

ALWAYS ... PATSY CLINE Glossary

May 2024, Jewel Theatre Company

Shaun Carroll, Director

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Notes: *This glossary not only provides word definitions but also includes information relevant to the play and its characters.*

When quoting a source, including the play script, I do not correct errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, instead leaving them as presented.

Key: DJ (disc jockey), LA (Los Angeles), NYC (New York City), UK (United Kingdom), US (United States), WWI (World War I)

CAST

Patsy Cline: Patsy Cline was born Virginia Patterson Hensley on September 8, 1932, in the Winchester (Virginia) Memorial Hospital. She died in a plane crash March 6, 1963, in the hill country near Camden, Tennessee, at the age of 30, just as her career was at its highest peak. Country performers Hawkshaw Hawkins and Cowboy Copas died with her, as did her manager, Randy Hughes. Hughes was piloting all of them in his Piper Comanche home from a benefit concert in Kansas City, Kansas for Jack Wesley Call, aka “Cactus Jack”, one of Country’s well-known Midwestern DJs, who had died in a car crash a month earlier. Also performing in the show were George Jones, George Riddle and The Jones Boys, Billy Walker, Dottie West, Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper, George McCormick, and the Clinch Mountain. According to Margaret Jones in her biography, [*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*](#), “Country people are famous for coming to the aid of those in need”.



Sam and Hilda’s home in Gore, where they lived before Patsy’s birth

When Patsy was born, her parents had been married for six days. Her mother, Hilda Virginia Patterson was 15 years old. Hilda met Samuel Lawrence Hensley, 43, a widower from his first marriage, while he worked in a sand mine in Elkton, Virginia. Their address was listed as Gore, a settlement of “flinty hillfolk” (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*) in the heavily wooded mountains near the West Virginia line.

A few weeks after Virginia, or Ginny, was born, Sam moved her and Hilda back to Solsburg, the family estate just outside of Elkton, on the banks of the Shenandoah River. The impressive homestead was built by Solomon Jobe Hensley, Patsy’s paternal grandfather. The Hensleys were among Virginia’s first families; they take up four columns in the Elkton telephone book.



Sol Hensley (above) and Sam Hensley (below) during WWI

Sol was one of the original hillbillies – a third-generation Virginian, born on his granddaddy’s farm, Hensley Hollow, deep in the heavily wooded Blue Ridge Mountains. By the time he started a family, Sol had already transformed himself into a country squire, with a thousand acres of prime Rockingham County farmland distributed over three farms. His fortunes would change, however, ultimately contributing to the demise of the family dynasty he had built. Southern agriculture declined after WWI, exacerbated further by a severe drought. Then came the stock market crash of 1929, and the Great Depression, which debilitated the few productive farms that remained. Buried in unsellable goods and mortgage foreclosures, he was forced to unload his land in bits and chunks.



Goldie and James Patterson, Patsy's maternal grandparents

At the same time, Sol got involved in a scandal with a fifteen-year-old girl from Elkton. Her family extracted a substantial amount of money for his indiscretion. When Patsy was born, the irony of the situation prompted folks in Elkton to remark, "Like father, like son", although Sam, unlike Sol, couldn't buy his way out.

Sam, the firstborn son, was indeed like his father in many ways, inheriting his handsome looks, pride, musical ability, aggression, independence, extravagant taste, "ungodly, uncontrollable temper" (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*) and tyrannical patriarchal attitude. A master blacksmith, he was also an expert wheelwright, horseshoer, tool maker, quarryman, and general mechanic. His greatest gift, however, was his singing. He had inherited, as he would pass on to Patsy and his other children, the Hensley musical talent. He played the piano, and in his strong, sweet tenor with its lucid, almost theatrical diction, he sang – always solo – in weekly multigenerational family songfests and the church choir.

The day after the US entered WWI, Sam enlisted. He would participate in combat in the Argonne Forest, one of WWI's bloodiest battles. He returned changed, with a new edge to his already formidable temper. The slightest things would set him off, and he began to go on hard drinking binges that lasted the entire weekend.

It was around this time that Sam married his first wife, Wynona Jones. She was pregnant with their fourth child when she died in a car accident, also losing the baby. He was devastated, and it didn't help that, in the wake of Wynona's death, his father was swiftly losing the family fortune.

Sam would virtually abandon his children to a housekeeper who later adopted them, and join other Depression-era nomads, living in his car and traveling to different states to work on farms, quarries, and the railroad. It was during a return visit to his hometown that he met Patsy's mother, the fifteen-year-old dark-haired beauty, Hilda.



A young Ginny Hensley (Patsy) and her brother, Sam Hensley Jr., called John by the family



Patsy at about age eight in a family photo. Sam Hensley is seated far right with Sam, Jr. ("John") on his lap. Hilda is seated on grass, far right.

Collection of Nellie Patterson

Their union was tempestuous, characterized by violent disputes that were fueled by Sam's drinking. The impoverished family, which would soon include another daughter, Sylvia and son, Sam Jr., called John, became itinerant. They couldn't pay their rent, so they'd "move

sometimes two or three times a year into some big house that sat empty” (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*), vacated by its owners who sought work outside the area they lived during the Depression. As a result, Patsy had sporadic schooling, dropping out nearly every grade because the family moved nineteen times when she was growing up. She dropped out for the last time in her sophomore year of high school.



Patsy at John Handley High School, in the last school photo she would take, 1947

Within a year, the family would stop squatting in abandoned houses, and move into a run-down duplex on crowded Kent Street in Winchester, where Depression-era rural families moved when they left their hardscrabble farms, hoping to find work in the city. South Kent Street was considered the wrong side of the tracks. Because she was from there, Patsy was looked down upon by the people of Winchester her entire life, even after she achieved renown and success. When she won Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scout Show in 1957 with [“Walkin’ After Midnight.”](#) the *Winchester Evening Star* noted, “she lives at 608 S. Kent St., with such talent and ability”, as if talent coming from such an address was unheard of.

Three years later, when she had her hit “I Fall to Pieces”, she performed at the Winchester Drive-In between the featured movies. The people watching leaned on their car horns and booed her. Even though she had made a name for herself and had already performed at the Grand Ole Opry, they made fun of her. She broke down crying and the manager took her to his trailer. She asked him, “Why do people in Winchester treat me like this?”

Margaret Jones starts her 1994 biography with an image that speaks to the disdain that Winchester had for Patsy while she was alive and for years after her death. In Jones’

vignette, Patsy is twenty-five years old, and riding on the top of the back seat of a red Oldsmobile convertible in the Apple Blossom Festival parade in her hometown of Winchester. This is her third time in the annual May parade – the first two times, her name was omitted from the program. Instead of the cowgirl outfit she wore in her previous parade outings, as a nod to her newly minted status as a pop singing sensation, she is attired in her crossover look of a tight, red, strapless two-piece sequined outfit, rhinestone earrings and high heels. She has returned in triumph, having recently – and singularly – broken the applause-o-meter on Arthur Godfrey’s "Talent Scouts" while singing "Walkin' After Midnight" before a combined radio and TV audience of 82 million people. The song has already climbed to the top of the pop and country charts.



Patsy in the 1957 Apple Blossom Parade

In the picture Johnson paints, Patsy is not the queen of this parade – her convertible is far behind Miss Anne Denise Doughty-Tichborne’s massive float. The Queen of the Apple Blossoms, the ideal of Southern womanhood, doesn’t hail from Winchester as Patsy does, not even from the “right” side of the tracks. For that matter, she isn’t even from the South. Her Majesty Queen Shenandoah XXX happens to be a 19-year-old Englishwoman with unimpeachable credentials, a pedigree, and an aristocratic background – none of which Patsy has.

As the parade comes into its home stretch, Patsy and some of her friends in the crowd can clearly hear the catcalls directed mockingly at her. Concerned, her friends seek her out after the parade is over and find her on a side street. She is completely alone – even her driver had deserted her. The parade over, she is ignored again.



Apple Blossom Queen with members of her court in the Apple Blossom Parade, 1951

Various explanations are proffered for Patsy's ill treatment by her fellow citizens of Winchester. Patsy's friend Pat Smallwood, who befriended her when she worked the soda fountain at Gaunt's drugstore, said, "She sang – that's all she did. But it didn't matter what she done. Back in the fifties, anything a woman did out of the ordinary was a big deal. She wore makeup and tight clothes and that was considered loose. See, the town was sort of jealous because she was a sexy-type lady. She had it. She was built. There weren't any girls around doing what she was doing and not as good as her either."

"Yeah, they laughed at her", said local musician Johnny Anderson, who'd backed Patsy on numerous occasions and knew her well. "This town's got a lot of funny people. They stay in the clique. If I'm from that side of the tracks, I'm from that side of the tracks and you're not going to let me forget it. It's as simple as that. There's certain people who have always controlled this town. They control the banks, they control the council, and if you're not one of them the hell with you. You're just a peon, and you'll always be a peon as long as you live. And they won't let you forget it, either. It was always on her mind that she was from Kent Street, the other side of the tracks."

In "[Hillbilly Heartache](#)", a 1994 article for the *Washington Post*, Lee Smith writes, "Even 24 years after her death in 1962, when the hard-living, hard-loving Patsy Cline had come to be widely acknowledged as a national icon, the Winchester City Council voted down a measure to rename Pleasant Valley Road Patsy Cline Boulevard. The vote was 11 to 1 against. 'Ask anybody in this town and they'll tell you,' one resident testified at the council meeting, 'Patsy Cline was nothin' but a whore.'" It would take many more years, but Winchester's attitudes would shift, and the town would finally recognize Patsy's legacy, when in 2007, her childhood home in Winchester, Virginia is awarded a place on the

National Register of Historic Places, with its attendant cast bronze on-site marker prominently displayed. Additionally, the house is placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register, identified by a State of Virginia Historical Marker on the street in front. (See p. 22 of the chronology.)

Despite their “white trash” status, the 16-year-old Patsy liked her new neighbors on Kent Street. They were people who had been down on their luck, who knew hardship and had been rejected. Patsy identified with them.



The always stylish Patsy Cline wearing a sailor-inspired look in her teenage years

With Patsy’s father’s absences and the family’s constant uprooting before they settled on Kent Street, they were consistent in one respect – joining the local church. None of them were religious – Patsy would say, “Too many hypocrites go to church” – but Sam and Hilda wanted to sing in the choir. As soon as Patsy was old enough, she joined her parents to sing with them in the choir. Even though she could play the piano brilliantly by ear, singing became the focus of her ambition. Patsy claims that after a serious throat infection in early childhood, where she was placed in an oxygen tent and nearly died, she “recovered from the illness with a voice that boomed like Kate Smith’s” (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*).

Kate Smith was an influence on her singing, as was Helen Morgan. Owen Bradley (profiled on pp. 3-7 of the chronology), who was responsible for her career move to the more mainstream songs that catapulted her to fame, said, “She loved to sing Helen Morgan songs, especially ‘Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man of Mine’. We worked on some of those tunes; in fact, we talked about doing some of that stuff in an album before she died and we worked out the arrangements in my office” (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*).

The singer who would greatly influence her style, in addition to her singing, was Ruby Blevins, whose stage name was Patsy Montana. She is described in the glossary on p. 25 and pictured on p. 26, in the definition for “Fancy cowgirl outfit and a neck scarf”.



Patsy's home on S. Kent St. is the third house from the left with a concrete apron to the street

After their move to Kent, Sam's presence became more and more scarce. Soon he would leave for good, but Patsy did not lament his absence. From the age of 11, her father had sexually abused her. In her biography of Patsy, Margaret Jones describes this chapter in her life:

Patsy broadly alluded to an incestuous relationship with Sam to a handful of friends with whom she felt safe in unloading the secret burden of guilt and shame she bore ... Understandable, many of her friends remained guarded discussing the details of a taboo subject that caused Patsy so much pain and confusion, and for which she would extract promises, as she did with Loretta [Lynn], to 'take this to your grave'. ... Patsy would describe how her father made 'sexual advances toward her', though avoiding any discussion of the particulars. She alternately loved and loathed him, a common feeling among sexually abused children. Ultimately, she felt that her early experiences had something to do with her inability to establish intimate relationships with her husbands and lovers, a common long-term incest fear that also manifests itself in anxiety, hostility, eating disorders, guilt, shame, sexual dysfunction and a tendency towards revictimization in adult relationships with men – all of which Patsy exhibited later to varying degrees.

Sam restricted Patsy's activities because of his possessiveness, but also to keep others from

finding out what was going on in his household. She couldn't have any friends come over, and when she started to get interested in boys, her father would embarrass her in front of them. The family's moves from abandoned house to abandoned house could be explained by economic necessity, but it can't be denied that the effect of all the moving was to ensure silence and secrecy.

Once her parents separated and Sam disappeared from Patsy's life, she was free to pursue her passion for singing with complete focus. Still, she had a lifetime ambivalence toward him, alternately loving and hating him, as many victims do with their abusers.

Patsy performed for nearly a decade before her breakthrough 1957 television appearance, when she sang "Walkin' After Midnight" on Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts Show, discussed later in the glossary and in the chronology. She became a leading figure in the Nashville music world, as well as a Pop crossover star. Patsy went on to record many hits in both genres, including "Crazy" and "She's Got You," before her death. The ensuing events of her life are detailed in the *Always ... Patsy Cline* chronology.

