

OZARK JUBILEE: THE IMPACT OF A REGIONAL IDENTITY AT A CROSSROADS

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ABSTRACT

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The objective of this study is to investigate the historical impact of the television show *Ozark Jubilee* on country music and the regional identity of the Ozarks. For my research, I gathered several primary documents, watched footage, listened to recordings, and interviewed a square dancer from the program. I then applied my findings to Appadurai's theory of globalized cultural landscapes, Richard A. Peterson's theories on country music performance, and models of cultural tourism emergence in the Ozarks.

The result of the study was a textual analysis, which presents the context and analyses the impact of the country music variety show during the 1950s. I correlated the experiences of the musicians to the cultural landscapes within the Ozarks that were intrinsically tied to the landscape of the nation. I also found that the *Ozark Jubilee* had a strong influence on the music of the Nashville Sound Era of country music of the late 1950s and 1960s. The program also played a role in the development of cultural tourism in the Ozarks; many of the first Branson, Missouri musical theaters had strong connections with *Ozark Jubilee*.

From my study, I conclude that *Ozark Jubilee* demonstrates that the show and the region were not isolated from the rest of the country music industry and had a great historical impact on the region and the developments of the country music genre, despite common narratives by country music historians. *Ozark Jubilee* created the foundation for the Nashville Sound Era, which reinvigorated the country music industry. The show was also catalyst for music tourism that has defined the cultural identity of the region and attracts millions of visitors to the region to this day.

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INTRODUCTION

From 1955 to 1960, at the crossroads of St. Louis Street and Jefferson Avenue in Springfield, Missouri, performances by country music stars such as Red Foley, Porter Wagoner, and Brenda Lee could be in the Jewell Theater. The Ozarks city hosted not only those in the audience of the theater but also millions of Americans watching their televisions. The program *Ozark Jubilee*, later to be renamed *Country Music Jubilee* and later *Jubilee U.S.A.*, was broadcast on affiliate stations of the ABC Television network across the nation live from the Jewell Theater once a week for five years. *Ozark Jubilee* was also placed at a crossroads in the history of the country music industry as well as the cultural development of the Ozarks region. The show was the first country music television program to be given a continual season of episodes by a national network like traditional television shows. Because of the wide national audience, *Ozark Jubilee* also created a lasting cultural image that attracts millions of tourists to this day.

The genre of country music was also at a crossroads from 1955 to 1960. The time period is often perceived as the “Hillbilly Depression” era of country music (Cusic 2008, 74-75) because of the emergence of rock n’ roll which was seen as a direct competitor to country music. Artists such as Elvis Presley who came from the country music tradition eschewed the traditional styles and found fame backed by electric guitars and drum sets. Despite the perception of a depression given by many country music historians, Springfield’s *Ozark Jubilee* was quite popular throughout its run. The dominance of Nashville, Tennessee in the genre of country music is a reason for the neglect of recognition of the legacy of *Ozark Jubilee*. With Springfield, Missouri no longer having the cultural infrastructure of preserving country music, scholars have justifiably given Music City the attention as the focal point of the genre. But the focus on

Nashville has led to the neglect of other scenes that have also shaped and altered the country music industry. Many other scholars have recently examined the scenes of other places and their role in the country music industry like Tracey Laird (2005), whose analysis of Louisiana Hayride is an example of this. But Nashville was not always the center of country music and it was only until the 1960s with the dominance of the RCA Victor and Acuff-Rose recording studios, along with the rise of the Grand Ole Opry becoming the singular symbol of the country music genre, that the country music industry was centrally located in the city. *Ozark Jubilee* helped the development of the sound of country music and the emergence of the Nashville Sound Era of the 1960s while also radically changing the cultural identity of the Ozarks region.

Ethnomusicology

The roots of ethnomusicology lay in the field of anthropology where scholars have often viewed their research subject as an isolated Other. While the field of ethnomusicology has now turned away from many of the theoretical and methodological approaches that established certain American cultures and their music as isolated from the developments of the outside, the stigma is still perceived today in the Ozarks. During the past half century, the Ozarks has been neglected by ethnomusicological research which has been focused more on urban spaces in research conducted in the United States and the relationship of cultural music to the globalized community. One of the aims of this research is to show how the perception of isolation in the Ozarks is a myth and in fact the music of the region has continually been a part of globalized networks. The presence of *Ozark Jubilee* on nationwide network television and the influence the show had on the country music industry in 1960 problematizes the myth of the isolated Ozarks. I believe that historical ethnomusicological research can greatly enhance our knowledge of how commercial music can change not only a genre's sound, but also the identity of an entire region.

Historical ethnomusicology is an emerging trend in the discipline. With the ever growing access to primary resources through library archives and online databases that store sound recordings, newspaper articles, and interviews, ethnomusicological researchers can begin to properly assess the musical landscape of the past. One of the primary topics of historical ethnomusicology is country music in the United States because of the concerted effort by many to preserve the genre's history even though it has been marginalized by musical scholars until quite recently. Peterson (1997), Fox (2004), Jensen (1998), Pecknold (2007) have examined the genre in terms of commercialization, working class identity, and authenticity. Other historical ethnomusicological research such as the works of Karl Hagstrom Miller (2010) have addressed how commercial music in America categorized music based on race and place. By using historical investigation along with traditional ethnomusicological methods such as interviews, scholars can address trends and events within musical culture that previously went unnoticed.

Historical ethnomusicology also enhances our knowledge of today's musical landscape. *Ozark Jubilee* is an example of this. By understanding how *Ozark Jubilee* created a relationship between live country music performances and the region's cultural identity, it is apparent that the program helped the region develop its tourism industry, particularly in Branson, Missouri. Today the Ozarks is often represented in part through its music. One can see this in the musical theaters in Branson and in popular media such as film. In the Academy Award-nominated film *Winter's Bone* (2010), music plays a central role in the representation of the region. The feature film's concluding scene features the protagonist, Ree Dolly, choosing to stay in the Ozarks hills to care for her loved ones and is given her father's most prized possession, a banjo.

Methods

Ozark Jubilee and the resources I use in my study serve as a text for my research. In interpreting this text, I decided to incorporate many methods to reach my conclusions. Due to the narratives of the isolation of the Ozarks, one of the theoretical frameworks I used is Arjun Appadurai's (2006) theories of globalization. Though the globalization that Appadurai addresses concerns nation-states and large-scale global regions, I believe that his methodologies in classifying cultural landscapes are appropriate for my research. His categories of cultural landscapes are seen in the Ozarks in relation to *Ozark Jubilee* and prove that the region and its music was a part of several economic and technological networks during the 1950s.

I also used the theories of Richard A. Peterson (1997) extensively in my research. The country music historian is primarily concerned with analyzing the authenticity of country music through a dialectic of "hard core" and "soft shell." In determining between the two options, Peterson proposes eleven categories in which to analyze country music performance. Similar to Appadurai, these categories are quite expansive and helpful for scholars. By framing *Ozark Jubilee* into Peterson's performance categories, I engage in the discussion of authenticity in country music and challenge the assumption that "soft shell" qualities in the genre are inauthentic.

Because of *Ozark's Jubilee's* impact on the local region's cultural identity and tourism industry, I also used theoretical framework set by studies about the Ozarks by Milton Rafferty and organizational theorists Todd H. Chiles, Alan D. Meyer, and Thomas J. Hench (2004). The studies by these scholars address the region's changes in cultural identity in relation to the developments in the region's tourism industry. *Ozark Jubilee* is often not considered in the

narratives of the region's tourism and cultural history, but my research shows that the program's impact has been marginalized by even scholars of the region.

Because I want to explore the complexity of Ozark Jubilee and its cultural legacy, I decided to incorporate many methodologies in my research. Library, museum, and internet archives comprised the bulk of my research. I was able to obtain transcriptions of several interviews from Country Music Foundation's oral history archive that is part of the Country Music Hall of Fame Archives. I was also able to view several hours of *Ozark Jubilee* on DVDs and VHS tapes at the museum. Much of the footage found in the archives and elsewhere, including on the internet and through bootleg DVDs, have little contextual information attached to them such as air dates or the length of the actual episodes. Much of the footage available is also not in the form of entire episodes but compilations of clips, often focusing on certain cast members or guest performances by artists who found later fame such as Brenda Lee, Patsy Cline, or Johnny Cash. I also utilized library and digital archives of periodicals from 1955 to 1960, including local newspapers from across the nation. I also attempted to conduct interviews to assist in my study. I reached out to several performers and crew members of *Ozark Jubilee* who are still living. Despite my best efforts, I was only able to conduct one interview which was with dancer and production assistant Gary Ellison.

One of the issues regarding research of *Ozark Jubilee* is the abundance of factual errors that are often assumed to be true. This situation is likely due to many factors, including events during *Ozark Jubilee*'s production, such as the title changes, and afterward, such as the relative lack of preservation of documents related to the program. These errors can be found in scholarly works, such as Chiles (2004), and in otherwise reliable sources, such as KY3-TV's official

history on the station's Facebook page (2008). To ensure that this research is as factually correct as possible regarding historical details, I tried to rely on primary sources.

The Ozarks and Country Music Before 1955

To understand *Ozark Jubilee*, it is necessary to look at what exactly is meant by “the Ozarks,” and more importantly what the word “Ozarks” meant before 1955. An important subject to bring up at the outset is the definition of “the Ozarks.” Because the Ozarks is not a discrete political unit such as a state, it is often hard to define the region in an exact way because the definition and scope of the region is not universally agreed upon by native Ozarkers and scholars of the Ozarks. The most agreed on way of defining the Ozarks is to go by physical geography. The region is comprised of southern Missouri, northern Arkansas, and northeastern Oklahoma and southeastern Kansas and its boundaries are rivers. The Mississippi River marks the eastern border, the Missouri River in the north, the Black and White Rivers in the South and the Neosho River in the west. The interior of the Ozarks is defined by being an uplift because it is “neither high nor truly mountainous” (Rafferty 2001, 7). Milton Rafferty states that the Ozarks as a culture is difficult to narrow down into specific traits but argues that rurality is undeniably an important factor, both within the region and outside of the region. The rural element “implies rudeness and lack of polish” but also “idealized simplicity, peacefulness, and apartness from the world.” (Rafferty, 1)

During the mid-nineteenth century, the land of the Ozarks began to be settled by a wave of migrants from the Western portions of Tennessee, Kentucky and Appalachia. These white settlers of Anglo-Saxon and Scots-Irish heritage were largely subsistence farmers living off what could be grown in the rocky and relatively unfertile soil in the hills and river valleys. The settlers

brought their own culture to the Ozark Mountains (such as music), as well as creating their own regional customs.

The most significant source of heritage for the people of the Ozarks has been its traditional music. Traditional music was quite similar to that of Appalachia , but there are some distinct differences in the traditions. According to McNeil (2011), there are three significant differences. The first difference is the substitution of major chords for minor. The cultural heritage of the repertoire in traditional Ozarks is also different. Because of geography and history, many non-Anglo-Saxon songs and tunes not performed in Appalachia are a part of the soundscape, including French and African-American musics. The third recognized difference is the presence of songs with local subjects that are native to the region. Many of these are ballads that tell of events in Ozarks history or recount outlaws (99-100).

Dancing also played an important part in music making in the Ozarks region. Traditionally Ozarkers performed jigs, waltzes, two-step, and square dances. For the interest of this thesis, I will focus here on square dancing, which is significant in Ozark Jubilee. Although McNeil does not discuss the square dancing in the Ozarks as a source of significant difference from Appalachia, I would argue that it is a huge difference. McNeil even notes some of the interesting qualities of Ozarks square dancing by stating, “Among the most popular square dances in the Ozarks are those such as Corner girl in which all the dancers are moving most of the time” (115). He even identifies an exceptional local practice in the Missouri Ozarks : “For many years, dancers in Douglas County, Missouri, have been known to like their dance music much faster than dancers in most other parts of the Ozarks. A tempo of 140 beats per minute would be considered break-neck speed for most square dancers but is just a comfortable tempo for Douglas County dancers” (115).

One of the first scholarly analyses of Ozarks music was written, appropriately, by Vance Randolph. Randolph was not born and raised in the region, but nearby in Pittsburg, Kansas. His interest in the folkways of the Ozarks began at a young age and continued for the rest of his life. He was drawn to scholarship in psychology and eventually received a master's degree in the discipline; he also became keenly interested in anthropology. He applied to study under Franz Boas, whose work was changing methodologies in anthropology, but the professor at Columbia denied Randolph admission. The rejection from Boas did not deter Randolph, though, and he continued collecting folk tales, beliefs, and songs. The first publication about Ozarks music that I could find was titled, "The Ozark Play-Party" (1929) in *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, written by Randolph. The article concerns folk rituals called play-parties that were prevalent in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Play-parties were socialization rituals for children of a community that involved dancing and singing. One well-known song that was commonly sung during play-parties was "Skip to My Lou." Play-parties would have been a logical first ethnomusicological study of music of the Ozarks because it is a synthesis of simple songs, dance, folk life, and historical significance. Randolph's article, like most of his early writings, was heavily influenced by comparative musicology. The prose of the article is centered on comparing the songs he collected to those collected by other scholars previously.

While Randolph was beginning to collect music, a professor at the University of Missouri published the first folksong collection featuring songs from the Ozarks. H.M. Belden collected folksongs across the entire state of Missouri, but many of his informants were from the southern portion of the state. *Ballads and Songs Collected by the Missouri Folk-Lore Society* (1955) contained just the text of the songs for most songs with a few tune transcriptions. It is important to mention that many of the songs were not collected firsthand ; sources for the book included

newspaper articles, homemade songbooks, and personal correspondence. The organization of the ballad book is greatly influenced by the work of Francis Child. Belden orders the songs in the same order as the Child ballads. The collection does not strictly follow the Child ballads and does present some songs that are not from the British Isles, such as popular ballads originating in the United States. In the introduction, Belden describes the book as a “scientific classification.” Another interesting aspect of the introduction is that Belden anticipates the impact that Vance Randolph will have for the Ozarks.

Randolph’s *Ozark Folksongs* (1980) is an indispensable example of ethnomusicological study on Ozarks music. While Randolph was still in the early stages of research, John Lomax took notice of the budding folksong collector and gave him a tape recorder to assist in his research. In return for the help from the famous collector, Randolph gave a majority of his recordings to the Library of Congress. The entire 883 song collection is contained in four volumes that were released once a year from 1946-1950. While *Ozark Folksongs* still reflects many of the philosophical ideas of comparative musicology collecting Child ballads, Randolph expands the on the precedent set by Belden. The first volume is comprised of two sections: traditional Child ballads and other ballads from the British Isles that were not recognized by other ballad scholars. The second, third and fourth volumes are arranged by topics and truly represented the music of the region. Volume II is “Songs of the South and West” and includes the topics: murderers and outlaws, Western songs and ballads, Civil War, Negro and pseudo-Negro songs, and Temperance. These topics give insight on not only the music of the Ozarks but also the culture itself. Randolph portrays the Ozarks culture as not only an isolated society stuck in the Elizabethan era, but as a unique and dynamic cultural unit. The second volume also includes many songs that are about local events and people including the Battle at Wilson Creek

and the Meeks Murder. The third volume includes humorous songs, many of which mention local state or town names, and play-party songs. The last volume includes religious music sung at brush-arbors and songs that did not fit into the other subjects. *Ozark Folksongs* also strays from the traditional song collections from the same time period because he personally collected most, if not all, of the music himself and did not refrain from recording singers whose songs might have been deemed as inauthentic by other scholars. In fact, *Ozark Folksongs* had to be amended in later editions because some of the collection contained copyrighted material, such as popular Tin Pan Alley tunes. Randolph's collection is significant in the scholarship of Ozark music because he refrained from deleting a song or omitting it because of uncouth language or the perception that a particular piece is not a folk song. Randolph's acceptance of any and all music means that the musical landscape that he describes can be generally seen as reliable in representing the repertoire of Ozarkers between the Civil War and World War II. During the 1920s and 30s many Ozarkers were connected to the commercial music industry through everyday interactions with people from other regions as well as through mail-order services such as Sears-Roebuck magazine (Blevins 2002, 122).

The History of Country Music

The commercialization of music recorded by rural Americans began in the 1920s with the growing availability of phonograph players and commercial radios. Following World War I, America saw a movement of great urbanization. People who grew up on farms moved to work in an ever-increasing industrial sector in large cities such as Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia. Folk songs and dance music by string bands were labeled "hillbilly" music and marketed to white rural and poor urban consumers by companies such as Okeh Records. Okeh Records, headed by Ralph Peer, was one of the most successful early recording companies of

both hillbilly and race records. Early country music pioneers such as Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family recorded for Peer. While radio reached many listeners in urban and in the Northern cities, it was not available in many individual households until the 1930s.

