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The Blue Yodeler is Coming to Town: A Week with Jimmie Rodgers in West Texas

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Abstract

Jimmie Rodgers, often called the Father of Country Music, was born, raised, and buried in the state of Mississippi. But in the minds of many, he has long been associated with Texas, and well he should be. For the last four years of his life, 1929-1933, Rodgers resided in Kerrville and then in San Antonio. He recorded three times in Dallas and once in the Alamo City, and several of his songs make direct reference to the Lone Star State. During this period, he also traveled around the state on numerous occasions performing and making personal appearances in towns both large and small. As country music historian Bill Malone has pointed out, Rodgers's link with Texas was such that noted folklorist Alan Lomax, almost thirty years after the singer's death, still identified him as "a San Antonio railroad brakeman" and "this Texas brakeman." Rodgers's biographer, Nolan Porterfield, has done an excellent job of documenting dozens of Rodgers comings and goings within the state, but as he acknowledges, the full extent of Jimmie's outings in Texas remains incomplete. The following essay attempts to fill in a few of the gaps.

KEYWORDS: blue yodeler, jimmie rogers, west texas, music, history, country music

THE BLUE YODELER

Specht: The Blue Yodeler is Coming to Town

IS COMING TO TOWN:

A Week with Jimmie Rodgers in West Texas

By Joe W. Specht



Courtesy of Midland Reporter-Telegram, Wednesday March 20, 1929 p.3

Jimmie Rodgers, often called the Father of Country Music, was born, raised, and buried in the state of Mississippi. But in the minds of many, he has long been associated with Texas, and well he should be. For the last four years of his life, 1929-1933, Rodgers resided in Kerrville and then in San Antonio. He recorded three times in Dallas and once in the Alamo City, and several of his songs make direct reference to the Lone Star State. During this period, he also traveled around the state on numerous occasions performing and making personal appearances in towns both large and small. As country music historian Bill Malone has pointed out, Rodgers's link with Texas was such that noted folklorist Alan Lomax, almost thirty years after the singer's death, still identified him as "a San Antonio railroad brakeman" and "this Texas brakeman."¹ Rodgers's biographer, Nolan Porterfield, has done an excellent job of documenting dozens of Rodgers comings and goings within the state, but as he acknowledges, the full extent of Jimmie's outings in Texas remains incomplete. The following essay attempts to fill in a few of the gaps.²

A headline in the Friday, March 15, 1929, edition of the Abilene Daily Reporter announced: "Blue Yodel Singer Coming Here." The writer continued:

Jimmy [sic] Rodgers, the former Mississippi railroad brakeman whose blue yodels now ensue from scores of records of Abilene phonograph owners, is to appear in Abilene, Monday. The popular blues singer is to make a personal appearance at Hall's Music company Monday morning from 11 o'clock until noon ... His \$1,500 guitar will be displayed at Hall's Monday.³

Imagine the excitement felt by the citizens of the Key City and surrounding communities when they read this and saw the publicity photograph of Jimmie nattily dressed in suit, bow tie, and straw hat and holding a guitar (which was, by the way, a Martin guitar and not the \$1,500 model made for Rodgers by the Weymann Company). The story in the newspaper reported

Blue Yodeler's Paradise. While concern for his health and a break from the road may have been the primary reasons for Jimmie being in the area, it obviously did not prevent him from making a personal appearance or two.

This swing into Texas in the spring of 1929 was not the first time Rodgers had visited the Lone Star State. In fact, he had performed only a few months before in Houston. But the Texas connection went back much further, as early as 1916 in fact, when Jimmie arrived in El Paso looking for a job on the Texas & Pacific Railroad. In the early mid-1920s, he passed through the state, hobbing or working his way west and then back east on the railroad. Many stories have been handed down over the years about those rambling days. For example, because the T&P made regular stopovers in Abilene, old timers report the railroaders in the area knew Rodgers well. Local legend also has Jimmie strumming his guitar on Abilene street corners for tips or singing and playing on the courthouse lawn with the crowd "chippin' in." He did find himself down and out in Texas several times. On one occasion in 1926, he and Carrie and their five

