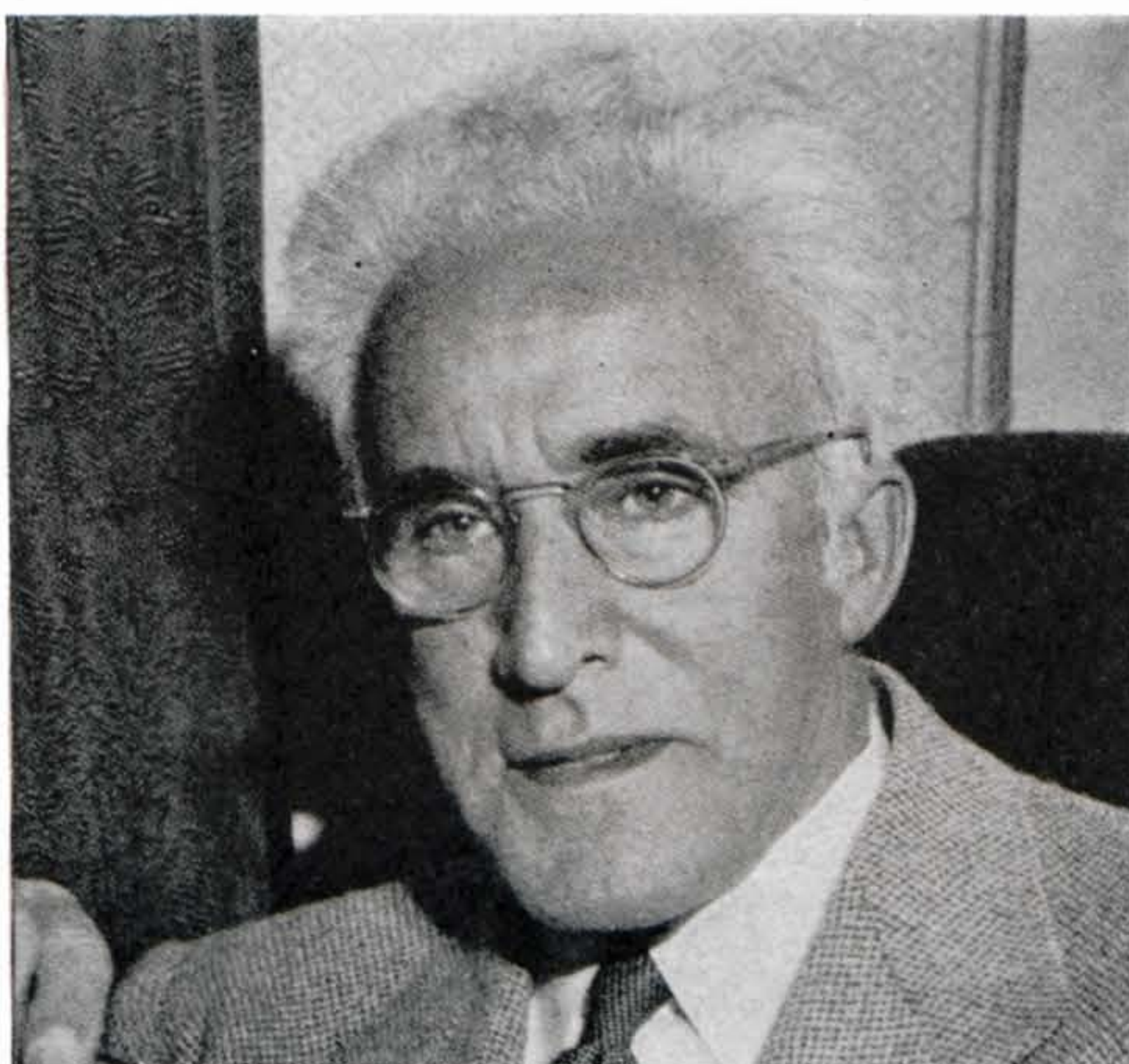
Released in March, 1943, Rosalita was promptly forgotten. Instead, millions of Americans began to walk around advising pistol-packin' mama to lay that pistol down. By June it became one of the biggest-selling records in the history of American recording,



A hillbilly unit waiting backstage before a performance. On the road, troupes of this kind have consistently attracted larger audiences than many a big-time Broadway production.