Louise Seger: Louise Seger ("Seg" is pronounced with a short "e"; "Seger" has an accented first syllable) was born May 31, 1932, to Fred and Ruby Everett in Jackson, Mississippi. Her father died in 1941, and her mother subsequently married Dick Alexander, a popular Gulf Coast musician and band leader at that time. He imparted a lifelong love of music to Louise.

In 1949, when she was 17, Louise won the Miss Biloxi beauty contest. Among her winnings was a tour with the Louisiana Hayride where she became friends with popular country star Little Jimmy Dickens.

After graduation from Hinds Junior College in Raymond Mississippi, Louise moved to Houston. There she met and married Rex Seger and became a stay-at-home mom with their two children. During this time in her life, she became a fan of Patsy Cline's while hearing her sing "Walkin' After Midnight" on the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout television show that her children were watching in the other room. After she and Rex divorced, Louise worked a variety of music-related jobs, at times involved in dance, singing, modeling and as a nightclub owner in the Houston area.

She also worked for several companies, including Mandrell Industries, Petty-Ray Geophysical, and Aramco. The latter is the popular name of the Saudi Arabian Oil Company (formerly Arabian-American Oil Company). It is a Saudi Arabian national petroleum and natural gas company based in Dhahran, also known as Saudi Aramco.

While working for Aramco, Louise met a man with whom she became engaged. She decided to move with him and her children to Manaus, Brazil. The last time she saw Patsy, she told her what she intended to do: "It was after a performance in Houston. I told her I was getting married and moving to Brazil. She said, 'Louise, you've got to be crazy.' I said, 'Yeah, you might be right.'"

It was there that she found out about Patsy's death.

LIFE on the
Newfronts
of the World



COWBOY COPAS, 48



PATRY CLINE, 29



HANKSHAW HAWKINS, 43



JACK ANGLIN, 46

32



GRAND OLE OPRY SAYS



A page from the *Life* magazine article where Louise read about the fatal plane crash

Ellis Nassour interviews her about it in [Honky Tonk Angel: The Intimate Story of Patsy Cline](#): “When I heard the news of Patsy’s death, it was something I wouldn’t let myself believe. There were a lot of people around the hotel from Oklahoma who worked the oil rigs and they liked country music. We’d get a few under our belts and we’d start singing. I’d always do Patsy’s songs. A man from New York came in from the airport and we got real friendly. I sang ‘I Fall to Pieces.’ ‘Louise,’ he asked, ‘who’d you say sang that song?’ ‘Patsy Cline.’ ‘My God, that’s the girl that was killed in a plane crash, isn’t it?’ ‘No, you must be talking about somebody else. It couldn’t have been Patsy.’ ‘I’m almost sure it is. ‘I said it couldn’t have been. No, you must mean somebody else. You don’t mean Patsy Cline.’ ‘I’d almost swear to it. I was reading about it in *Life* on the plane coming down.’ ‘I don’t care what you were reading, you’ve got to be mistaken.’ ‘The magazine’s in my room. Here’s the key. If you don’t believe me, go see for yourself. Honey, I’m not lying to you.’ Louise went to the room, found the magazine, and started turning the pages until there it was. He hadn’t lied. Patsy Cline had been killed. Louise broke down.”

In an [interview with *Country Western Weekly* in 1995, written by Rick Taylor](#), Louise recalls her reaction: “It was like a physical blow to my gut. I couldn’t believe it. A part of my life had ended and I made plans that day to return home.”

“The last glimpse I have of Patsy in my mind was after the Houston show. She held up a bottle of bourbon, winked and said, ‘I’ll see you, hoss.’ It was a favorite expression of hers.”

At the time of Patsy’s death, Louise had known Patsy for two years, having developed a friendship with her when she sang at the Empire Ballroom, one of Houston’s prominent country western music establishments (see pp. 18-20 of this glossary). It was 1961, and Patsy was doing a promotional tour for Decca following the success of “I Fall to Pieces”, a song that Louise would ask the DJ, Hal Harris, to play on her local radio station, KIKK, four or five times a day. Louise recognized Patsy when she arrived at the Empire, introduced herself, and thus made a connection that would play itself out over the ensuing years through frequent, lengthy letters and phone calls. Louise would visit with Patsy whenever she came to Houston to perform. Louise described their initial meeting in her interview with *Country Western Weekly*: “She told me about her life, her hopes, her dreams. We discussed loves lost, loves found, loves yet to be. We talked about her troubled marriage and the pain she endured being away from her children. It was just two people baring their souls. We both sang and harmonized old Gospel songs and hillbilly tunes. We sat there and smoked and sang until 4:00 in the morning.”

The next morning, Louise rushed Patsy to the airport, expecting never to hear from her again. Within two weeks, however, Louise received her first in what was to be many letters and phone calls they would exchange. “I often would receive calls at 1:00 in the morning”, she told Taylor. “She’d be singing in some town wanting a friend to talk to.”

Louise’s letters from Patsy are reprinted throughout *Honky Tonk Angel*. Patsy wrote several from her hospital bed after her car accident, and many from the road. She’d exult about her latest hit, grumble about life on the road, gush about her children and lament their absence when she traveled, and complain about Charlie, recounting their latest squabble. Louise

and Patsy were sounding boards for one another during their protracted late-night phone calls.



Louise in 1980

Their friendship was documented in the aforementioned Nassour biography, *Honky Tonk Angel: The Intimate Story of Patsy Cline*, and its predecessor, [*Patsy Cline: An Intimate Biography*](#). It formed the basis of *Always ... Patsy Cline*, the dialogue of which came directly from the pages of *Honky Tonk Angel*. *Always ... Patsy Cline*, was created and originally

directed by Ted Swindley in 1988 in Houston, Texas, premiering at Houston's Stages Repertory Theatre, where Swindley was the founding artistic director. It has been performed extensively in the US, UK, Canada, and Australia ever since. The show's title was inspired by Patsy's letters to Louise, many of which she'd sign "Love always... Patsy Cline."

Despite the success of *Always ... Patsy Cline*, Louise, "an elegant and witty blonde", as described in *Country Western Weekly*, was equally pleased and dismayed with her character's portrayal as "the play's comic relief". She explained, "I've never had red hair, certainly not in a beehive. I don't wear tacky clothes or have that accent. When my daughter saw it in Nashville, she just broke down and cried. She said, 'You've never been that way in your life. I don't want you to be remembered that way.'"

Nevertheless, *Always ... Patsy Cline* endeared her to thousands of her fans from around the world.

Louise's life included three marriages and the tragic death of her son in 1979. She died at her home on Lake Conroe in Willis, Texas on October 28, 2004, of emphysema after several years of poor health. She left her husband, daughter, two step-granddaughters, a granddaughter and her husband and a great-granddaughter. Her son, son-in-law, and her children's father preceded her in death.

[This page](#) from *Comfort Theatre's* website has the full interview with Louise from *Country Weekly* magazine, her obituary from the *Houston Chronicle*, a letter about her passing from her third husband, Ed Zurbuchen, and more photos.

The Bodacious Bobcats Band: an homage to Cline's tradition of calling her backup band "The Bodacious Bobcats" (from *DL Online*, July 11, 2017)

SETTINGS

The Grande Ole Opry: From the [official Grande Ole Opry website](#):

What began as a simple radio broadcast in 1925 is today a live entertainment phenomenon. Dedicated to honoring country music's rich history and dynamic present, the Grand Ole Opry showcases a mix of country legends and the contemporary chart-toppers who have followed in their footsteps. The Opry, an American icon and Nashville, Tennessee's number-one attraction, is world-famous for creating one-of-a-kind entertainment experiences for audiences of all ages.

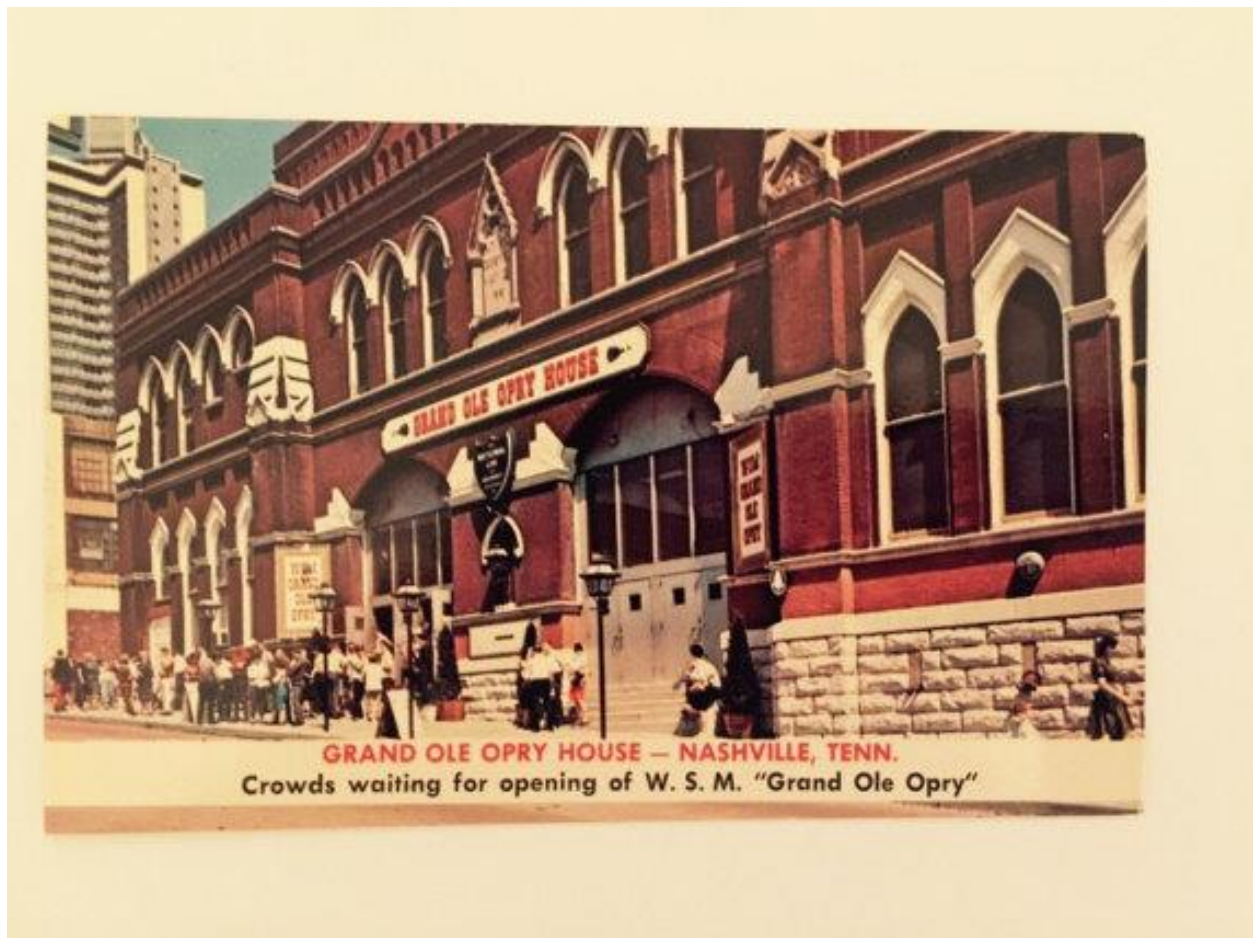
It's been called the "home of American music" and "country's most famous stage." ... From Philadelphia to Fiji, everyone knows the Grand Ole Opry is the show that made country music famous. How it earned that reputation is quite a tale.

It began on the night of Nov. 28, 1925, when an announcer on Nashville radio station WSM introduced fiddle player Uncle Jimmy Thompson as the first performer on a new show called "The WSM Barn Dance." Now, more than 80 years later, the show