Jimmie was obviously on a roll, but there was one drawback. Namely, his tuberculosis, which had been diagnosed in 1924, was getting progressively worse.

that the singer was "being brought here by Burt Ford, West Texas representative of the Victor Talking Machine company," and Jimmie's secretary, L.K. Sides, was already in town on Friday "making arrangements."⁴

Just what was Rodgers doing out in West Texas anyway? After all, the spring of 1929 found Jimmie riding a whirlwind of success. He had recently concluded a successful tent show tour of Alabama and Mississippi with the Paul English Players. His record sales were reported to be in the hundreds of thousands, and just the month before, he had recorded again for Victor, this time in New York City. This latest recording session produced "Blue Yodel No. 5," as well as "Any Old Time" and "High Powered Mama." In May, he was booked to join the R-K-O Interstate Circuit tour, scheduled to swing through Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Georgia.⁵

Jimmie was obviously on a roll, but there was one drawback. Namely, his tuberculosis, which had been diagnosed in 1924, was getting progressively worse. Both he and his wife, Carrie, understood that he required a climate more sympathetic to his condition, a place with, as Mrs. Rodgers described, "dry air, warm winters, [and] a fairly high altitude."⁶ The Abilene Daily Reporter confirmed as much: "A quest for health brought Rodgers out here, chiefly. He is going to buy a ranch and stay away from the stage and large cities for awhile."⁷ The "ranch" later turned out to be a house in Kerrville that he dubbed the

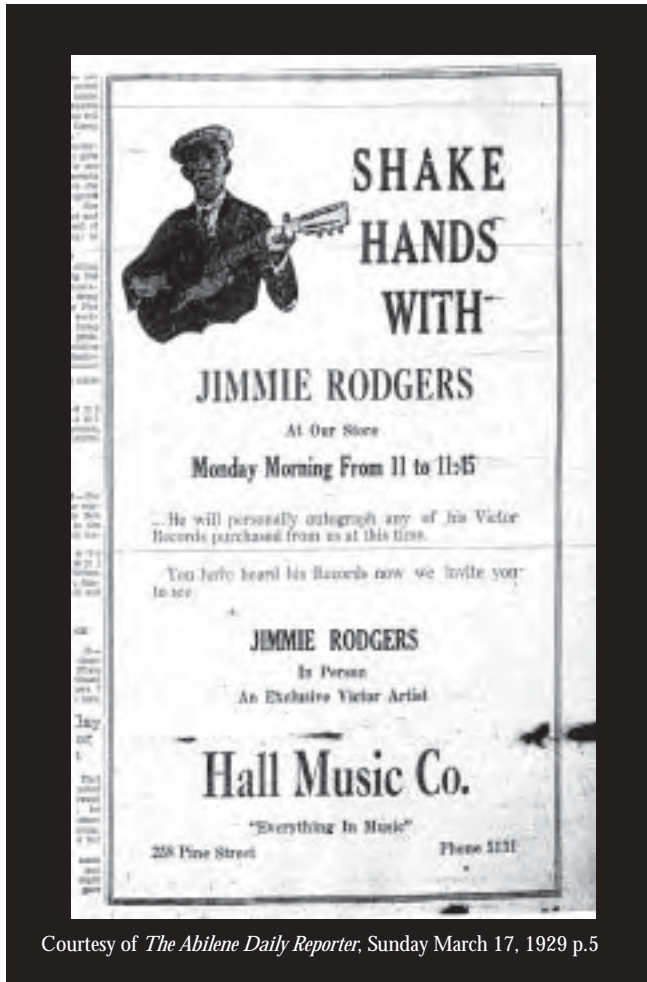
year old daughter, Anita, were briefly stranded in San Antonio with only pennies in their pockets.⁸

Jimmie eventually put these Texas experiences to good use in his songs. The first "Blue Yodel," recorded on November 20, 1927, was also known as "T for Texas." In "Waiting for a Train," recorded the next year, he recalled his hobbing days and being unceremoniously tossed off a train in Texas, "a place I dearly love." The Lone Star State creeps into other Rodgers's tunes, including "The Land of My Boyhood Dreams," "Anniversary Blue Yodel," "Mother, Queen of My Heart," and "Jimmie's Texas Blues" with its hearty declaration: "Give me sweet Dallas, Texas, where the women think the world of me."⁹

