

LABOR CONQUERS ALL Entertainment



At the beginning of the 20th century tent repertoire, medicine, and minstrel shows helped quench rural Oklahoma's thirst for entertainment. These companies focused on small towns, while stock companies performed in opera houses in the larger cities such as Oklahoma City and Muskogee. Soon the medicine and minstrel shows disappeared, and the tent repertoire reached its zenith. Radio, film, and eventually television helped put an end to these shows, although a few continued into the 1950s.



The Overholser Opera House, Oklahoma City, Okla.

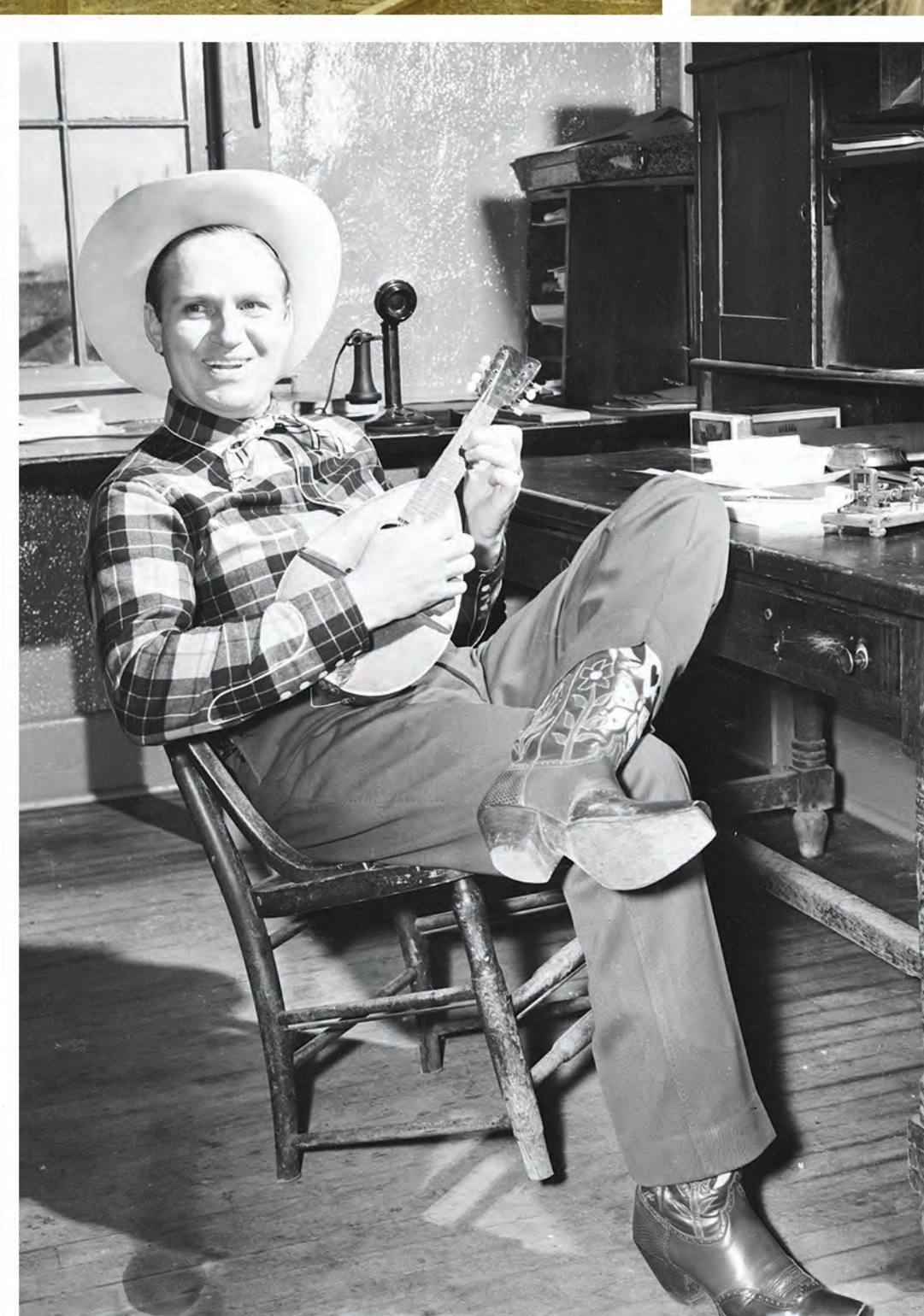


Oklahoma musicians have the reputation of being versatile and innovative.