During the 1930s, more households throughout the South and rural environments began to have radios. Radio allowed for the performers to be heard instantly to all of the radios within a certain range giving the audience a sense of immediacy and intimacy that prerecorded phonographs could not provide. Radio technology also allowed for the performances to be in front of a live audience instead of a more sensitive phonograph recorder. Live performances on the radio soon began to be the most important medium for country music (Peterson 1997, 98). During this time there were many stylistic changes within the genre. While many of the first hillbilly records were largely instrumental, singers began to emerge as an important aspect of the genre. As Peterson notes, “Fiddlers who could also sing soon displaced the old-time square-dance fiddler as the staple fare on radio programs” (99). Square dancing was often a common part of radio programs but “performing largely for the entertainment of the studio rather than the radio audience” (ibid). Country music on the radio also adopted many elements of vaudeville such as comedy routines. This adoption of other entertainment formats led to the creation of the barn dance format radio programs.

The first barn dance show to reach a large audience was Chicago’s “National Barn Dance.” Broadcast from the station WLS, National Barn Dance was able to reach a wide audience throughout the Midwest because of the wide distribution of radios among households in the region’s cities. The 1930s radio era also saw the emergence of the “crooning” vocal style, which was “softer, mellower, and more intimate” than the older style of singing (107). This new style likely owed a great debt to the technology of the microphones. Singers’ voices no longer

had to compete with the volume of loud and sharp string instruments like the banjo or fiddle as much as open air performances or recording. Thus singers could sing more softly and provide a more emotionally nuanced performance.

Outside of the radio broadcasts, “most artists made a living by giving live performances at various venues within the hearing range of the radio stations” and were often packaged in specialty groups (115). This venue provided the artists with work between the weekly scheduled radio programs and allowed them to sell song books that contained much of their repertoire. The direct feedback of the audience, through the purchase of song books or mail sent to the stations, was often tied to the reputation of the artists in the eyes of radio programmers and lead to a mantra of “pull mail or perish” throughout the industry (129).

After World War Two, the nation underwent dramatic demographic shifts, becoming more urban and cosmopolitan. This movement saw a rise in nostalgia in popular culture and an interest in “retro music.” An essential part of this trend was a square-dancing fad. (Lange 2004, 201). In 1953, a *Billboard* article stated “that songwriting and publishing were fundamental to the commercial music business” (Peterson 1997, 190). In the fifties, honky-tonkers wore western garb “primarily as a means to give their transplanted hillbilly music more respectability and enhance its entertainment value” (Lange 2004, 160). Lange states that honky-tonks, bars where country musicians could play, were “the equivalent of the rural/urban dichotomy” during the post-war years (164).

Springfield History and Its Music

The city of Springfield, Missouri was founded by white settlers from central Tennessee in 1829 (Rafferty 2001). In 1935, a federal government land office was established in the town for the southwest region of the state, which led to the city becoming the commercial center of the

Ozarks. This distinction, in turn, led to Springfield also becoming the cultural center of the Ozarks. The city's commercial significance in the region increased when railroads reached the city by the mid-nineteenth century. The commercial growth of the city led to Springfield becoming the cultural capital of the region as well. Springfield became the education center for the Missouri Ozarks due to the presence of many higher education institutions, such as Drury University and Southwest Missouri State Teacher's College (now known as Missouri State). The city even earned the designation as the "Queen City of the Ozarks," pointing to its function as the center of commerce as well as culture in the Ozarks region.

Another significant aspect of Springfield's history is the famous Highway 66. During the advent of the national highway system, Route 66 became a central artery of the national transportation system because it connected Chicago and Los Angeles in one continuous route. Located along Route 66, Springfield prospered economically due to the influx of commercial and pedestrian traffic. Through its connections to the rest of the country through railroads and Route 66, Springfield lived up to its "Queen City" moniker.

Because of the cultural significance of Springfield, the city became a center for the region's budding commercial entertainment industry after the turn of the twentieth century. Weaver Brothers, one of the most well-known groups of Ozark entertainers in the early twentieth century, was comprised of two brothers, Leon and Frank Weaver, and Leon's wife June. Known as the Weaver Brothers and Elviry, the trio from a few miles south of Springfield in Christian County was a vaudeville act that incorporated comedy and music into their routines. The trio found international success during the 1930s and 1940s and toured much of the United States, as well as a six week tour in Europe. The trio made their film debut in the feature film *Swing Your Lady* (1938) which starred Humphrey Bogart and Ronald Reagan. The movie

included music by the troupe. Also significant is the fact that the movie had its official premiere in Springfield (Blevins 2009). The Weaver Brothers and Elviry brought national attention to Springfield as a source of hillbilly entertainment and music, and premiere of *Swing Your Lady* emphasized how the city became the symbolic center of Ozarks music. One local radio station crystallized the association so that Springfield became the functional center of commercial hillbilly music in the Ozarks.

Being the commercial and cultural center of the region led to Springfield being the leader in technology in the Ozarks region. Springfield became the center for mass media in the region including radio. The radio was a key part of the cultural landscape of the Ozarks during the first half of the twentieth century and the most dominant station in the Ozarks was Springfield's KWTO. Media magnate Ralph Foster established the station during the 1930s after finding success in the northern Missouri city St. Joseph (McKinney 2012, 240). KWTO even highlighted its role for the region with its call letters, which stand for "Keep Watching the Ozarks." The station, led by Ralph Foster, featured programming that echoed the songs that Randolph was collecting, an amalgamation of songs that came from popular and folk sources. In 1947, half of radio listeners in the listening range of the station preferred KWTO over any other that could be heard (241). Throughout the 1930s and into the 1950s, KWTO's programming was predominantly family string bands, including the Goodwill Family and the Haden Family.

KWTO's first major programming success was the program *Korns a Krackin'*. The show followed the barn-dance format set by Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and featured mostly local musicians. This show was different for KWTO because it was not centered on a single family act. There is no discernible record of when *Korns a Krackin'* began but it is clear from promotional pictures of the show that it likely the show reached its highest popularity around

1946 (Glenn 2009). The show included many performers that had starred in their own shows on KWTO, including Slim Wilson and Bill Ring. Slim Wilson served as emcee for many of the radio station's programs, as well as performing in several ensembles such as the Goodwill Family and the Tall Timber Trio. Wilson proved to be the station's most popular personality during the 1940s and 1950s through his folksy persona as well as his talents as a string band musician. Bill Ring was another personality on KWTO who played multiple roles on the station. He was one of the announcers on *Korns a Krackin'* while also hosting his own radio transcription show, *The Bill Ring Show*. Ring differed from Wilson due to his singing style, which was similar to Broadway singers of the era such as Stubby Kaye. Ring's clear diction and light-hearted personality fit into the trends of commercial popular music performers of Tin Pan Alley and the eastern United States. Ring's presence on KWTO demonstrates that the music on the station and in the Ozarks was not restricted to folk and hillbilly bands performing traditional ballads and dance songs.

During the 30s and 40s barnstorming style radio programming was a trend in country music. Many artists including the Delmore Brothers and the Carter family made a living from establishing a radio program in a region as a method to promote songbooks and to perform concerts at a previously untapped market. These acts were often not associated with a stable country music program like *National Barn Dance* because of their transience. Radio stations enjoyed programming "country artists not only because they cost less than union musicians but also because they were even cheaper than maintaining a record library" (Peterson 1997, 121). Springfield's KWTO proved to be advantageous for barnstorming musicians because of the range of the station's signal. The live music shows on KWTO were able to reach listeners in

many large cities near the Ozarks including St. Louis, Missouri, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Little Rock, Arkansas. Producer of KWTO and *Ozark Jubilee*, Si Siman, stated,

Well, KWTO was 5,000 watts, but it was on 560 [kilohertz], which would be comparable to 93,000 square miles on 1260. So, you see the power that radio station was getting out. You could hear it in St. Louis, you could hear it in Little Rock, you could hear it in Tulsa. I mean, it was a regional station. The thought occurred to me that if those programs were so popular, that why wouldn't they sell on other stations? Well, that was the start of RadiOzark Enterprises, which was a radio syndication company. My first ownership was 25 percent of that. (Rumble and Siman 1989a, 11)

KWTO studio also served as a recording studio for programs known as radio transcriptions during the 1940s and 1950s. Transcription programs were prerecorded shows, as opposed to the typical live broadcasts. Typically fifteen minutes in length, radio transcription shows would be used to fill in space on the station that would otherwise be dead air. Recorded on sixteen-inch records, these programs had to be recorded in one take, including spaces for station identification and advertising. Copies of these master recordings were made and then distributed to other stations that wished to subscribe to the programs. This is the same model as that used by syndicated television shows of today. Many commercial country music acts, including the Carter Family, had their own radio transcription shows that were distributed to media markets across the nation. The transcriptions never made mention of the time, date, or current events because member stations could play the shows at any time (Peterson 1997).

Origin of *Ozark Jubilee*

In 1954, a young KWTO producer name Si Siman believed that despite the successes with programs like *Korn's a Krackin'*, the station who need to extent its programming into

television. Television was relatively new for the public during 1954 and many of the station's advertisers were beginning to back away from radio marketing. Siman, along with Springfield business leaders John Mahaffey, Lester E. Cox, and KWTO's owner, began a new venture called Crossroads Television. Each of the four men received an equal twenty-five percent ownership in the business aimed at bringing the country music on KWTO onto the television screen.

Siman had ambitious visions for the television program and began to recruit many of country music's top session musicians and performers to come to Springfield to work on the radio transcription shows, but often did not mention television. Comedian Pete Stamper recalled being hired by KWTO and stated in an interview, "They had probably had television in mind, but that came later. Reason I'm pretty sure they had it in mind [is] because it came such a short time later." (Stamper Interview 23) The reason why Siman neglected to mention television was probably that he did not want to risk scaring many of the musicians away from signing a contract with him. Because television was quite new in 1954, most of the country musicians were not comfortable with performing in front of a television camera. But one performer he was able to recruit with the promise of television was Red Foley.

In 1954 Red Foley was one of the most popular music personalities in country music. He first received fame on Chicago's *National Barn Dance* during the 1930s and hosted Grand Ole Opry in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s. Foley also hosted the special portion of the Grand Ole Opry sponsored by Prince Albert Tobacco, which aired on national networks once a month (Ellison Interview 2014). Even though Foley was at the height of his professional career, Foley was in the middle of emotional struggle after the suicide of his wife Judy Martin. In an effort to recover from his loss, Foley moved to Springfield after hearing Siman's pitch to get away from the memories of Nashville.

Foley's relocation to Springfield allowed Siman and the other executives to pitch the idea for their television program to network men in New York City. Siman brought Foley as well as some square dancers to the network board meetings in an effort to convince them to create the show. Siman's pitch to ABC-Television worked and Crossroads Television made a deal to produce a weekly country music variety show for the network's affiliate stations every Saturday night. The show was *Ozark Jubilee*.

The second chapter of this thesis will explore the popularity of the show and the contributions of the program through Appadurai's theories of globalization through the processes of homogenization and heterogenization. The third chapter will be a musical analysis of the show's music using Richard Peterson's dialectic of "hard core" and "soft shell" country music and the elements of expression in country music. The chapter will focus on the relationship between the sound of the *Ozark Jubilee* and the Nashville Sound. The fourth chapter will center on the creation of musical and cultural identity in *Ozark Jubilee* and will show how they created a transition from a primarily recreational tourism industry to one of cultural and musical tourism.

CHAPTER I: HETEROGENIZATION AND HOMOGENIZATION IN COUNTRY MUSIC IN THE OZARKS

One of the defining characteristics of the *Ozark Jubilee* was that, even though the show's music was a more popular sound, the program was very aware of its locality. This is most evident in the title *Ozark Jubilee* and the use of local musicians and dancers throughout the entire run of the program. Even when the show was titled *Country Music Jubilee* and *Jubilee U.S.A.*, both Springfield and the Ozarks were mentioned in every episode, most commonly in announcer Joe Slattery's parting words, "*Jubilee U.S.A.* comes to you from the Jewell Theater in Springfield Missouri, which is right in the heart of the Ozark Mountains" (Mad Phat Enterprises 2009). The awareness and recognition of locality contrasted with the approach of other music variety shows reaching a national audience, even within country music like Grand Ole Opry. The clear recognition of locality serves as a cultural statement; the Ozarks is both relatable to the television audience (in the form of popular musicians and songs) and on the other hand exotic (proclaimed as a place of distinction). This duality of identity of place is of concern to many cultural theorists interested in globalization. Analyzing *Ozark Jubilee* through theories of globalization disputes the isolation that is often attributed the program and the region.

Homogenizing Country, Heterogenizing the Ozarks

To illustrate that the Ozarks is not as isolated as often perceived and to show the complexity of *Ozark Jubilee*, I will apply cultural theories of globalization, especially the works of Appadurai, on the subject. I believe that applying globalization theory fits the topic at hand because of the use of modern technology to create translocal interactions. Although globalization theory is most often applied in cases in which non-Western cultures interact with Western culture, the basic process of using media to send and receive cultural ideas and practices is not

limited to those cases. I also want to make clear that in my analysis I am not attempting to compare the relationship between the people of the Ozarks and the rest of the United States to that of a political empire and its former colony, i.e. Great Britain and India. What I am going to address are the dimensions in which culture flows to and from a once restricted space to one which is a larger whole. My application of globalization theory will also be divergent from the common use due to the direction of cultural flow that I will be addressing. While many globalization theorists are concerned with phenomena such as Americanization, where a dominant culture uses power to influence another region, I am interested here in examining how a nonpolitical region adapts national cultural practices as a way to fundamentally change the characteristics of both entities.

Appadurai (2006) addresses these types of interactions as a “tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization.” (588) He argues that centerperiphery models that come from the Marxist thought are inadequate in showing and explaining the complexity of cultural exchanges in a globalized world. Cultural homogenization entails Americanization and occurs when the cultural practices of a foreign political entity are adopted, creating a sameness. Cultural heterogenization is in opposition with homogenization and occurs when “forces . . . are brought into new societies [that] tend to become indigenized in one or another way.” (ibid) Appadurai notes that music is often the object of heterogenization.

Karl Hagstrom Miller (2010) addresses the relationship between the local and the global in commercial music from the South in *Segregating Sound*. He argues that all American music is a “product of globalization” (185) and when a local music is being marketed commercially it then becomes part of the globalized network of the commercial music industry. Miller states that local music is commercialized because it is seen as culturally inferior to styles of music taken

more seriously. I find that this theory is overly simplistic because of the assumption of a Marxist model where there is one hegemonic force guiding the rest of the culture which Appadurai counters in his work.

Appadurai proposes the phrase *imagined worlds* when addressing groups that are linked historically. The concept of *imagined worlds* is similar to Benedict Anderson's *imagined communities*, but more broadly defined. Appadurai lays out five types of landscapes that comprise cultural flows: ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financescapas, and ideoscapas. Central to these landscapes is disjuncture between the global and the local, creating cultural friction that leads to developments in the certain type of landscape. An ethnoscape is the "landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world" (Appadurai 2006, 589). This includes tourists, guest workers and moving groups while excluding the native residents. The disjuncture between the local and the transient create relationships that shape of the development of the locality. A technoscape is the fluid global configuration of technology and the powers which create access to that technology. Appadurai states that "the odd distribution of technologies, and thus peculiarities of these technoscapas, are increasingly driven not by any obvious economies of scale, of political control, or of market rationality, but by increasingly complex relationships of money flows, political possibilities, and the availability of both un- and highly skilled labor." (589-590) By looking at technoscapas, one can analyze how certain gatekeepers can provide a locality or even deny it of technological conveniences, creating an imbalance of power.

A financescape is "the disposition of global capital" (590). Financescapas are important when considering cultural landscape of a locality because capital is transferred not only within a place, but also between regions. The financescape of a place can determine the amount of transient people and technology located in a certain place at a particular time.

The next type of landscape is a mediascape. According to Appadurai, “mediascapes refer to both the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information” (591). This has much in common with the definition of a technoscape but instead of being manifested in physical objects, a mediascape is manifested through imagery: “They provide . . . large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapescapes to viewers throughout the world.” (ibid) Mediascapes create a disjuncture between the physical reality of a place and the imagery in the minds of the viewers. “The lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred . . . construct imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects.” (ibid)

“Ideoscapes are also concatenations of images,” Appadurai wrote, “but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter ideologies of movements” (Appadurai 2006, 591). The concept of the ideoscape may not appear relevant in terms of the Ozarks and *Ozark Jubilee* due to the region not being a political unit such as a nation or a state (and is even divided among four states, and thus does not have a central government) but it is applicable when considering all of the other landscapes at once. Analyzing the bigger picture, it is apparent that the images of *Ozark Jubilee* counter many narratives of the region that were held before the show and afterward.