It might have been in "sweet" Dallas, Texas, where the idea for the 1929 West Texas excursion was hatched. Either traveling from Mobile, Alabama, with the Paul English Players or "barnstorming" on his own, Jimmie arrived in the state sometime in early March with plans to hook up with the R-K-O Interstate Circuit tour in May in Oklahoma. Of course, he was also there because of his health, with intentions of vacationing with his family in the Texas Hill Country.¹⁰

At some point, perhaps in Big D, Rodgers met Burt Ford who worked for Victor's Dallas distributor, the T. E. Swann Music Company. Through the encouragement of the Swann Company or on their own initiative, the two men apparently decided to team up to promote the sale of Rodgers's Victor

records. As the West Texas representative for Victor, Ford lived in and worked out of Sweetwater, forty-three miles west of Abilene on Texas Highway 1 (also known as the Bankhead Highway, later US 80, and now I-20). The plan appears to have been for Rodgers to “headquarter” in Sweetwater using the town as base of operations to “fulfill West Texas vaudeville engagements.”¹¹



Courtesy of *The Abilene Daily Reporter*, Sunday March 17, 1929 p.5

The association with Ford allowed Jimmie the chance to work at a leisurely pace without the rigid structure of the package shows. After all, he was supposed to be taking a break. It also meant he could meet more easily with his fans, something he truly loved to do. And finally, there was the opportunity to sell some product. As Carrie Rodgers recalled, her husband quickly learned on previous tours through the Southland how “autographing records at the Victor dealers” helped to spur sales.¹² From Sweetwater, then, Ford would help coordinate Jimmie’s appearances at authorized Victor dealers in the area. Unlike so many of Rodgers’s other barnstormings which were put together on the fly, this West Texas outing was more carefully planned.

Readers of the Sunday, March 17, 1929, edition of the *Abilene Daily Reporter* found this advertisement placed by the Hall Music Company: “Shake hands with Jimmie Rodgers at our store Monday morning from 11 to 11:45. He will personally autograph any of his Victor Records purchased from us at this time. You have heard his Records now we invite you to see Jimmie in person.”¹³ A similar ad for the Angelo Furniture Company ran on the same day in the *San Angelo Standard-Times*: “We are pleased to make this announcement to the many friends of ‘Jimmie’ who insists that he would like to greet everyone of you personally. Jimmie will also autograph for you any Victor Record of his purchased next Tuesday morning from 11 to 12 a.m., while he is here.”¹⁴ This was obviously part of the Rodgers/Ford plan, working in conjunction with Victor dealers in Abilene and San Angelo.

How many hands did Jimmie shake? In the Key City, the *Abilene Daily Reporter* stated that “nearly 2,000 or so of his admirers” showed up at Hall Music Company. The reporter who covered the story must have been familiar with Jimmie’s recorded repertoire, as he cleverly wrote: “The fellow that’s always got the musical blues and is ‘going home to Daddy,’ taking a train for that ‘last ride’ and getting ‘turned down’ by ‘women’ was in Abilene Monday morning.” Attesting to Rodgers’s popularity, the reporter offered, “no home with talking machine in America, it seems, is complete without one of his blue yodels,” a yodel described as “plaintive, appealing ... with that little sob effect into it.”¹⁵ Jimmie was truly America’s Own Blue Yodeler.¹⁶

The reporter also observed: “Jimmy [sic], more than anyone else right now in the talking machine record making business, is responsible for the return of the old sentimental ballads of a generation ago that the modern syncopation and fast rythm [sic] displaced.”¹⁷ While offering insight into what made Rodgers so popular to so many – a blues singer to some and a sentimental balladeer to others – the reporter, perhaps without realizing it, echoed Jimmie’s own thoughts. But even though Rodgers was sometimes ambivalent about the music he once called that “jazz music junk,” it did not keep him from dabbling in the sounds of the day.¹⁸ For example, on Jimmie’s “Blue Yodel No. 9,” recorded the next year in July, Louis Armstrong’s trumpet lays down a bluesy backup mixed with hot syncopated rhythm.

