

LONE STAR BREWING: BEER, PROGRESSIVE
COUNTRY MUSIC, AND THE TEXAS
MYSTIQUE

By

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DEDICATION

In Memory of

Curtis L. Englebright

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the April 1976 edition of the music magazine *Hit Parade*, writer Bruce Meyer wrote about a post-concert interview conducted with the Texas rock band ZZ Top entitled, “ZZ-Top Living in a braggart’s bubble.” ZZ Top had just finished an energetic concert with 20,000 people in Atlanta’s Omni Stadium and all three members of the band, wearing cowboy hats, belt buckles, and jeans, went to a nearby hotel ballroom to cavort with eager fans and to drink beer. “You’ve got to be a Texan to love Lone Star beer,” wrote Bruce Meyer. Capturing the masculine swagger of drinking Lone Star beer, Meyer describes the flavor of Lone Star as being tough to stomach but that because of the image associated with it, “no self-respecting Texan would think of tarnishing his image by admitting the stuff turns his stomach. So he chokes it down and smiles, knowing that after the fourth or fifth bottle it won’t matter.” At the end of the ballroom, stainless steel tubs (resembling horse troughs) contained bottles of Lone Star beer kept cold by frigid ice water. When ZZ-Top entered the room, they made their way back to the tubs and, according to Meyer, lead-guitarist Billy Gibbons proceeded to grab a beer and chugged half of the bottle down with one swallow. Gibbons then looked around the room “with an elfish grin and a glint of triumph in his eye.”¹

Such a bold proclamation of male, Texas bravado was a hallmark of ZZ-Top’s style. Starting in 1969, Gibbons (from Houston, Texas) worked with the manager Bill Ham to form ZZ Top by recruiting a drummer named Frank Beard (from Frankston, Texas) and a bassist named Joe Michael “Dusty” Hill (from Dallas, Texas).² The band

¹ Bruce Meyer, “ZZ Top Living in the braggart’s bubble,” *Hit Parade*, April, 1976, 40.

² Gary Hartman, *The History of Texas Music* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 217.

started out as a local band playing shows in whatever Texas town that was willing to book them. “Jesus, we played in places like F[P]ort Lavaca, Alice, George West, and—we played everywhere there is in Texas,” recalled Gibbons to Meyer. Through Ham, the band signed a contract with London Records and, after touring and releasing four successful albums, popularized their “gospel of Mythic Texas” outside the reaches of the Lone Star State with international tours. “We live in the braggart’s bubble” explained Gibbons to Meyer. “We’ve got the prettiest girls, the prettiest horses, the prettiest clothes. Our suits cost \$1300 a piece. ‘My gun’s bigger than your gun’ is the Texas feeling.”³

Later, in the same year as their interview with Meyer, ZZ Top embarked on their “World Texas Tour” through North America, Europe, Australia, and Japan. Texas music historian Gary Hartman describes that “with a long-standing interest in theatrical production and with an obvious pride in their home state, the band took along on its tour a Texas-shaped stage and Lone Star props such as cacti and live cattle.”⁴ The once local Texas band gained international recognition by promoting a unique image of what it meant to be a larger-than-life male, Anglo-Texan. However, the question remained: where did this image of the Texan come from and how was it being changed by the generation of Texans that ZZ Top was representing? In the midst of the 1970s, the Lone Star Brewing Company appeared to have promotional deals with musicians across the state. However, Texas musicians like ZZ Top, Gary P. Nunn, Asleep at the Wheel, and Willie Nelson willingly implied loyalty to Lone Star beer without signing official contracts or promotional deals. Salesmen for Lone Star beer and Texas musicians established connections and friendships with each other and, through collaborative

³ Meyer, 41-42.

