

## ***The Family Band Years***

By the time I hit my teens I had somewhat mastered the guitar but decided to take a few lessons anyway to further hone my skills. I should note, that sister Shirley was now working on the upright bass and brother Ford was working with a pedal steel guitar. Mom, at the time, played the organ and dad was our agent, organizer and announcer. Sensing our potential, dad began booking the family band as the Webb Sisters and later the Harmony Sweethearts; the latter stuck until Hank Williams asked us to go back to the Webb Sisters. We were doing western shows with a local band called the Renford Akins Western Band. This is also when our singing had matured with age. I want to share with you a couple of my favorites at that time that we were performing, ***Cimarron Roll On*** [Family song 4], and ***Snowflakes*** [Family song 5]. At this point we were moving through our teens and our act was becoming more and more refined ... this is when Little Jimmy Dickens and Cowboy Copus first saw us at the Bayfront Auditorium [see photo]. They took our dad aside and encouraged him to get us to Nashville. Bye bye Miami.

Soon after we were off to Nashville ... oops, not so fast. Dad heard of the Big D Jamboree in Dallas so he detoured to there. We stayed in Dallas about a year ... while there we had our own radio show as well as performed on the Big D Jamboree. ***Sorrow and Pain*** [Family song 6] is one song we sang during that period along with *Cimarron*, *Snowflakes* and a host of other tunes that were popular then.

Finally, off to Nashville. I will not bore you with the entire Hank Williams story since you're read and heard it a number of times. [photo of us with Hank] Suffice it to say upon arrival we accidentally met Hank ... that chance meeting changed our lives immeasurably ... soon after we were touring with him on the Hadacol Caravan. We had a blast. After the Caravan ended, the offers to appear started pouring in so the Webb Sisters were off and running in country music.

During this time, I privately began pondering what it would be like to be a solo artist ... I'll share with you a war tune [mom wrote] I toyed with; ***Operation Heartbreak*** [Family song 7]. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. To close out the Harmony Sweetheart – Webb Sisters era let's do exactly what we did at the end of every appearance and radio show; we'll end with a Gospel tune, ***Homesick For Heaven*** [Family song 8]. Okay time to close the Webb Sisters-Harmony Sweethearts era ... here's dad [Family song 9]. Note, mind you, my younger brother [Ford] was only about 10 when he was doing this amazing steel guitar work.