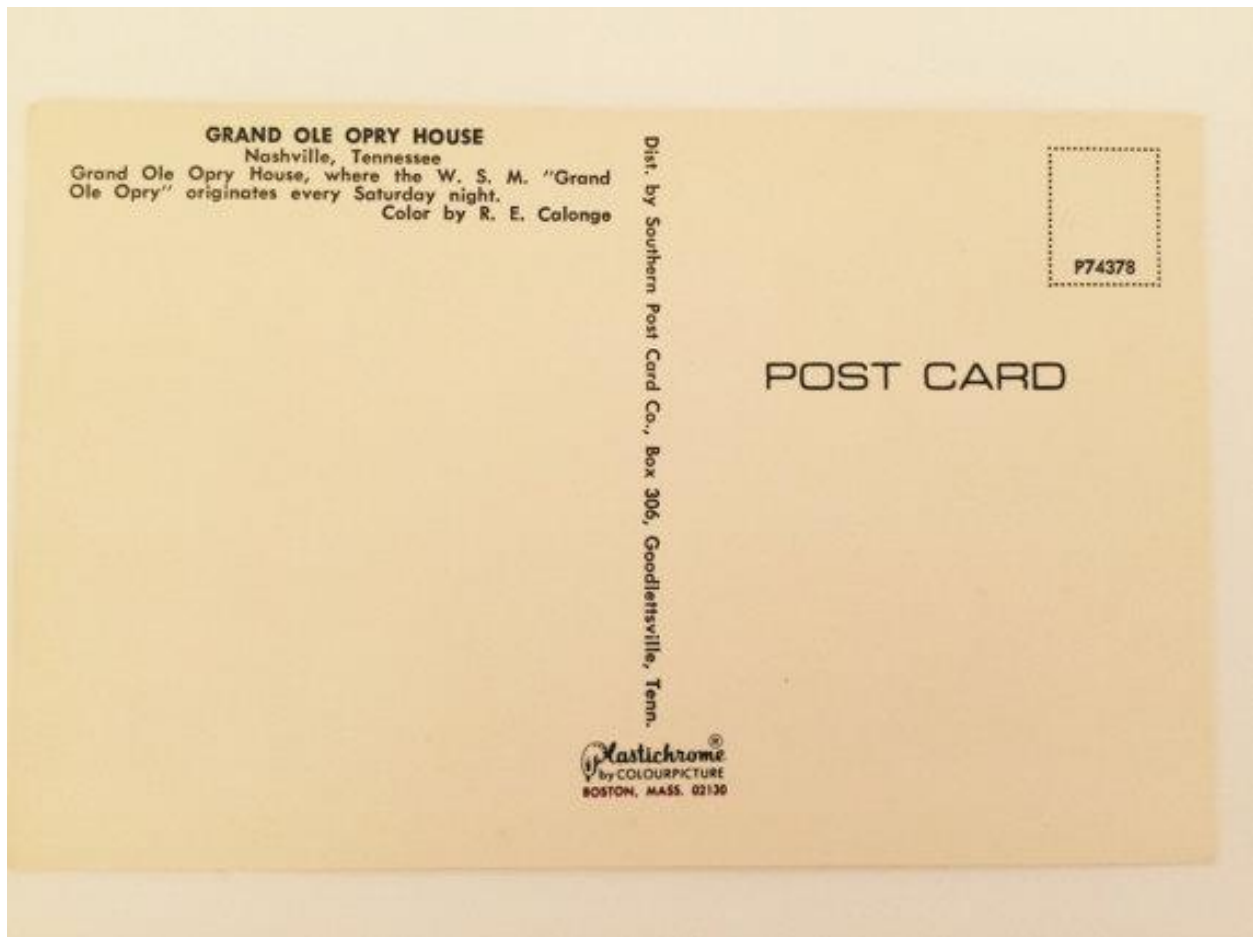
Hay started is still going strong. Along the way, it has launched countless country music careers and led the way for Nashville to become Music City. Early Opry performers such as Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Ernest Tubb, and Bill Monroe became musical foundations for the Opry during its years in residence at the historic Ryman Auditorium, later welcoming to the stage artists who would become entertainment icons in their own right including Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, and Bill Anderson.

The Opry said goodbye to the Ryman Auditorium on Friday night, March 15, 1974, to take up residence at the newly built Grand Ole Opry House. The next night, President Richard Nixon joined Roy Acuff on stage at the Grand Ole Opry House. Still, they could keep in touch with the traditions of the Ryman because a six-foot circle of hardwood was taken from the Ryman and placed center stage at the Opry House.

Thousands of people continue to make pilgrimages every year to see and hear their favorite country stars perform at the Opry, while millions tune in to enjoy the Opry via 650 AM WSM, Sirius XM Satellite Radio, syndicated radio, or opry.com.



Front view of a postcard from the 1950s, showing the Grande Ole Opry



Back view of the postcard pictured on the previous page

The Arthur Godfrey Show: Born on August 31, 1903, Arthur Godfrey worked in radio until his first television show, "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts," was introduced in December 1948 on CBS. The aim of the show was to discover new talent, with an applause meter that measured audience reaction to each contestant. Louise was watching the show on January 21, 1957, when Patsy first performed "Walkin' After Midnight".

The song garnered such a strong response from viewers that it was rush-released as a single on February 11, 1957. "Walkin' After Midnight" would go on to become Patsy's first major hit single, reaching No. 2 on the Billboard country music chart and No. 12 on its pop chart. Although the song was her only hit until 1961, the single version sold over one million copies and is often included on authoritative lists of the all-time greatest songs in country music.

Godfrey and Patsy Cline were each involved in severe automobile accidents right before their respective careers took off. From the [New York Times obituary of Arthur Godfrey](#), "His career seemed fairly successful at first, but not sensational until after he suffered severe injuries in an automobile accident. While in the hospital, 'I listened to a lot of radio, hour after hour,' he said, 'and I decided to take the informal approach in my own work.'

After his release from the hospital, Mr. Godfrey went to work for NBC in Washington and in 1941 he came to New York. In 1945, CBS radio gave him his big break with a half-hour morning show.”



Arthur Godfrey and Minnie Pearl under the marquee for his Talent Scouts show outside CBS studios

According to a program about Patsy on PBS's *American Masters* series, “At 29 years old, with a successful career and several hits climbing the charts, Patsy Cline was almost killed in a head-on car collision. Permanent scarring and chronic pain could've ended the young musician's career, but Cline refused to let it slow her down. Six weeks after the accident, still on crutches, she appeared on the Grand Ole Opry's stage to perform her biggest hit yet: *Crazy*.”

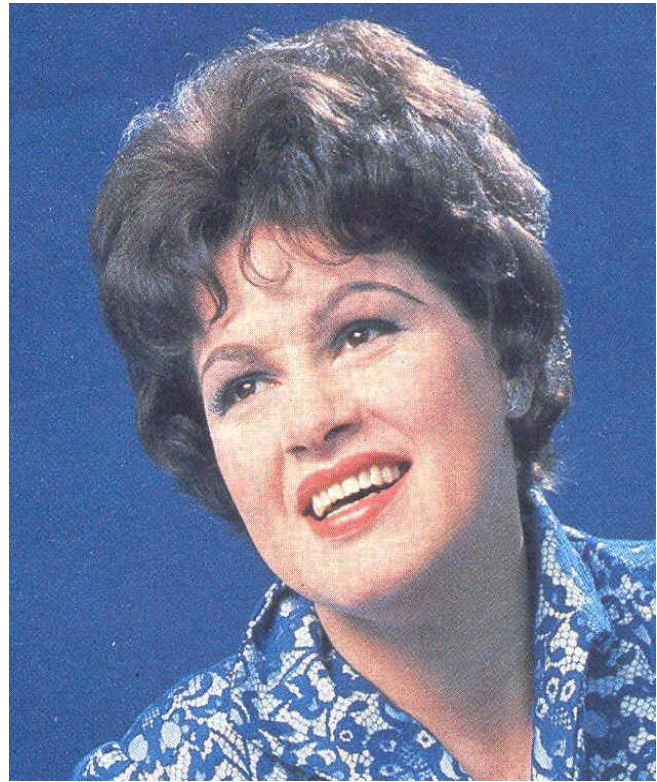
Seat belts weren't fitted in cars until 1968, and Patsy, as she described in a letter to Louise, “went through the windshield and back,” sustaining facial injuries that left a deep scar across her forehead, over an eyebrow, and in other parts of her face and neck. She had to use heavy make-up to cover them and was planning plastic surgery before she died. The accident pulled her right hip out of its socket, pulled ligaments, and fractured her right wrist.



The car in which Patsy crashed



Patsy in 1961, shortly before the car crash



In 1963, her scars still visible under makeup

The Esquire Ballroom: The Esquire Ballroom was founded in 1955 by Raymond Proske in Houston, Texas at 11410 Hempstead, northwest of downtown. In the 1970s and 1980s the club was considered the main rival to Gilley's Club across town in Pasadena.



The Esquire Ballroom building back in the day



Jimmy Day and Willie Nelson (right) at the Esquire Ballroom in the 1950s

After his son Billy was born in 1958, Willie Nelson, who would go on to write one of Patsy's biggest hits, "Crazy", moved his family to Houston. On the way, Nelson, who was known at

the time as Hugh, stopped by the Esquire Ballroom to sell his original songs to house band singer Larry Butler. Butler refused to purchase the song "Mr. Record Man" for \$10 (\$85 now) instead giving Nelson a six-night-a-week job singing in the club and a \$50 (\$425 now) loan to rent an apartment. Nelson rented an apartment near Houston, in Pasadena, Texas, where he also worked at the radio station as the sign-on disk jockey. Nelson was inspired to write the song "Night Life" during one of his trips from his home in Pasadena to his job singing nights at the Esquire. The [lyrics](#) speak to broken dreams and the struggle to make it as a musician.

Notable appearances and performances at the Esquire Ballroom, in addition to those of Patsy Cline and Willie Nelson, include Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, Jimmy Day, Buck Owens, Charley Pride, Conway Twitty, Crystal Gayle, Dolly Parton, Earl Scruggs, Ernest Tubb, Floyd Tillman, Gene Watson, George Jones, Glen Campbell, Hank Locklin, Jean Shepard, Jeannie C. Riley, Jimmy Copeland, Jimmy Dean, Johnnie Lee Wills, Kenny Rogers, Kitty Wells, Lester Flatt, Loretta Lynn, Mel Tillis, Merle Haggard, Rita Hardt & The Rhinestones, Ronnie Milsap, Rose Maddox, Roy Clark, Tammy Wynette, Tanya Tucker, Wanda Jackson, and Waylon Jennings.

The Esquire Ballroom closed in 1995 and remained unused for several years. It reopened as Neon Boots Dancehall & Saloon in August 2013, becoming the largest gay Country and Western bar in the Southern United States, the second largest gay bar in the state of Texas, and largest gay bar in Houston. It has a significant heterosexual and mainstream following as well and continues to host music acts on the same stage that it used as the Esquire Ballroom. Neon Boots has set aside a separate bar dedicated to its history called the "Esquire Room" where you can see all the names and memorabilia of the historic artists who performed at the venue.

A Houston Radio Station: In the 1950s and 1960s, Country Music was known as Country and Western music, and radio stations in Houston and across the US were playing it, as well as popular music from George Jones, Eddy Arnold, Elvis Presley, Faron Young, Slim Whitman, Marty Robbins, Earl Scruggs, and The Wilburn Bros, among others. I found several Houston radio stations that broadcast country music at that time. KRCT was a leading AM country station that changed its call letters to KIKK in 1961 but retained its country programming. On the next page is a newspaper ad from the weekend the call letters were changed.

KIKK was mentioned in the play by Louise as the station that played at her workplace. It is where she heard Patsy Cline again after being introduced to her on the Arthur Godfrey show. KIKK had many reputable disc jockeys in addition to Hal Harris, the DJ Louise would call to request Patsy's music (see pp. 31-32 of this glossary). Gabe Tucker, a country DJ who had worked on KLEE in Iowa, would be on KRCT and KIKK for years. He had been a country DJ in Houston in the early 50s on KNUZ, as well as KATL, where he was one of their last DJs after the station switched its call letters in 1954 to KYOK and dropped its country programming in favor of rhythm and blues. Tucker spent a couple of years in Nashville managing Ernest and Justin Tubb and the Wilbourne Brothers before returning to Houston to Houston to KRCT. His wife was also in the music business.

KIKK

GABE TUCKER
7:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
Mon. through Sat.

TIGER MYERS
2:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.
Mon. through Sat.

HAL HARRIS
12:00 Noon - 3:00 P.M.

Music With That "Kountry" Flavor

PLUS

"INSTANT NEWS"

HAL WALLACE
8:00, 8:30 and 9:00 A.M.
4:00 and 5:00 P.M.

650 on your DIAL

Two Houston stations that had previously been country, KCOH and KATL, started moving towards serving the African American community, in 1953 and 1954 respectively. For KCOH, the official switch over of programming was supposed to be on August 21, 1953, but a look at the daily listings for that date indicates the changes may have been made gradually. Programs like Harlem Breakfast and Harlem Nights, Tuxedo Junction and Cool and Easy suggest that the station might have already been programming toward the African American audience before the change of ownership. The schedule posted in the newspaper on the 21st also showed programs that had a country content: Chambers Corner, King Bee and Hattie Holmes, Sweet and Solid, Jammin' Jamboree, Swing Low, the Rhythm Parade and the PM Ramble.

A similar switch seemed to be taking place on KATL during the same time. Program listings, including Dixie Downbeat, RFD 1590, and the Chuck Wagon Call, the station's morning show for years, were pure country. Two programs, Trummie Cain and Ramblin' Round, soon dropped with the new format, resurfaced on KCOH schedules. In early 1954, the station was sold, becoming KYOK, Houston's second African American radio station. As with KCOH, program changes were brought into place gradually; in the summer of 1954, program listings still included Chuck Wagon Call, Let's Polka, Gabe Tucker, Serenade in Blue, Kosher Kitchen and Hillbilly Hits, along with Sweet Chariot, Hotsy Totsy, Spiritual Sunbeams, and Little Betty. Hotsy-Totsy was to be a name of a KYOK jock for years.

Hal Harris DJ'd for KYOK, KRCT and KIKK.

KTHT 97.1 is an FM station with the slogan, "Houston's Only Home for The Country Legends". It continues to retain its classic country programming. I found some evidence showing that it was on the air in the late 1950s, ostensibly under different call letters.

ACT I

Honky Tonk: Merriam Webster defines honky tonk as:

- 1: a usually tawdry nightclub or dance hall; especially one that features country music
- 2: a district marked by places of cheap entertainment
- 3: country music that has a heavy beat and lyrics dealing usually with vice or misfortune

More than one person would object to the use of "tawdry". Simply put, a Honky Tonk is a name given to a type of bar that provides country music for entertainment to its patrons. The term applies to a variety of music genres with a country theme, and can refer to a local country bar or a new track. It is still widely used today.

When the term was first used, a Honky Tonk was considered to be a place that served alcohol to working class folk. They also typically featured some element of live music such as a piano player or a live band. Dancing was very common at these establishments as the night went on, and very often they were also well known for being centers of prostitution.