Uncle Dave, grand old man of Grand Ole Op'ry show, full of years and music.

Student of hillbilly music, leading talent scout Art Satherley prefers to call it "folk music."



and by December, 1943, it had sold 1,600,000 copies, and the manufacturer had orders on hand for 500,000 more which he could not fill because of the wartime shortages of labor and shellac.

On the black market, coin-machine phonograph operators were offering from three dollars up to as high as ten dollars for a copy of Pistol-Packin' Mama in good condition, because the jukebox cognoscenti preferred this record to all others. Even Bing Crosby was driven to recording it. The Hit Parade for a long time refused to recognize the existence of Pistol-Packin' Mama because the opening line went "Drinkin' beer in a cabaret," and the radio networks are not permitted to publicize people who look upon the malt when it is amber. This is a ruling of the Federal Communications Commission. The publishers of Pistol-Packin' Mama haled the Hit Parade into court, and finally the lyric was altered to read "Singin' songs in a cabaret," and Pistol-Packin' Mama became No. 1 on the Hit Parade. Poindexter, who meanwhile had changed his name to Al Dexter, is now playing in vaudeville theaters at a salary of \$3500 a week.

Satherley has a gloating air of triumph as he recites these and other statistics which prove that hillbilly music has come into its own. After Pistol-Packin' Mama, among the biggest recordings of the past twelvemonth have been There's a Star-Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere, by Elton Britt and his band, and No Letter Today, by Ted Daffan and his Texans, both of which have gone over the million mark. Six large radio stations now have gigantic programs devoted solely to hillbilly music, and WLS broadcasts five solid hours of the National Barn Dance every Saturday. In Nashville, Tennessee, the Grand Ole Op'ry is aired over WSM for four hours. NBC broadcasts portions of these two programs on a national hookup, and has a third sorghum show entitled The Hook 'n' Ladder Follies.

Almost as remarkable are the grosses amassed by hillbilly units which play one-night stands all over the country in county auditoriums, schools, barns and theaters. Obscure performers playing in hamlets like



Even in jug-blowing, say the experts, the prime requisite for success is sincerity.

Reeds Ferry, New Hampshire, will draw \$5600 in a single night. On the road, hillbilly troupes will consistently outdraw legitimate Broadway plays, symphony concerts, sophisticated comedians and beautiful dancing girls. When a unit, say, like Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys is scheduled to hit a town like Albany, Georgia, farmers will pour into Albany from a 200-mile radius, and night after night Acuff will play to audiences of 4000 in places where Betty Grable or Tommy Dorsey or Bob Hope would only succeed in drawing boll weevils. This is (Continued on Page 36)

COMING DOWN WITH A COLD?

Don't Delay! Go after it at once, not only with temporary relief measures, but by taking these basic steps which help the system throw off a cold infection.

5 BASIC THINGS TO DO FOR COLDS advised by physicians and public health authorities (See how lemons help with all 5)

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | GET PLENTY OF REST; BUILD RESISTANCE.
Lemons are among the richest sources of <i>anti-fatigue, anti-infection</i> vitamin C. |
| 2. | ALKALINIZE YOUR SYSTEM.
Lemon and soda (fresh lemon juice with water and baking soda) forms <i>sodium citrate</i> , excellent to offset acid condition. |
| 3. | KEEP ELIMINATION REGULAR.
Lemon and soda has a gentle, natural laxative effect for most people. |
| 4. | EAT LIGHTLY. TAKE PLENTY OF LIQUIDS.
Citrus juices are most frequently advised. |
| 5. | KEEP WARM; AVOID FURTHER CHILL.
Hot lemonade is almost universally prescribed. |

If cold does not respond, call your doctor.