Fiddler Henry Gilliland from Altus is considered the first person to make a country music recording in 1922. Otto Gray and his Oklahoma Cowboys, founded in Ripley, were one of the first popular western string bands in the United States. In 1934 Bob Wills began broadcasting from Tulsa's KVOO Radio and employed many outstanding musicians. KVOO and other Tulsa radio stations launched the careers of Gene Autry, Al Clauser and his Oklahoma Outlaws, and Patti Page. The success of these early country and western musicians created a tradition of Oklahoma stars that has continued with the likes of Hank Thompson, Roger Miller, Wanda Jackson, Vince Gill, Garth Brooks, Reba McEntire, Blake Shelton, and many others.



Patti Page



Gene Autry



Wanda Jackson

The state has produced an inordinate number of jazz musicians,

including legends such as the Oklahoma City Blue Devils, Jay McShann, Jimmy Rushing, Chet Baker, and Barney Kessel. After 1955 and the explosion of rock and roll, Oklahomans like Wanda Jackson, The Collins Kids, and Eddie Cochran helped popularize the genre. Later, the Tulsa musicians Leon Russell, J. J. Cale, and David Gates left their marks on rock and roll.

20th century technology helped shape pop culture.

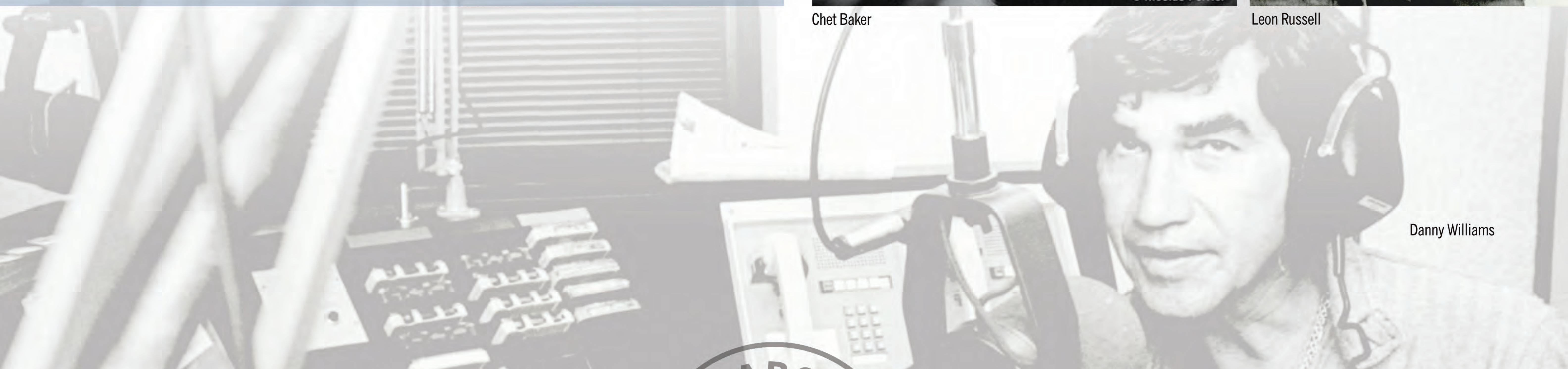
Oklahoma's radio industry began in 1921 and 28 years later the state's first television station went on the air. These industries created jobs not only for creative, on-air personalities such as Ida B, Don Woods, Danny Williams, Ronnie Kaye, Lola Hall, and Betty Boyd, but also engineers, cameramen, commercial salesmen, and many other professions.



Chet Baker



Leon Russell



Danny Williams



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