The write-up in the *Abilene Daily Reporter* concluded by informing readers that Rodgers would be in San Angelo the next day and “will return Saturday and appear at a program at Simmons University [now Hardin-Simmons University] under the auspices of the Cowboy Band.”¹⁹ This last tidbit surely delighted the Key City populace because it meant they actually could get to see and hear Jimmie perform on stage.

In San Angelo, the Angelo Furniture Company placed another ad in the Tuesday edition of the *San Angelo Morning Times* reminding Concho Valley residents: “The Unparalleled Jimmie

Rodgers in person! at our store between 11 and 12.”²⁰ The next morning the newspaper reported “a large crowd [had] greeted him ... and he was kept busy during the morning autographing his records.” Rodgers’s secretary, L.K. Sides, and Burt Ford were also along for the ride. After finishing up at the Angelo Furniture Company, Jimmie stopped by radio station KGKL, the same station for which future Hall of Famer and Rodgers’s disciple, Ernest Tubb, worked eight years later. Jimmie was on the air from 1:00 to 1:15, singing songs and telling stories. He clearly understood the publicity value afforded by radio.²¹

The story in the San Angelo newspaper does not mention where the Blue Yodeler headed next, but since he had to be back in

had used back east on several occasions.²⁸ Like many of the Victor ads, this one was generic in design – “Jimmie Rodgers In Person!” – and easily adaptable to include specific local information. In this case, location, time, and price: “Popular prices 50 cents and 75 cents. The treat of the season.”²⁹ The treat of the season, indeed.

Exactly how and why Rodgers was booked to appear at Simmons University “under the auspices of the Cowboy band” remains unknown. Band memorabilia from this period was unfortunately destroyed in a fire in 1947.³⁰ But appear he did, on Saturday evening at 8:00 p.m., to an audience of “about 1000” at the Simmons University auditorium. The Abilene Daily Reporter reported “delegations were present from Clyde,

“T for Texas, T for Tennessee, T for Thelma that gal that make a wreck out of me.”

Abilene on Saturday, Rodgers and his traveling companions could not have strayed far, if for no other reason than that many stretches of area highway remained unpaved. Advertisements had already begun to run in the Midland Reporter-Telegram announcing that Jimmie would be appearing the following week on March 26 and 27 at Midland’s Ritz Theatre.²²

After finishing up in San Angelo, Rodgers most likely continued on to Sweetwater in his Model A ragtop roadster to set up “headquarters” as planned. There was a Rodgers sighting in Sweetwater on Saturday.²³ Undoubtedly, as Carrie Rodgers recounted, Jimmie would have had plenty of opportunities to rub shoulders with “his kind of folks ... loaf around the lot; talk shop with folks who talked his language, play with the dogs and kids; be gay.”²⁴ In other words – hang out. This is probably how he met up with “a couple of West Texas lads, one from McCaulley, who also yodel[ed].”²⁵ The lads were identified as Leon McQuire and sixteen year old Cecil Gill, but it is unclear which of the boys was from McCaulley, a small farming community located north of both Sweetwater and Abilene in Fisher County. The young men must have had something to offer in the vocal department because Jimmie recruited both to appear with him at the upcoming Saturday night gig in Abilene. Using local talent to augment a show was something Rodgers did on more than one occasion.²⁶

Meanwhile, the publicity campaign for the concert at Simmons University continued. Hall Music Company ran an ad in the Thursday, March 21, 1929, edition of the Abilene Daily Reporter: “Don’t Miss Hearing Jimmie Rodgers in Person – Simmons Auditorium – Saturday March 23.” Readers were reminded the store stocked “a collection of twenty of Jimmie Rodgers best songs [so] come in and listen to these new Victor Records soon!”²⁷ On Friday, another advertisement for the concert appeared in the Abilene newspaper. This one had a most familiar look. It was the “Coast-to-Coast Tour” promo Rodgers