HOW TO USE LEMONS FOR COLDS Make Lemon and Soda

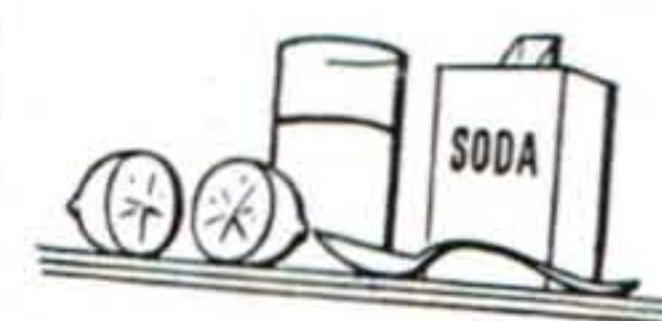
First day, drink a glass of lemon and soda every 2 to 3 hours. If away from home, have nearest fountain mix one for you.

To induce perspiration... take a hot lemonade when you go to bed.

Then—continue with lemon and soda 3 to 4 times a day while the cold lasts.

Lemon and soda forms natural sodium citrate. Gives vitamins and all benefits of fresh lemon juice plus increased alkalizing and laxative effects. Consumed at once, soda does not appreciably reduce vitamin content.

To avoid colds build your resistance! Lemons provide anti-infection vitamin C; they alkalize; they aid elimination—3 factors that help you keep up to par. Join the millions who now drink lemon and water daily for health. Juice of 1 lemon, in glass of plain water, first thing on arising.



To make lemon & soda
pour juice of 1 lemon in a half glass of water. Add—slowly—half teaspoon baking soda (bicarbonate). Drink as foaming quiets.

WHEN YOU TAKE COLD TAKE LEMONS



California
**Sunkist
Lemons**

BUY MORE WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

HILLBILLY BOOM

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a great mystery to the clever strategists of show business who plan projects on Broadway and in Hollywood.

It is no mystery to Satherley, who, for some twenty-five years, has been crusading for hillbilly music among his cynical Broadway friends. Satherley dislikes the term "hillbilly," and he keeps talking about "folk music," "country music" or "mountain music." He says that the explanation of the hillbilly phenomenon is quite simple. He explains that most Americans either live on farms today or came from farms, and that the strains of a hoedown fiddle or a cowboy plaint are their own native folk music and the one they will always respond to, no matter how far they have gone from the farm. He also believes that the congregation of groups of young men in Army camps has much to do with the boom in hillbilly music.

Because much of the hillbilly talent is employed in farming or ranching, Satherley must seek out his talent in the bayous, the canebrakes, the cotton plantations, the tobacco regions. Every spring he departs from his home base in Los Angeles with a complete portable recording outfit—a set of six microphones, pickups, turntables, a truckload of blank disks, and he follows a trail from Dallas to Amarillo, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Houston, San Antonio, Beaumont, working through New Orleans, around to Shreveport, up into Birmingham, Nashville and Columbia. He makes about 400 recordings on each tour. He will record everyone from Gene Autry and Roy Acuff, the leaders in their respective fields of cowboy and mountain lament, to such lesser knowns as Bob Atcher and Bonnie Blue Eyes, Bob Wills, Memphis Minnie, Roosevelt Sykes, The Yas-Yas Girl, and Fisher Hendley and his Aristocratic Pigs, the latter being a very tempestuous hoedown fiddle band from South Carolina.

When word spreads that "Uncle Art" has arrived in a Southern town, dozens of folk geniuses will come trooping in from the mountains to attend the "recordin' jam-boree." Homemade fiddles are dusted off, mandolins and guitars are taken off the shelf, as well as all the less conventional instrumentation of the hillbilly musician, which includes washboards, piepans, automobile horns, cowbells, train whistles, jew's-harps, combs, kazooes, harmonicas, sweet-potato fives and carpenter's saws. Satherley pays most of the semiprofessional artists twenty-five dollars per record side, while the luminaries receive a royalty of one half cent a side.