The Grizzly Rose, a Honky Tonk in Denver Colorado, has traced the etymology of the words, but explains that, "the sad truth about the word 'Honky Tonk' is that no one can really agree how it came about. The earliest evidence of the word being used was by a newspaper in Fort Worth, Texas in 1889. The word was capitalized and followed by the word 'theater' in the article, which was simply a petition to re-open the establishment. This suggests that perhaps it was just the name of the establishment rather than the type. In another newspaper article in 1894, this time in Oklahoma, the word honk-a-tonk was used in an article, but it had nothing to do with a bar or theater of any kind. Historians believe the word might have been meant to describe cattle drive trails where cowboys would bring their livestock to market. These were very common around the border of Texas and Oklahoma during that time period. As cowboys were common in these types of establishments, this localized slang may have developed into the name for their local drinking holes over time. One final other theory about the term's origination comes from the name of an American piano manufacturer. 'William Tonk & Bros' started making pianos in the late 1880's many of which were likely being played in these Honky Tonk establishments. As music was a commonality for these types of bars, it's very plausible that 'Honky Tonk' developed from the brand name of these pianos."

Just as the origins of the term itself are disputed, so is the history of Honky Tonk bars. Most people would agree that they originated somewhere around Texas and its neighboring states. As the Grizzly Rose mentions above, Texas and Oklahoma have the oldest newspaper record of the word being used. Basically, where there were cowboys, there were Honky Tonks. In the late 1800s, Wyatt Earp and others like him mentioned visiting Honky Tonks in a variety of cow towns from Kansas to Montana. In accounts of the Spanish-American War in the early 1900s, Honky Tonks were even mentioned as far west as New Mexico.

Today, if a country western bar offers live music, it's often called a Honky Tonk. Honky Tonks are no longer limited to the Wild West (Oklahoma, the Native American Territories and Texas) but can be found in major cities and small towns from California to North Carolina.

Wikipedia, which hyphenates the two words, offers other names for the honky tonk, also calling it a honkatonk, honkey-tonk, and just plain tonk. It continues, "Many eminent country music artists, such as Jimmie Rodgers, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline, Ernest Tubb, and Merle Haggard began their careers as amateur musicians in honky-tonks ... The first music genre to be commonly known as honky-tonk was a style of piano playing related to ragtime but emphasizing rhythm more than melody or harmony; the style evolved in response to an environment in which pianos were often poorly cared for, tending to be out of tune and having some nonfunctioning keys. This honky-tonk music was an important influence on the boogie-woogie piano style. Before World War II, the music industry began to refer to hillbilly music being played from Texas and Oklahoma to the West Coast as "honky-tonk" music. In the 1950s, honky-tonk entered its golden age, with the popularity of Webb Pierce, Hank Locklin, Lefty Frizzell, Ray Price, Faron Young, George Jones and Hank Williams.

Grand Ole Opry microphone: In photos from Patsy Cline's era, the Grande Ole Opry's microphone is distinguished by a tall white sign that is attached vertically and runs up the height of its base. It's painted with the letters "Grande Ole Opry" in black. You can see it in the photo below. The microphone in the left of the photo is easier to read than the one that Patsy is using. Shaun Carroll, *Always ... Patsy Cline's* director and properties designer, made an exact replica for the play.



Patsy Cline performs "Crazy" at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry in 1961

Fancy cowgirl outfit and a neck scarf: Patsy's "fancy cowgirl outfit" is described by Margaret Jones in her book, *Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline* as "her trademark cowgirl couture – tailored and sequined affairs with colorful appliques and five-inch fringe shimmying from bosom and hem". In the play, Patsy says that her mother sewed all her cowgirl outfits.

Patsy Cline dressed this way in the beginning of her career, modeling her look at that time after her childhood idol, cowgirl country singer Patsy Montana. According to Margaret Jones in her book, *Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*, Montana was the first female country soloist to dress in full cowgirl regalia, complete with fringe, boots, and hat.



One of Patsy's cowgirl stage costumes



Patsy Montana, circa 1935

As early as the seventh grade, Patsy (then Ginny Hensley) had adopted the style. In a class photo from then, seen on the following page, she is pictured wearing a brightly colored scarf around her neck, tied cowboy style. According to a former classmate, it was an accessory she was never without. In an early publicity photo, taken when she was 16 years old, she wears a fringed vest and skirt and cowboy boots.

When Decca producer Owen Bradley started working with her, things changed. He wanted her to have a more sophisticated image to go with her more sophisticated sound. Though she enjoyed the dress, she wasn't 100% on board with the genre. She wrote to her friend, Marie Flynt, an aspiring singer, in August 1961, that she was not at all happy about Owen Bradley forcing her to record pop: "... I could spit dust [,] I'm so mad. And he wants to put

violins (you heard me) on my new session ... I'll die & walk out before I'll go all the way pop ..."



Patsy Cline in her seventh-grade class photo, second row-third from right, wearing her scarf tied cowboy style

Hoss: Patsy called everyone Hoss. It was a part of her crass, brassy, tomboyish personality.

Muntz black and white TV: a television set that was the brainchild of Earl Muntz, huckster, TV commercial pioneer, automaker, electronics manufacturer and acknowledged marketing genius. Muntz was born on Jan. 3, 1904, in Elgin, IL, and showed an early interest in electronics. At the age of 8, he had already built his first radio, and a few years later, had built one for his parents' car. He dropped out of high school and went to work in his parents' hardware store in Elgin. When he was 20 years old, he opened what would become a successful used-car lot in town. After a trip to California a few years later, he noticed that used cars were selling for far higher prices than they were in Elgin, so he opened a lot in Glendale, CA. In the late '30s, after realizing that LA was where the money was, he closed his Elgin lot and relocated permanently to California.

There he developed the persona of "Madman" Muntz, a somewhat crazed used-car salesman who dressed in outrageous costumes and performed wild stunts for a series of quirky, humorous, and very profitable TV commercials that blanketed the Los Angeles area. In one such commercial, he claimed that if a car didn't sell, he'd smash it to pieces on TV

with a sledgehammer. It didn't sell, of course, and he kept his promise. "Madman" Muntz quickly became a local celebrity. People would come to his used-car lot not to buy a car but to see him, and at one point his lot was rated by a local travel agency as the 7th most visited site in Southern California.

Besides his commercials, Muntz was known for manufacturing TV sets. He made his first one in 1946. As a self-taught electrical engineer, he was able to discern that there was a simpler way to make a TV set. According to his biography on the Internet Movie Data Base (IMDB), the few TV sets available at the time were "big, bulky, complicated, heavy, had small screens and were expensive. By taking apart and examining the various makes of TVs on the market, he figured out how to build a good set, using a minimum number of parts but delivering a good picture, for less than \$100 (the average 12-inch TV set went for about \$450). He also included a built-in aerial in his sets, a major innovation – most TVs had to use an aerial that attached to the roof of the building in order to get reception, and

...dramatic proof that
Quality Television need not be expensive!!



...the great new **27 inch**
Muntz TV
\$279.95

America's Most Remarkable TV Values
... the Proof of Factory-To-You Savings.

UHF-Designed and Color Guaranteed,* in a variety of hand-rubbed finishes. Immediate Delivery... cash or terms! Built, Sold and Serviced by the Largest Direct TV Organization the World Has Ever Known!

Call or visit the Muntz Factory Branch in your city for information or Free Demonstration!

AKRON	.....	POruga	6201
ATLANTA	.....	CPress	7771
BALTIMORE	.....	VEron	1200
CHARLOTTE	.....	.....	6-8461
CHICAGO	.....	EVerglades	4-3500
CINCINNATI	.....	GAirfield	4100
CLEVELAND	.....	Ufish	5-9000
COLUMBUS	.....	KLondike	3561
DALLAS	.....	RRivside	1546
DAYTON	.....	FLiton	2141
DENVER	.....	AComo	5421
DEARBORN	.....	ULigon	4-0750
DETROIT	.....	TEans	4-6660
ELGIN	.....	ELgin	7477
FLINT	.....	.....	9-5791
FORT WORTH	.....	EDison	4511
HANTRAMCK	.....	TDomend	8-4025
HOUSTON	.....	ATwood	5151
INDIANAPOLIS	.....	ATlantic	1447
JACKSONVILLE	.....	.....	6-6363
KANSAS CITY	.....	JEfferson	4700
LANDING	.....	.....	4-8457
LONG BEACH	.....	.....	7-2221
LOS ANGELES	.....	HOllywood	2-3321
MEMPHIS	.....	.....	5-6821
MIAMI	.....	.....	84-7551
MILWAUKEE	.....	BRoadway	1-2232
MINNEAPOLIS	.....	FIllmore	3001
NEW ORLEANS	.....	EXpress	2331
NEW YORK	.....	ELincoln	8-6000
NORFOLK	.....	.....	5-7877
OAKLAND	.....	TEmplabar	6-1373
PHILADELPHIA	.....	LDixon	7-1860
PONTIAC	.....	FEderal	4-1515
ROSEVILLE	.....	PRocom	6-3800
ST. LOUIS	.....	MAin	9355
ST. PAUL	.....	DAle	7886
SAN FRANCISCO	.....	UNderhill	3-4830
SEATTLE	.....	SEwca	8383
UPPER MONTCLAIR	.....	MOntclair	3-4443
WASHINGTON, D.C.	.....	LIncoln	7-9375

All prices subject to change without notice.



20in. **'99⁵**



21in. **'139⁵**



21in. **'169⁵**



27in. **'289⁵**

ALL PRICES PLUS \$10 DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION PLUS FEDERAL EXCISE TAX

WORLD'S LARGEST TELEVISION RETAILER

You may purchase Muntz TV already UHF-Equipped or your present set can be adapted at slight extra cost.

*Full purchase price refunded and applied to trade-purchase of Muntz Color-Set if Color-TV becomes available within year of delivery date of current Muntz TV!

77

A 1959 ad for a Muntz TV set

apartment buildings at the time often had rules prohibiting the use of aerials on their roofs, so many apartment residents didn't have TVs, making them prime customers for Muntz's sets. He marketed his TVs with the same types of outrageous TV commercials and radio and newspaper ads as he did with his cars, and the sets sold like wildfire. In 1951 alone his company grossed almost \$50 million. Unfortunately, by the mid-1950s color TV was introduced and the market for black-and-white TVs like Muntz's shrank precipitously. In 1953 his company lost almost \$1.5 million. He hung on for a few more years, but by 1959 Muntz's TV operation was forced to declare bankruptcy and shut its doors."

Chunky little country girl leaning back and leading into a wonderful country song called "Walkin' After Midnight": When Patsy won Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scout Show on January 21, 1957, the day President Eisenhower took his oath of office, the *Winchester Evening Star* managed to squeeze in a story about it amongst the coverage of the inauguration festivities. Under the caption, "TOPS IN TALENT", it erroneously called the song, "I Walk Alone at Midnight".

In a month, the song would catch on in virtually every important market, with *Billboard* noting, "Here is the most recent example of a country artist coming into the pop market and cleaning up. Miss Cline has cracked New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and other East Coast cities as well as Southern and Midwestern key markets, where the action is both pop and country and western. It is coming up fast now and should make the charts."

A bona fide hit, the song peaked on February 23 at number 12 on the pop charts and on March 2, it became a number 2 country hit. Patsy would perform the song on several television shows in March, receiving her biggest fee to date, \$1500 (\$13,121.30 today) from the Bob Crosby Show for three performances.

Television would showcase her singing style. She was an "enactor" of songs, working with the camera effectively, "her gestures and body language minimal, her eyes saying it all" (p. 141, *Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*).

About Patsy being "chunky": she struggled to maintain a thin figure for the camera throughout her career. Before a performance at the Grand Ole Opry on October 14, 1960, she was introduced by Jim Reeves: "As special guest, we got the talents of that sweet singin' 115 lbs. of feminine dynamite, the newcomer to the Opry, Miss Patsy Cline." In response, Patsy told him and the audience, "That's not quite true ... I don't weigh 115 lbs." Reeves responded, "Well, 116 maybe, but what difference does it make? We're here to sing, not to be weighed ..."

She alluded to her weight during her second-to-last concert in Birmingham on March 2, 1963, which also featured Tex Ritter, Charlie Rich, Jerry Lee Lewis and Flatt and Scruggs. "Any of you gals out there have any weight problems?", she asked the audience. "I've been busy trying to lose weight, and this is the first time in a long time I've been able to wear white. I'm tellin' ya, don't it just look good?" She then proceeded to share the results of her latest diet, including the number of pounds she had lost and her current weight.



Patsy at her March 2, 1963 concert, slim and gorgeous in her white dress and signature white pumps

Brenda Lee reminisces in *Honky Tonk Angel* about cooking in Patsy's kitchen: "We loved that kitchen! A little too much! Patsy and I had one thing in common. We gained weight so easily and we were always on a diet. I have wonderful memories of Dottie and Loretta coming over. They'd exchange recipes and cook. We'd sit in there and eat and talk about the road, which didn't help our diets one bit."

Stylish 50s style cocktail dress, full skirt with neck scarf: According to Margaret Jones in her book, *Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*, this is Patsy's "makeover look", and included "rhinestone earrings and nosebleedingly high heels". Patsy's heels were almost always white, her signature. Post-Owen Bradley, the combination would replace her cowgirl outfits.

Little girl from Virginia: Winchester, Virginia, to be exact. Her origins and early life in Virginia are discussed in the bio of Patsy, starting on p. 1 of this glossary.