Ozark Jubilee can be analyzed in terms of both cultural homogenization and heterogenization. This double process is key to the historical and cultural impact on the show. *Ozark Jubilee* exhibited homogenization through the synthesis of country music barn dances and popular music variety shows. The homogenization was the result of the adaptation to the relatively new medium of television. By combining elements of the barn dance format with those popular variety shows such as *The Perry Como Show*, *Ozark Jubilee* fit the country music genre

into the nationwide television trends. Si Siman and the other producers involved with the *Ozark Jubilee* were actively trying to reach the broadest audience possible. To achieve this, the program combined the sounds of the rural and the urban. One example of this process is the show's use of diverse backdrops to accompany performances. Brenda Lee's backdrops were often depicted urban or at least suburban environments. During one performance (Tichy 2008) of "Hound Dog" (most famously sung by Elvis Presley), behind Lee was a mock billboard advertising dog food with a giant cartoon of the title animal. Surrounding the billboard is grass and nondescript trees. This setting is neither rural nor urban, allowing the national television audience to be comfortable as well as the studio audience. The June 20, 1959 episode featured a New Orleans theme with backdrops featuring buildings that resembled those on the French Quarter and cast iron fences (Moving Image Collection). This stood in contrast with the backdrops of the Grand Ole Opry, which always included rustic imagery such as a log cabin. The homogenization on *Ozark Jubilee* allowed for the show to reach audiences across the nation, especially in big cities where nostalgia was desired. This nostalgia was particularly present in the Midwestern cities. One of the producers of the show, Ralph Foster, commented on the importance of nostalgia in a *Time* magazine interview (May 7, 1956), "There are more country people in America than any other kind of people. Most city people were from the country and are still sentimentally attached to it." The intent of marketing for sentimentality and nostalgia allowed for the greater use of homogenization.

Ethnoscapes

Ozark Jubilee created a disjuncture between the transient and the local, not only on stage but also in the audiences in Jewell Theater. Most of the featured performers who had long-term contracts with *Ozark Jubilee*, including Red Foley and Brenda Lee, were not from the Ozarks

and often had no connection to the region besides the show. Many of the supporting musicians such as lead guitarist Grady Martin, bassist Bob Moore, pedal steel guitarist Bud Isaacs, were not locals either. These artists often had strong connections with the Nashville recording industry. The ethnoscape of the nonlocal musicians shows the importance of the show. The acts on the show, whether local or transient, guests or featured artists were transient even between the days on which the program aired. During the week, the weekly musicians often travelled in groups to venues within driving range such as fairs and rodeos. Springfield's location proved to be enticing for travelling musicians because of its proximity to the large markets of Tulsa, Kansas City, and St. Louis. Featured comedian Pete Stamper (Rumble and Stamper 1985, 30) recalled travelling between *Ozark Jubilee* recordings: "But we were playing personal appearances through the Midwest. The Flame Club, Minneapolis, was a place we went into twice. Played a lot of parks; those were the days of the country music parks, Sunday shows, and quite a few personal appearances throughout the state of Missouri. I traveled—one highlight of my career, I consider it to be that—traveled one summer with, or at least one tour with Rex Allen."

Newspaper advertisements throughout the Midwest show how much the talent on *Ozark Jubilee* would travel and the distances they would travel during the week between each Saturday's episodes. In 1955 alone, members of the *Ozark Jubilee* travelled to cities in multiple states such as Jefferson City, Missouri; Miami, Oklahoma; Lawrence, Kansas; and even into Texas. For example, a Johnny Cash concert advertisement ran in the Odessa, Texas newspaper and indicated the other acts performing alongside the headliner from Arkansas (*The Odessa American*, December 2, 1955). The opening acts are divided in two parts in the advertisement according to the primary radio or television program on which the artist performed, *Louisiana Hayride* or *Ozark Jubilee*. The ad indicates that the duo Jim Edward Brown and Bonnie Brown,

along with “many others” from *Ozark Jubilee*, were scheduled to perform. This advertisement, along with others that I have seen in newspapers around the country during the airing of *Ozark Jubilee*, point to the program being familiar enough to the populace that it was used to market musicians even outside the context of the show itself. The musicians comprised the ethnoscape of the nation while touring and were distinguished due to their identities on *Ozark Jubilee*.

Another fundamental factor in *Ozark Jubilee*’s ethnoscape is the tourism aspect of the audience. Once *Ozark Jubilee* found national success, it attracted audiences to the Jewell Theater to view the live tapings of the show. Producer Si Siman described the effects of the tourists coming to see the show in person:

It focused attention on the Ozarks like you’ve never known. The shows were sold out for the whole season in the summer and mostly in the winter months in advance. The tour buses all wanted to route themselves through there, because the price for a ticket to the Jubilee was most reasonable. I think it was in the neighborhood of a dollar and a half or something like that. There was concession stands with books and magazines and so forth. The motels in Springfield, Missouri, which were generally empty on the weekends, were sold out months in advance. We counted, one time, forty-two states’ license plates within two blocks of the theater. So it was a major shot-in-the-arm to the tourist industry of the Ozarks (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 2).

One of the ways that the show was able to attract the audience was by directly inviting the viewers to come to Springfield to watch the show in person. After attracting a live audience from a diverse array of states, the producers of *Ozark Jubilee* knew an effective form of marketing the show even more was to showcase the audience presence at the Jewell Theater. During many episodes, usually toward the conclusion, the television camera panned across the audience

showing the packed auditorium with waving and jubilant fans. Many times the audience members, to get the attention of their friends and loved ones at home, brought signs that stated their hometowns. These moments are useful for learning about how far the most dedicated audiences for the show were willing to travel. They also further show *Ozark Jubilee*'s emphasis on locality by pointing out the transience of the audience in the theater.

Although Appadurai's ethnoscape is defined by transient members of a locality, it is essential to note those that are not transient. While the transient often show homogenization because of the presence of individuals from across the nation that have similar demographic and cultural habits such as travel and consumption of goods, the stable local population contributes to the heterogenization of a locality. Because of the musical output of KWTO's initial run of *Ozark Jubilee* prior to the national network premiere, many Ozark natives had experience suitable for the program. Two performers who contributed to *Ozark Jubilee* from the original broadcasts until the cancellation of the last spin-off show, *Five Star Jubilee*, were Slim Wilson and Speedy Haworth. Both musicians were native to the Springfield area and began their careers on KWTO as part of a family band; Wilson was also Haworth's uncle (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 7). Wilson was one of the most popular personalities on the radio station and was featured on many of the station's shows as host and performer. Haworth started as a member of Wilson's band The Goodwill Family as a singer and guitar player and was not as comfortable in front of the microphone as his uncle. He eventually picked up the electric guitar and modeled his playing style from Chet Atkins, with whom he likely was acquainted with while Atkins was in Springfield working at KWTO (McKinney 2012). Wilson and Haworth proved to be an important part of the show because they provided part of a stable roster that viewers could rely on seeing for nearly every episode, while also providing an immediate connection to Ozarks

musicians. Neither was interested in leaving the Springfield scene and remained in the Ozarks until their deaths). Wilson earned the title of Music Director at one point, strengthening the influence that he had on the show (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 7). Both Wilson and Haworth contributed to the heterogenization of the *Ozark Jubilee* because their performances could not be seen on other shows; many of the other star musicians on *Ozark Jubilee* visited other shows throughout the year (This includes Red Foley, who frequently performed on his son-in-law, Pat Boone's, program on NBC).

Some local musicians, though, later became transient showing that the status of local and transient can change through time in an ethnoscape. Porter Wagoner, a native of near-by West Plains, Missouri, came to Springfield to work at KWTO in 1951. In 1954, Wagoner recorded the song "Company's Coming" for RCA Victor which proved to be his first hit and climbed as high as number seven on the country Billboard charts. As one of the first stars on *Ozark Jubilee*, Wagoner gave the program a rising local star. After *Ozark Jubilee* premiered in 1955, Wagoner recorded his signature song that propelled him to country music stardom, "Satisfied Mind." With the success and popularity of his recordings, Wagoner was given an "understudy" status to Foley on the show and honed his skills as a television personality (Eng 1992, 88). Wagoner's fame through his recordings from Springfield and his presence on *Ozark Jubilee* led to his national fame but he later left the show after a financial dispute with the executives in Springfield. He moved to Nashville in 1957 to star on *Grand Ole Opry* and later had his own network television variety show.

Mediascapes

When addressing a media entity the analysis of the technoscape and mediascape can be one and the same because both concern "electronic distribution" in this case. The difference

between the two lies in the relationship with the local. Technoscape is dependent on physical materials during a concrete set of time. On the other hand, mediascape impact is not as strictly restricted to physical materials because it is concerned with images and narratives, which can continue to reach audiences through memory and re-airings. To illustrate this point, when the *Ozark Jubilee* was cancelled in 1960, the elimination of technological opportunity through the removal of cameras and the elimination of both skilled and unskilled labor in the production of the show altered the technoscape drastically. The mediascape was altered with the cancellation of *Ozark Jubilee* because the production of new imagery and narratives were no longer possible, but the images were still impactful through the memorabilia, such as the picture albums and records associated with the show. Also, the mediascape continues today in new books and documentaries such as Wayne Glenn's *The Ozarks Greatest Hits* (2005) and that Ozarks Public Television's *OzarksWatch* news magazine contain elements of the production of *Ozark Jubilee* because the images are assembled in brand new contexts, changing and shifting the narrative of the show.

Most importantly to the creation of images, *Ozark Jubilee*'s greatest contribution was the homogenization of the popular variety television and country music performance. Before *Ozark Jubilee*, country music was not foreign to network broadcast television. Red Foley hosted the well-known Prince Albert section of Grand Ole Opry, which was the portion that was televised, before he relocated to Springfield; but *Ozark Jubilee* was the first country music show to fit the typical television model of seasons and ordered episodes. There were also other programs that were country music barn dance style programs, but they only aired locally. This meant that *Ozark Jubilee* was the first country music show to be aired on a consistent basis on television

sets across the nation. This distinction is important not only to the mediascape of the Ozarks and formulating the image of the region, but also of the genre of country music as a whole.

Here it is important to show how the imagery on *Ozark Jubilee* was distributed and received. When *Ozark Jubilee* premiered on ABC-TV in January 22 1955, it replaced a boxing program. Television critics were ambivalent about the program replacing the sports show and often doubted if the show would find success and an audience. This opinion was particularly held among the critics on the east coast, where boxing is historically more popular. In Oil City, Pennsylvania's newspaper, *The Blizzard*, critic Gus R. Moran had harsh opinions about the program writing, "We won't try to conceal our irritation with the program . . . There must be something other than 'cornball' music available to the TV boys. At a time when TV is trying to grow up, it seems like an ill-conceived step. Oh well, 9 o'clock Saturday night is a good time to take a bath" (*The Blizzard*, January 21, 1955). But despite the initial responses from critics, *Ozark Jubilee* quickly found an audience across the nation because as even Moran conceded, "Someone must have asked for this." (ibid) Pete Stamper, a comedian on the show, recalled the popularity of the show, stating, "this was the biggest show of its time, you know, . . . I remember one story on *Newsweek* or someplace, called it '20 million men were watching'" (Rumble and Stamper 1985, 28). The show was particularly popular in the Midwest and in cities. Bobby Lord recalled touring throughout the Midwest while on *Ozark Jubilee* and seeing the massive crowds that would come to see the program's musicians:

Well, the biggest crowd was at the Illinois State Fair, in the neighborhood of 20,000 people. The best crowd and the most responsive crowd I ever performed before was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The auditorium seats 6,500 people, and we had 8,000 that night in the auditorium, the Red Foley show. We had Marvin Rainwater and Leroy Van Dyke.

Some of these names you'll remember. These are from the *Jubilee* days back in the fifties. The most responsive crowd I've ever seen. Everybody took an encore. They didn't want anybody to leave. It was just terrific. It's very rewarding, very rewarding. (Whaley and Lord 1969, 7)

One of the key features of the *Ozark Jubilee* that separated it from its competitors, and that led to its relative longevity and success was taking advantage of the visual medium of television. Local square dancing was the key. As addressed in Chapter 1, traditional square dancing in the Ozarks is unique in its use of high movement at an often very fast tempo. The visual spectacle of the twirling and stamping dancers at a high pace was not seen on the other barn dance shows. *Ozark Jubilee* also capitalized on and indeed played a vital role in the square dancing trend of the 1950s. When Siman went to New York to pitch *Ozark Jubilee* to the executives of ABC-TV, he brought a Springfield troupe of square dancers along with Red Foley to the meetings to convince the network to air the show (Rumble and Siman 1989b). By bringing the dancers with Foley, Siman showed that *Ozark Jubilee* not only brought the stars to the small screen, but also an interesting visual aesthetic that justified the investment of putting a barn dance program from a relatively remote location on broadcast network television.

By looking at *Ozark Jubilee* through the lens of the mediascape it is apparent that the program had a wide distribution and created long lasting imagery. While the show's image, on one hand, was primarily that of a standard country variety show, the show also embraced unique aspects of Ozark culture that proved to be fundamental in finding an audience.

Technoscapes

Ozark Jubilee drastically changed the technoscape of the Ozarks. Even though the region proved to be technologically suitable for radio mass media in KWTO, the Ozarks region was not

known as a center for television. Though there is very little record of this early series, it appears that there was an early form of *Ozark Jubilee* on Springfield television in early 1954, even before Red Foley arrived in the city in late 1954. The most reliable source about this program is a newspaper television schedule from nearby Neosho, Missouri. A website that timelines the history of Springfield's television station KY3 also states that the show was aired on the station in early 1954, but the site's information is not reliable due to factual errors and a lack of citations and sources.) These pilot shows were likely used by the producers at Crossroads Television Productions to show that the station had the cameras to use for the show. Once the producers of *Ozark Jubilee* convinced the executives at ABC to broadcast the show, there was an apparent disjuncture between the technoscape of the Ozarks and the rest of the nation. In late 1954 or early 1955, the network realized that the technology of the Springfield station KY3 was not suitable to feed the network with video. As Siman later put it, "We could suck but we couldn't blow" (Rumble and Siman 1989a, 36) referring to the idea that the station could receive video but not send out. Because of this technological inadequacy, *Ozark Jubilee* was actually first broadcast from Columbia, Missouri which is not in the geographical region. The program could not move into its permanent filming space of the Jewell Theater in Springfield until six weeks into the production of the show with ABC-TV.

When analyzing the technoscape of the Ozarks and *Ozark Jubilee*, one must look at the labor force involved with the program. On a Saturday broadcast, there were up to eighty workers in Jewell Theater contributing to the airing of the show, from on-air talent such as the musicians, dancers, and comedians to the production workers that handled the cameras, cue cards, and video feed to the network (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 2). While it is obvious that the production crew were equally inexperienced with managing the television equipment at the onset of the show,

much of the on-air talent was as inexperienced with working with television camera. Because country music was not widely seen or performed on television before the debut of *Ozark Jubilee*, many of the performers found working on the show challenging because they had to change how they presented themselves (Rumble and Stamper 1985, 25). With the radio barn dance shows, the performers remained very still because of the immobility of the radio microphones used (Peterson 1997). With television, the performers had to adapt to the new freedom of movement that the television medium allowed. Television also allowed viewers to read the medium more quickly than radio because of the sound and visual elements. Pete Stamper described how this challenge affected his comedy routines and factored into his leaving the show to go back to radio: “Radio doesn’t seem to eat up material like television” (Rumble and Stamper 1985, 29). He further explained this point in the same interview by saying, “I suppose it would be like you can do a routine and let the listener at home imagine, maybe, what’s going on. Or at least, if you’re in a radio show, your band can [be] like canned laughter; in other words, your band around you was pretty much your canned laughter. But if you’re out on television in a live [performance] and you’re depending on the audience to reaction, your material has just got to be good; it’s got to actually be there” (32).

An exception to the general unfamiliarity with the new medium was Bobby Lord, who was one of the few artists to stay on the show and was not from the Springfield area. Lord grew up in Florida and performed on local television there before coming to *Ozark Jubilee* at the age of twenty.

“I came straight from my television show in Florida to the *Jubilee*, and as a result of my television show there, I gained considerable experience in television. As a matter of fact, I have never had a radio show as such. Most of the fellows have, but I have always had a

television show. I grew up in television like most of the fellows grew up in radio.

Surprisingly enough, radio is hard for me to do. I find it very hard for me to do. Television doesn't require as much from you if you get used to it" (Lord and Whaley 1969, 6).

Lord represented a new emerging generation of musicians in the 1950s where television became the dominant media to market their music. With *Ozark Jubilee*, new artists no longer had to rely on radio to get national attention and these new artists were often obviously more comfortable in front of cameras but struggled on radio. By looking at the technoscape of *Ozark Jubilee* it is clear how the duality of homogenization and heterogenization is an important part of country music history. *Ozark Jubilee* marked a change in the physical delivery of the genre technologically and through performance.

It is also significant to note how technology and the technoscape also were key factors in the end of network television in Springfield. The homogenization of technology meant that the equipment used could be repurposed for other functions outside of the studio in Springfield, Missouri. During the one season of Five Star Jubilee in 1961, the World Series was being held in part in St. Louis. NBC, the parent network of KY3, needed the color cameras for the sports event, and NBC mobilized the cameras in Springfield to fill this need. For reasons that are not known, the cameras somehow did not come back to Springfield and Crossroads Television was left without a way to shoot and air Five Star Jubilee, and thus the show could no longer be produced.