Hamlin, Sweetwater, and other neighboring West Texas cities.” The Simmons University Cowboy Band, just back from Washington D.C. and the inauguration of President Herbert Hoover, led off with a couple of “popular” numbers. The Cowboy Band was followed by an “unexpected feature.” Jimmie introduced two of his own “finds” – those West Texas “lads” Leon McQuire and Cecil Gill. McQuire, backing himself on guitar, sang “A Gay Cavellero [sic]” and “Little Joe the Wrangler.” The sixteen-year-old Gill, accompanied on piano, chose to sing and yodel “Never No More Blues,” a composition Rodgers had co-written with his sister-in-law Elsie McWilliams and recorded the previous year.³¹

Rodgers then took to the stage with “his \$1,500 golden guitar.”³² Sharply dressed, no doubt, and perhaps even wearing a John B. Stetson hat, “his fine ‘Texas’ hat” as Carrie Rodgers once described it, Jimmie gave the audience their money’s worth.³³ He offered up a variety of tunes from his song bag, including “Blue Yodel,” “Treasures Untold,” “The Brakeman’s Blues,” “In the Jailhouse Now,” “Sleep Baby Sleep,” and “Blue Yodel No. 3.” According to the Abilene Daily Reporter, the two Blue Yodels “proved the most popular selections on the program.”³⁴ And it is easy to picture the audience reacting enthusiastically to “Blue Yodel” with the memorable opening couplet: “T for Texas, T for Tennessee, T for Thelma that gal that make a wreck out of me.” Of course “Blue Yodel No. 3” is no less a potential crowd pleaser with lines like: “She’s long, she’s tall, she’s six feet from the ground/She’s tailor made, she ain’t no hand me down.”

The cub reporter for the Simmons University student newspaper, in an awkward but rather charming fashion, described the yodel numbers as “featuring the peculiar type of vocal music making which he [Rodgers] himself has perfected.”³⁵ Each of the reporters commented on Jimmie’s ability to charm the audience by telling “humorous stories” between songs and

recounting “incidents in connection with the songs to add spice to the program.”³⁶ Clearly, Rodgers was in his element.

The newspaper account also mentioned in passing that Mrs. Rodgers and Anita had arrived on Sunday from Meridian, Mississippi, to join Jimmie on his “West Texas tour.”³⁷ Rodgers and Burt Ford dropped by to visit at the George Allen and P.T. Quast music firms in Sweetwater on Monday, March 25. The Nolan County News reported that he would make another personal appearance in Sweetwater “soon,” but there is no record of this in subsequent editions of the newspaper.³⁸ From Sweetwater, Jimmie and his entourage cruised over to Midland

morning Rodgers was at the Home Furniture Company from 10:00 to 11:00 to “shake hands” as well as autograph his records.⁴²

After the appearances in Midland, the next immediate stops on the “West Texas tour” are unclear. Rodgers did not roll into O’Donnell until a week later on April 5. Nolan Porterfield has speculated that Jimmie played Big Spring, but a check of the Big Spring Herald for the period rendered no reported Rodgers sightings. Other area newspapers are equally mum.⁴³ In O’Donnell, he performed the day after arriving at the Lynn Theatre, with Burt Ford again handling the arrangements.

The reporter left the newspaper’s readers with this ringing endorsement: “He was better to the nth degree than on his records – believe it or not.”

for his engagement at the Ritz Theatre on March 26 and 27.

The Ritz Theatre along with two Victor dealers, the Texas Music Company and the Home Furniture Company, had been actively promoting the Rodgers stopover with advertisements in the Midland newspaper, and Jimmie was set to perform on Tuesday and Wednesday for both the matinee and nightly shows. The featured silent film was a Colleen Moore and Neil Hamilton comedy, *Why Be Good?*³⁹ Even with bobbed-haired flappers on screen, Rodgers more than held his own as a headline in the Wednesday, March 27 edition of the Midland Reporter-Telegram confirmed: “Jimmy [sic] Rodgers Raises the Roof in His Appearance.” The writer of the accompanying piece also got to spend some time with the star in his dressing room. Here a chain smoking Rodgers enthusiastically provided “a running fire line of talk and stage patter” on a variety of topics ranging from his “nearest competitor,” Gene Austin, to a photo of his daughter Anita: “The baby is a living image of Greta Garbo, don’t you think?” Jimmie even pulled out the Weymann guitar and shared his latest composition which, according to the reporter, he had written a few nights earlier “in the lobby of a hotel in Sweetwater.” Rodgers confided that the song “will be my next record.”⁴⁰ It would be nice to think the tune was “Jimmie’s Texas Blues,” recorded five months later in Dallas at his next Victor session.