⁴ Hartman, 218.

advertising of their product, inadvertently contributed to a new version of the Texas mystique reflecting a more diverse and metropolitan audience.⁵

Recently, historians have conducted numerous studies of the 1970s counter-culture in Austin (with a focus on the progressive country music genre) and changing Texas identity. Notably, West Virginia University music historian Travis Stimeling in his study *Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks: the Countercultural Sounds of Austin's Progressive Country Music Scene* charted the efforts of musicians and local entrepreneurs in the Austin community to define Austin as a “free-spi[ri]ted, anticommercial, and musically adventurous metropolis” by trying to find ways to “commodify the scene and its projected identity for an audience that sought a distinctly Texan alternative to the American identities put forth by the national mass media.”⁶ Expanding beyond the Austin scene into the broader social currents occurring in Texas in the 1970s, *Progressive Country: How The 1970's Transformed the Texan in Popular Culture* by Texas State University music historian Jason Mellard charts the 1970s in Texas as a time when “civil rights and feminist movements challenged dominant notions of the representative Texan, [and] icons of Anglo-Texan masculinity—the cowboy, the oilman, the wheeler-dealer—came in for a dizzying round of both celebration and critique.” Putting the 1970s in the broader context of Texas cultural history, Mellard’s study focuses on actors who “invoked the symbolic weight of Anglo-Texan masculinity for progressive ends” with a focus on Austin.⁷ Although both studies provide an

⁵ I am using the turn “Texas mystique” to describe the regional identity or personality associated with Texas or being from Texas by the people who lived there.

⁶ Travis D. Stimeling, *Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.

⁷ Jason Mellard, *Progressive Country: How The 1970s Transformed The Texan In Popular Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 5.

extensive picture of the influences that built Austin's progressive country scene, how progressive country music and style was influenced by Texas businesses is an aspect of this scene that needs to be explored in greater detail. Building on the works of historians like Stimeling and Mellard, this thesis examines the relationship between regional identity (in Texas), consumer culture (Lone Star beer and their customers), and music (progressive country) in an era when Texas was rapidly shifting from rural to urban, Democratic to Republican, segregated to integrated, and past to future. Using radio and magazine ads, connections with popular Texas musicians, and sponsoring live music events to link their product in the minds of young people to the progressive country movement, the Lone Star Brewing Company played a significant role in influencing both the Austin counter-culture and the larger state of Texas by inadvertently pushing a new metropolitan version of the Texas mystique.

II: NO PLACE BUT TEXAS: 1970s VISIONS OF THE

TEXAS MYSTIQUE

During the 1970's, ZZ Top was one of many Texas musical groups that exhibited pride in its state by playing music and drinking Lone Star beer. The epicenter of this new generation of Texas musicians was the state capital of Austin, where musicians of various styles and backgrounds played in the city's numerous night clubs and venues, and both old and new visions of what it meant to be Texan blended in a new metropolitan setting. The most popular music in the Austin music scene at this time was a new style that both reaffirmed and blended traditional country music with other genres— progressive country music. An eclectic mix of honky-tonk, folk, rock and roll, and western swing blended with other genres and an independent, counter culture attitude, this new style led by musicians and bands such as Guy Clark, Steve Fromholz, Michael Martin Murphey (whose song “Cosmic Cowboy pt. 1” became a progressive country anthem among fans), Rusty Wier, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Bob Livingston, Gary P. Nunn (and his Lost Gonzo Band), Townes Van Zandt, Marcia Ball, Doug Sahm, Jerry Jeff Walker, Kinky Friedman (with his band the Texas Jewboys), Greezy Wheels, Freda and the Firedogs, Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen, Western swing revivalists Asleep at the Wheel and Red Steagall, and, perhaps the most famous musician from this movement, Willie Nelson.⁸ In this chapter, I will analyze three different visions of the Texas mystique common to people living in Texas in the 1970s. These views can be categorized as: the traditionalist view that embraced Texas exceptionalism and a conservative business

⁸ Cory Lock, “Counterculture Cowboys: Progressive Texas Country of the 1970's & 1980's,” *Journal of Texas Music History* Volume 3, Issue 1 (2003), 5.

climate, the revisionists or countercultural views that challenged the traditional narrative while seeking to include groups that had been marginalized in Texas history, and the pastoral views that lamented the loss of rural ways of life in a rapidly urbanizing state.