By 1961, I was divorced. Yahoo! hallelujah! Louise is talking about her divorce from her first husband, Rex Seger, the father of her son, David, and daughter, Donna. She would later marry two more times, remaining with her third husband, Ed Zurbuchen, until her death.

KIKK: a Houston radio station described on pp. 20-22 of this glossary.

[local station]: My vote is to use [KPIG](#) here. It has broadcast out of Freedom, California, near Watsonville, since 1988. It's known worldwide for its unconventional programming and iconic logo, pictured below.



Wikipedia describes KPIG's appeal:

KPIG has strong community ties featuring local disc jockeys, local sponsors, local news and commentary, and the Hog Call line, a free community call-in line for leaving recorded announcements that will be played on the air. Much like newspaper classifieds, common "Hog Calls" are regarding items for sale or upcoming community events.

Among its most well-known programs are "Cousin Al's Bluegrass Show" on Sunday nights, "Uncle Sherman's Dirty Boogie" on Saturday nights, "Please Stand By" the in-studio live music show, on Sunday mornings. "Please Stand By", hosted by Sleepy John Sandidge, features local and world-famous Country, Folk, and Blues acts. The station also hosts several popular music festivals each year including the Humbug Hoedown in December, and is the radio volunteer for the free music festival each October in Golden Gate Park called Hardly Strictly Bluegrass.

KPIG is well known worldwide as well. It was one of the first radio stations in the world to webcast their program, going online on August 2, 1995 during Cousin Al's show. Frequently song requests are submitted via e-mail from listeners around the globe. Indirect references to KPIG appear in the songs "I'm Coming Home" by Robert

Earl Keen and "Beer Run" (which references the Robert Keen song) by Todd Snider, both of whom are frequently featured on the air and perform at KPIG's events.

Another local country station is [KRTY](#). It broadcasts out of San Jose, so it's not exactly local. It's known to country music fans, but nearly everyone knows KPIG.

Hal Harris, the local disc jockey: I found an excellent biography of Hal Harris by Dave Penny from *This Is My Story*, a collection of biographies of rockabilly musicians. The bio was posted on *Rockabilly.nl*, a division of Rockabilly Europe.

Born Harold F Harris, 27 September 1920, near Pike, Alabama.
Died 11 January 1992, Jackson, Mississippi.

One of the most celebrated of the early rockabilly guitarists of the 1950s, "Fuzzy" Hal Harris' chaotic and spine-chillingly bluesy solos on his Fender Stratocaster for Starday Records in Houston were as distinctive (and valuable) as Roland Janes' in Memphis, Grady Martin's in Nashville or Joe Maphis' in Hollywood.

Spending his early years in Alabama, playing in a string band with his brothers Roy Harris and Clyde "Boots" Harris, Hal joined the Florida-based band of "Pappy" Neal McCormick in the early 1940s and moved to Los Angeles, at Boots' insistence, after the war, where he made his recording debut with Curley Williams' Georgia Peach Pickers for Columbia Records in 1946.

He moved back to Alabama, and by the dawn of the 1950s, Harris was disc-jockeying in Mississippi and was based in Jackson. It was here that he cut his first solo record for Webb Pierce's Pacemaker label in 1951. One of the sides, "Poor Boy Rag" gives us a taste of what to expect later in the decade!

In 1953, Hal took his family to Houston, Texas, having been offered a DJ job at KYOK where he spun records and featured his own band, The Southern Playboys. He moved to KRCT around 1954 where he was billed "Fuzzy" Hal due to his new flat-top crew cut and remained with the station until 1963. By 1954, coinciding with Harris' move to KRCT, Pappy Daily's local Starday label was starting to hit its stride and was established enough to experiment with the new Texas "Cat Music", invariably recorded at Bill Quinn's Gold Star recording studio at 3104 Telephone Road. The small coterie of seasoned session musicians chosen to support this new breed of wild young singer included Herb Remington on steel guitar, Doc Lewis on piano, Link Davis on fiddle or tenor sax, and Hal Harris on lead electric guitar. Harris would soon become the session leader on classic Houston rockabilly and rock 'n' roll sessions by Joe Clay (Vik), George & Earl (Mercury), Al Urban (Sarg), Floyd Lee (Enterprise) as well as a plethora of Starday/Dixie/D sessions by the likes of Sleepy LaBeef, Rock Rogers, Link Davis, Bob Doss, Eddie Noack, Benny Barnes, Glenn Barber, Jimmy & Johnny, Ray Campi, The Big Bopper and George "Thumper" Jones.

It was reportedly at the end of a 1957 Jones session that Harris was given the rare

opportunity to cut a couple of tracks in his own right, and the two strong rockabilly sides - "Jitterbop Baby" and "I Don't Know When" - became a big success in 1978 when Ace Records issued them on a 10" LP and, subsequently, back to back on a 45 (rumours persist that the coupling was released in 1957 on Starday or one of its subsidiaries, but no copy has ever been uncovered). He enjoyed two more releases in the '50s; "Please Pass the Biscuits" (Dixie 529) and "Boy Crazy Jane" (Rainbow 1203) and acted as Sleepy LaBeef's manager briefly, but by the early 1960s the Houston scene was at a low ebb; Quinn had sold his Gold Star studio to Huey Meaux and Radio KRCT changed its call letters to KIKK and its format to a top 40 Pop station.

In 1963, Hal moved back to Jackson, remarried, and spent his last three decades quietly as a born-again Christian, working as a gospel DJ and recording three solo religious LPs, until his death aged 71 in 1992.

Esquire ballroom next Friday night ... This big, barnlike structure out on the Hempstead Highway in Houston is described on pp. 18-20 of this glossary.

For cryin' in a bucket: a favorite phrase of Louise's boyfriend, the McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs defines it as "an exclamation of shock, anger, or surprise". American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms calls it "an exclamation of anger or exasperation", synonymous with "for crying out loud". It is defined as "a euphemism for 'for Christ's sake.' [Colloquial; early 1900s]"

Pink and black Pontiac: The image below was the only one I found that was black *and* pink.



Pink and black 1960 Pontiac Bonneville

All the others were primarily pink, and I couldn't see Louise naming a pink car "SEXY DUDE". It's a 1960 Pontiac Bonneville with a pink roof and hubcaps.

White high-heeled pumps: Patsy's signature shoe once she ditched the cowgirl garb.

Do-si-do: According to *Wikipedia*, "Do-si-do or dos-à-dos is a basic dance step in such dance styles as square dance, contra dance, polka, various historical dances, and some reels.

The term is a corruption of the original French term dos-à-dos for the dance move, which means 'back-to-back', as opposed to 'vis-à-vis' which means 'face to face'.

It is probably the most well-known call in square dancing aside from, perhaps, "Promenade".

Here's [how it's done](#).

Schlitz: Schlitz is the namesake beer of the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company, a brewery based in Milwaukee Wisconsin, which was once the largest producer of beer in the US.



An image of Schlitz from a 60s ad

Schlitz was known as "The beer that made Milwaukee famous" and was advertised with the slogan "When you're out of Schlitz, you're out of beer". According to *Wikipedia*, "Schlitz first became the largest beer producer in the US in 1902 and enjoyed that status at several points during the first half of the 20th century, exchanging the title with Anheuser-Busch multiple times during the 1950s."

\$350 dollars ... four and one half hours with only one fifteen minute break: When she met Louise, Patsy had only just been released from her Four-Star contract, which drained her financially. She hadn't had a hit in the three years since "Walkin' After Midnight". "I Fall to Pieces," which was released three months before she and Louise met, was making a slow climb up the charts. After Patsy's car accident five weeks later, "I Fall to Pieces" would jump to the top of the charts, becoming a #1 hit and catalyzing Patsy's swift and spectacular rise. At the time she met Louise, however, Patsy was still needing to make money by going on the road. The payoff for a hit record took a year, she was still hurting from her costly Four-Star contract, and she needed to continue to go out and meet her public or they'd forget her – common wisdom of the entertainment world, espoused by her manager, Randy Hughes. The equivalent today of \$350 is \$2,835.61, not really a lot when you consider travel, musicians, and other associated costs.

Charts: Patsy would have had a binder of her own hand-written chord charts, which she'd take to all her gigs and distribute to the musicians in her band. A chord chart – usually simply called a "chart" – is the most common form of notation used by professional session musicians playing jazz or popular music. A form of musical notation, it describes the basic harmonic and rhythmic information for a song or tune. For singers like Patsy, it is intended primarily for a rhythm section, which usually consists of piano, guitar, drums, and bass. Musicians are expected to be able to improvise the individual notes used for the chords, known as the "voicing", and the appropriate ornamentation, counter melody, or bassline.

Wikipedia describes the chart further:

In some chord charts, the harmony is given as a series of chord symbols above a traditional musical staff. The rhythmic information can be very specific and written using a form of traditional notation, sometimes called rhythmic notation, or it can be completely unspecified using slash notation, allowing the musician to fill the bar with chords or fills any way he or she sees fit (called "comping"). In Nashville notation, the key is left unspecified on the chart by substituting numbers for chord names. This facilitates on-the-spot key changes to songs. Chord charts may also include explicit parts written in modern music notation (such as a musical riff that the song is dependent on for character), lyrics or lyric fragments, and various other information to help the musician compose and play their part.

and style as the music. To achieve a cut off, the hand or hands are moved in some variation of a circular motion.

Frog strangler: A frog strangler (aka a frog-drowner or frog storm) is a “sudden hard rain. It can also be called a gullywasher. A frog rain is a very heavy rain accompanied by windsprouts that pick up small frogs and shower them on nearby land”. (from the [Dictionary of Smoky Mountain English](#) by Michael B. Montgomery and Joseph S. Hall, University of Tennessee Press, 2004)

“**jiving**”: Louise here is dancing. The term once referred to a specific way of dancing to jazz or swing music but has come more to mean just “groovin” to the beat.

Working in a drug store during the day to help support my momma: After Sam left the family, Patsy quit Handley High School to support her mother and siblings by working. Her first job was in a chicken factory, Rockingham Poultry on North Kent Street. Rockingham Poultry required its employees to be at least 18, but Patsy lied about her age. Her job was to stand in rubber hip boots and cut the necks of chickens as they dangled from lines tied to their feet. When the foreman discovered she was only 16, he fired her. Patsy cried and pleaded to stay, explaining how badly the family needed her (meager) paycheck, so he kept her on another two weeks until she secured a job working the counter at the Greyhound Bus Depot in Winchester. She soon approached Hunter Gaunt and his wife for a job. The Gaunts owned a drugstore and soda fountain right around the corner from Patsy’s home on Kent Street. The couple sympathized with Patsy’s family situation and gave the responsible



Patsy in her Gaunts uniform. She signed the photo “Virginia,” the name she was called then

young woman a job as a clerk and fountain attendant at their drugstore for minimum wage, which was 75¢ an hour, or \$7.74 now. Her job at Gaunts, coupled with her emerging singing career (described below), gave her little time for sleep, let alone the carefree activities of a normal teenager. Nevertheless, Patsy was exhilarated by her life. “We [she and the musicians] wouldn’t get home until about three o’clock in the morning. A few hours later I was up getting ready to work in the drugstore” (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*).

Singing in clubs at night in Winchester, Virginia: In the earlier days of her career, Patsy sang in clubs, but also in Moose Halls, fire stations, carnivals, and roadhouses. Patsy pursued her singing career with a single-minded intensity in the evenings, but still managed to work her day jobs diligently. Her first club gig was at a gin mill, the Melody Lane, on the outskirts of Winchester. One evening, the then 16-year-old Patsy showed up there with her mother. Hilda approached the piano player, Ralph “Jumbo” Rinker, and introduced herself and Patsy. She asked Jumbo if he would “play a couple of songs and let Virginia sing”. She did, the patrons liked her, and she returned. She would go on to win local amateur talent contests and perform in charity events and on the local radio station. Soon, she had a regular Saturday night gig as the girl singer for the house band, the Jack Fretwell Orchestra, at the Yorks Inn on Route 11 on the outskirts of town. She was a cigarette girl and hostess in the early part of the evening, and later would sing five or six numbers with the band, including “Embraceable You”, “Time on My Hands”. “Stardust”, and a club favorite, “You Made Me Love You”. She also sang at another venue, in nearby Front Royal’s John Marshall Nightclub.

According to Margaret Jones in *Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*, “Throughout this time, Patsy continued to sing at beer joints and dance halls like Donald Patterson’s in downtown Winchester where she was still singing ‘a little on the pop modern side, at first’, according to local musician Bob Armel.” Patsy’s local club experience and exposure at other venues enabled her to eventually move to regional TV popularity, and finally to national television stardom.

You know them cowgirl outfits I used to wear? My momma sewed each and every one of them by hand. I look different now, don’t I?: Hilda, a professional seamstress, did indeed sew Patsy’s cowgirl outfits. Only 15 years older than her daughter, she was her greatest champion. She vowed to help her daughter any way she could. “She could stretch potato sandwiches and pennies to last any distance between where they were and the stage Patsy needed to get to” (*Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*).

To qualify Patsy for the Arthur Godfrey Talent Scouts show, [Hilda pretended to be her agent](#). The show required its contestants to be accompanied by their agent or talent scout, and the show’s talent coordinator, Janette Davis, specifically told Patsy it couldn’t be her mother because it might prejudice the audience. Because the two women had different last names, Patsy and Hilda got away with it.

