

HANK WILLIAMS

THE MOTHER'S BEST FLOUR RADIO SHOWS

From late 1950 to late 1951, you could hear Hank Williams on WSM every morning at 7:15 singing and selling Mother's Best Flour, as well as self-raising Cornmeal and Pig & Sow Feed. During the 15 minute show Hank and the announcer Louie Buck would pitch the flour in between Hank's songs. Hank even wrote a theme song for the show.

"I love to have that gal around
Her biscuits are so nice and brown
Her pies and cakes beat all the rest
Cause she makes them all with Mother's Best"

Hank was paid \$100 a week for five shows. Often times, they were pre-recorded due to Hank's touring schedule. These shows are among Hank Williams most popular, if not his best, work. Listed below are the shows, and the songs sang on each of them.....

Perhaps the most well known, most sought collection in the Hank Williams catalogue are the Mother's Best radio shows. This collection of radio shows is considered by many to be Hank's best work and were done at the peak of his career in 1951.

The show was broadcast live between 7:15 and 7:30 a.m. on WSM out of Nashville, Tennessee. Some of the shows were pre-recorded to be played on the air when Hank was out on the road. Hank was paid \$100 a week for recording the shows that usually consisted of one country song, one instrumental and a gospel song to close the show, but that's not all they have to offer.

The Mother's Best Shows capture Hank's personality better than anything else known to exist and they don't paint the picture of a sad, lonesome, forlorn man hell bent on drinking and death as many books and other publications try to portray him as. In fact, it is probably the in-between song chatter that makes these recordings so great, you get a glimpse of what Hank Williams was like as a person.

The Mother's Best shows also featured a surprising variety of hymns,

since there was at least one in every early-morning broadcast. A lesser-known Hank-penned uptempo jubilee number, "I'm Gonna Sing", is a highlight – but so is his surprising three-part harmony singing with Drifting Cowboys Jerry Rivers and Cedric Rainwater on the likes of "I Hear My Savior Calling Me". Those expecting all lonesome barroom ballads and joking marital complaints should know that there's a lot of the gospel side of Hank on these discs. He shows a particular appreciation for songs by his Louisiana Hayride and Opry buddies the Bailes Brothers – "Dust On The Bible" and "I've Got My One-Way Ticket To The Sky", for instance. The Bailes' influence on Hank may have been as potent as that of Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb.

For all of the solemn spirituality, there's plenty of joking, in any case. We still hear Williams inform his female audience, "Hey good lookin', if you've got anything cookin', just make sure you're cookin' it with Mother's Best Flour." This is a Hank very much in the world of his moment; he mentions the current pop hit version of "On Top Of Old Smoky" (it was by the Weavers) before launching into a great hard country version himself as an answer.

(Some material for this series synopsis is from www.nodepression.com, and www.geocities.com/mothersbestshows.)