The 1970s merger of country music with 1960s counter culture seems, on first glance, like a highly unusual event. However, a common theme found in traditional country music is a desire for open spaces and a pre-modern, pastoral way of life. This desire was shared by Austin's original counter-culture movement of the 1960s who, made up of many urban youth who moved away from small towns, were paradoxically attracted to notions of a folk culture untarnished by modern, city life. As Travis Stimeling records in *Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks*, "These young people, the majority of whom congregated in and around Austin, often wore their hair long and smoked marijuana like 'hippies' but dressed in the faded blues jeans, work shirts, cowboy hats, and boots of the rural cowboy."⁹ With six major colleges and universities, the city of Austin attracted a large number of young people who, despite being more politically and socially progressive than their parents, grew up listening to country music and rock and roll.¹⁰ While in the sixties, conflicts concerning the Vietnam War and civil rights caused tensions and even outright violence between hippies and rednecks, the figure of the cowboy (seen in Texas as both a loner and outlaw or frontier hero)¹¹ appealed to many of the traditionalists and hippies in the Austin music scene.¹²

⁹ Stimeling, 42.

¹⁰ Hartman, 165.

¹¹ Archie Green, "Austin's Cosmic Cowboys: Worlds in Collision," in *And Other Neighborly Names: Social Process and Cultural Image in Texas Folklore*, edited by Richard Bauman and Roger D. Abrahams (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 155.

¹² Mellard, 67.

Jim Franklin, a co-founder and resident artist of Austin's Vulcan Gas Company and the Armadillo World Headquarters, popularized the armadillo as a symbol of this new counter-cultural scene. In a 1976 interview with *the Daily Texan* on the six-year anniversary of the opening of the Armadillo, Franklin admitted being shocked by how people picked up on his armadillo illustrations seeing the animal as symbolizing a lifestyle or attitude rather than merely a place. This distinction was important to Franklin because it emphasized what he saw as the armadillo's individuality and reluctance "to be pinned down on anything" going as far to say that "if you got it nailed down, what's that all around it? Soon as you say this is what it all means, then you start seeing all the other meanings. To me, the armadillo is one thing you cannot pin down."¹³

In his invocation of a unique Southwestern animal for use in Austin's counter-culture, Franklin was not alone in associating a mindset or attitude with Texas. Leading up to the 1970s, authors and intellectuals debated the meaning of the hyper-masculine Anglo-Texan in popular culture. In his popular 1961 book *The Super-Americans*, New York writer John Bainbridge described Texas as a "mirror in which Americans see themselves reflected, not life-sized but, as in a distorting mirror, bigger than life." Bainbridge saw these distorted features as including "bravado, zest, optimism, ebullience, and swaggering self-confidence" that was embodied by not only the Texas cowboy, but oil barons and businessmen in the state.¹⁴ This "wheeler-dealer" attitude of the Texan that Bainbridge identified as an "adventurous millionaire whose approach to business is strictly free-style"¹⁵ and cowboy swagger was being adopted by both conservative and

¹³ Marcia Pons, "Franklin Remembers," *Daily Texan* (August 1976): 4.

¹⁴ John Bainbridge, *The Super-Americans* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

liberal politicians in the state such as Lyndon Baines Johnson or John Tower¹⁶ (in 1961 the first Republican elected in Texas to Senator since Reconstruction) as it was by progressive country bands like the Lost Gonzo Band or Blues-Rock bands like ZZ Top in the Austin counter-culture.

In 1968, popular Texas historian T.R. Fehrenbach wrote his best-selling and widely read *Lone Star: A History of Texas and Texans*, where he aimed to “cut” through the mythology of the state to write the history of Anglo-Texans as if they were any other group like the “Frenchman or Chinese.”¹⁷ Fehrenbach’s epic telling of Texas history earned him popular acclaim within the state of Texas and positions of influence like the presidency of the Texas Historical Commission while, at the same time, criticism among academic historians for his questionable use of historiography and Anglo-centric narrative.¹⁸ His history of the state, in the vein of older Texas historians or writers, was replete with the epic and bloody conflicts that occurred between Anglos as they conquered the state from Indians and Mexicans.¹⁹ However, a theme that appeared repeatedly in his work is an almost mystical connection between the land or soil of Texas and those who lived on it. In closing his book, Fehrenbach placed Anglos among the other groups of people that lived in Texas in writing that “The Anglo-Saxon laced this soil with his own and other men’s blood; it would take his bones, and monstrous artifacts, and still remain.” To Fehrenbach, the land of Texas was bigger than any one particular group inhabiting it in that “The sun would remain, while men must die. The moon would

¹⁶ Sean Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism: Texas and the Rise of the Modern Right* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 74-76.