Julie Dick Fudge, Patsy’s daughter, is quoted in *Wikipedia*, saying of Hilda in 1985: “Grannie loved my mother so much that it’s still hard for her to talk about [the accident].” The photo on the right of the following page attests to that.



Hilda fitting Patsy early in her career



Hilda Hensley in later life, holding one of the many stage outfits that she sewed for Patsy

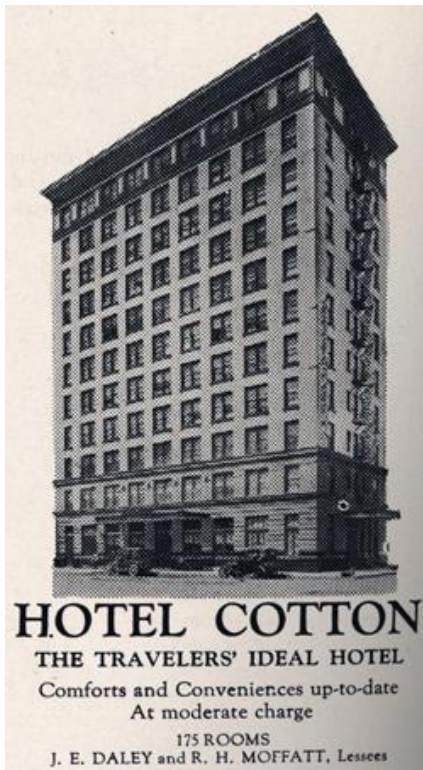
A tiger by the tail: the standard definition, to be in a difficult or dangerous situation in which one ideally should not remain, but from which one cannot withdraw, don't seem to work for what is happening with Louise here as well as this story I found. It makes more sense because it includes the movement that Louise seems to be referencing more than the peril: "Once a man was walking in the jungle and saw something move behind a tree and grabbed it. 'It' turned out to be the tail of a tiger that was resting on the other side of the tree. Startled the tiger, tried to run around the tree and encountered the man holding the end of its tail. As it tried to catch him, its tail yanked the man away from it. The man soon realized that he had made a terrible mistake but had no real choice. He held on to the tiger's tail as it chased him around the tree."

Shake a leg: a term meaning to dance. It also means to hurry up, which my dad would urge us to do when we were "dilly-dallying", an expression of my mom's.

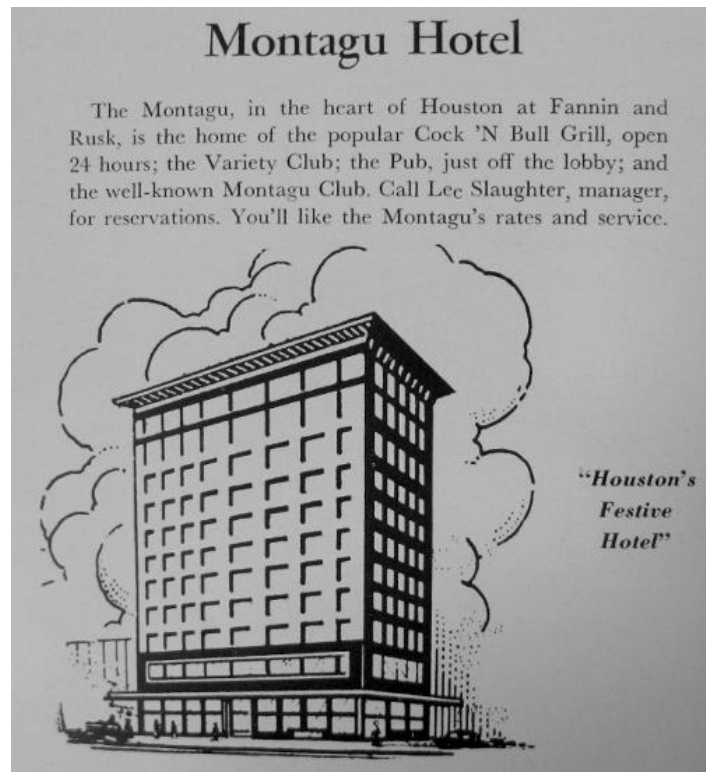
She takes off her high heels: something you could expect her to do during a performance. Adele does it, too. It's a characteristic of each performer.

ACT II

Montague Hotel, Houston: The Montagu (no “e”) Hotel at Fannin and Rusk on the southern tip of downtown Houston was founded in March 1913 as its original name, Hotel Cotton. When it opened, the 11-story skyscraper offered residents posh rooms in a prime location for the bustling life of Houston. One of the first high-rises in Houston to be made from concrete and steel, its early ads touted “175 fireproof rooms.” The hotel’s other selling point was a bathroom in every room.



A print ad for Hotel Cotton, 1913



An ad for Hotel Montagu in *Houston Magazine*, Feb 1955

Around the time of the name change in 1960 to the Montagu Hotel, however, the establishment began seeing more and more sketchy characters and activities. The once prominent block of downtown began to succumb to economic collapse and the degrading social fabric of the area. The neighborhood downgraded, its buildings were boarded and the Montagu and other hotels in the area attracted criminal activity such as drug use and prostitution.

Frank and Albert Kalas bought the Montagu in 1975 in hopes to restore it to its former glory, but for them, as for their predecessors, the task proved dauntingly expensive. Their nephew, George Kalas, took over as general manager in July 2005, initiating a slow, low-profile renovation. His hope was to fill a niche in downtown for midrange-priced rooms, as well as maintain the facility for the hotel’s long-term monthly residents until they no longer need the rooms. Many have lived there 20 years or longer; others have transitioned into nursing homes.



Patsy would have seen the original front step from the Hotel Cotton had she stayed at the Montagu instead of Louise's the night they met

An article in the Houston Chronicle in 2007 described the 800 block of Main Street as, "the most blighted block in all of downtown." The facilities became nearly impossible for Kalas to upkeep, and with the rise of competing hotels in the area and the lack of funding to update the building, he sold it to Hines, an international development firm. The Montagu was imploded on January 20, 2008; Hines demolished the entire city block except for the Stowers Building to make way for BG Group Place (at the time MainPlace). Part of a 46-story skyscraper now sits in the Montagu's place.

Decca Records: Decca Records is a UK record label, which Edward Lewis established in 1929. Lewis, along with American Decca's first president Jack Kapp and later American Decca president Milton Rackmil, established its US label in late 1934. In 1937, Lewis sold the American arm of Decca, breaking the link between the UK and US Decca labels for several decades.

The British label was renowned for its development of recording methods, while the American company developed the concept of cast albums in the musical genre. Both wings are now part of the Universal Music Group, which is owned by Vivendi, a media conglomerate headquartered in Paris, France.

The name "Decca" was chosen as a brand name by Wilfred S. Samuel, a linguist, as it was easy to pronounce in most languages. He merged the word "Mecca" with the initial D of their logo "Dulcet" or their trademark Decca "Dulcephone", a portable gramophone patented in 1914 by musical instrument makers Barnett Samuel and Sons. According to *Wikipedia*, "that company was eventually renamed the Decca Gramophone Co. Ltd. and then sold to former stockbroker Edward Lewis in 1929. Within years, Decca Records Ltd. was the second largest record label in the world, calling itself 'The Supreme Record Company'".

In the 1950s, when the Decca studios in the US were in the Pythian Temple in New York City. Patsy's relationship with Decca begins in the year 1960 and is described throughout the chronology.

Crazy: The song, written by Willie Nelson and recorded by Patsy in 1961, has gone on to sell millions of copies and continues to hold the status, established in 1997, as the number one jukebox hit of all time.

The circumstances around Patsy's recording of the song are so interesting that NPR made a program and a podcast about it.

According to NPR Music's "NPR 100", Charlie Dick helped to find "Crazy" for Patsy. He was in a bar waiting for Patsy, and he found a record on the jukebox by Paul Buskirk and His Little Men that he wanted her to hear. The featured vocalist was Hugh Nelson, now known as Willie Nelson.

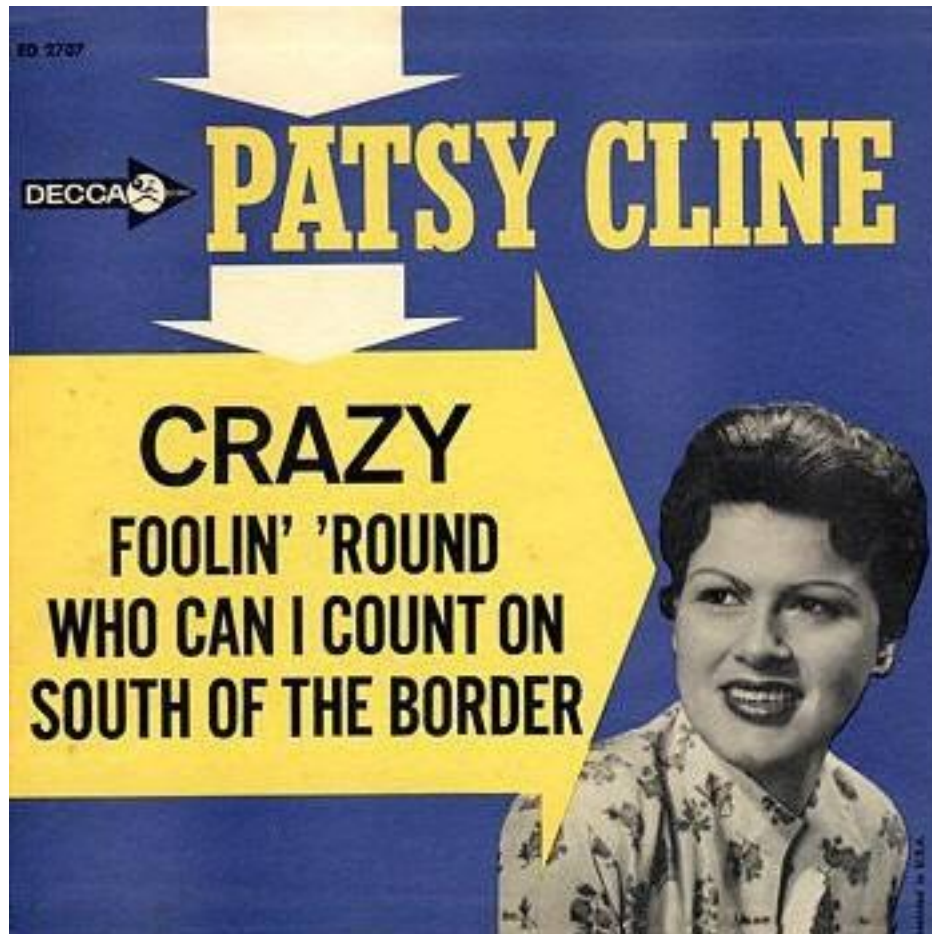
"Later that week on Saturday night, I was at the Opry, and I tried to buy that record someplace, and they didn't have it because it was on a small label," Dick said. Nelson, whom he had subsequently met, gave him a copy. "I took it home and listened to it about half the night and kept Patsy up half the night, and she didn't think too much of that. And that's when we finally got the demo on 'Crazy.' She didn't think too much of the song. She just didn't even want to hear Willie Nelson's name mentioned. And then Hank Cochran, who was a song plugger for the publishing company Willie was writing for, when he came over to bring this tape of 'Crazy' that he thought was so good — Willie actually sat in the car; he didn't come in the house, 'cause I'd told him what Patsy said about me keeping her up all night. So he waited outside. He didn't want to lose a sale."

Everyone involved with Patsy's eventual recording of the song agrees that it was a tough sale. At the time, Patsy Cline had finally scored the job she had always dreamed of – she was part of the cast of the Grand Ole Opry. She considered herself as a country singer and didn't like the vulnerable heartbroken sound of songs like "Crazy" and "Walkin' After Midnight". She battled Owen Bradley, insisted those songs were exactly right for her. He eventually won, and when "I Fall to Pieces" rose to #1 on the charts, she stopped doubting him.

NPR continues:

'Patsy had incredible vocal technique,' says Paul Kingsbury, a music historian at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. 'She was a very powerful singer and very

versatile, capable of growling or purring, vaulting octaves with ease. But beyond just the raw technique, Patsy was able to give you a window into her soul. You feel that you're hearing exactly how Patsy feels, almost as if she were a neighbor coming over for a cup of coffee and spilling her heart out to you.'



Decca's 1962 EP (extended play) release of "Crazy"

Patsy recorded "Crazy" in the summer of 1961, after her terrible car accident. She wasn't ready to go back to work at the time, either physically or mentally. In fact, she was under doctor's orders not to. However, Owen Bradley had scheduled the first recording session, and she came in to hear what Bradley had in mind for the record. He had planned a rather complicated production for Willie Nelson's unusual piece of music.

Paul Kingsbury explains,

'Willie wrote and was writing at that time, early '60s, very different songs from typical country music fare, says Kingsbury. 'Instead of the usual three or four chords that were just major chords and sevenths, he was writing 'Crazy' with jazzy minor sevenths, major sevenths, minors. If you count the chords, there are about seven chords in 'Crazy,' very different for a country song at the time. And also Willie wrote some great lyrics. There are some wonderful alliteration in that, and Willie was

going through his own romantic troubles with his wife, Martha, at the time, and you hear that in his songs like 'Crazy' and 'Hello Walls.'

