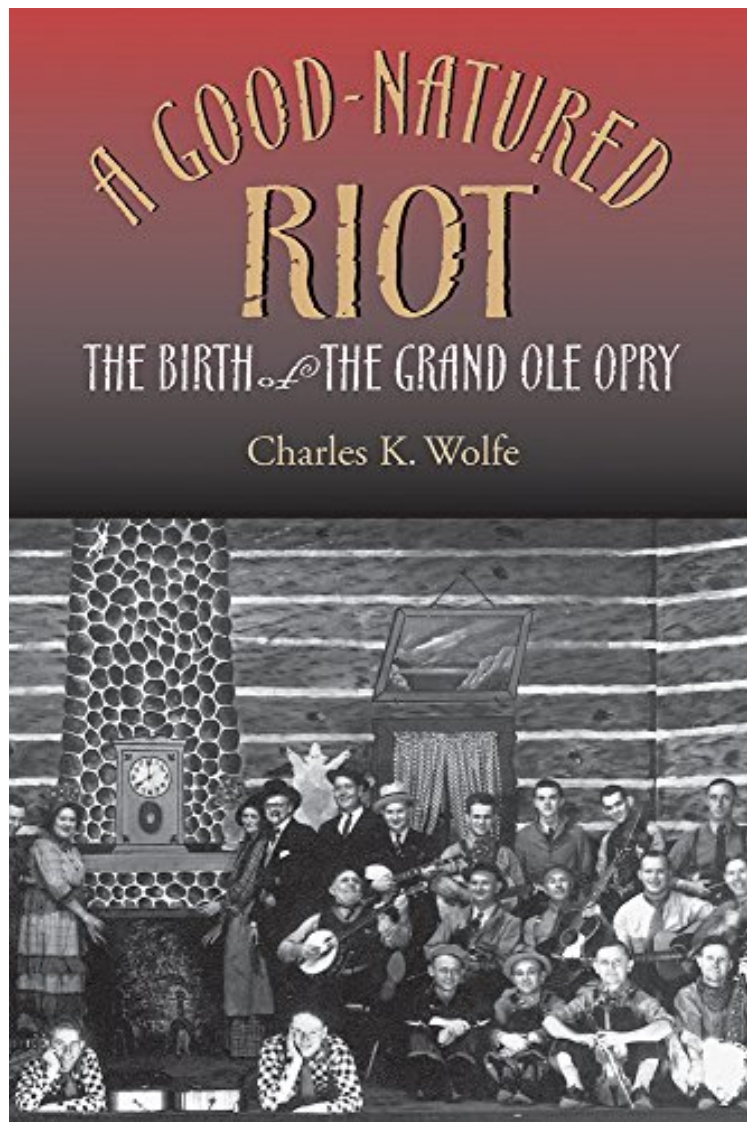


(Ebook free) A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry (Co-published with the Country Music Foundation Press)

## A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry (Co-published with the Country Music Foundation Press)

*Charles K. Wolfe*

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**Charles K. Wolfe : A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry (Co-published with the Country Music Foundation Press)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry (Co-published with the Country Music Foundation Press):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommendedBy MTGAn extremely well-written book.

Wolfe has a writing style which makes it easy to read, and to learn at the same time. He spent years researching the material - interviewing people who were there at the time, and reading newspaper reports, etc, so the facts are both accurate and, in some instances, unexpected. He personalises the story behind the Opry, and the mission to make country music an accepted and integral part of American culture. The book's illustrations are contemporary photographs of the people and places. He includes lyrics from some of the early songs, including versions that were never recorded. His attention to detail, throughout the book, is first class. I highly recommend the book to anyone who is interested in American music culture in general or country music in particular. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fine look at the early days of radio in Nashville By Sid Griffin A crackin', topnotch overview of the early days of the Grand Ole Opry radio show in Nashville, Tennessee. Written by the late, great Charles K. Wolfe this is a wonderful and informative read, its depth and warmth tinged by the knowledge Wolfe, one of the USA's best writers on the subject of country music's history, will never write again. If interested in the subject at all I do recommend this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. a good natured read By Steven K Vann entertaining early history of the Grand Ole Opry. the information led me to many side journies to learn more about particular artists and songs. well organized and interestingly presented