As for his performance on stage, the newspaper reported the Blue Yodeler was met at first with “a momentary silence and a detonation of applause on its heels that followed wave after wave for almost two minutes.” Jimmie then proceeded to sing and chat and sing and tell some jokes, all in the inimitable style “that was Jimmy [sic] Rodgers.” The reporter left the newspaper’s readers with this ringing endorsement: “He was better to the nth degree than on his records – believe it or not.”⁴¹ Thursday

Biographer Porterfield provides a colorful account of Jimmie’s stay in the small farming community located about halfway between Big Spring and Lubbock, just off of what is now US Highway 87. Porterfield also reports on Rodgers’s visit to Lubbock the next week for a two-day engagement at the Palace Theatre on April 11 and 12. At some point, Mrs. Rodgers and Anita had left for Madisonville in East Central Texas, where she had relatives, and it was to Madisonville that Jimmie headed after finishing up in Lubbock. From there, the family finally drove to the Texas Hill Country and Kerrville.⁴⁴

As an aside, Rodgers was back in the area in September, first appearing at the Palace Theatre in Ballinger on September 30 and October 1, along with the “talking” feature, *The Girl in the Show*, starring Hattie Hartley. He also found time to autograph his records and pictures at the L.C. Daughtery Drug Company.⁴⁵ Two days later he was in San Angelo, booked at the Municipal Auditorium on October 3 and 4. Rodgers returned to both San Angelo and Abilene at least one more time in January 1931 as part of the Will Rogers Red Cross benefit tour. Oddly enough, although there is front page coverage of the show in the *Abilene Daily Reporter*, Jimmie is not mentioned. This is something that apparently occurred throughout much of the tour: the other, equally famous, Rogers got all the ink.⁴⁶

The initial foray into West Texas in the spring of ’29 was clearly a success. Rodgers, as he was wont to say, had been “ovationed,” this time by several thousand enthusiastic Texans.⁴⁷ The Blue Yodeler had hit it off big time with his soon-to-be-adopted state, and the Texas connection would only grow stronger. In her memoir, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, Carrie Rodgers warmly conveys the affection Jimmie had for the Lone Star State and its citizens, and the feeling was obviously mutual. T for Texas! ■