Financescapes

The flow of money is essential in an analysis of *Ozark Jubilee*. The financescape appears to be one of the primary reasons that Siman was able to convince ABC to broadcast the show. Crossroads was able to produce the show on a smaller budget than other shows, around \$10,000

per episode according to Siman (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 9). Part of the reason why they could keep the cost so low was a monopoly on nearly all facets of the country music industry including the radio and television programs, the talent agency, and the music publishing.

Siman along with Ralph Foster, Lester Cox, and John Mahaffey ran all of the country music ventures in Springfield jointly. Foster owned KWTO but the future ventures were split evenly between the four men: the music recording and publishing company RadiOzark, the television production company Crossroads Television Productions Inc., and the talent agency called Top Talent Inc. Siman et al were able to control nearly every business transaction between the financescape of the Springfield's country music industry and the rest of the music world. The desire for wealth drove Siman and his partners to look for innovative business ventures beyond radio because the revenue from advertisers was beginning to dwindle with the growing popularity of televisions before 1955. Siman described these motivations by stating:

Well, I was going to be on my way to becoming an early millionaire and so were my partners. Unfortunately, television just—I mean, it was almost an overnight thing. And we'll get into the television later. But when television hit, people said, "Well, there goes radio." I mean, why would you want to listen to something when you can see it and hear it?

Psychologically, it was disastrous. We got cancellations from the radio stations. We got cancellations from the sponsors because this new media was coming in, and they were laying back, not spending their money on radio but not spending it on TV either, till they were just kind of laying in limbo, seeing which way the wind was going to blow.

(Rumble and Siman 1989a, 16)

Although the centrality of the Springfield country music business had many benefits for not only the owners of the businesses, including a uniform identity and easy to book musicians for performances and recordings due to fewer middlemen and less bureaucracy, the business model led to the musicians feeling dissatisfied with their incomes because there was no other competition. Many of the artists felt that they were being unjustly paid, as well as pressured to do well outside of Springfield in the show's target market of large cities, toward which most of the performers were not accustomed to marketing themselves. The surest way to reach the large markets was to balance country and pop music. Siman described the strategy in marketing:

In order for us to sell enough markets outside of the big markets, which were hard, always, to crack, like your Wheelings, because they had live talent, your WLS and so forth, and particularly your metropolitan markets, we had to walk the middle of the road. I think the *Smiley Burnette Show* was probably the best example of country comedy and a pretty—not pop, but middle-of-the-road-type band. . . Now, you could bring in some country guests with Smiley, and you really accomplished a lot of things. You made it palatable, metropolitan New York, Philadelphia, Boston—type acceptable radio show, and yet you were promoting country. And for whatever country fans we had in those markets, I mean, we drew mail [received fan letters]. You know, it was kind of an exciting experience. Even in my publishing, I went all the way from traditional to pop. (Rumble and Siman 1989a, 20)

While the Springfield country music industry business model was effective in marketing the talent to large markets, often the artists were given contracts that did not reward them adequately for their recordings and performances. These contracts were wider in scope than the signers realized, leading to the artists feeling that they were neither paid enough for their work

nor free to perform their music when and where they wanted to. Because only a few people were in charge of the artists' marketing, recordings, publishing, and bookings, these contracts were often whole packages and thus the percentages for each service went to the same people.

Musicians such as Porter Wagoner fought for more money and were able to negotiate for a better deal. Stamper also found faults in the contracts because of the awareness made by Wagoner but noticed that others signed the contracts blindly without knowing the details,

I had never been given a contract before, and it was my first contract, and I remember Porter [Wagoner] and everyone talking about it. It tied us up to what we were doing then, what we might do later, such as Hollywood or something like that. And then it had a line in there that we were tied up, tied us up to anything that might be invented later. I recall that. So it was a pretty ironclad contract. And we didn't sign it. I still got mine. We didn't sign it. So somebody, and not me; I just stood back and let someone else do the negotiating, and I went along with the group. But, someone went to them and, I think, got a line or two knocked out of that contract. (Rumble and Stamper 1985, 23-24)

The financescape of *Ozark Jubilee* also created a disjuncture between the artists. A common business tactic for the producers of barn-dance style programs was to hire performers to fit in predetermined stereotypes such as the fiddler, cowboy, or hillbilly rube. On the Grand Ole Opry this led to artists feeling complacent because they were only allowed to act in one way on stage or on the radio. The creators of *Ozark Jubilee* created an environment that was similar but often hired multiple acts that were similar in nature. An example of this is the hiring of comedians Pete Stamper and Boob "Uncle Cyp" Brasfield. Both comedians followed a vaudevillian tradition of comedy routines and fought for screen time and money. Because of the secrecy of contract negotiations, Stamper was unaware of how much his competitor was being

paid. Stamper felt offended when he eventually heard that Brasfield was getting a hundred dollars per episode while he was only getting thirty-five dollars for the same work. Angry that he was not receiving equal pay, Stamper threatened to quit for jobs in Nashville, following Brenda Lee and Porter Wagoner. The show runners decided to give Stamper equal pay but the comedian did not stay in Springfield for much longer and decided to join the Grand Ole Opry (24).

By looking at the financescape of the country music industry and *Ozark Jubilee*, it is apparent that the business models were structured toward quick monetary gains for those running the companies in the city. While this structure homogenized the Ozarks with other scenes because it allowed for effective national marketing of programs and artists, the lack of other businesses in Springfield to provide alternative forms of income for the musicians led many musicians, local and otherwise, to relocate to other scenes. For many on *Ozark Jubilee*, after finding a national audience Nashville “just seemed to be the way people were going. There just wasn’t enough money being made” (30).

Ideoscapes

Although *Ozark Jubilee* was a country music program and is referencing a region that is not a unified political unit, it did play a role in the regional and national ideoscape. Regionally many politicians in Missouri recognized the importance of the program in terms of the state’s tourism and the region’s image. Missouri politicians including federal senators Tom Hennings and Stuart Symington visited the show at some point. By appearing on *Ozark Jubilee* the politicians demonstrated their approval of the show, the country music, and imagery of the show. Presumably *Ozark Jubilee* was also attractive to politicians because of the national network audience.

The show also included Red Foley making political statements through his songs. During the 1950s, one of the signature aspects of Foley's songs was the incorporation of spoken word portions that he called recitations. The themes of these songs were often nostalgic, religious, patriotic, or a combination of all three. These songs were frequently sung as the closing number on Ozark Jubilee. An example of this can be found on his album *The Red Foley Show* (Foley n.d.). Though released after the end of Ozark Jubilee, *The Red Foley Show* is structured like his radio program and the television show and includes guest performances by artists who appeared on Ozark Jubilee as either guests or featuring performers: Speedy Haworth, the Wilborn Brothers, Uncle Cyp Brasfield, Earnest Tubb, Kitty Wells, and Patsy Cline. One of the tracks is a solo performance by Foley called "The Message." The song begins with the soft and smooth "oohs" of the back-up singers performing a wordless rendition of "America the Beautiful." Red Foley then begins to recite the text, which echoes McCarthy era political sentiment regarding nationalism, freedom, and capitalism:

*Why is it every twenty years or so
Somewhere on a foreign shore
Some greedy man gets the power in his hand
And wants to kick down freedom's door?
Why can't they just leave us alone over here?
We're not looking for a fuss.
While we've proved it time and again
By giving them the shells that they shoot back at us.
Capitalists! Capitalists that's what they call us!
It's in the papers every day.
[unintelligible] plan is dad-blam bad and they hate it so much
Why do they want to take it away?
I'm kind of proud of the land with a plan
Where a kid that's born in the slums
Can climb a tree with the rich man's boy
And fight for the juiciest plum.
In a land where your chances are all the same
If you are a millionaire or you are a bum
Why if you want to, you can even run for President
Or if you'd rather, just follow the sun*

*So listen greedy man with your mighty weapons!
 Speak of freedom when you speak to me!
 Because about all of my country that you'll ever own
 Is a little plot just about six by three.*

In this song Foley is clearly stating a jingoistic political statement including a threat of death for those who oppose America's capitalist plan. The ideology in text reflects many of the political attitudes during that time period, especially for those who had memories of World War II.

The ideological landscape of *Ozark Jubilee* parallel the other landscapes discussed above by in one way conforming to national trends, through conservative political patriotism, while also recognizing the Ozarks as exceptional to rest of the nation through the region's politicians using the show as a platform for tourism in the Ozarks.

By looking at *Ozark Jubilee* and the country music industry in the Ozarks region through globalization theories set by Appadurai, it is apparent that even though the Ozarks is not the same kind of structure as a nation-state, the musical culture of the region underwent homogenization and heterogenization like cultures in the twenty-first century. The five types of cultural landscapes of globalization provide a methodological approach to analyzing the context of a region and a television program that is often marginalized in scholarly narratives about country music. *Ozark Jubilee* is significant because of the contributions to the culture of the Ozarks and the national sound of the country music genre. The sounds produced by homogenization and heterogenization factors proved crucial in the development of country music. Although the genre became centralized in Nashville, it is indebted to Springfield and *Ozark Jubilee*.

CHAPTER II: OZARK SOUND, NASHVILLE SOUND

In the previous chapter, I examined the cultural landscape of *Ozark Jubilee* while showing the relationship between the Springfield country music industry and the rest of the nation. For this chapter I will narrow my focus to the music of the program and related radio and studio recordings from musicians involved with the show. My analyses will use Richard A. Peterson's country music theory, which separates country music into two basic styles, "hard core" and "soft shell," to analyze this music, especially in relation to what came to be defined as the Nashville Sound by the end of the 1950s and into the 1960s. I will first address Peterson's theory of authenticity in country music. I will then describe the country music recording industry in the Ozarks and then analyze some of the elements of music on *Ozark Jubilee*. Finally, I will demonstrate how the music on the program influenced the commercial wave of country music known as the Nashville Sound through diverse instrumentation, quartet singing style, and high production stage presentation.

In a recent publication, country music critic Hinton (2000) reviewed the Foley Show album mentioned in the previous chapter and his sentiment echoes that of Peterson. Hinton writes

Has Appalachian wisdom come to this? Countless songs, paintings, movies, poems, sermons, and parents have said much the same . . . but never before can it have been stated with such smarm. . . . The best thing about this album, then, and the country mind-cast which produced it, is that you can't take it with you. Pure corn from Nashville. (129)

Hinton viewed the music and performances of Foley and the other artists like Speedy Haworth and Uncle Cyp Brasfield as extremely inauthentic. Hinton incorrectly aimed his barbs at Appalachia and Nashville but his critique shows how locality is important to followers of

country music. The locality of country music has always played an important role in the history of the genre and Hinton's mistake in the source of the music is important. While this era of country music history is largely defined by the Nashville Sound, the Ozarks and *Ozark Jubilee* played a crucial role in creating the aesthetic of the genre during the 1950s and 1960s.

Authenticity in Country: Hard Core and Soft Shell

Perhaps one of the reasons that *Ozark Jubilee*, its music, and its musicians have not been included in academic discourse regarding the history of country music is that there is a widely held perception of the show as being inauthentic. Authenticity is no doubt important to consider when conducting academic research, but can also marginalize members of a culture. In country music, sound and place are often used to determine the authenticity of an artist's music. Country music scholar and sociologist Richard A. Peterson (1997) addressed authenticity in country music in his book *Creating Country Music* and created a theoretical dialectic to approach issues of authenticity in country music.

When analyzing country music, Richard A. Peterson offers a dialectic between what he calls "hard core" and "soft shell." He equates these terms respectively with "traditional," instrumental male barn dance, and "nontraditional," primarily vocal popular female, country music. Peterson points that these two kinds of country music have been present in the music culture since the 19th century but hard core is often seen as more authentic. He states, "The basic justification of hard country is that it represents the authentic tradition of the music called country and that it is by and for those steeped in the tradition . . . The leading hard-core artists have received the most attention from contemporary commentators and later scholars as well" (150). Peterson implies that soft shell country music from the 1930s to 1950s constitutes little more than pop tunes marketed toward the country music audience. Even though Peterson argues

that historically soft shell elements are present the country music tradition, there is little doubt of his belief that hard core music and artists are considered more authentic than their soft shell counterparts due to the latter's "layers of hypocritical self-righteousness" (153). Peterson also constructs a list of eleven characteristics within country music that can be analyzed in relation to the hard core and soft shell dialectic: Speech, Singing Style, Lyrics, Songwriting, Instruments, Instrumental Style, Singer's Origin, Stage Presentation, Personal Life, Clothes/Hair Style, and Career Longevity.

In defining these eleven characteristics, Peterson discusses artists that serve as prototypes for the hard core and soft shell approaches to each characteristic. For four of the characteristics (Speech, Singing Style, Lyrics, and Personal Life), Peterson cites Red Foley as the prototype for the soft shell style of that characteristic. Red Foley is mentioned as the prototype more often than any other artist except for Eddy Arnold, who also receives four mentions in Peterson's lists. This matter of Red Foley being framed as one of the most soft shell artists in country music history has no doubt had an impact on the perception of *Ozark Jubilee*. As the star and host of *Ozark Jubilee*, the perception of Red Foley among country music experts and scholars is intrinsically linked to the program that he brought to network television. This type of relationship can also be observed in the perception of Roy Acuff and the Grand Ole Opry. Foley's music was undoubtedly more pop-centric than the music of many of his contemporaries because his smooth crooning singing style was similar to that of Bing Crosby; but during his lifetime he had strong connections with the hardest core country artists of his time. Hank Williams and his son Hank Williams Jr. are routinely portrayed as two of the most hard core and authentic country musicians because of their nonconformist lyrics and their uncompromising lifestyles off the stage. The death of Hank Williams in 1953 is seen as a pivotal moment in country music history

and, for many, solidified the hard core aesthetic for the genre. At his funeral, many of the most successful country musicians were in attendance and performed during the ceremony. Foley, who was the host of Grand Ole Opry at the time, provided a rendition of the gospel song “Peace in the Valley.” In 1968 Foley was eulogized in turn by Hank Williams Jr. with the song “I Was With Red Foley (The Night He Passed Away).” During his lifetime Foley was revered by many hard core artists and many were guests on *Ozark Jubilee*. Nonetheless, Red Foley and his recordings are seen as inauthentic and cheap to scholars today, and this fact has undoubtedly played a role in the perception of the *Ozark Jubilee*’s role in country music.

Peterson’s categories for analyzing country music are useful because they prioritize sound over other qualities that are perceived as important in popular music such as personal background and visual style. I find this model useful because commercial popular artists often are not judged or perceived by their music alone. This consideration is also important when studying country music in the Ozarks during the 1950s because of the focus on visual elements of performance on *Ozark Jubilee*. However, researchers of *Ozark Jubilee* encounter difficulty in analyzing performances because of the limited availability of footage. For my research, I was able to view several hours of the show but often without ideal contextual information such as air date. I was able to acquire about three hours of undated footage from various points in the series, including three whole episodes on DVD. In my research I also travelled to the Country Music Foundation Archive in Nashville Tennessee to view about four hours of footage stored on DVD and VHS tapes. The footage at the archives varied from collections of performances by specific artists such as Brenda Lee, to whole episodes. Before I discuss some of the elements of authenticity, want to elaborate on the state of the country music industry within the Ozarks and Springfield during the 1950s.

Ozark Country Sound

Beginning in 1955 with the presence of Foley, the output from the country recording industry blossomed and the combination of Top Talent Inc., RadiOzark Enterprises, Crossroads Television, and KWTO created an industry of concert bookings, radio transcription programs, television shows, and regional radio broadcasting. Each aspect of the industry proved lucrative for some time and the musicians were often surprised by the expanse of the endeavors. Pedal steel guitarist Bud Isaacs for *Ozark Jubilee* and other projects including *The Red Foley Show* recalled his disbelief in the musical output by saying, “Yeah, [Foley] used to go up there [to Springfield] and do them [transcriptions]. But they wanted us to move there, because they wanted us to do a lot of them. We’d done 460 of them at one time in one contract” (Rumble, Isaacs, and Mapes 1989, 25).

The same KWTO studio used by RadiOzark and radio transcription was used for recording records as well. It is difficult to find resources that provide concrete evidence of which records were actually recorded in Springfield as opposed to Nashville from 1954 to 1960 because most of the artists that likely recorded in Springfield such as Porter Wagoner and others, recorded for RCA-Victor, which does not have a recording session discography. It can be established that Porter Wagoner’s “Company’s Coming” was definitely recorded at the KWTO studio due to the accounts from Si Siman and Bud Isaacs, who produced the recording. During that session in 1954, Wagoner was joined by Speedy Haworth on electric guitar while an African American quartet “hamboned,” a musical technique of using the body as a percussion instrument through slaps, to provide percussion to the song and Bob White played bass. Other performers for whom Isaacs produced records in Springfield include the Oklahoma Wranglers (Rumble, Isaacs, and Mapes 1989). Marijohn Wilkin, who also got her first fame when starring on *Ozark*

Jubilee recorded her very first commercial records with other *Ozark Jubilee* musicians accompanying her (Wilkin and Hall 1975, 5).