When Satherley is told that there is somebody in an out-of-the-way place who has a very original ballad and that this native artist is too shy to come to town, he will pack his recording equipment into suitcases and head into regions where no city shoes have ever trod before. Traveling by plane, train and automobile, and on foot where there are no passable roads, he journeys 70,000 miles during a typical year.

Although all hillbilly music sounds monotonously alike to the urban ear-drum, it includes many types of music.

The qualities Satherley says must always be present in fine hillbilly music are simplicity of language, an emotional depth in the music, sincerity in the rendition, and an indigenous genuineness of dialect and twang. "I would never think of hiring a Mississippi boy to play in a Texas band," he says. "Any Texan would know right off it was wrong."

The Wreck on the Highway, a dirge-like opus composed and first sung by Roy Acuff, has all the qualities in perfection that Satherley looks for. It is sung by a soloist and a chorus. The soloist, Mr. Acuff, has just returned from the scene of a dreadful automobile accident, and he asks, rhetorically, who was driving and who was killed. After pointing out that at the scene he saw whisky and blood running together, he inquires if they heard anyone pray. The chorus replies that they didn't hear nobody pray, dear brother. The lyric pursues its grim way, full of broken glass, more whisky, moans and screams, and death laying her hand in destruction, and the insistent refrain that nobody was heard to pray.

But, above all, sincerity, even if it is awkward unpolished sincerity, is the criterion used to judge the performer. "A true folk singer who is not synthetic can be recognized because he doesn't 'do' a song; he cries it out with his heart and soul," Satherley says. He remembers a sullen lean-jawed mountaineer whom he chanced upon in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, many years ago. The man sang railroad chants passably well, and he had a robust voice, but he lacked the note of sincerity. Nevertheless, Satherley recorded two of his numbers and gave him fifty dollars, a bottle of bourbon whisky and a straw hat. The following June, when Satherley returned to Mississippi, he found that the mountaineer had really acquired vocal sincerity. During the interim, the man and his wife had quarreled over the fifty dollars and he had blown out her brains. When Satherley greeted him again, he was languishing in jail waiting his turn to be hanged. He had also composed a new song, The Hangman Blues, and this time he had really put his heart into it, and it was one of the most sincere Satherley ever recorded. In fact, he made the recording right in the condemned man's cell.

In his search for realistic sincerity, Satherley once happened upon a venerable and dignified colored preacher in Richmond, Virginia. He was holding a street revival. With him were two little blind boys playing on a dilapidated portable organ, held together only by ropes and prayers. The three sang Ezekiel Saw de Wheel, and then the minister, smoothing his

long black robes, began to preach a beautiful sermon, in which the words fell into spontaneous cadences and became a musical prose. It suddenly came to Satherley that it might be unusual to record a preachin', and he approached the minister and asked him for permission to record a sermon, which was steadfastly refused until Satherley argued that

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*In any event
wire flowers*



There is no sweeter way to say "Will You Be My Valentine?" Whether it's a special occasion or just because you're thoughtful, flowers say things for you in a way people never forget. Flowers boost morale too, so—

In Any Event Wire Flowers.

But remember, Valentine orders should be in early, so do it now! Give your F.T.D. Florist enough time to deliver your Valentine flowers on time.

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This FTD Seal is your assurance that when you send flowers by wire you'll get full value because all FTD members are bonded for your protection. All florists are not FTD Florists, so always look for the FTD Seal on the window. Write Direct to Headquarters.

FLORISTS' TELEGRAPH DELIVERY ASSOCIATION

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if the sermons were placed on records, then the flock in Richmond would derive spiritual comfort if their preacher had to visit another county or another state. The first preachin' records were released in 1930, and scored such a success that Satherley looked around for more suitable preachin' talent.

