

JOHNSON CITY SESSIONS

Frank Walker, head of Columbia Records “hillbilly” recording division, conducted recording sessions in Johnson City in 1928 and 1929. Walker was a pioneer in the art of remote recording, which was deemed more effective than bringing musicians to large northern cities to record.

Courtesy of Bob L. Cox



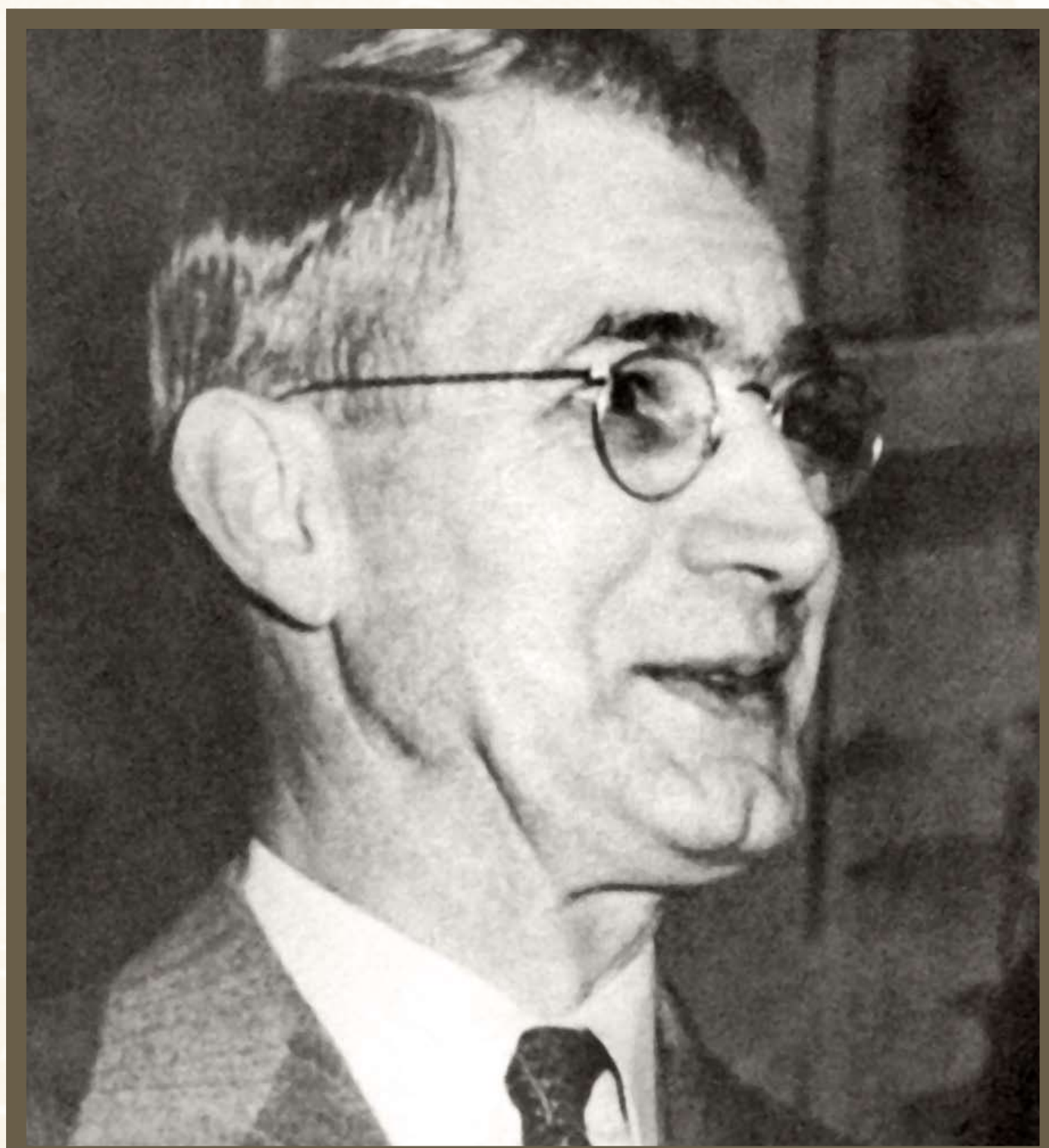
Charlie Bowman & the Hill Billies. Charlie was a major influence on the distinctive fiddling style in country music in the '20s and '30s.

The Columbia Records platter, *Railroad Take Me Back*, recorded in 1929 by Charlie Bowman's daughters, Jennie and Pauline, in New York.

Courtesy of Bob L. Cox



Courtesy of MGM Records



Frank Buckley Walker (1889 – 1963) scouted talent for Columbia Records' Country Music Division in the 1920s and '30s.

Walker was searching for talent from the southeastern mountains. On Saturday, October 13, 1928, he held auditions at the John Sevier Hotel in Johnson City. The following week he conducted recording sessions in makeshift studios at the Marshall Brothers Lumber Company on 334 East Main Street.

The Marshall Brothers Lumber Company building, ca. 1930.



Popular recordings – such as *Roll on Buddy*, a bluegrass standard, by Charlie Bowman and his brothers and *Johnson City Blues* by Clarence Greene – highlighted the 1928 sessions. Clarence Ashley's classic *Coo Coo Bird* was recorded in October 1929. Frank Walker also was instrumental in the careers of blues star Bessie Smith and music legend Hank Williams.