While documentation of the recordings of RCA-Victor cannot be found, information regarding recordings that Foley made for Decca in Springfield has been preserved in Decca's recording session discography. During the fall of 1954, Foley recorded seven songs at the KWTO studio for Decca. Four of the tracks were recorded with Kitty Wells on September 29, 1954 with Grady Martin accompanying on lead guitar, Tommy Jackson on fiddle, Johnnie Wright on guitar, and Bud Isaacs on pedal steel. "Make Believe" was released as a single with "As Long As I Live" on the B side while "You and Me" was released alongside "No One But You." "Make Believe" proved to be a minor hit and was included on two subsequent long-play compilation albums. The other three songs Foley recorded for Decca were never released- two versions of "I See God" (one with the Foggy River Boys and one without the quartet) and "You Never Had It So Good." These were recorded in late November of 1954 (Ruppli 1996).

The cast members on *Ozark Jubilee* represented not only the show but also the region when finding stardom while on in Springfield even when the artists may not have been originally from the Ozarks. This was the case with Brenda Lee. The singer was first on the show in 1955 when she was just ten years old. She stood out because of her mature and husky voice that compared to rock n' roll singers. RCA-Victor record executive Murray Nash recalled how the young singer's youth and musical style brought plenty of publicity to Springfield, Missouri: "I remember going to Springfield. In fact, I was over there the day that Paul Cohen [of Decca Records] signed Brenda Lee, who was about this tall at that time. . . Well, that was an event that led to some publicity, and certainly publicity for Springfield. I think, if I'm right, this was toward the beginning of the rock & roll era, and, of course, there was competition between

country music and rock & roll. In fact, some of the country artists tried to get into the rock & roll field” (Rumble and Nash 1987, 1-2). An Advance Program Promotion for *Jubilee U.S.A.* distributed by ABC-TV from January 1959 identifies Lee as the “cutest ‘cow-girl’ in the country” and as an “Ozark recording artist for over three years” (1959). The fact that the network identifies Lee as from the region, even though she was not, is significant because it shows that being labeled as a recording artist from the Ozarks was an important selling point to attract viewers. In the viewers’ minds, country music from the Ozarks was authentic.

The production of country music in Springfield was enough to garner attention from executives at major labels. At one point after 1954, Decca’s famed record producer Paul Cohen was looking for locations for a new studio for the label to record country music and away from the Nashville studio already used. Red Foley, Brenda Lee, and other artists on *Ozark Jubilee* had record contracts with Decca and Cohen considered the Ozarks city as a finalist for the new studio. Cohen ultimately decided to remain in “Paul Cohen considered moving his recording either to Dallas, Texas, or to Springfield, Missouri, where Red Foley was having success with his *Ozark Jubilee* show. With his money tied up in film and audio studios in Nashville, Owen didn’t think he could afford to move, and if Paul wanted a better facility, Owen was prepared to build it” (Emery 1998, 136).

An article in a 1956 edition of Time magazine stated that “Springfield, Mo., ‘queen city of the Ozarks’ has convinced millions, through radio and TV, that it is the home of country music. While other radio stations were scratching out pop music on wax, Springfield’s KWTO (Keep Watching the Ozarks) gave its listeners live, howling hillbillies . . . Springfield could lay claim to being the hillbilly [music] capital of the world” (“They Love Mountain Music,” 1956). A few months after the Wilson article, an AP wire story was published across the nation that

declared Springfield as the capital of country music because of the Ozark Jubilee and the boon of tourism the show generated to the city. The article's author notes the ubiquity of Foley and country music by stating "Foley, in the unlikely event you don't know, has been called the dean of country music—though he looks too young and acts too modest to be the dean of anything. And country music, in case you don't know, used to be known as hillbilly music" (Mercer 1956).

Singing Style

During the fifties, the incorporation of background singers and their style of singing characterized the commercial country music sound of the Ozarks and Ozark Jubilee. Peterson classifies this as soft shell due to the singers' more polished style of smooth harmonies, opposed to the nasal and rough voices of hard core singing (Peterson 1997). The background singers were gospel groups and the best example of these was the Jordanares. In 1948 four Ozarks men from Springfield and Barry County formed a quartet to sing gospel songs on KWTO for a daily show. The four men entered singing competitions in the region and found regional acclaim. The group changed its name to the Jordanares, after Jordan Creek, the dominant body of water in the city (Hubbard 2010). The quartet's style was defined by tight harmonies. In 1955 the group was discovered by Elvis Presley and found further success at the recording studio of RCA-Victor. Also during the fifties a similar female group called the Anita Kerr Singers emerged in the country music recording industry, providing backup vocals to artists. Dottie Dillard, the most prominent and recognized member of the Anita Kerr singers was also an Ozarks native from Springfield.

Because county music culture emphasizes locality so much, it can be assumed that Springfield and Ozarks country music began gaining attention as a place where there was plenty of talent because of the Ozarks connection to the two biggest vocal groups in the genre during

from the 1950s. In fact, the quartet style singing that was a signature style for the region in country music was adopted by the country music recording industry, especially by record producers at Decca, the company that Red Foley and Brenda Lee sang with and RCA-Victor who signed Chet Atkins and Porter Wagoner.

The quartet style singing was also a signature part of the music on *Ozark Jubilee*. The Foggy River Boys, a group that included original members of the Jordanaires, were stars on the show from the first air date. Formed by Charlie Hutton on second tenor and lead vocals, Bill Matthews on first tenor, Monty Matthews on baritone, and Warren Holmes on bass, the Foggy River Boys often served multiple duties during each episode, as backup singers to other acts well as the act on the forefront. The Foggy River Boys were once the featured guest on an episode of KWTO's transcription program *The Red Foley Show* (Foley and The Foggy River Boys, n.d.), which was recorded during the week in between *Ozark Jubilee* shows. The date of this and other episodes of *The Red Foley Show* are unknown due to the nature of radio transcription programs where there is no mention of date or even current events because it was unknown when the program would be airing on affiliate stations. This particular episode begins with Foley singing a patriotic song called "Smoke on the Water" in a honky-tonk style with Bud Isaac's pedal guitar featured prominently along with a fiddle solo performed by Tommy Jackson. The song includes Foley's patriotic lyrics and warns the nation's enemies "when our army and navy overtakes the enemy, there'll be fire on the mountain and the tyrants will die, when our mission is over there'll be peace in the sky." The quick tempo, the major tonality, and Foley's optimistic deliverance subverts the grave and violent nature of the lyrics of the song. Foley's solo is followed by a fiddle tune performed by famed musician Tommy Jackson, "Back Up and Push."

After the hard core instrumental, Foley introduces his guests the Foggy River Boys as “America’s favorite foursome.” The first song the quartet performs is the spiritual “I Wanna Go There.” The lyrics are as follows:

Chorus:

*Well, I wanna go there when He calls my number
Well, I wanna go there when he calls my name
Oh Lord you know I’m prayin’
I’m singin’ and shoutin’ God’s praises
And I know He’ll welcome me there, oh yeah*

Verse 1:

*Hey well, I wanna be in morning and it won’t be long
You’re gonna look for me child and I’ll be gone
I’m gonna move right up to the Promised Land
Seeking Jesus, gonna shake his hand*

Verse 2:

*I’ll shout howdy, howdy
Howdy brother, howdy, howdy
Howdy sister, howdy, howdy
Howdy neighbor, howdy, howdy*

Verse 3:

*Then I’m gonna move up a little higher
Gonna shake hands with my mother
Then I’m gonna move a little higher
Gonna shake hands with my father*

Verse 4:

*Then I’m gonna move a little higher
Gonna shake hands with my sister
Then I’m gonna move a little higher
Gonna shake hands with my neighbor*

Chorus:

*Well, I wanna go there when He calls my number
Well, I wanna go there when he calls my name
Oh Lord you know I’m prayin’
I’m singin’ and shoutin’ God’s praises
And I know He’ll welcome me there, oh yeah*

Verse 5:

Well over there, over there

*Over there, over there
I'll meet my loves once gone
Well, well, well, well, well*

*Chorus:
Been prayin'
Been singin' and shoutin' God's praises
And I know He'll welcome me there, oh yeah*

*Verse 6:
O-o-o-over there!
Over there! Over there!
I'll meet my loved ones gone!
Well, well, well, well, well!*

*Chorus:
Been prayin'
Been singin' and shoutin' God's praises
And I know He'll welcome me there!*

After an arpeggiated major chord played by an acoustic guitar establishes the key for the four singers, they sing the first instance of the chorus with Hutton on melody while the others sing sustained “oohs” in the background except for the final line “I know He’ll welcome me there,” where the other three parts join in singing the words. This approach to the final line of the chorus acts as a transition to a shift in the harmonic voices. The sustained and homogenous oohs are replaced by a more discrete and disjunct texture, starting with the bass singing the root of the chord followed by the baritone and tenor singing in thirds “I’m gonna mmm” on step-wise ascending lines. During the second verse, the melody becomes syncopated with the 4/4 meter. This syncopation is fitting to the source material being a spiritual likely from African American tradition. The syncopation allows Hutton to take liberty with the rhythm of the melody and he also changes the melody to emphasize certain lyrics. For the lines, “I’ll shout howdy howdy” and “Then I’m gonna move a little higher” both words “shout” and “move” are an octave higher than the previous approached with a glissando. The word move is repeated throughout the verse and is

elongated every time, showing the singer's virtuosity but also emphasizing the song's text. When the melody shifts, the style of the accompanying harmony changes as well. The other singers replace "I'm gonna mmm" with the phrase "over there." When the chorus returns, all of the singers handle the lyrics in hymn-like fashion. The final verse begins at a mezzo piano and sings the opening lines "Well, over there." The singer repeats the line four times, being flexible with the rhythm before continuing the phrase "I'll meet my loved ones gone." At the final chorus Hutton improvises using falsetto, and sings the conclusion of the chorus an octave higher than any of the previous choruses. The lively up-tempo singing of the Foggy River Boys of "I Wanna Go There" exemplifies the sound of the Ozarks quartets and also shows their flexibility in style. While the first verse is in the ooh and ahh style that was used when backing up musicians like Red Foley, the later verses exhibit the rhythmic structure and flexibility of African American spirituals.

The after "I Wanna Go There" is a poem recitation from Red Foley's *Keepsake Album* called "Why Fear or Fret." This poem is very similarly musically and thematically to "The Message" from *The Red Foley Show* long play album mentioned in the previous chapter. The recitation transitions into Foley singing "Peace in the Valley", Foley's signature song. The Foggy River Boys backup the show's host by sustain "ooh"s behind Foley's verses and then singing the choruses and trading of lines with Foley. The transcription concludes similarly to all of the RadiOzark and *Ozark Jubilee* with the words, "We'd like to remind you to come and see us. And if you can't come and visit with us in person write to us here at the crossroads of country music, won't you?" encouraging listeners to come to the Ozarks to see the musicians in person and visit the region.

The Foggy River Boys episode of *The Red Foley Show* radio transcription displays the singing style that present on *Ozark Jubilee*. The quartet singing complemented slower songs like those that Foley most often sang, but could also be entertaining in more up-tempo songs. To Peterson, this singing style would fall into soft shell because of the connections to parlor and ballad singing, but I would offer that there are facets of the style that should be hard core. When the Foggy River Boys or Jordanaires employed the “ooh and aah” singing style behind the singers, their role in establishing the harmonic underpinning to a song is the same as a string band accompanying an old-time fiddle tune. The syncopated verses also do not align with the soft shell model of singing on the beat.

Instruments and Instrument Style

Not only was the singing style unique to *Ozark Jubilee*, but the instrumentation on *Ozark Jubilee* and the rest of the Springfield country music industry developed combining hard core and soft shell elements of the genre. Peterson (1997) only specifies three instruments that comprise hard core country music: fiddle, banjo, and dobro. Soft shell instruments include “swooping pedal steel” and “ooh-aah vocal backing.” The instrumental style of hard core is “rough, ragged, energized” according to Peterson while soft shell instrumentation is “smooth, harmonious” and mimic pop songs (152). Because of an influence of other variety shows popular during the same time, *Ozark Jubilee* house band was set up in a very similar way to that of the other shows like *The Lawrence Welk Show*. The musicians were positioned behind opulent music podiums. The big band style setup combined string band country music instruments with big band era instruments. Instruments included electric guitar, drum set, piano, steel pedal guitar which was relatively new to country music at the time. The background studio band in *Ozark Jubilee* was known as the Crossroads Boys. During the first episode of the program they

highlighted these musicians after Red Foley's opening song. All of the musicians were dressed in matching plaid with bolo ties. The band included traditional string band instrumentalists Billy Firth on accordion, Tommy Jackson on fiddle, and Bob Moore on bass. The band also featured musicians playing nontraditional country music instruments including Mel Bly on drum set, Bud Isaacs on steel guitar and Grady Martin with a two-headed electric guitar. *Ozark Jubilee* marked the first time many of these instruments were showcased in country music performance on a large national platform. The inclusion of the instruments most associated with pop tunes conformed with the producer's and network's goals of attracting viewers nationwide but also influenced further developments in the genre's immediate future.

One of the earliest examples of the combination of hardcore string band instruments, along with soft shell singing and popular instruments in a commercial setting in the Ozarks is *The Carter Sisters Show* on KWTO. The show starred members of the famous Carter family including June and Maybelle, Helen, and Anita, who were accompanied by Chet Atkins on guitar. The show was in a transcription format, meaning that it was recorded on vinyl discs and sent to other radio stations across the nation to be played. Recordings of the Carter Sisters and KWTO's other transcription programs can be found but due to the way they were distributed there are never any mentions of time or current events so that the listeners are less aware of the program being a recording and not live. This creates a problem for researchers because it is difficult to know when a particular show was actually recorded. Nevertheless, it is known that the Carter Sisters' show was recorded in Springfield during the early 1950s (Atkins and Cochran 2003). The announcer for the show was Joe Slattery, who would later serve the same role in *The Red Foley Show* radio program and *Ozark Jubilee*. For example the set lists of the show included June singing "Eight More Miles to Louisville" (The Carter Sisters and Atkins n.d.) a

contemporary song proclaiming with guitar solo with bass, accordion. Helen (accordion) and Anita (bass) singing the traditional song “Ain’t it Hard to Love” (also known as “Hard, Ain’t it Hard”) with guitar solo and yodeling. “No Tear in Heaven” is next featuring three part gospel harmony. Then a virtuosic guitar solo. Anita Carter singing a “sad song” “I’m fading fast with the times.” They would also transition into ads with little instrumental dance numbers like “Bile the Cabbage Down”. They would end every program with “In the Pines.”

The instrumental style of the Carter Sisters’ program greatly influenced commercial country music in Springfield during the rest of the decade. Chet Atkins’ ability to play the electric guitar, an instrument associated with rock n’ roll, in an aesthetically pleasing way to traditional, gospel, and contemporary country music paved the way for instrumentalists like Speedy Haworth on *Ozark Jubilee* to perform and innovate the very sound of country music in the rest of the nation. The presence of hard core instruments along with the soft shell during this time period is significant because it foreshadows the coming developments in country music in the Nashville Sound era.

Stage Presentation

According to Peterson (1997), hard core country music stage presentation is “informal, friendly, accommodating, modest” and addresses the individual viewer through personal anecdotes. Conversely, soft shell stage presentation is “formally packaged, distant, professional, unrevealing.” Peterson suggests that these artists’ looks could theoretically be swapped with any other commercial entertainer and the viewer could not tell a difference. One of the prototypes that Peterson cites for the soft shell stage presentation is Eddy Arnold, who was a frequent guest on *Ozark Jubilee* and even had his own show produced by Crossroads Television with Chet Atkins in Springfield. (153) While some of the characteristics that Peterson points to as signs of

soft shell or hard core do not adequately apply to *Ozark Jubilee* due to the his focus on individual artists, many of these aspects of stage presentation can be seen in *Ozark Jubilee* footage and were even noted on during its time on air. Bob Foster of a San Mateo, California newspaper wrote one of the first reviews of *Ozark Jubilee* and immediately noticed the quality of the stage production and presentation saying “The first hour was not too bad. It came from Springfield, Mo., where Red Foley and his gang were dedicating a new theatre-studio, *Ozark Jubilee* which it is called, and rightfully so, is a success for many reason. First of all it is expertly and artistically produced Second, and most important, we suppose it has Red Foley, whose easy going manner makes you feel right at home” (*San Mateo Times*, May 3,1955). The review compares *Ozark Jubilee* with other country music shows and uses the program as an example for with others can model to find success, thus putting authenticity into the stage presentation of *Ozark Jubilee*. This contrasts Peterson’s assessment that what is seen as soft shell is distant and unrevealing and therefore fake.