A few months later he was in Augusta, Georgia, and he passed the word around that he was looking for a good preacher. An immaculately dressed Negro in a reversed collar appeared, carrying a nicked guitar, and said, "Ise a man of God and I hears you is looking for a sermon. I brung my flock with me." The flock sheepishly followed him in. The group sang a spiritual, and then the Negro launched into the most moving preachment Satherley had ever heard.

After the recording was completed, Satherley paid the prophet \$100 for himself and his congregation. The following day the congregation appeared and asked for their payment. Satherley explained that he had paid their pastor.

"What pastor?" they cried. "He ain't our pastor. He picked us up on the corner and said he gwine gi' us two bits apiece ifn we he'p him sing the gospel. Why, he ain't even no churchgoin' man. He's blacker'n the devil hissel'. Why, he's the man who runs all our dens of 'niquity and 'bomination round here."

After sincerity, Satherley strives to project the meaning of the lyrics. "The person who listens to mountain music wants to hear a story," Satherley explains. "My singers must get the picture of the words. I've got to instill into them a picture of what they are singing about. If they're singing about a dead person, I impress on them that their best friend is lying dead and 'you'll never see him again.' I tell them, 'Sing it in the extreme.' In folk music, we don't care about trick ways of phrasing or hot licks; we concentrate on the emotions. The country people, these so-called hillbillies, are tremendously sensitive people, with deep emotions. Whereas the sophisticated city person likes these humbug boy-girl love songs, with everything pretty-pretty, the mountaineer is a realist. His songs deal with loneliness, misery, death, murder."

Art Satherley is very self-conscious about the fact that neither his physical appearance, his clothes nor his genteel British way of speaking is fitting to a talent scout for Texas and Tennessee minstrels. When he is on the road making recordings, he sometimes tries his best to look like and act like a hillbilly. He puts on a pair of corduroys and a sport shirt, and he goes squirrel hunting. He also tries to drink "cawn." He pretends to be very understanding when he runs into a mountaineering idiosyncrasy, such as the tradition of putting one or more rattlesnake tails into a fiddle.

"These hoedown fiddlers say," relates Satherley, "that putting a couple of rattles into the fiddle makes it sound different from a classical-music fiddle. I have tried to argue with my boys on this point for very many years, but they are adamant. I tell them to try playing on a fiddle without any rattles inside, but they say they can't play hoedown without it. They give me all kinds

of reasons too. Some say the rattlesnakes keep the moisture out of the fiddle, others that it keeps spider webs and cobwebs out; some say it keeps dust out, others that it gives the fiddle the real vibration. The fiddler can only use rattlers he has killed himself. I am getting so I almost believe it myself."

Despite all his efforts, Satherley is becoming convinced that he will never be able to overcome the handicap of having been born in Bristol, England, in 1891. He was the son of an Episcopalian minister and was intended for a theological career. After he completed his education at Queen Elizabeth College, he became restless and served with the Somerset Yeomanry regiment of the British army for three and a half years. Thrown by a horse, he was deafened in his right ear, but says his left ear is now supersensitive, "like a microphone." He came to this country when he was twenty-two years old, and he got a job working in a factory, at Grafton, Wisconsin. When the firm went into the business of manufacturing phonographs and records, Satherley was placed in charge of production. In 1925 he got tired of checking production sheets in an office, and asked to be transferred to an out-of-doors job,

and ever since he has been traveling eleven months of the year in search of new folk music. In 1930 he discovered Gene Autry, a boy from Tioga, Texas, who was working as a railroad telegrapher near Ardmore, Oklahoma. In six months, Satherley made a national idol of Autry, and he has never been equaled in popularity in hillbilly circles.

Satherley discovered and recorded the cowboy music of United States Sen. W. Lee O'Daniel in the not-so-bygone days when O'Daniel was the conductor of a band called The Light Crust Doughboys and played such tunes as Please Pass the Biscuits, Pappy; Dirty Hang-over Blues; Peach-Pickin' Time in Georgia; There's Evil in Ye Children.