¹⁷ T.R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (Da Capo Press, 1968, 2000), xvi.

¹⁸ Mellard, 10-11.

¹⁹ Walter L. Buenger, “Three Truths in Texas,” in *Beyond Texas Through Time*, edited by Walter L. Buenger and Arnoldo De Leon (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 8.

rise again, while civilizations fell. In the end would be the earth. Texas, under any name, would go on forever.”²⁰

Fehrenbach’s traditionalist sentiments of the Texas mystique were featured prominently in a January 1975 issue of the magazine *Texas Monthly*. In this issue, the cover page asked the reader “Is Texas too big for its britches?” and featured several articles that contemplated Texas secession (including one by Fehrenbach lamenting the ‘americanization’ of Texas).²¹ In one article called “A Place in the Sun: If at first you don’t secede, try, try again,” the *Texas Monthly* staff made a case for Texas independence by appealing to the victories of the 1836 Texas Revolution against Mexico: “Independence?... Not secession, mind you, just good old hard-earned sovereignty. Battled for at Goliad, won at San Jacinto, and... well... never relinquished after all. Not such a bad idea, independence; not half bad. You say we can’t divide? Please, don’t throw us in that briar patch.” The authors argue the point that out of 158 countries in the world, Texas would be thirty-third in size, forty-fifth in population, sixteenth in number of daily newspapers, and enough oil to be a member country of OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Producing Countries]. As if giving the greatest reason why the reader should support secession, the authors add at the end of their article, “And somebody in the Southwest Conference could win a national championship [in football] practically every year.”²²

²⁰ Fehrenbach, 725.

²¹ *Texas Monthly*, January, 1975, accessed on 10/28/16 at <http://www.texasmonthly.com/issue/january-1975/>.

²² Texas Monthly staff, “A Place in the Sun: If at first you don’t secede, try, try again” *Texas Monthly*, January, 1975. Accessed on 10/28/16 at <http://www.texasmonthly.com/issue/january-1975/>.

Although many Anglo-Texans took pride in this “imperial” history of dominance,²³ a new school of authors in the 1970s challenged the traditionalist view by pointing out the darker side of the Texas myth in the form of control exerted by white Texans (or Anglos) over non-white peoples. These conquered peoples included both Native Americans and Mexicans already living in Texas before the Texas Revolution and African slaves brought by Anglos for forced plantation labor. In his influential 1958 book, *With His Pistol in His Hand*, Américo Paredes argued that “the difference, and a fundamental one, between folklore and the Texas legend is that the latter is not usually found in the oral traditions of those groups of Texas people that one might consider folk.” Instead, Paredes sought to debunk the Texas mystique as “pseudo folklore” propagated “in the written works of the literary and the educated and orally among a class of rootless adventurers who have used the legend for practical purpose.”²⁴ For Paredes, this practical purpose was not rooted in a real community that exhibited real culture but took its form most strongly in the Texas Ranger who subjugated (through terror and violence) Tejanos. Strongly criticizing laudatory accounts of the Texas mystique previously put forward by Anglo academics such as historian Walter Prescott Webb and folklorist J. Frank Dobie, Paredes sought to demolish the myth of Texas in order to fight for the social equality of Tejanos. As a professor at the University of Texas studying folklore from the U.S.-Mexico border, Paredes influenced a new generation of politically active university

²³ D.W. Meinig, *Imperial Texas: An Interpretative Essay in Cultural Geography* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969). Note- This book was an influential geographical essay by Syracuse Professor D.W. Meinig who argued that Texas had a strong Imperial character it could be proud of even though its “imperial” ambitions, dating back President Mirabeau Lamar’s vision of the Republic of Texas conquering territory out to the Pacific Ocean, were largely unfulfilled.