The stage presentation is significant in *Ozark Jubilee* because of its role being the first country music variety show built exclusively for television. The first *Ozark Jubilee* from January 22, 1959 (Moving Image Collection) reveals that in the beginning of the show, the backdrops were relatively bare because of the studio was in a temporary location on the campus of the University of Missouri in Columbia. But the relative bareness meant that the focus of stage presentation was essential in conveying the image of the Ozarks region and country music. The general qualities of performances on this show that then can be seen on subsequent episodes are the West, Southern Mountains, or a nostalgic displacement. The opening song of the broadcast was Red Foley’s rendition of the sentimental pop tune “Hearts of Stone.” Foley plays his guitar while backed by the Foggy River Boys quartet and the programs house band The Crossroads

Boys. Foley and the Foggy River Boys donned formal suits and ties leading to a soft shell presentation. (An interesting aspect of the very first *Ozark Jubilee* shows was that the incorporation of many camera tricks that embraced the medium of television. In many performances like “Hearts of Stone” that had multiple groups performing at one time, the two camera feeds overlaid onto one another so that the viewers could see a close-up of Foley at the same time as the Foggy River Boys or the Crossroads Boys. The performers looked like ghosts but gave the television audience a unique perspective that those in the studio could not have.) After an introduction of the Crossroads Boys, the all male three-part harmony group known as the Willis Brothers performed “Oklahoma Wranglers.” The three members of the group wore stereotypical Western attire while playing guitar, accordion, fiddle, and bass. The lyrics of the song include the performance of an onomatopoeia that simulates the sound of spitting tobacco. The combination of the performers’ clothing, instrumentation, and lyrical content suggest a hard core performance according to Peterson’s guidelines. Later on in the program Pete Stamper performed a comedic skit wearing a suit and tie, which was rare for the hillbilly comedian. In his introduction, Foley reminds the viewers that although Stamper may be dressed nicely, he is accustomed to being in a log cabin. These three examples from one episode show the fluidity from hard core to soft shell that the program exhibited. While segments of the show comply with Peterson’s dialectic, such as the soft-shell “Hearts of Stone” or the hard core performance of “Oklahoma Wranglers,” others such as the Pete Stamper routine have elements of hard core and soft-shell simultaneously.

Crossroads Television’s approach did not stay constant throughout the *Ozark Jubilee*’s run on network television. Eventually Si Siman shifted the approach of the overall production that connected the performances through visual themes. This approach was unlike the radio-

based shows such as Grand Ole Opry because he aimed to have central themes for each episode, where all of the performances were related. These would often tie in with the music of the guest stars. For instance if Gene Autry, a frequent guest, was performing, the show would tend to have more of a Western theme. When they would broadcast a special Junior Jubilee episode focusing on young talents such as Brenda Lee and the square dancing troupe called the Tadpoles, the backdrops resembled schoolrooms. Topical current events also served as inspiration for the presentation of *Ozark Jubilee* at times. The January 9, 1960 episode contained an election themed cast introduction because of the beginning of primary elections and politicians were announcing their candidacy for the Presidential race (Moving Image Collection).

The Nashville Sound

While *Ozark Jubilee* was creating a distinctive sound by combining soft shell and hard core elements, it was playing a role in the development of country music that would soon be adopted by other locations, including the genre's most well-known location, Nashville, Tennessee. *Ozark Jubilee* instrumentation style, stage presentation, and singing style was unique and led to the show's popularity. As record executives and country music scenes across the nation watched the rise of *Ozark Jubilee*, they began to emulate many facets of the program and even luring the musicians to perform and record at their studios and on their radio and television programs. In similar way that *Ozark Jubilee* was able to attract Red Foley from Nashville, institutions from Nashville drew in talent from *Ozark Jubilee* after the show's successes. This new wave of country music coming from Nashville is known as the Nashville Sound.

The term "Nashville Sound" was originally coined in 1957, two years after the premiere of *Ozark Jubilee* (Kosser 2006). The principal actors in the Nashville sound was guitarist Chet Atkins and his studio musicians at RCA-Victor. Atkins, Owen Bradley, and their "A-Team" of

musicians institutionalized a unified sound featuring a distinct instrumentation for that time. In the Nashville Sound recordings, instruments that defined the genre for decades prior such as the fiddle, banjo, and acoustic guitar were hardly present and often not used in any capacity. The Nashville Sound producers instead added facets of pop music such as piano, classical string orchestration, and background singers. Well known examples of Nashville Sound recordings include Patsy Cline's "Crazy" from 1961 and Eddie Arnold's "Make the World Go Away" in 1965.

The elements analyzed above (Instruments & Instrument Style, Stage Presentation, and Singing Style) were showcased on *Ozark Jubilee* and related music ventures and influenced the Nashville Sound. This may in large part be due to the Chet Atkins participation at KWTO in the early fifties and the formation of the Nashville Sound. His guitar performance on the Carter Sisters radio transcriptions provided a unique sound for the station that ushered in a new era of country music. Atkins was not the sole catalyst for the change and took from the Springfield scene as well. By 1955 Atkins was no longer working for KWTO but he did work on one of the spin-off shows of *Ozark Jubilee* starring Eddy Arnold called *The Eddy Arnold Show* in 1956. This show was also shot in the Jewell Theater and was served as a summer replacement to fill-in time slots for the network while another show was on hiatus between seasons. Atkins was the show's lead guitarist (Spears-Stewart 1993, 48). Atkins' presence on *The Eddy Arnold Show* reveals he that had a connection to the other artists in Springfield during that time, many of which comprised of the Nashville Sound "A-Team."

The reliance on a few session musicians on RCA-Victor's records helped create one of the distinct qualities of the music of the Nashville Sound. This select group, known as the "A-Team" performed on hundreds of records and many of them were performers on the Ozark

Jubilee or members of the house band, the Crossroads Boys. Bassist Bob Moore, guitarist Grady Martin, and steel guitarist Bud Isaacs were all on the first season of *Ozark Jubilee* and on the RadiOzark radio transcriptions. Another important connection is the two primary background singing groups of the Nashville Sound, The Jordanares and The Anita Kerr Singers, that had strong ties with the Ozark country music industry. The fact that many of the same talent on *Ozark Jubilee* played a vital role in the foundation of the Nashville Sound showcases the importance of the show in the country music genre. Bob Hubbard of the Jordanares and The Foggy River Boys stated this about how their role in record industry in Nashville: “They started using our vocal groups . . . They started using us behind talent, Red Foley or whoever it was and it just made a unique sound with these vocals behind. And we did some great arranging . . . They found out that this sound didn’t interfere with the star but added a whole lot to the recording. So they started using us a great deal behind country music stars especially. And it just worked out great and that started what they called the Nashville Sound.” (Hubbard 2010) In 1956, Springfield was seen as influential, if not more than Nashville in the development of country music by being called by some as the “capital of country music.” The Ozarks had become a competitor to Music Row.

The transience many of the musicians from *Ozark Jubilee* to Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry and RCA-Victor studios was perhaps the result of the monopolistic business model of Siman and his partners. As stated in the previous chapter, many of the artists on *Ozark Jubilee* felt they were unjustly compensated financially for their work on the show and their weekly tours. This includes musicians who moved to Springfield such as Pete Stamper and locals like Porter Wagoner.

Authenticity in country music is very present in the discourse of the genre and has a lasting effect on the perceived legacy of individual artists and institutions within the culture. Because of the close association with Red Foley, *Ozark Jubilee* and the Springfield country music industry during the 1950s is often regarded as inauthentic and significant only in regards to the program's viewership. By analyzing factors of hard core and soft shell country music in *Ozark Jubilee* and the related ventures and looking at the region's industry in comparison to the future of the Nashville Sound, it is clear that the Ozarks' commercial country music was not only more complex than is often thought, but also played an important role in the development of the genre during the mid-twentieth century.

CHAPTER III: REGIONAL IDENTITY AND *OZARK JUBILEE*

While the last two chapters looked at *Ozark Jubilee* in global and national genre settings, this chapter seeks to investigate the ways in which the *Ozark Jubilee* created and transformed the region's identity. For the Ozarks tourism is essential to the region's identity due to the geography and economy of the region. The Ozarks does not have any large industrial cities or metropolises that serve as a signature identifier for the area. As stated in the second chapter, the transient people in a place form the ethnoscape, which is one of the fundamental features of the cultural landscape. Branson, Missouri, the largest tourism center in the Ozarks, has been one of the three most popular destinations in the state for the last three years. In 2011 and 2013 Branson was second only to St. Louis attracting nearly a third of Missouri's travelers. In 2012 Kansas City narrowly edged out Branson for second place (Missouri Destinations 2014). The tourism is also important to the music of the Ozarks being prominently featured in attractions that represent the region's culture in state tourism institutions such as the Ozark Folk Center in Arkansas or the Ozark Empire Fair in Springfield. The region's tourism industry went from one reliant upon nature, to one reliant on cultural music as can be seen most evidently in the Branson tourism industry. *Ozark Jubilee* also fits into cultural tourism theoretical models created by Ozark studies scholars. These models show that *Ozark Jubilee* assisted in the region's shift to a region for music tourism.

Models of Tourism in the Ozarks

In *The Ozarks: Land and Life*, cultural geographer Milton Rafferty (2001) details the history and geography of tourism in the Ozarks. Rafferty's thorough investigation of the tourism in the region highlighted certain cases, but a theoretical structure emerges when considering all of the cases together. The pattern of tourism development begins with the geography of a place

itself. Whether a place has a specific geographic site like a cave, or an attractive viewpoint at the peak of a mountain range, characteristics of a place that are perceived as unique to tourists is the start of Rafferty's tourism development. Geography then creates recreational tourism, where nature is the primary attraction on a tourist's visit. Recreational tourism can encompass a diverse range of activities including sightseeing, hiking, hunting, and fishing. When recreational tourism of a place further develops and more visitors come to a site, an infrastructure develops to service those visitors. This infrastructure may be to ease the access to nature through transportation, such as roads and railroads, or to occupy the tourists' time while not participating with nature, such as hotels and restaurants. The next step of the development emerges out of the infrastructure built to support the recreational tourism. The infrastructure of a location often becomes an attraction in itself and can eventually become the primary object of the tourists' gaze. Cultural tourism surfaces because of the development of the infrastructure because now the geographic place can support and sustain other attractions. While this model is founded on progressive steps, it is important to point out that the previous parts of the development are very much present. Even though a place's tourism industry may be fully dominated by cultural attractions, the previous parts are still there like recreational tourism and never are fully replaced.

An example of Rafferty's model at work is found in the history of Silver Dollar City in Branson, Missouri. In 1894, William Henry Lynch bought land in the wilderness outside of Branson in which there is a cave that had previously been used to collect bat guano. (Rafferty 2001) Called Marvel Cave, the site became an attraction for tourists. Tourists could make the trek to the cave and explore its passages. In 1946, the Herschend family bought the property, and repurposed the mining buildings into themed shops evoking nineteenth century commercial practices, including local craftspeople, as a way to entertain tourists as they waited to tour the

cave. The new area was named Silver Dollar City because tourists exchanged modern day cash for silver dollars to purchase goods, allowing the visitors to re-enact the region's past. Despite the original function of being a way for the tourists to stay at the site despite the long wait to visit the cave, Silver Dollar City's popularity eventually eclipsed that of Marvel Cave. The shops and the work of the local craftspeople, including glassblowers and quilters, became the central attraction for tourists. Silver Dollar City is now a vast theme park and the largest tourist attraction in the Ozarks, featuring roller coasters and musical theater shows as well as the original shops. Visitors can still tour Marvel Cave, but it no longer is marketed in advertisements or is as popular as other attractions at Silver Dollar City. The theme park shows how places of tourism in the Ozarks start as settings of recreational tourism for gazing at nature but become sites of cultural tourism after the development of infrastructure. The transition from nature tourism to cultural tourism in the Ozarks has also been researched by organizational theorists.

Another theoretical model that has a local scope is a study by organizational theorists investigated the emergence of musical theaters in Branson, Missouri. Applying emergence and complex theories through interviews and historical research, Chiles, Meyer, and Hench (2004) recognized four distinct era of development for Branson's musical theaters. They determined these eras by significant moments and movements within multiple categories of the local and regional economies, including government policy, collective strategy, and infrastructure. The first era recognized is the Tourism Foundation Era, which lasted from the nineteenth century to 1955. During this time "Branson became a destination for outdoors vacationers [because of] the combined effects of improved rail service, a best-selling novel set in Branson, and the creation of Lake Taneycomo" (Chiles et al., 505). This era corresponds with the early recreation tourism stage described by Rafferty. Specific coded events that define the tourism foundation era include

other developments in nature tourism such as the first float-fishing businesses in the 1930s and the national media attention toward the trend in the 1930s and 40s. This era also included significant developments in the infrastructure of Branson and the surrounding area with construction of Route 66 which ran through the Ozarks and Springfield, Missouri, and the formation of the Ozark Playground Association (OPA) in 1919.

Succeeding the Tourism Foundation is the era that researchers title the Pioneering Era of musical theaters in Branson. The Pioneering Era is “inaugurated by the founding of the town’s first theater in 1955 ‘and characterized by the growth of musical theaters featuring local musicians embodying the hillbilly stereotype” (505). The first theater according to Chiles is the Shepherd of the Hills theater which housed staged productions adapted from the popular novel of the same title by Harold Bell Wright which is set in the Ozarks and was one of the key factors in the tourism growth during the foundation era.

The importance of this study on Branson musical theater tourism is that it shows in greater detail the progression of tourism that Rafferty asserts. In the Foundation Tourism Era, the nature tourism dominated but infrastructure was laid to allow for the growth of cultural tourism. The Pioneering Era contrasts the previous era because of the showcase of local culture. Before 1955, the culture of Ozarks was an accessory to the flowing rivers and picturesque hills. At theaters, tourists are stationary and their attention is concentrated on the performances of people of the Ozarks. Chiles, et al. recognize dozens of events that contributed to the eras of tourism in a visualization of the history of musical theaters in Branson, but only address a few of them in their prose. Located in the external events section of the chart, one of these events that is presented but not explained is titled, “Barn Dancing Format Adopted by *Ozark Jubilee* Show (1953) and Lee Mace’s Ozark Opry (1953)” (505). This event is the first in the entire timeline

that has a direct relationship to music in any way, let alone music of the Ozarks. It is curious that the foundation of these two institutions are not further explored because of the focus on musical theaters in Branson when it is apparent that *Ozark Jubilee* and the Ozark Opry are clearly predecessors to the shows created in the following decades. It is also important to point out that the date of the show given in this study is incorrect. *Ozark Jubilee* premiered in 1955, the same year as the start of the Pioneering Era and the end of the Foundation Tourism Era.

The Ozarks and Nature

Tourism has been a significant part of the Ozarks for much of its post-settlement history. The region has been the object of the tourist gaze since the early nineteenth-century. One of the earliest tourists in the region was Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, a mineralogist from New York, who traveled to northern Arkansas and southern Missouri in 1818-19. He marveled at the beauty of the topography and the clearness of the region's rivers but compared the residents he encountered to savages (Blevins 2002). Schoolcraft's writings marked the beginning of the men and women of the Ozarks being stereotyped as culturally and economically backwards compared to urbanites on the eastern portion of the United States. His writings are also important because they are evidence of the Ozarks being attractive to visitors because of the region's natural environment.

The aspect of identifying the Ozarks with nature and the frontier continues into the twentieth century and was even used by Ozarkers themselves to market their own businesses. When KWTO began to showcase the music of the region through their live broadcasts, they often marketed their musicians in relation to their connection with nature. During the 40s, KWTO published a magazine entitled *The Dial*, which primarily served as promotion for the

station and its on-air talent. McKinney (2007) describes one particular passage about local Slim Wilson as follows:

Goodwill Family member Slim Wilson and his wife Ada owned a dairy farm near Springfield. Frequent photographs of Slim and Ada, and of their farm activities, were printed in *The Dial*, and some times short articles appeared about them. One article recounted a week of setbacks. Who could not love a person who had the following troubles and yet managed to perform cheerfully during his scheduled broadcasts? The article noted that one of Slim's cows got stuck in a pond, requiring four hours to get her out; rats got out into his chicken house and killed many of his six hundred white leghorn chicks; Slim mowed the hay, and rain the next two days damaged it. When he baled the hay, ten tons (about three hundred thirty bales) spoiled. That same week Slim bought a shed that had to be moved, thinking he could use the materials from which it was built, but the lumber was so rotten that only the metal roofing could be salvaged. That Saturday night, Slim made a personal appearance; while he performed, a big rain storm flooded a creek, cutting him off from his home. He spent the night stranded on the creek. (246-247)

The example above illustrates how the station created an identity of their musicians as being folksy and familiar with the lay of the land, and in this case the dominance of nature in the Ozarks. In the story, Wilson must admit defeat in the wake of Mother Nature's cruel jokes. This marketing strategy echoed the folksy identity that Schoolcraft portrayed over a century before by showing Wilson as a bewildered farmer down on his luck on his farm. The *Ozark Jubilee* would continue this tradition of showing their cast's mishaps on the farm but in an entirely different context. In pre-taped segments that were shown before commercial breaks, the program often

showed Slim Wilson, Red Foley, or others out on a farm struggling with various farm chores such as tilling and then using new Massey-Ferguson tractors to solve the problem. Massey-Ferguson was one of the show's primary sponsors. The Ozark people's connection to the land and the marketability of the region's geography was significant to the identity of the region seen and heard on *Ozark Jubilee*.