Owen Bradley wanted to produce a new form of country music and had planned several innovations for "Crazy". He wanted a background vocal to add richness and sophistication, so he brought in The Jordanaires (see below and pp. 55-56 of this glossary), known for recording with Elvis Presley. Bradley also hired a young piano player, Floyd Cramer, to provide what the other musicians called "tinkling." Owen had a bass guitar to add a kind of jazzy percussion to the mix, and he set aside an entire recording session to lay down the background sound without Patsy's vocal, which was added a week later. At a time when four songs were produced in an average afternoon session, Bradley gave the song unusual attention to detail.

Three of the session musicians who were on the original recording of "Crazy" talked to NPR about it: Bob Moore, the bass player, Gordon Stoker, the top voice of The Jordanaires, and guitarist Harold Bradley, brother of Owen Bradley and co-founder of the "Quonset Hut", where "Crazy" and so many other seminal songs were recorded. Per standard procedure, they worked that day from a rather unadorned demo of Willie Nelson singing "Crazy". According to Gordon Stoker, Patsy was unimpressed with Nelson's interpretation of the song.

I remember when Patsy heard the demo, she said, 'Look, Hoss, there ain't no way I could sing it like that guy's a-singing it,' Stoker says. I always got such a kick out of the way she talked. Phrasing. The phrasing of it. The way he cut his words off and choppy. She didn't want to do it like that. She wasn't going to do it that way.

'Yeah', Moore adds. 'Willie waits till the chord hits, and then he starts his phrasing, and then he'll end up with his phrasing ahead on that.'

But what about the artistic disagreement – or at least tension – between Owen Bradley and Patsy Cline? 'When they got the hit 'I Fall to Pieces,' they didn't have any more arguments,' Moore says. 'But before that, there were some arguments and disagreements. And one of the things, I think, was something Owen did was to make her slow down the songs. And she didn't want to slow them down. And when you slow them down, she'd put a lot of feeling in there, but sometimes I thought she just had a lot of feeling 'cause she was kind of mad at Owen because, you know, she wasn't really thrilled over doing something that slow.'

'Well, you know,' Stoker chimes in, 'at first when Owen told us he was going to use The Jordanaires on her recording, she'd said, 'Look, I don't want four male voices covering me up.' He said, 'You just leave that to me, Patsy. You just leave that to me, and you'll be all right.'

The tick-tack bass – an octave lower than a normal guitar, and it's an octave higher than a bass, in the middle between a percussive instrument and a musical instrument – was important to the unique sound of the recording.

'Right,' Mr. Moore confirms. 'And Harold could turn that treble on it up to where it was real treble, and it would pick up his pick, and you get a click. If you want to hear a real good example, right at the very end, Patsy says, 'I'm crazy for loving' – right there, the band stops. And when she says, 'you,' we come back in and play just a bar and three beats. And the tick-tack is very predominant right in that place.'

'He defined his version of the Nashville sound with the tick-tack bass and the chink guitar,' Bradley adds.

'I remember how much I loved it,' Mr. Stoker says. 'I know I remember that. I remember I was pleasantly surprised at how great she did it, with how much feeling she did it.'

A music legend exists that "Crazy" was recorded in one take; it's both true and not true. The studio musicians would record their part after what they determined was the right amount of rehearsing and experimentation. When Patsy Cline came in a week later to record the vocal of "Crazy," she did in fact sing it only once. That one magical version is still selling records. Young singers are still measuring their own efforts against hers. Kathy Mattea, a contemporary country singer, marvels at the idea that a woman like Patsy Cline could walk into a studio and sing "Crazy" one time from the heart.

'One of the downsides of technology is that it has allowed us not to believe in magic anymore,' says Kathy Mattea. 'And when music is at its best, it's like throwing up a butterfly net and catching a moment in time. And, you know, when you work it too hard and make it too perfect, you know, it's like you don't see the forest for the trees. Sometimes the flaws in something or the moments where it's not perfect are what makes it special.'

She is a woman with many struggles and her life is not as easy as it may seem: Patsy endured tremendous hardships throughout her short life: the bias against her because of her beginnings and where she lived; her childhood poverty, itinerancy, lack of educational opportunities, exploitation by men in the industry, abuse at the hands of both her husbands – not to mention her car accident and the subsequent pain, disability and scarring. She had to postpone a planned plastic surgery when Charlie punched her so hard in the face that he opened some of the scars. The plane crash occurred soon after, so the surgery was never done.

Ellis Nassour, in *Honky Tonk Angel*, quotes Patsy's sister Sylvia, talking about the hard time she still has listening to Patsy's final recordings, such as "Sweet Dreams (of You)" and "Faded Love," because of "the hurt [she hears] in Patsy's voice" over her marriage to Charlie, whom she planned to divorce.

Letters Patsy wrote to aspiring singer Marie Flynt, published on Nassour's website, detail her troubles with Charlie. Marie and Patsy became "fast and endearing friends" after they

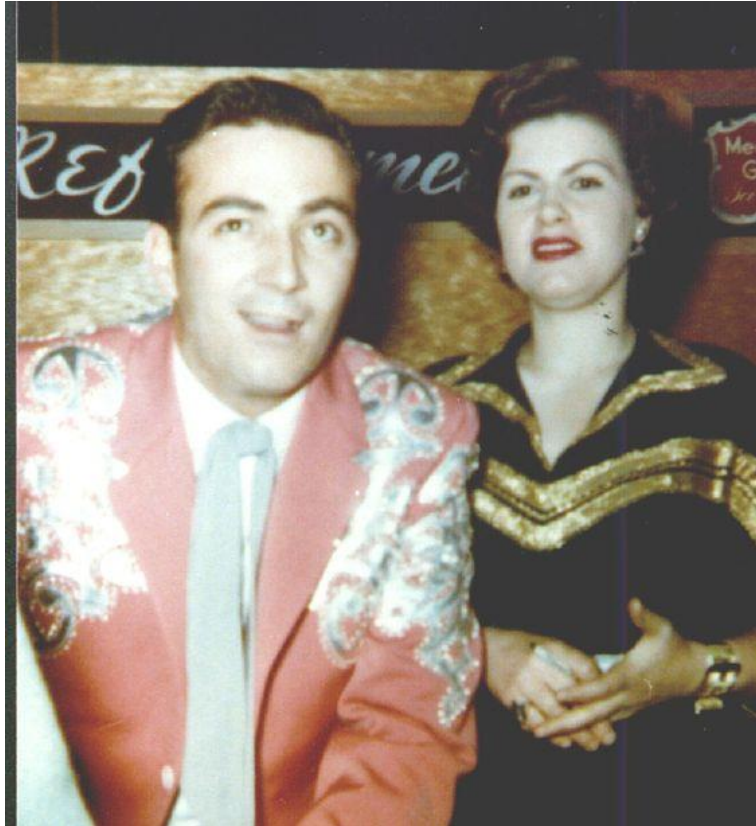
met in 1959 when Patsy appeared at a Maryland nightclub owned by Marie's family. Their intimate correspondence lasted four years, until a month before Patsy's death.

In May 1961, with a new Decca album, *Showcase*, zooming up the country charts, Patsy's marriage to Charlie Dick became rockier than ever. In a letter to Marie, Patsy wrote: "... I was ready to get a divorce [.] I'm tired of being left one night a week [.] all night long & never knowing where he was..." She complained that Charlie had been "out all night drunk...I'm sick of this #%&# ... If these 2 kids weren't here [.] I would never have come home [from a road tour,] I'll tell you that for sure. I'm at the point where I'm just sick in health, happiness & my mind & nerves are shot..."

Porter Wagoner, a tall, lanky country singer known for his glittery suits and blond pompadour, toured with Brenda Lee and Patsy in 1957. Later dubbed "Mr. Grand Ole Opry," Wagoner would become famous for introducing new Country singers (Dolly Parton was one) on his Country music variety television show, which aired from 1960-1981. In an interview with Nassour for his book, Wagoner said, "... Stardom, whether a husband's or a wife's, is a terrible thing to bring to a marriage ... ". Not only did Patsy prioritize her career over her marriage, but she also had affairs while on the road.

Porter and Faron Young, another Country singer who toured with Patsy, spoke to Nassour about their affairs with her while touring. "When Patsy was out working with me," Young stated, "Charlie'd get drunk and call to accuse her of things. And he'd be home doing just what he was accusing Patsy of."

"What really bothered Charlie," Faron Young asserted, "especially if he was drinking, was when someone called him 'Mr. Cline' or introduced him as 'Patsy Cline's husband.' That's a natural ego thing to piss you off. Whether you're the husband or wife, when you have somebody in the business, you have to accept being relegated to the background." Young described the two sides of Charlie. "Sober, I love him. He tried to do a lot for Patsy. He loved her and them kids. He had a job at the newspaper printing plant but worked like the dickens for Patsy. He'd go around to the record companies and call and write the deejays. But, hot damn, if he's drunk and I see him coming, I'll cross the street to get away from him. He gets so damn belligerent. Charlie would beat Patsy around and chew her out something terrible. He was just a Jekyll and a damn Hyde!"



Faron Young and Patsy, 1957

In September 1961, from a letter posted on Nassour's website, Patsy wrote Marie: "... it's the same ole thing[,] ... he proceeded to get drunk every dam[n] night ... I get so dam[n] fed up [,] I could scream. I'm at that point again where it don't [sic] matter where he is to me anymore. He's just not man enough to take it ... I mean the having me where I am now [as a star] & a wife. But I'm gonna put away as much of this money as I can & then when I get sick enough of it I'll be able to live with out [sic] my dam[n] man ..."

By October 1961, Patsy wrote Marie that she was filing for divorce. In fact, Patsy told just about anybody who would listen that she was ready to dump Charlie, but, despite bitter arguments, accusations and wild fights, they always managed to patch their differences. However, early in 1963, according to Patsy's mother and best friends Dottie West and Roger Miller, Patsy saw an attorney and had divorce papers drawn up.

Nassour writes in his book, "The only things Patsy bequeathed to Charlie were 'my western designed den furniture, a hi-fi stereo record player and radio, records and albums and tape recorder and blond floor model television set ... [and] whatever make car we have at the time of my death.' He got Patsy's Cadillac—and a lifetime of huge royalties." If he did indeed get all her royalties, that was contrary to the will Patsy wrote on April 22, 1961, less than two months before her near-fatal car accident. She stated that her "royalties of 5% of each recording sold of the said recording company to whom I'm contracted with at the time of my death or any royalties paid to me thereafter, I wish the money to go to the care and education of Julie S. and Allen R. Dick".

Greased lightning: According to *The Phrase Finder*, greased lightning means “very fast”. It goes on:

Lightning has been synonymous with speed for many centuries. It is, after all, a natural phenomenon known to everyone in the world, that is evidently rapid.

... Lightning was awarded its 'fast' meaning as early as the 17th century; for example, Thomas Comber used it in the devotional text, *A Companion to the Temple*, in 1676: ‘Now if the Attendants be bright as the Sun, quick as Lightning, and powerful as Thunder; what is He that is their Lord?’

'Greased' is clearly an intensifier, a linguistic device ever since people first felt the need to exaggerate. In the way that people were first 'mad' and those who were a little more mad were 'raving mad' and the more mad still were 'stark, raving mad', 'greased lightning' is meant to convey the meaning of 'very fast lightning'.

Incidentally, lightning bolts don't travel at the speed of light as one might imagine and their speed is variable depending on atmospheric conditions; they are fingers of plasma rather than beams of light and their rate of transmission is considerably slower than that of light.

The first uses of 'greased lightning' are from the early 19th century; for example, the English newspaper, *The Boston, Lincoln, Louth & Spalding Herald*, published a story in January 1833, which included the text ‘He spoke as quick as 'greased lightning'.

Squaw boots: “Squaw” boots are a style of Western boot so named as they replicate the tall, rawhide moccasins worn by Native American women and men as part of their tribal dress. The boots were often adorned with fringe, buttons, beading and rawhide laces, and for the winter months, were often lined in fur. They went to the knee and had a flat sole, often stitched like the shorter moccasins.

The photos on the next page show, clockwise, a pair of KIOWA women's beaded hide boots, Comanche high moccasins from the late 19th century, and beaded boots from the 1800s. The beaded boots are described as having “what looks like Sioux beadwork, but boots were typically Southern plains”. The photo of the Comanche boots is described in the John Mollary Gallery of Native American antique and contemporary art; “This pair of late 19th century Comanche hi-tops moccasins painted with green and yellow ochre paint and heavily ornamented with German silver buttons was collected by Amos Gottschall near Cache River, OK”.