²⁴ Américo Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 23.

students living in Austin in the 1970s.²⁵ In conjunction with Chicano political groups such as La Raza Unida or Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers that were using a romantic nationalism to expel Anglo influences on Mexican culture and win greater political freedom,²⁶ Chicano musicians such as Little Joe y La Familia, Tortilla Factory, Sunny and the Sunliners, or the popular country singer (who later collaborated with the Lone Star Brewing Company) Freddy Fender, performed across Texas and the Southwest.

Other views of the Texas mystique were more pastoral in nature and, by the time of the rapidly urbanizing 1970s, took the view of the Texas mystique as something that had been lost or was slowly fading. In his 1968 book, *In a Narrow Grave*, writer Larry McMurtry described Texas at that time as a place where, "rural and soil traditions are competing most desperately with urban traditions."²⁷ In this new urban Texas, large numbers of Texas cowboys were leaving the farm or the ranch for the suburb and the city. McMurtry's Texas mystique was a way of life embodied by both the Western frontier and the cowboy. Despite giving a strong critique of Texas writers who glossed over the racism against Mexicans and Natives Americans, McMurtry (from a ranch in Archer City) still found something in Texas's transition from rural to urban that moved him to write that even though he disliked frontiers, "the sense that my own has vanished produces in me the strongest emotion I have felt in connection with Texas, or with any place."²⁸ While McMurtry gave a blunt and critical assessment of the state of Texas in his

²⁵ Mellard, 49-52

²⁶ Manuel Peña, *Música Tejana* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 159-161.

²⁷ Larry McMurtry, *In a Narrow Grave* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), XV.

²⁸ Ibid, XVII.

work as a writer in a way similar to revisionists, his work also invoked the sense of place that Texas traditionalists readily sympathized with.

This strong emotion was shared by many college students in Austin in the 1970s, although many were seeking to escape the domination of their parents or life in a small town.²⁹ McMurtry's books were routinely advertised in popular Austin magazines such as the *Austin Sun* and read by many of the same attendees at progressive country shows. Even before the Armadillo World Headquarters, some of the first young people to think of themselves as counter-cultural found a welcome home at a gas station turned bar on the northern edge of town called Threadgill's Tavern, where they played folk music reminiscent of rural Texas.³⁰ The owner, an older country yodeler named Kenneth Threadgill, mentored many of the young musicians (including a young Janis Joplin) and even went as far as to perform on Wednesday nights for them.³¹ McMurtry (who lived in Austin for eight months in 1963) described this tendency of young people towards "groupiness" as endemic to the city: "In such a town is apt to be literally crushed by the surging mobs of the insecure, all rushing to confirm themselves by association."³²

The tension McMurtry identified between rural and urban Texas could be readily seen in Jim Franklin's armadillo posters. However, instead of idealizing the mythic Anglo-Texan cowboy, these posters were often drawn in a surrealist style reflecting the larger-than-life image of the Texas mystique subverted with new meaning in the Austin music scene. In one interview, Franklin described his style of surrealist poster art in

²⁹ Jan Reid, *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock* (Austin, University of Texas Press), xvi-xix.

³⁰ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Alan Lee Haworth, "Threadgill, John Kenneth," accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fth58>.

³¹ Alice Echols, *Scars of Sweet Paradise: the Life and Times of Janis Joplin* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1999), 55.

³² McMurtry, 159.

relation to Texas: “Here was this surrealist state you know, with all this exaggeration as part of the official imagery. The biggest this and the biggest that. Then there was the Jackalope and the giant fish strapped to a horse. All this brags of Texas. I took that all to be surreal. You don’t have to go to Paris and copy Salvador Dali; you just stay in Texas and look around.”³³ Armadillos were commonly seen dead (having been run over by humans) on the side of Texas highways, which gave Franklin a sense that they were victims of modern society in a way similar to longhaired freaks and hippies. In a 1972 interview with *Rolling Stone*, Franklin explained his sympathy for the Armadillo: “Armadillos have been completely ignored in this state. They’ve been a joke, they really have. No one takes an armadillo seriously if they see it on the side of the road although maybe young people are beginning to. They’re realizing it’s there, it’s a species, and if you see it from your car you might slow down and start hitting it.”³⁴