Identities on *Ozark Jubilee*

As indicated by the title, *Ozark Jubilee* did produce a representation of the region, but it was fairly loose from the beginning. This identity at once reinforced to its viewers previous perceptions of the region but would also change its cultural identity. Regional identity on *Ozark Jubilee* was constructed in many ways and most importantly shifted throughout its five year run on network television. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, the producers were able to create a unique Ozarks identity through the music and stage presentation of the show that incorporated many geographic (Wild West and Appalachia) and musical styles (hard core country and pop tunes). In looking at the show in the framework of both Rafferty and Chiles, et al. it is essential to analyze the relationship of *Ozark Jubilee* and nature tourism in the region. As Rafferty asserts all aspects are interconnected and founded ultimately in the geography of a place. By looking at primary documents from national newspapers and the show's own promotional material, I will illustrate how the program's audience and the creators of the show interacted with the draw of the rivers and hills.

One facet of the marketing and promotion of *Ozark Jubilee* included the selling and distribution of "souvenir picture albums." The albums were small paper books, 8" x 11" in size, and along with pictures of the performers of the show (primarily professional headshots), includes captions often with biographical or production information. As indicated in the second

edition of these albums (*Ozark Jubilee Souvenir Picture Album* 1956), these albums could be purchased at the gift shop at the Jewell Theater so that not just audience members of the show could purchase the souvenir books. On the front covers of the second and third editions of the souvenir picture albums, host Red Foley in his signature suit and tie bears a warm smile, greeting the readers of the books. The back covers of the two editions also parallel one another. Both feature pictures that greatly contrast the material in the rest of the albums. While different photographs, both back covers feature a solitary man in a plaid shirt with his back to the camera lens, positioned next to a tree, gazing at the Ozarks landscape. Both also have a multi-paragraph caption beneath them encouraging the reader to visit the nature of the Ozarks. The second edition's caption is as follows:

The Beautiful, Bountiful Ozarks. It is difficult to describe the appealing charm of the Ozarks, but impossible not to feel it. It is a charm made up of many things. The beauty of the scenery, brilliant sunshine, invigorating air, glorious days and cool nights, the lure of clear lakes and roaring rivers, fine fishing, recreation of every sort, excellent accommodations that permit you to rough it or live in luxury as you prefer . . . all of these are part of the beautiful, bountiful 25,000 square miles of Ozark playgrounds.

If you have never enjoyed a relaxing vacation in this lovely land of historic hills, verdant valleys, shimmering streams and limpid lakes . . . come and visit soon . . . and while you're here . . . be sure and visit America's favorite family television show . . . the *OZARK JUBILEE* . . . every Saturday night over ABC Coast-to-Coast Network, from Springfield, Missouri, "Crossroads of Country Music" . . . "The Heart of The Ozarks." (*Ozark Jubilee Souvenir Picture Album* 1956, Back Cover)

An important word in the passage above is playgrounds and fits in with regional tourism trends during that time. Throughout the twentieth century, the Ozarks was marketed across the nation, most often in periodical advertisements as a playground where visitors could fish, relax, and gaze at the scenery. The primary organization behind this marketing was the Ozark Playground Association, whose advertisements used the slogan, “Land of a Million Smiles” (Blevins 2002). By using the words “playground” and “smiles,” the OPA connected humanity with the nature of the Ozarks. It is clear though that the humanity that the OPA was promoting lies in the visitors and not in the Ozarkers themselves. Smiles were brandishing the faces of those in interacting with nature in a playful way. *Ozark Jubilee* shifted the focus on marketing of the Ozarks from the connection between the tourists and nature to the relationship of the local performers and the tourists. By placing the promotional material relating to the recreation of the Ozarks, the souvenir picture albums are quite literally show how the recreation that was the center of the tourism industry in the Ozarks was now being pushed back by the showcase of culture. The process of backgrounding recreation tourism echoes the Rafferty model of tourism development in the Ozarks.

The third edition’s back cover (*ABC Television’s Jubilee U.S.A.* 1958) is more detailed in the sites that tourists can visit. It states:

A picture postcard come to life . . . a land of painted skies and crystal streams . . . a treasury of Nature’s glories . . . in the Ozarks.

From the Lake of the Ozarks to the north of Springfield to Lake Taneycomo, Table Rock, Norfolk, and Bull Shoals to the south, the expanses of countryside vary from softly rolling hills to ruggedly handsome mountains, dotted with stately trees and magnificent rock formations . . . the lakes and rivers are populated like a fisherman’s idea of heaven.

There's a storybook fascination about the Shepherd of the Hills region, unusual recreation in the fabulous "float trips" on the White and James Rivers, a world of enjoyment in the state park facilities at Roaring River . . . relaxation for the body and the spirit.

The producers of *Country Music Jubilee* join with Red Foley in welcoming you to the Ozarks.

Although the term "playground" is absent from the caption, the acknowledgement of The Shepherd of the Hills shows how the Pioneering Era was still relevant in the region and audiences would know the reference to the novel.

Newspapers from the time period also point to the relationship between *Ozark Jubilee* and recreational tourism in the Ozarks. During the 1950s it was customary for local newspapers to include a section dedicated to the miscellaneous goings-on in the local community. Often these were inconsequential events that fueled local gossip such as the announcement that a once longtime resident has come to visit or family reunions. Information included in these articles was often vacations that locals had recently embarked on or will soon. In my research of newspapers across the United States, I have found many references to *Ozark Jubilee* in the local gossip sections of newspapers. I have discovered that for many of the tourists who went to watch the show's broadcast live, the show was only one stop on their trips. The tourists often visited the show on cross-country journeys or vacations to the Ozarks region in general. One example comes from a newspaper article from Hillsboro, Ohio during the show's first year of broadcasting. The newspaper claimed that four locals "returned Sunday evening from a trip to the Ozarks. While there they visited Meramic [sic] Caverns and Mountain View Park and attended the *Ozark Jubilee* at Jewell Theatre in Springfield, Mo. They also visited the Big Spring

State Park at Van Buren, Mo” (*The Press-Gazette*, August 9, 1955). This clipping is indicative of other newspaper stories that I have found. It is important to note that none of the other such passages in newspapers have mentioned any other cultural attractions in the Ozarks. So while many tourists that travelled to the Ozarks to gaze at the scenic views and interact with nature during the late 1950s, *Ozark Jubilee* diverted tourists’ attention to the region’s people and their performances.

The popularity of the show, as indicated in the example above, was able to attract viewers from other parts of the nation because of relatability. The unique sound also allowed the show to reach a broad audience around the country and compete for viewers that might have watched other shows, such as *The Jackie Gleason Show*. Siman referred to the *Honeymooners* star when speaking about the audience they were marketing toward, “We weren’t going to go up against Jackie Gleason and beat him, but we were going to reach the loyal country music fans and those who didn’t like Gleason and those who were taking a television adventure, and we hoped that the program would be good enough and interesting enough to convert some, and it did” (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 9).

Programming

Eventually the *Ozark Jubilee* made a gradual shift in programming from its original presentation. Performance of the early episodes often followed the barn-dance format of their competitors. But eventually the producers shifted the not always thematically connected to one another, particularly when the show was still titled *Ozark Jubilee*. Siman felt that having a central theme for the performances to give the viewer was important in keeping the show interesting saying, “We stayed with the concept thing, but we got away from the identity, because you’ll quickly run out from underneath that. How many chuckwagon parties can you

have?” (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 17). Siman further explains the idea of having each episode stick with a certain concept thusly:

Like if you’re going to do a western, if you’re going to do a chuckwagon party, and you’re booking the talent that’s leaning a little that way—not necessarily all of it—you’re going to have square dancers on there whether it’s a chuckwagon party or a barn party, a hayloft; but you would have a central setting, then, for a chuckwagon party. We’d have a real chuckwagon on there, and everything would be built around that. So those things were thought of and planned at least three weeks in advance, the overall thing.

I think probably the guests had as much influence, the big guests—and we usually had one or two—would have a big influence on which way we’d move. Then we found out, after a little experience, that you shouldn’t try to tie the concept to one big central theme every week, because there wasn’t enough of them, and then you’d almost root out your regulars who are going to be performing something new or an idea, since it was pieced together like a blanket would be, the individual pieces made the overall.

But I think we put more emphasis on not trying to break, because I hated those things where you’d break and you go to something else. Integration was the word I guess I’m looking for, where you’d tie together—you can even do that on a commercial. You can say, “Hey, man, we’re going to break for a little word from the sponsor, but stayed tuned because Red Foley’s going to do ‘Peace in the Valley.’ ” You know, you make that transition and integrate it to where your overall production is a lot smoother than it would be if you just do individual acts and go to black, come up on something. Now you’re starting a whole new thing, and it’s cold that way, and we didn’t want that.” (17-18)

This change to focus on a central concept for the show was most evident in the cast introductions in the later episodes, mostly after the name changes. For instance, the January 1960 episode of *Jubilee U.S.A.* where the cast introduction featured hats of different sizes and shapes being thrown onto a boxing ring imitating Presidential candidates throwing their proverbial hats into the years future election. The boxing ring was tilted at an angle to allow the cameras and the studio audience to gaze at the spectacle. When announcer Joe Slattery introduced a cast member, the performers head would come up through the mat of the boxing ring underneath one of the hats (Moving Image Collection). By framing the shows around specific contemporary topics or concepts, the program could attract viewers that might not want to watch performances that were often stigmatized as “hillbilly.” By programming performances with connected themes and elements, the producers of *Ozark Jubilee* were creating a statement that the people producing and performing on the show were not isolated backwoods hillbillies, but citizens of the same world as those in the city and impacted in similar ways by the current events, political and beyond.

While the above quotes by Siman may infer an abandonment of Ozarks centric identity in favor of more broad and generic themes, Siman also states that the programming “never got away from *Ozark Jubilee*. The name change was caused because of poor thinking on the part of the network. They thought they had better sales appeal if we called it *Jubilee USA* and not just *Ozark*, which was too local. Well, the *Ozark Jubilee* was so established by that time—I mean, this was way later” (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 16). Siman’s quote may appear contradictory to his commentary on not focusing the show on “identity,” but they show the complexity in how the show represented the region. Though the show sometimes was visually set in other locations, the program was still physically set in the region and the majority of the performers were still local Ozarks. To Siman, staying on “identity” was the conscious portrayal of the Ozarks as painted

textile or wood that served as a prop for the performers. To Siman the musicians, dancers, and comedians on *Ozark Jubilee* were the embodiment of the Ozarks because they were living and breathing Ozarkers. Siman's apparent contradiction shows that the identity of the Ozarks was not strictly dependant on the physical geography of the place, but a cultural one.

Name Change

The show though did not merely represent the Ozarks. The show also represented the genre of country music because of its position as being the first country music variety series on television. The show's music, as I stated in the previous chapter, predicated many of the elements of the Nashville Sound which was changing the country music industry. The changing of the title to *Country Music Jubilee* in 1957 was shows how the show reflected the genre as a whole instead of just the Ozarks. The homogenization of the rest of the country music industry with the music on *Ozark Jubilee* codified the influence of the region yet also alienated it at the same time. This process furthered with the second title change for the program when it became known as *Jubilee U.S.A.* in 1958. This shift away from regional representation and identity can be seen in the imagery used in the title cards of the program. Below I will analyze a title card from when the show was titled *Ozark Jubilee* and another from *Jubilee U.S.A.*

At the beginning of every show, a title card featuring the show's title was shown to the television audiences. When the show was known as *Ozark Jubilee*, the title card was a physical poster with a rough map of the United States (Figure 1). The name of the program is in a font comprised of logs while a replica wagon wheel forms the capital-O which is centered on where Springfield, Missouri is located. When filmed, the capital-O was spun, adding emphasis to the region and drawing in the viewers' eyes. Bands of glittery rays emit from the capital-O and penetrate through the names of Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, on their spots on the map.

This title card stresses that the show identifies with the Ozarks and subverts the notion that live television and media should be restricted to the cities. As the show became more popular and the sound and look of country music shifted during the fifties, the diversity on *Ozark Jubilee* became the norm for the rest of country.



Figure 1. A Still Photo of the *Ozark Jubilee* Title Card

It is important to note that the programs names become more expansive, first to include an entire genre, *Country Music Jubilee*, and then the entire nation, in *Jubilee U.S.A.* The title card of *Jubilee U.S.A.* is similar to that of *Ozark Jubilee*, and includes the title set over a map of the United States (Figure 2). No longer though does it focus on a certain point of the map. What once was a jubilee of a certain region is transformed to be set in placeless ambiguity.

The changes in the title and the title cards show how *Ozark Jubilee* created a unique sound and stood out in the country music industry when it premiered but lost those unique characteristics when the industry changed. What could only be found only on *Ozark Jubilee* in 1955, such as the singing quartets, the varied instruments, and the square dancing were now the norm with the advent of the Nashville Sound.



Figure 2. A Still Photo of the *Jubilee U.S.A.* Title Card

Impact on Branson

Though the frequent title change of *Ozark Jubilee* probably played a role in the show's lack of identity and thus a unique voice in television at a time when more country variety shows were beginning to emerge, tourists remained coming to the Ozarks and now shifted their attention toward the music of the region. Because of the popularity of the show, more tourists were now recognized the Ozarks as a source for country music. To Gary Ellison, a worker in the production of *Ozark Jubilee* and one-time caller of *The Wagon Wheelers*, it is apparent the show's legacy on tourism in the Ozarks. He stated in a recent interview about *Ozark Jubilee*, "It proved to be an excellent commercial to get tourists to visit the Ozarks. And I think that the two major things that influenced tourism in the Ozarks more than anything else was when Harold Bell Wright wrote *Shepherd of the Hills* . . . but it was the *Ozark Jubilee*, a live one-hour television show every week—no summer reruns . . . 52 shows a year. We talked a great deal about the Ozarks and Mr. Foley would always invite the people to come see us" (Baker and Ellison, 2003).

Many local Ozarkers observed this change and began to cater to the demand for live musical entertainment. The Ozark Opry in Lake of the Ozarks is one example of an attraction that provided live country music to visitors to the shores of Lake of the Ozarks. Founded by Lee Mace in 1953, the show featured local musicians and square dancers and was structured in the barn dance model. The show remained a staple of Lake of the Ozarks tourism until 2005 (Peek 2010). While Ozark Opry was a contemporary for *Ozark Jubilee* and benefitted from the new wave of tourists after 1955, the performers did not have direct connections with *Ozark Jubilee*. In Branson though, an emergent trend of family bands were directly affected by not only the new expectations of tourists but also personalities involved with *Ozark Jubilee*.

While the research of Chiles et al. acknowledges the contribution of the barn dance format, it neglects to mention other relationships between the musical theaters of Branson and *Ozark Jubilee*. Many of the early musical theaters were directly influenced by the television show. The Presley family was one of the first families to open a theater and the first one to do so on the Branson Strip on Highway 76. Many members of the family jammed with *Ozark Jubilee* musicians such as Red Foley and the show's lead guitar player Speedy Haworth (Mabe, et al. 2007). This experience encouraged the family to start their own show. Even the title of their show, The Presley's Country Jubilee, is a reference to the second title given the *Ozark Jubilee* program. The fourth earliest Branson musical theater also had a direct connection to *Ozark Jubilee*. The Foggy River Boys, who were featured musicians on *Ozark Jubilee* and helped create the distinctive singing style seen on the program, moved to Branson soon after the cancellation of the show and started their own theater in the booming tourist town.

Ellison furthered explained how much many of the workers in the production of *Ozark Jubilee* and many of the musicians who did not go to Nashville were early performers in Branson

musical theaters. Don Richardson, one of the writers for *Ozark Jubilee*, was hired by the Hershend family in Branson and reportedly came up with the name of Silver Dollar City (the Hershend owned theme park). The set designer from the show Andy Miller also went to work on the construction of buildings at the Branson tourist attraction (Ellison Interview 2014).

While tourism was already a large industry in Branson, the influences of *Ozark Jubilee* lead to the prevalence of musical theaters in the city and the rest of the region. The presence of musical performance as a cultural commodity in the Ozarks is not restrained to Branson. After the cancellation of *Ozark Jubilee*, institutions and businesses in other parts of the region used music as the primary way to attract tourists. In 1962, the Ozark Folk Center opened in Mountain View, Arkansas as a state park. The center's mission is to attract tourists on vacation while educating its visitors on Ozarks heritage. Since its inception, music has played a pivotal role in the activities of the park. Today, the Ozark Folk Center logo is a profile of a fiddle while the primary picture on the location's website is a photograph of three musicians performing on a stage. (The Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism n.d.). Missouri State University in Springfield also hosts a yearly Ozark Celebration Festival where crafters and storytellers perform, but folk, country, and popular musicians are the primary focus.

By looking at the models of Ozarks tourism, both in perspective of the entire region and centralized in Branson it is apparent how *Ozark Jubilee* transformed the identity of the region. The performances on the program altered the identity of the region by creating an interest in the cultural music of Ozark natives. The *Ozark Jubilee* helped transform the region from a destination for visitors wanting a place for recreation to one where the tourists come to see the culture itself. This identity shift is still seen today in the music theaters that line Branson, Missouri some of which have direct connections to the *Ozark Jubilee*. As Rafferty's model for

tourism suggests, there needs to be infrastructure in place to create cultural tourism. Ozark Jubilee provided the infrastructure for the demand of live music in the Ozarks. As one of the catalysts for the birth of Branson music tourism, *Ozark Jubilee* helped usher in the Pioneer Era that Chiles et al. formulate in their model of the local tourism.