A pair of KIOWA women's beaded hide boots



Late 19th century Comanche high moccasins



"Squaw" boots from the 1800s



Patsy in full cowgirl regalia, including "squaw" boots, circa 1957

Gold lamé Western slacks: Patsy was fond of clothes, and especially liked sequins and shiny fabrics when she made public appearances. The picture below shows some of her outfits. The gold lamé pants are on the left. The skirt Louis sewed for her from the definition on pp. 37-38 of the glossary is on the right:



Patsy's clothing display in the Country Music Hall of Fame

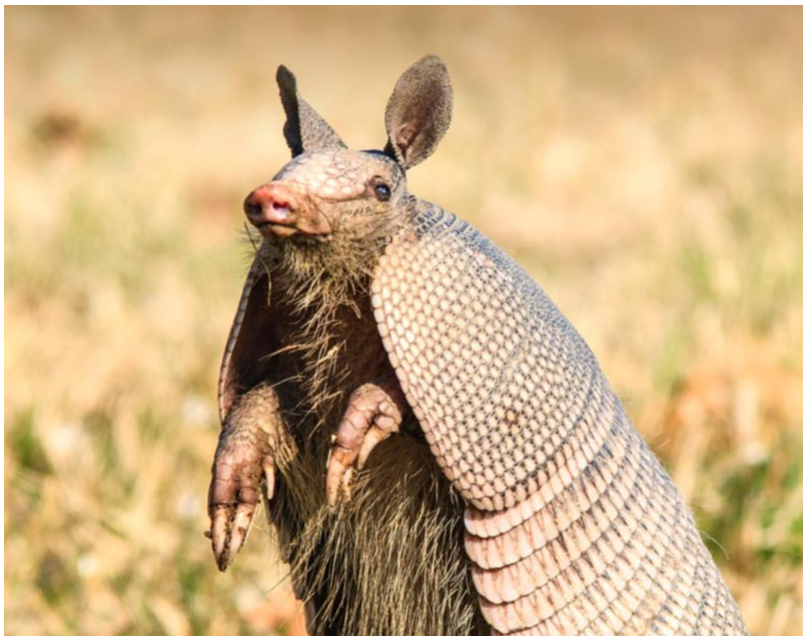
Death eatin' a cracker: (also heard as “You look like death eating a soda cracker,” a soda cracker being a saltine cracker, or a little square of unleavened bread, sometimes with a bit of salt on top, sometimes without; and” You look like “death eatin’ a cracker walkin’ backwards,” which is an Appalachian expression meaning, “you look terrible (or sick)”)

“Like death eating a cracker” has been reported to be a Southern expression, especially in Kentucky.

“Like death eating a cracker” and its variants have been cited in print since at least 1949. Ralph Ellison’s novel *Invisible Man* (1952) included the food variant “looking like death eating a sandwich.” The author Rita Mae Brown has used “like death eating a cracker” in her novels *Loose Lips* and *Six of One*. The residents of Glory, a town in West Virginia that Davis Grubb writes about in his collection of short stories, *The People of Glory*, use the phrase. It is also used in the LeRoi Jones play *Dutchman*,

There were several definitions available for this phrase, but my favorite came from Defininition.com: “a phrase to describe somebody who looks so vile, dried up and old that they are near death. because the only thing that is worse then [sic] looking like death is looking like death attempting to eat a food that dries you up. dude [sic] your neighbor looks like death eating a cracker.”

Like an armadillo in heat: I couldn’t find anything specific about the meaning of this except that it’s very likely Texan, as they tend to have idiomatic expressions that involve armadillos. Armadillos are known to shuffle along rather slowly, possibly due to their very low metabolic rate. Or maybe they are just plain lazy. They will run after prey as well as another armadillo they are amorously interested in. The father cannot be bothered to stay to help raise the young. Armadillos do not form bonds, and judging by the photo below, I



Armadillo

Can't see how another armadillo would have any interest in waking up to *that*, unless maybe it got a wax and a nail trim. Ugh. Not even that. No way.

Thirty-four thousand people have viewed the YouTube video "[Mating frenzy of Six-Banded Armadillos 3](#)". (If I were you, I wouldn't bother looking up "1" and "2", let alone the other seven. Yup, there are seven more. More on that later.) The armadillos don't appear frenzied – the term is clearly subjective when applied to armadillos – until :58, when another one interrupts the other two going at it, which is an expression that doesn't really apply to armadillos in the act of procreation, because judging from the video there is little "going" involved. There are actually eight of these "mating frenzy" videos of armadillos. I don't understand people. They've posted videos all over YouTube of sloths, raccoons, koalas, possums – you name it – mating. What is the attraction? Please don't tell me it has to do with science.

In less than two weeks, I received the first in a long series of letters and telephone calls from Miss Patsy Cline ... I received my first letter May 29, 1961: Here is the text of that letter, reprinted from Ellis Nassour's book:

May 29, 1961

Dear Louise & All,

Wanted to take time out to write a line or two to thank you folks for the nice way you treated this ole country gal while I was there. I sure do appreciate all you done, because if you hadn't been so nice I wouldn't have been able to go to the radio station. My sincere thanks and hope I can be as nice to you all sometime. Tell Hal "hello" for me.

Hope this finds you well and things going great. As for me, the kids and myself are fine and hell is still a poppin' of course. Ha. Don't know how much longer I can stand this way of living, but the little ones always come first with me. Till then I'll grin and bear it. Ha.

Now for the really big news. Well I'm nearly up on the moon and don't need a rocket. My record sold 10,000 in Detroit last week alone and is hitting all pop charts. It's #1 on both pop stations here in Nash. & is the #1 seller at Decca and is already being put in 3 albums right away of different artists. I do the 5 Star Jubilee on July 7th, and it's in color. Swingin' huh? I think I told you I'm getting things in shape for the Dick Clark [show] but don't know the date yet. But I'll let you know.

I'm going home next Tuesday and while there, they are proclaiming a Patsy Cline Day in my home town. Ain't that a kick in the head? I wish they would just left it like it was, but I do appreciate the noise they are kicking up. So I guess I'll have to do what they want that day. The mayor is gonna be there and recognize me and so on. Any way, it sure is a good feeling. I can't really believe it.

Guess I'd better close and get busy with this ironing I've got here. Be sure and kiss the boy [Louise's son] for me. He sure is a doll and tell the couple that was there that night "hello" and I hope I didn't bore them with my troubles, and I think they are wonderful folks. I still want all of you to come down to see us and the Opry. So write soon and thanks again. (Dallas was a swingin' date.)

Hope to see you again soon.

Love & Luck,
Patsy Cline & Family

Whether Patsy was mixed up about the city where she met Louise, or is talking about a gig that followed, it's anyone's guess what she meant by, "Dallas was a swingin' date'.

Five Star Jubilee (Friday nights, NBC TV, Springfield, Missouri, Ozark Jubilee) on July 7, and it's in color: Per *Wikipedia*:

Five Star Jubilee is an American country music variety show carried by NBC-TV from March 17–September 22, 1961. The live program, a spin-off of ABC-TV's Jubilee USA, was the first network color television series to originate outside New York City or Hollywood.

From March 17 to May 5, the weekly show aired on Fridays from 8–8:30 p.m. Eastern Time, but moved to 8:30–9 p.m. from May 12 to September 22. The series featured five rotating hosts: Snooky Lanson (first show March 17), Tex Ritter (March 24), Rex Allen (March 31), Jimmy Wakely (April 7) and Carl Smith (April 14). All five appeared on the May 12 show, which was the first in color.

Produced from the Landers Theatre in Springfield, Missouri, the program was similar to Jubilee USA and featured some of the same cast, including Bobby Lord, Cecil Brower, Speedy Haworth and Slim Wilson's Jubilee Band. Barbara Mandrell (who had toured with Red Foley and a Jubilee USA personal appearance unit) made her network debut on the program at age 12. The final program was hosted by Foley, who also appeared on the July 7 show. In April he had been acquitted of tax evasion charges, which were believed to have originally kept him out of consideration as a host. The sponsor was Massey Ferguson.

Five Star Jubilee debuted March 17, 1961 in black-and-white, but switched to color on May 12. The first two color programs (May 12 and 19) were videotaped beginning at 1:30 a.m. local time Friday (for playback that evening) after nearby KTTS-AM signed off at 1:00 a.m., because of unforeseen RF interference from its transmitter with the color TV picture. Despite the hour, both shows had audiences at the theater. NBC resolved the problem for the May 26 program, which was the first live color show. The series was aired by 150 NBC affiliates, although not by WNBC-TV in New York.

Patsy was understandably excited about the show being broadcast in color, as it was the first color TV series outside New York City or Hollywood.

Massey Ferguson is an American-owned major manufacturer of agricultural equipment. The current business was formed by the 1953 merger of farm machinery manufacturers Massey Harris of Canada and Britain's Ferguson Company under the new name Massey Harris Ferguson. In 1958, the name was shortened to Massey Ferguson. Today Massey Ferguson remains a major seller around the world.

The *Wikipedia* article lists the talent that performed in the show, but Patsy Cline wasn't among them. There's a good chance she couldn't sing on the show, as her car accident was on June 14, 1961, only three weeks before she was scheduled to perform. The show went off the air on September 22, 1961, so they may not have been able to get her back on by then.



Pictured left to right are Tex Ritter, Jimmy Wakely, Snooky Lanson, Carl Smith and Rex Allen at the Landers Theatre. Note the Massey Ferguson tractor at right.

Ain't that a kick in the head? The *Free Dictionary* defines "a kick in the head" as:

1. A thoroughly devastating or disappointing setback or failure.
2. A harsh punishment (or remedy) for acting foolishly or malevolently. Usually used prescriptively (i.e., "(someone) needs a kick in the head").

"Ain't That a Kick in the Head" was also a very popular song at that time, having been recorded by Dean Martin in a Nelson Riddle-arrangement for his 1960 album *This Time I'm Swingin!* It didn't make the cut, but that same year, he performed it in the movie *Ocean's 11* in an alternate arrangement with Red Norvo and His Quartet.

Patsy Cline had been killed in an airplane crash on her way back to Nashville. She was 30 years old. It had only been six years since I first heard Patsy sing on the Arthur Godfrey Show: Patsy's career was all too brief. She died on March 5, 1963, in a plane crash in Camden, Tennessee. Details about it are provided throughout this glossary, as well as in the chronology.

That Saturday night I tuned in my radio to a live broadcast of the Grand Ole Opry: Exactly as Louise describes, the Grande Ole Opry did a live tribute only four nights after the crash in honor of Randy and the Country stars who were lost.

However, this was not the way Louise learned of Patsy's death. She had moved to Manaus, Brazil, with her children and then-intended husband. It was there that she found out about Patsy's death. (See pp. 10-12 of this glossary.)

Jordanaires: The first time Patsy worked with the Jordanaires, a gospel quartet who had been providing backup for Elvis, was in the Decca Studios on January 8 and 9, 1959. They recorded the songs "I'm Moving Along," "I'm Blue Again," "Love, Love, Love Me, Honey, Do," "Gotta Lot of Rhythm in My Soul" and "Yes, I Understand." It was Owen Bradley's idea to use them as backup for Patsy, and Patsy was none too happy about it--surprising, since the group was one of the most in-demand properties in town, often doing up to three sessions a day.

Gordon Stoker, leader of the Jordanaires, has insightful memories of Patsy that day, which he told to Ellis Nassour for his book:

We began working with Patsy on those January 1959 sessions. A lot of people took Patsy to be unfriendly, which we certainly found out about right away. She didn't want us, and, after a few minutes, we didn't want to be there. She yelled at Owen, 'I've never had anything like this! I don't want four guys singing and covering me up.' We stood there redfaced and didn't know what to do. Owen gave a sign to take a break. And we'd just gotten there! He took Miss Cline aside and they had a powwow, and we could see the smoke signals rising. "When she returned, it was, 'Hello, guys, I'm Patsy.' We introduced ourselves and she said it was nice to meet us after all she'd heard. We said how pleased we were to be working with her. It might have

been Neal [Matthews] or Hoyt [Hawkins], but one of them said, 'And we've heard a lot about you, too!' There we were, all smiles and laughing.

She apologized, as she put it, for acting like a horse's ass. And, I think it was—well, I won't say. But someone commented, 'And a nice one it is, too.'

She raised her voice to us more than once, but it was just the artist bubbling over. Patsy could be cold to those she didn't know. However, that was rare. She had a lot of respect for those who worked with her, and we had great respect for her. In fact, we got to love her like a sister—and sometimes that's the way we had to treat her.

The Jordanaires also recorded "A Closer Walk with Thee" and "Life's Railway to Heaven," a favorite of Patsy's since her days at Gore Baptist Church.

In November, they recorded "I Fall to Pieces" with Patsy, prompting Hank Cochran, who co-wrote the song, to tell Ellis Nassour, "The way Owen used the Jordanaires was wonderful. The end result is nothing like the demo we cut."



The Jordanaires did the backup vocals for many other Patsy songs. They particularly shined on "Crazy," which was recorded in the summer of 1961. In November of that year, a week after the song entered both the Billboard Pop and Country charts, Patsy's second album, *Patsy Cline Showcase*, was released, with the Jordanaires receiving featured billing.

True Love: On August 17, 1961, Patsy, only two months after her automobile accident, hobbled on crutches into a session that had been long planned by Owen Bradley. Ellis Nassour describes the recording:

They started with “True Love,” by Cole Porter. The tune was sung by Bing Crosby with a slight assist from Grace Kelly in the 1956 musical film hit *High Society*. On her track, the violin introduces Patsy’s low-key vocal. She even had the audacity to mimic Decca’s multimillion-selling superstar by humming on the same verse where Crosby crooned. When you hear Patsy’s rendition, it’s impossible to reconcile the simple beauty she manages with her crass, brassy tomboyish personality.

Bradley’s production marked a milestone in country music. “That’s when I began letting the strings creep in. It wasn’t intentional. We just thought it sounded nice.

Patsy liked a big, full sound and didn’t care if that meant a lush string arrangement. We walked a fine line between country and pop—pretty far ahead of the way things were being done.”

Patsy turns and sings to Louise, who sees her as a guardian angel: Loretta Lynn did, too; she wrote about it in her foreword for Margaret Jones’ book: “I do know Patsy and I have a psychic bond. I have dreams about her and sometimes she comes to me. I know that she guides me and I feel she’s here.”

Cuts the “rumble” off: rumble is defined as “a continuous deep, resonant sound like distant thunder”, so I guess it’s another way of saying “thunderous applause”.