NOTES

- 1 Bill C. Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, Rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 89; Alan Lomax, *The Folk Songs of North America in the English Language* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 281, 612.
- 2 Nolan Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers: The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979), 432. After twenty-plus years, Porterfield's biography still shines, a readable and well-researched work. A list of Rodgers appearances can be found in Appendix II.
- 3 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 15, 1929, 2.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 A useful chronology of Rodgers's life, compiled by Nolan Porterfield, is available in Carrie Rodgers, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, Reprint ed. (Nashville: Country Music Foundation, 1975), xix-xxiii.
- 6 Ibid. 210. Carrie Rodgers's account of her husband's life has often been maligned. Nick Tosches, for example, described *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers* as "the first of those junk country books." See Nick Tosches, *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock 'n' Roll* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 137. I agree with Nolan Porterfield, who in the introduction to the 1975 reprint of the Rodgers book, firmly asserts it "stands as a supremely important, but curious document...." (p. vi). There is no doubt *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers* is rich with anecdotal asides which capture much of the essence of Rodgers as performer and personality.
- 7 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 18, 1929, 1.
- 8 Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 26-27, 39-40, 52-53, 61-62. I learned of Rodgers possible presence in Abilene prior to 1929 in conversation with Archie Jefferies, who also supplied the "chippin' in" quote. Jefferies, eighty-seven years old, is a local musician and longtime resident of Abilene.
- 9 For information on Rodgers's recordings, I have relied on the discography/sessionography in Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*.
- 10 Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 81; Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 190; Mike Paris and Chris Comber, *Jimmie the Kid: The Life of Jimmie Rodgers* (London: Eddison Musicbooks, 1977), 83; Nolan Porterfield, notes to *Jimmie Rodgers, the Signing Brakeman*, Bear Family BCD 15540 (1992).
- 11 *Nolan County News*, March 28, 1929, 5.
- 12 Rodgers, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, 192; Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 82.
- 13 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 17, 1929, 5.
- 14 *San Angelo Standard-Times*, March 17, 1929, 2.
- 15 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 18, 1929, 1.
- 16 For insight into the role the yodel has played in country music, see Robert Coltman, "Roots of the Country Yodel: Notes Toward a Life History," *JEMF Quarterly* 12 (No. 42), 91-94; Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 86-87, 103; Bart Platenga, "Will There Be Yodeling in Heaven," *American Music Research Center Journal* 8/9 (1998-99), 107-138; Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 123-126; and Tosches, *Country*, 109-114. In his recently published treatise on Emmett Miller, *Where Dead Voices Gather* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), Tosches offers up further thoughts on the yodel and speculates on the influence Miller might have had on Rodgers. A complete list of Jimmie's blue yodels can be found in Appendix I of Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*.
- 17 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 18, 1929, 1.
- 18 Rodgers, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, 69-70; Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 71-74.
- 19 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 18, 1929, 1.
- 20 *San Angelo Morning Times*, March 19, 1929, 3.
- 21 *San Angelo Morning Times*, March 20, 1929, 4; Ronnie Pugh, *Ernest Tubbs: The Texas Troubadour*, 1st Paperback Printing [with corrections] (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 43. For background on Rodgers's radio experiences and his use of the medium, see Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 70-71, 140, 182, 203, 270, 311-312.
- 22 *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, March 20, 21, 24, and 25, 1929.
- 23 *Nolan County News*, March 28, 1929, 5.
- 24 Rodgers, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, p. 229.
- 25 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 25, 1929, 5.
- 26 Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 157.
- 27 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 21, 1929, 2.
- 28 Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 157, 190.
- 29 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 22, 1929, 2.
- 30 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 18, 1929, 1; Dorothy May McClure, *The World Famous Cowboy Band, 1923-1973: A History of the First Fifty Years of the Cowboy Band, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas* (Abilene: Quality Printing Company, 1983), 122-123. Rodgers is not mentioned in McClure's book. I checked further in the Cowboy Band library but could find nothing pertaining to Rodgers.
- 31 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 25, 1929, 5; *Simmons Brand*, March 30, 1929, 1.
- 32 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 25, 1929, 5.
- 33 Rodgers, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, 242.
- 34 *Simmons Brand*, March 30, 1929, 1; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 25, 1929, 5.
- 35 *Simmons Brand*, March 30, 1929, 1.
- 36 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 25, 1929, 5; *Simmons Brand*, March 30, 1929, 1. An often quoted passage which provides a vivid description of what it must have been like to see Rodgers perform can be found in Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 85-86.
- 37 *Abilene Daily Reporter*, March 25, 1929, 5.
- 38 *Nolan County News*, March 28, 1929, 5.
- 39 *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, March 26, 1929, 3, 5.
- 40 *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, March 27, 1929, 1, 3.
- 41 *Midland Reporter Telegram*, March 27, 1929, 3.
- 42 *Midland Reporter-Telegram*, March 27, 1929, 6.
- 43 Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 199, 433. To check area newspapers for possible Rodgers sightings, I drove to Albany, Anson, Ballinger, Big Spring, Coleman, Colorado City, Midland, Odessa, Rotan, San Angelo, Snyder, Stamford, and Sweetwater. The *Odessa News-Times* is missing all of the 1929 issues up to August 30, and the Rotan newspaper for the period has not been preserved.
- 44 Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 198-201, 433.
- 45 *Ballinger Daily Ledger*, September, 28, 1929, 1; *Ballinger Daily Ledger*, September 30, 1929, 1.
- 46 Porterfield, *Jimmie Rodgers*, 213-214, 276-278, 434, 436; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, January 29, 1931, 1; *Abilene Daily Reporter*, January 30, 1931, 5.
- 47 Rodgers, *My Husband, Jimmie Rodgers*, 198.