The *Rolling Stone* article documented Franklin’s early attempts to popularize the armadillo in his posters. His first, an advertisement for a 1968 love-in or outdoor concert at Woolridge Park in Austin, simply had an armadillo “smoking a joint, no human relevance or smart-ass connotations intended. Simply an armadillo as an armadillo might look.”³⁵ Another famous poster drawn by Franklin in 1969 for an outdoor concert in Fiesta Garden Park featured a similar theme found in future Lone Star commercials of a giant armadillo destroying a car on the side of a highway. In the poster, the wrecked truck is crushed with a giant armadillo footprint in the bed as the back of the armadillo is seen walking away from the revenge against modernity-inspired carnage. In another example,

³³ Joe Nick Patoski and Nels Jacobson “Reimagining Texas,” in *Homegrown: Austin Music Posters 1967 to 1982*, ed. Alan Schaefer (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015) 75.

³⁴ Stephen Harrigan, “The Dawning of the Armadillo” *Rolling Stone*, March 30, 1972, 20.

³⁵ Ibid.

Franklin's armadillos were featured in the famous August 1970 colored poster advertising the band Shiva's Headband at the Armadillo World Headquarters' grand opening. This poster featured a globe divided into four sections and adorned by two armadillos sitting on the top and two supporting it at the bottom.³⁶ As if in a psychedelic mirage, the animals in the posters merged together in the center of the poster. Franklin's posters became popular enough in Austin that students at the University of Texas even tried to push the armadillo as a mascot to replace the longhorn.³⁷ Franklin's posters spawned armadillo themed festivals including Victoria, Texas's late July Armadillo Festival, for which Franklin would often serve as a keynote speaker. Such festivals often featured armadillo races and other activities. Perhaps contradicting Franklin's purpose of raising sympathy for the armadillo, the 1972 festival he spoke at in Victoria served samples of cooked armadillos on shish-kabobs to their human participants. In the interview, Franklin thought about his armadillos, "I think it's perhaps a temporary fad or phase or whatever, but I think the armadillo is a lot more meaningful than a hula-hoop, and you can take it to much higher levels. It didn't start as a big ad campaign or any of that bullshit. It's just a trippy thing, and as long as you can keep it that way I don't see why there shouldn't be an armadillo in every garage."³⁸

Whether by authentic yearning or by trend, armadillos and pastoral cowboys became endemic to Austin and the rest of Texas by the late 1960s and early 1970s, and local businesses looked to tap into similar sentiment through promoting the progressive

³⁶ Harrigan, 77-78. By having four armadillos budding from each other in the picture, Franklin referenced how armadillos are born in sets of genetically identical quadruplets.

³⁷ Ibid, 20.

³⁸ Franklin noted in the interview that the armadillos served at the festival were raised on the farm and that the festival as a whole did not capture or torture any wild armadillos.

country movement. Radio disc jockey Joe Gracey worked for one of the most-listened to radio stations in the city, KOKE, that coined the term 'progressive country' on its programming and bumper stickers. He explained this general feeling in Austin as similar to the Chicano and Black Power movements in that through country music, Anglo-Texans in Austin were rediscovering their roots. While seemingly aligned with groups contesting the Texas mystique and the Anglo power structures that it served, Gracey perceived that in an urbanized Texas, a way of life was being lost. To Gracey, the progressive country movement was an organic and grassroots movement saying "Just wait a damn minute. I'm from Texas, I love Texas, it's a great place to live. I love the way we eat, I love the way we dress, I love our habits and our customs, and I love the way I talk. I love everything about this state—and why wouldn't I? It's a great place!"³⁹

The venue called the Armadillo World Headquarters became a safe haven for members of the Austin counter culture, many of whom had left their small town or suburban life for an education at the University of Texas. Formed in the hot summer of 1970 out of a building originally designed as a National Guard Armory,⁴⁰ the venue filled the niche that venues before it had, like Threadgill's Tavern or the Vulcan Gas Company, in attracting musicians and fans wanting a new sound.⁴¹ Built in a section of Austin south of Town Lake (traditionally an area where Mexican Americans and lower-income Anglos lived),⁴² the venue attracted few noise complaints and was rarely harassed by local police

³⁹ Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover & London: University of New England Press, 1994), 58.