Winner of the Ralph J. Gleason Music Book Award Winner of the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award On November 28, 1925, a white-bearded man sat before one of Nashville radio station WSM's newfangled carbon microphones to play a few old-time fiddle tunes. Uncle Jimmy Thompson played on the air for an hour that night, and throughout the region listeners at their old crystal sets suddenly perked up. Back in Nashville the response at the offices of National Life Insurance Company, which owned radio station WSM ("We Shield Millions"), was dramatic; phone calls and telegrams poured into the station, many of them making special requests. It was not long before station manager George D. Hay was besieged by pickers and fiddlers of every variety, as well as hoedown bands, singers, and comedians—all wanting their shot at the Saturday night airwaves. "We soon had a good-natured riot on our hands," Hay later recalled. And, thus, the Opry was born. Or so the story goes. In truth, the birth of the Opry was a far more complicated event than even Hay, "the solemn old Judge," remembered. The veteran performers of that era are all gone now, but since the 1970s pioneering country music historian Charles K. Wolfe has spent countless hours recording the oral history of the principals and their families and mining archival materials from the Country Music Foundation and elsewhere to understand just what those early days were like. The story that he has reconstructed is fascinating. Both a detailed history and a group biography of the Opry's early years, *A Good-Natured Riot* provides the first comprehensive and thoroughly researched account of the personalities, the music, and the social and cultural conditions that were such fertile ground for the growth of a radio show that was to become an essential part of American culture. Wolfe traces the unsure beginnings of the Opry through its many incarnations, through cast tours of the South, the Great Depression, commercial sponsorship by companies like Prince Albert Tobacco, and the first national radio linkups. He gives colorful and engaging portraits of the motley assembly of the first Opry casts—amateurs from the hills and valleys surrounding Nashville, like harmonica player Dr. Humphrey Bate ("Dean of the Opry") and fiddler Sid Harkreader, virtuoso string bands like the Dixieliners, colorful hoedown bands like the Gully Jumpers and the Fruit Jar Drinkers, the important African American performer DeFord Bailey, vaudeville acts and comedians like Lasses and Honey, through more professional groups such as the Vagabonds, the Delmore Brothers, Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys, and perennial favorite Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys. With dozens of wonderful photographs and a complete roster of every performer and performance of these early Opry years, *A Good-Natured Riot* gives a full and authoritative portrayal of the colorful beginnings of WSM's barn dance program up to 1940, by which time the Grand Ole Opry had found its national audience and was poised to become the legendary institution that it remains to this day.

.com When Nashville's National Life and Accident Insurance Company created radio station WSM as an advertising vehicle--the call letters representing their corporate slogan, "We Shield Millions"--no one suspected its "old-time music" program would one day be country music's shining star. In *A Good-Natured Riot*, author Charles Wolfe offers a thorough, valuable examination of the Grand Ole Opry's formative years, answering the questions that the genre's recorded history cannot (simply because most of the Opry's earliest stalwarts were part-time musicians who were rarely recorded). Interestingly, WSM wasn't the first station to broadcast old-time music, and the citizens of Nashville, who considered theirs to be an erudite and cultured city, despised hillbilly music and any association with it. Nevertheless, the nearby Tennessee hills offered a wealth of authentic old-time music, and rural folks from all across the U.S. (the airwaves were quite clear at the time) adored the sounds of Uncle Jimmy Thompson and Dr. Humphrey Bate. Soon enough, the music's popularity led WSM station manager George Hay to create a weekly Barn Dance program in the fall of 1925. The bulk of Wolfe's chronicle is told through discussions of the Opry's stars, their lives, and their music, adding station logs, repertoire listings, press releases, and news clippings to his own extensive interviews and research. He progresses from early staples like Bate, Thompson, DeFord Bailey, and Uncle Dave Macon (the only early member who was actually a well-known professional musician), to innovators like the McGee

Brothers, Fiddlin' Arthur Smith, and the Delmore Brothers, to Roy Acuff and Bill Monroe, who brought country music into the modern age. By the time Acuff and Monroe held sway, circa 1940, the Opry had become a nationally syndicated NBC show and most of its stars were actively and successfully making records. Wolfe documents the first 15 years of the Opry in incredible detail, and in doing so illustrates the development of old-time music from homespun, informal diversion to finely honed commercial powerhouse. --Marc Greilsamer  
From Publishers Weekly  
Perhaps there is no commercially successful genre of music as misunderstood as country: even its most ardent fans seem content to embrace its aw-shucks image. Wolfe makes no such mistake, affectionately chronicling the savvy business decisions that gave birth to the Opry and to its careful "rustication." Emerging from 25 years of research on the Opry's beginnings, Wolfe's book includes an unprecedented number of interviews with the performers and their families and associates. Although he sometimes favors depth of detail over narrative shape, his work will be invaluable to historians of country, and of American music more broadly. Wolfe depicts a number of eager, opportunistic (not to mention talented and pioneering) performers and businessmen who made big bucks by fashioning old-time music into a slick commodity with mass appeal. Knowing that early Opry stars Uncle Dave Macon and Uncle Jimmy Thompson were in it for as much glory and money as they could come by should not decrease our appreciation of their music; no one minds that Elvis and the Beatles built fortunes along with their legends. Wolfe's book should help both country music's proponents and opponents realize that country is an important and substantial chunk of the music business, and that it has always involved both smarts and flair. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From Library Journal  
While collecting oral histories from old-timers of the Grand Ole Opry, award-winning country music historian Wolfe (English, Middle Tennessee State Univ.; *The Devil's Box: Masters of Southern Fiddling*) saw a need to gather written material to back up what he was hearing. Beyond the standard histories and journals of country music, Wolfe combed the files of the Tennessean and the Nashville Banner as well as materials at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Country Music Foundation, and the Grand Ole Opry collection at Vanderbilt University. The result is a thoroughly researched yet entertaining study of the Grand Ole Opry from its beginning to 1940. Wolfe is meticulous in his research and writing  
Aa good match for the Country Music Foundation and Vanderbilt University Press in their efforts to produce sterling works on the history of country music. Recommended for collections on American music in public and academic libraries.  
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