He found Roy Acuff, today the most sensational personality in hillbilly music, in Nashville in 1938. Acuff is a quiet, shy person, who looks ten years younger than his thirty-nine years. He is married, and the father of a year-old son. He lives on a 150-acre farm about twelve miles out of Nashville. His income in 1943 was more than \$200,000.

Like the pure hillbilly singer, Acuff hardly moves a muscle in his face when he sings. He sings mainly with his eyes closed, and now and then, as he feels a note deeply, tears will roll down his face.

In October, 1943, Acuff's program went on a coast-to-coast hookup of 129 stations, and to celebrate the event a party was given at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, where the Grand Ole Op'ry is performed to a regular Saturday-night audience of 3500 who pay seventy-five-cents admission. Gov. Prentice Cooper was invited to grace the stage as guest of honor. Governor Cooper declined, stating that he would be no party to a "circus," and that Acuff was bringing disgrace to Tennessee, by making Nashville the hillbilly capital of the United States.

Governor Cooper is supported by political boss Ed (Red Snapper) Crump, who is said to run Shelby County and Memphis with an ironclad grip. And thereby hangs a tale. It being an off-day for news in Nashville, Beazley Thompson, a reporter for the Nashville Tennessean, decided to stir up a little excitement. He reported Governor Cooper's acid comment to Acuff, and said it would be a fitting revenge if Acuff were to run for governor. Acuff absently nodded, and this was all the encouragement Thompson needed. He immediately got up a petition, and now Acuff has been entered in the 1944 Democratic primaries. Boss Crump has been reported as much worried for the first time in his career. The Memphis Commercial Appeal pictorially demonstrated the crisis in Tennessee politics when it recently ran a cartoon showing a Capitol Hill politico standing outside a music shop and gazing pensively at a fiddle. The caption underneath read, "I wonder can you really learn in ten easy lessons?" Nobody in the South has forgotten how Lee O'Daniel successfully campaigned for governor of Texas by playing hillbilly music.

Art Satherley is convinced Acuff will be elected without any trouble, if he runs. As far as Satherley is concerned, it wouldn't be a bad idea if every state in the Union elected a hillbilly singer or fiddler as governor.

The Lincoln Song of Old Man Willets

By ROBERT D. ABRAHAMS

(Yep, I'm an old-timer who looked on his body,
Not many are left who can say that today;
My chief claim to glory, I'll always proclaim it—
I lived on this earth when a man walked this way.)

By the banks of the Sangamon River he sat,
And he dreamed of his destiny fair,
And he knew not what called him, but knew he
was called
To a journey a great way from there.

Get along then, Abe Lincoln, get you up and get
going.

There's a long road awaiting to carry you far.
There's no time to be sitting, awatching the river.
Come along now; get going and follow your star.

At the rail in the courtroom in Springfield he stood
As he pleaded a litigant's cause,
But he knew in his heart that he couldn't stay long,
Just expounding some other man's laws.

Get along there, Abe Lincoln, the Union is
waiting;

The hope of the world may be falling apart;
There's no time to be wasted in country disputing.
Get along there, come forward; it's time for a
start.

On the steps of the White House the man Lincoln
climbed,

And he entered and made the place home.
He wished he could rest, but so much must be
done;
He had only a day to build Rome.

Get along there, Abe Lincoln, all history's calling
And black men unborn will rise blessing your
name.

There's no time for a fellow to rest in the White
House.

Get you up and keep going; the world is aflame.

In the tomb back in Springfield, Old Abe rests at
last,

But the road that he walked shall not end
While the people he loved is a people alive,
And there yet lives one cause to defend.

Get along then, Abe Lincoln; get you up and get
going.

I know now what called you and where you were
bound;

And this I know surely, because you have walked
here—

Forever and ever a music shall sound.