⁴⁰ Mellard, 66.

⁴¹ Reid, 63.

⁴² *Handbook of Texas Online*, "Lady Bird Lake," accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/rollb>. Note- After the death of the former first lady Claudia Alta Taylor (Lady Bird) Johnson in 2007, the city of Austin renamed Town Lake to Lady Bird Lake.

or politicians, many of whom were frequent guests. To keep its concert goers— upwards of 1,500—satisfied while listening to local and national musical acts,⁴³ the owner and promoter of the Armadillo, Eddie Wilson, eventually secured a liquor license and constructed a German-style beer garden and restaurant.⁴⁴ The venue began to advertise itself as the largest supplier of Lone Star beer in the state of Texas, second only to the Astrodome.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, John Wheat, "Armadillo World Headquarters," accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/xda01>.

⁴⁴ Reid, 67.

⁴⁵ *The Armadillo*, Daily Cougar, December 6, 1973.

III: LONG LIVE LONGNECKS: THE LONE STAR BREWING COMPANY'S HISTORY IN TEXAS

Lone Star beer, the beverage guzzled by ZZ Top in Atlanta and drunk by many concert goers at the Armadillo World Headquarters, was one of many brewing companies with a deep history in the state of Texas. With roots reaching back to the opening of the Lone Star Brewery in San Antonio in 1884, Lone Star already marketed itself as Texan long before progressive country music was popular.⁴⁶ The Lone Star Brewery was originally a joint venture between businessmen in San Antonio and St. Louis beer baron Adolphus Busch that sought to tap into the regional Texas market.⁴⁷ San Antonio was seen as a perfect spot to establish a large-scale brewery due to its location in the center of the state, its large German and Mexican population, and aquifers supplying a large amount of artesian water. Previously in 1876, the fifty-eight breweries in Texas combined produced 16,806 barrels of beer. In contrast, production at the Lone Star Brewery (which had modern equipment and access to a steady flow of outside capital from Busch) by 1885 outpaced any other brewery in Texas at 17,246 barrels annually. As a result, the number of breweries in the state went from twenty-eight to eight between 1880 and 1889. One of these was the Pearl Brewing Company started by former Lone Star Brewery manager Otto Koehler and the San Antonio Brewing company to compete with Lone Star. Of the remaining eight brewers, only five were able to stay in business until 1918 when the Eighteenth Amendment passed under the Woodrow Wilson administration.

⁴⁶ Michael C. Hennech and Tracé Etienne-Gray, "BREWING INDUSTRY," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dib01>), accessed December 06, 2014. Uploaded on June 12, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association

⁴⁷ Mike Hennech, *The Encyclopedia of Texas Breweries* (Irving, TX: Ale Publishing Company), 15-18.

This new amendment prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages and forced the breweries to halt production or switch to beverages like soda or non-alcoholic beer.

After Prohibition ended in 1932, a company called the Champion Brewing Company started construction of a new brewery near the old Lone Star Brewery under the ownership of the Haeglin family.⁴⁸ The Haeglins ran the brewery until April of 1940 when a group of Texas businessmen, using the name the Lone Star Brewing Company, bought the brewery and produced 39,000 barrels of beer in its first year of production.⁴⁹ By 1965, production at the plant surpassed an unprecedented one million barrels using a new filtration system that increased the shelf life of the beer. The beer produced by this new method, which like keg beer was not pasteurized, allowed Lone Star to market their beer as a novelty, draft beer that they called “handy kegs.” However, this level of production seemed unlikely to sustain itself. By 1972, outside companies like Schlitz and Budweiser (who no longer had ownership of the Lone Star brand) moved into the market and were competing with Lone Star’s market through aggressive marketing of their so-called “premium” beer.⁵⁰ Starting as early as the 1940s and 1950s, companies like Schlitz and Budweiser could charge more for their product (thirty cents per bottle as opposed to Lone Star’s twenty-five cents) on premise because it created the image that their product was of higher quality than competitors. Adding to Lone Star’s problem with image was the notion that it was an older rural beer in a rapidly urbanizing state. In 1940, the ratio of Texans living in urban and rural areas was at 45.4 percent to 54.6 percent. By 1970, the