Even though *Ozark Jubilee* was only on air for five years, the show had a substantial impact on the image and identity of the region as can be seen in the changes in the region's tourism at that time. *Ozark Jubilee* ushered in a shift from recreation tourism dependant on the physical geography to one of cultural as can be seen in the growth of musical tourism in the region. No longer was the Ozarks a destination only for the sights of the mountains but also the sounds of the locals playing country music.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study on *Ozark Jubilee* is to show how the program gives insight into the genre of country music, the cultural landscape in the region. While many scholars of country music history view country music as being in a “depression” from 1955 to 1960, this may be because of an unawareness of *Ozark Jubilee*. Even though the show was short lived in comparison to the often-studied Grand Ole Opry, Springfield’s *Ozark Jubilee* was a singular voice during a period when country music was undergoing an historic transition into the Nashville Sound. Through *Ozark Jubilee* we can see how the region was not as isolated as is often perceived. Instead, the program and its’ music allows us to see that Springfield and the rest of the region was a crucial participant in local, national, and even globalized networks of culture. The show also was significant in changing the cultural identity of the region. Because of the show’s popularity and ability to attract thousands of viewers in the television audience the show was able to help change the region’s identity from one exemplary of nature and the frontier to one of culture, music, and live entertainment.

Further Research

There are many avenues for further research that I could not cover in this thesis that deserve attention by scholars in Ozark studies and in country music. Perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of *Ozark Jubilee* that I did not explore in depth above is the square dancing. I believe that further examination into The Promenaders, The Wagon Wheelers, and The Tadpoles is warranted. Investigation into the performances of the groups could not only enlighten many of the visual aspects of *Ozark Jubilee*, but also the role of square dancing in country music during the 1950s. Other topics for further scholarship regarding *Ozark Jubilee* include the program’s relationship with gender and race. There are conflicting opinions in the archived interviews about

whether the show was a “man’s show” or a “woman’s show” in terms of who the show was marketed towards and the television audience. The role of female performances could also be analyzed to examine how women were portrayed on country music television at that time. The presence of race in *Ozark Jubilee* should also receive scholarly attention. A local African American quartet called the Philharmonics was among the cast of *Ozark Jubilee* for much of the show’s airing. This is especially interesting due to the racial history and the racial demographics of Springfield.

Ozark Jubilee was defined by crossroads. The program originated at the crossroads of country music and the producers of the show recognized that in the title of their production company, Crossroads Television, and in the show’s promotional materials. The show was at a crossroads both geographically and chronologically. *Ozark Jubilee* was able to homogenize the musical styles of other regions in the United States to create a new sound for the genre across the nation. The Ozarks themselves were at a crossroads as well when *Ozark Jubilee* was broadcast on televisions across the nation. The programs representation of the region’s people and their music supplanted previous ideals of the Ozark Mountains as a silent and pristine frontier and replaced is with the entertainment and joy from the local musicians themselves.

I find it fitting to end this study with a quote by producer Si Siman during an interview with Country Music Foundation’s John Rumble for the Country Music Hall of Fame’s Oral History Project. Rumble notes the importance of *Ozark Jubilee* and Siman’s legacy on country music by stating, “We’ve always got to remember posterity, all the people who’ll be here after we’re gone.” Siman replies, “I hope they won’t find it boring” (Rumble and Siman 1989b, 29).

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WITH GARY ELLISON

Nathaniel Lucy: What was your relationship with *Ozark Jubilee*?

Gary Ellison: Well, um, in 1959 and in 1960, the last two years, I was the square dance caller for the Wagon Wheelers, which was the high school square dance group on the *Jubilee*. And the last year though we alternated weeks the college group, the Promenaders. And so we were down there quite frequently.

NL: How did you get first involved with the show? Was it through the Wagon Wheelers . . .

GE: Yes.

NL: Ok.

NL: So how did you get involved with that group? It was just through a high school association?

GE: Well, it kinda started when we were in elementary school and gathered in a basement and learned how to square dance and for some reason I decided I wanted to be the caller and so it just sort of grew from there.

NL: What was the music scene like in Springfield at the time with square dancing and country music? What was Springfield like musically?

GE: Well the radio station KWTO, which was owned by Ralph Foster, they were the producers of the *Ozark Jubilee* and radio stations back then all had a stable of live entertainment that did fifteen minute programs. And KWTO had the same thing and that's where a lot of the early performers on the Jubilee came from. A side story for instance, Porter Wagoner was from West Plains, Missouri and he had his guitar and did a radio program on a local West Plains station. And the people who booked the talent for KWTO in Springfield which was a more high powered station heard about him and were driving through the area and listening to him and went

down and signed him up and he moved to Springfield and that's how he got involved. That was very similar to a lot of the people that were there.

NL: Do you know the name of Porter's show?

GE: No, I don't. I do know it was at a grocery store and that was very common in those days.

NL: Especially if they helped sponsor and everything like that.

GE: Sure

NL: Do you have an idea how musicians from the Ozarks like Porter Wagoner were received outside the region before the show?

GE: Well, the KWTO radio signal got into parts of four states. It was on the dial. It was an AM station on 560 with five thousand watts of power. And that gave them the signal that would reach from, oh say, Clinton Missouri over into Kansas down into the northeast corner of Oklahoma and across the northern counties of Arkansas as well as Missouri. And so those entertainers that were on there, in those days there were only four radio stations broadcasting out of Springfield, KWTO was the most powerful. And so those performers sort of became the local stars in that geographic area and they would do their radio programs on the air, usually live, and then they would travel to performance dates in that geographic area. And so they sort of became the local stars. And there not only local folks but in the days leading up to the *Ozark Jubilee* some pretty big names worked at that radio station. The biggest probably would have been Mother Maybelle and the Carter daughters, the Carter family and their accompanist guitar player was Chet Atkins. And they had a local radio show on KWTO. They left the station but came back frequently as guests on *Ozark Jubilee* because they knew all the folks.

NL: Going on the Chet Atkins and Carter Sisters connection, do you feel like Chet Atkins' influence on KWTO had a certain influence on the future of country music in the Nashville Sound.

GE: Absolutely. The two talent producers at the Ozark Jubilee were John Mahaffey and Si Siman. Spelled S-I S-I-M-A-N. And Si had some contacts and when Chet was in Springfield he was known as Chester Atkins and Si convinced him to drop the Chester and make it "Chet." And Si went to New York and negotiated a record contract with RCA records for Chet and while he was gone Chet was fired from the radio, KWTO radio, because he couldn't sing. But Si let Chet keep the record contract, so Chet moved to Nashville and ended up being the producer of all of the records for RCA out of Nashville and he was the originator of what was called the Nashville Sound. So the influence of what he did in Springfield, his natural talent took him on to Nashville to become maybe the most important person in country music for a long time.

NL: How was the Ozarks and the region represented during your time on the program?

GE: Well, the *Ozark Jubilee* was the first nationalized country music television series ever. It was on ABC-Television and they brought in for every show at least one major country music star. But to fill out the hour each week, they used local folks. The band leader was Slim Wilson who was from Nixa, Missouri and his guitar player was his nephew Speedy Haworth. And they had been with KWTO for years. And so you have the band accompanying all these acts, local people and they would bring in other local folks. Leroy Van Dyke, the singing auctioneer was local here. Jim Ed Brown and his two female sisters, one of the was his sister I think, any way they were called the Browns and they . . . I think he was a soldier up at Fort Leonard Wood. He would come down and that's how he came onto the show. So you had the Nashville stars interspersed with some pretty talented folks and that's what made up the program.

NL: And so what was local opinion or the local thought of the *Ozark Jubilee*? What was the perception of *Ozark Jubilee* and their musicians in Springfield? Were they embraced or . . .

GE: No. Absolutely not. We had people come to the show from literally every state in the United States and very few came from Springfield to see because they thought it was beneath them hillbilly music and they really didn't have anything to do with us. It was kind of unique. I think if the city of Springfield and the citizens here had gotten behind it a little more it wouldn't have ended when it did.

NL: What was the theater like during the broadcast? What was the whole atmosphere like?

GE: It was a dump. The place was literally falling apart toward the end of it. They had to close off the balcony because it was unsafe to go up there. It was an old vaudeville theater that been turned into the movie theater and after the show went off the air, it was just bulldozed. There wasn't anything left.

NL: You were saying that the audience came from all over the country and what was - - -

GE: Oh yeah.

NL: What was the demographic of the audience?

GE: Well, as I recall, I was seventeen or eighteen years old so everyone older than me looked older. But as we would look out in the audience they seemed to be, you know in there forties, fifties, sixties, something like that. And the unique thing, they always ended the show with a crowd shot. They'd hold up these signs saying where they were from. And this became such a tourist draw, the show during the summer time we would have to do two shows on a Saturday night, one for television live and then they would roll the cameras back and they would run that crowd out of the theater and do it again for the next crowd just to accommodate the literally thousands of people that would stand on the street trying to get into the place.

NL: And so what do you think lead to that popularity? Was it just big stars on there? What was the magic that was going on?

GE: The magic was two or three things. Number one: the star of the show was Red Foley. And he was, just before he came to Springfield, he was the number one country music artist in the country. Red was the host of the radio NBC network section of the Grand Ole Opry from the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville and it was sponsored by Price Albert smoking tobacco. It was called the Prince Albert portion of the Grand Ole Opry and Red was the star. Red was such a big star that he sang at Hank Williams' funeral. And so he had undergone some really traumatic things in his life; he had four daughters and his wife had died. I think she took her own life. But I'm not sure about that.

NL: Yeah, that's true.

GE: Yeah. And so Si Siman convinced Red to leave Nashville and move to Springfield. And that's what brought him here. And he was such a natural, easy-going entertainer and people just absolutely loved him. So that was part of the mix. You had to have this easy-going good singer star of the show. Then the other thing was, country music was really coming into its own in the late fifties and every major star wanted to be on the show. And so that's how they were able to get them. And they didn't pay the entertainers very much to come on this program. The entertainers did it for exposure because they could be on the *Ozark Jubilee* and the show was done so quickly, and I'll explain that in a minute, that it didn't take much of their time. They would come into town to Springfield on Friday and they would do a run through the music on Friday evening. And then run through, block the show, for television. And we'd go through it twice on Saturday during the day time and then hit the network live at six o'clock. So basically the people that were going to be there had a day and a half invested in being on the program.

Then they'd get back out on the road where they made money on concerts and record sales. So they did for exposure, but we had absolutely the top-drawer people in country music. It was literally a who's-who of country music at the time they were on the show. So the other part of the magic, you had a wonderful host and the top stars and you never knew what was going to happen because it was live. There was no video tape back then. It was just if you made a mistake, you made a mistake and the world watched.

NL: There is limited information about *Ozark Jubilee*, but there seems to be even less about the spin-off shows, *Five Star Jubilee* and even Eddy Arnold had a show from Springfield for a little bit. Can you tell me about those?

GE: Yeah. Well, *Jubilee* went off the air in 1960. Si Siman and John Mahaffey were able to convince NBC to do a color program the next year. And it only lasted six months and the reason for that was NBC had one mobile color television unit. And the Jewell Theater had been torn down by then so they moved it to Walnut Street at the Landers Theater and outfitted that for television and parked the NBC color unit in the back alley. And they had to end the show in September because they needed that color unit to do the World Series. So they drove off one night and that was the end of that show. One of the great influences that people don't realize about the *Ozark Jubilee* that is still with us today is that there was a family down in Branson Missouri named Hershend. And Hugo Hershend and his wife Mary and their two sons Pete and Jack and they had a ninety-nine year lease on a hole in the ground, Marvel Cave. And they decided they wanted to put in a craft village near the entrance to the cave to give the people something to do while waiting for the cave tour. They hired the writer of the *Ozark Jubilee*, Don Richardson, to be their publicity guy. Well Don went to work for them and came up with the name Silver Dollar City. He named it. So that was one thing and the other thing, the set designer

from *Jubilee* was a wonderful artist named Andy Miller. And so the Hershends hired him and he designed Silver Dollar City. And so Silver Dollar City is a direct off-shoot of the *Ozark Jubilee* and still exists to this day.

NL: Are there any other impacts that the *Ozark Jubilee* has had on Branson and the region's tourism industry?

GE: Absolutely. The *Ozark Jubilee*, as I said, brought people literally all over the country to Springfield and the Ozarks to see live country music. And *Ozark Jubilee* went off the air finally in 1961. In 1959 a family from Nixa named Mabe M-A-B-E had started a group called the Baldknobbers and they were in Branson. And they started performing so the people that were coming to the Ozarks to hear this music could go on down to Branson on Lake Taneycomo lakefront and hear this family playing local country music. And then the Presley family came down there and those were the first two theaters in Branson. And it was an outgrowth of the - - the reason they did it was because of the interest of people coming down to listen to country music in the Ozarks. And so they just kept that producing going and that's where that came from.

NL: Do you know anything about the Eddy Arnold spin-off that was only one summer in Springfield?

GE: Yeah. In those days in television, again this is pre-video tape; every network would have the regular season which would run from September to May. And so they then had the summer off and they had to come up with a summer replacement program. And all the networks did this. And so Si Siman was able to convince some of the networks to let them do some of the other programming and that's where *The Eddy Arnold Show* came from. They used the very same theater. Now the *Ozark Jubilee* ran fifty-two weeks a year. We never had a summer replacement. If Red Foley was travelling, they would bring in a guest host and that was common.

But Eddy Arnold and some of the other program - - somebody told me at some point that Springfield was third largest originator of live network television, New York being one, Hollywood would be number two and Springfield was number three because we had this theater and we had all these summer replacement shows at one time.

NL: Were there any other summer replacement show that you can remember?

GE: I'm trying to think who they were. There were some. There was a gospel show I know and - - - but of the top of my head I can't remember one of them.

NL: Ok. What do you think of the impact of *Ozark Jubilee* on television?

GE: It might have. Like I said we did the show with a day and a half of rehearsal competing with Perry Como on NBC and they did a five day rehearsal and we kinda showed the networks that you could do something on a little easier of a budget and it was good quality. And then when video tape came in that changed the whole thing cause you could get people together, you could setup and video tape say five shows and a period of three or four days. And then the entertainers would have time off to go to do personal appearances. Another thing, and Porter Wagoner talked about this a lot, he said by doing live television the way we did it at the *Ozark Jubilee*, he learned to do it right the first time. There were no second takes or anything. And the entertainers that worked regularly on the *Jubilee* were better known as the best performers on television because of the training they had.

NL: And I had some questions about the square-dancing because I know you were familiar with that in *Ozark Jubilee*. So how big a draw was that for the show and the audience?

GE: Very much. One of Red Foley's - - - Red Foley started back in Berea, Kentucky where he was born and as a young man played guitar and played for square dances and kinda knew what that was all about, as did Eddy Arnold and everybody else. All guitar players played for a

square dancer at one time or another and it was very important to Foley that he had square dancers on the show, on every one of the *Ozark Jubilee* shows because it was fun, the kids were cute and had a lot of energy, and it was part of the genre of country music. They tried to do this when they televised the Grand Ole Opry for a while but those dancers were not as good as the Promenaders, the Wagon Wheelers, and the Tadpoles that were on the *Jubilee*. This was high energy stuff. The stuff they were doing in Nashville was much lower energy and people would come and they would want to see us. And then the other thing that both the Promenaders and we did during the summer, Si would book various *Ozark Jubilee* units to go out and do summer shows. We were out of school and so our parents would drive to wherever our show was going to be and every Ozark Jubilee show, even on the road, had square dancers. And probably the biggest crowd that I remember, we did a show at the Texas State Fair in Dallas and they set up a stage at the fifty yard line of the Cotton Bowl and Red Foley and Slim Wilson and then a couple of entertainers and then us. And we did a show for about thirty-five thousand people as I recall.

NL: Do you remember what year that was?

GE: It would have been '59 or '60. Probably '59.

NL: And so what was it that made the local square dancers more energetic and more entertaining for viewers than those that were on other programs?

GE: Well, it was just the way we learned. And you'll give credit to that to the caller and the originator of the Promenaders, L.D. Keller. His dancers came from Missouri State University and they learned their square dancing—and it kinda started in the Phys. Ed department I think over there. Cause it's as I said very energetic and took a lot of stamina and it was a pretty good aerobic workout and that's the way they danced, so that's the way we danced.

NL: Was that a certain regional technique or was that the influence of L.D.?

GE: It was the influence of L.D. And of course we all got to see him because of the *Jubilee*.

NL: Is there anything else you want to bring up? I think this has been a great interview.

GE: Well I wish you well with this and I would love to read your piece when you get it done.

NL: I'll send that to you. Thank you very much.

GE: Ok. Thank you a lot.