⁴⁸ Jeremy Banas and Travis E. Poling, *San Antonio Beer: Alamo City History By The Pint* (Charleston, South Carolina: American Palate), 62. The Champion Brewing Company brewed beer under the labels Champion and Sabinas.

⁴⁹ Hennech and Etienne-Gray.

⁵⁰ Jerry Retzlloff, interview with author, Gruene, TX. February 26, 2016.

ratio flipped to 79.7 percent to 20.3 percent as thousands of Texans left the farms and small towns for cities.⁵¹ This meant that Lone Star had to change the way it was marketing its product to maintain its lead over other breweries in Texas and cater to a new generation of young people.

The president of the Lone Star Brewing Company, Hill Country rancher and businessman Harry Jersig, marketed his beer partly through civic participation in the San Antonio community. Part of this involved being a co-founder of the San Antonio River Authority and offering hospitality through outdoor and indoor parties for residents, but also sponsoring local community organizations (including women's bowling teams) and employing delivery truck drivers to sell beer and establish relations with bar owners on their delivery routes. Former Lone Star delivery driver and shop worker Jimmy Boeck recalled in an interview that the Lone Star Brewing Company as early as the 1950s used singing cowboys to promote its product, "Lone Star kind of started out with a bunch of western stuff. And their first radio spots that I can remember of the Light Crust Doughboys and of all people it was Bob Wills that was heard on the local radio station here WOAI and lord have mercy— 'Lone Star beer's the clear and mellow brew. Try it once and you'll agree, it's the beer for you'." ⁵² While in the 1950s, Lone Star worked with musicians like Wills, an influential pioneer of Western swing music, to compete with rival brewers Pearl (who employed Czech musician Adolf Hofner and His Pearl Wranglers).⁵³ In a similar way, Lone Star beer in the early 1970s was advertised through

⁵¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990, 1995 accessed March 16, 2016, <https://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt>.

⁵² Jimmy Boeck, interview with author, San Antonio, April 26, 2016.

⁵³ Jerry Retzliff, interview with author, June 20, 2016.

campaigns created by the agency Glenn Advertising and their president Ward Wilcox.⁵⁴ Wilcox advertised Lone Star beer as, according to an interview he did later in the 1980s, a “good homegrown brew for good, solid, homegrown, working people.” One slogan used by Lone Star in the early 1970s was “From the Big Country.” This slogan, developed by the Dallas agency, attempted to give Lone Star a persona of being both exotic and Texan.⁵⁵

Radio spots played frequently in 1973 featured famous Mexican-American actor Ricardo Montalbán. One ad featured blaring trumpets and strings as Montalbán narrated:

I’d like to talk a minute about beer. It’s a funny thing about beer, every man has his own choice. Some of us choose a beer just because it’s there and people drink it. There’s nothing wrong with that but men who live here in the Big Country have a special reason to drink one brand, I mean Lone Star. It’s brewed here for the men who lives here and it tastes great besides. Watch the men who drink it because it tells the world who they are. Lone Star with a fresh clear taste of the Big Country. Lone Star, the beer every beer would like to be like. Take it from me Ricardo Montalbán.⁵⁶

This ad attempted to connect the brand to the traditional image of the Texas mystique. However, the ad was not successful in connecting Lone Star with the youth culture in Texas even though other Lone Star radio ads were specifically aimed at the youth market. Trying to reach the group, a 1972 ad played a rockabilly jingle for Lone

⁵⁴ Michael Ennis, “The Beer That Made Armadillos Famous,” *Texas Monthly*, February, 1982, 114-120, accessed at http://books.google.com/books?id=PCwEAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA114&dq=lone+star+armaArmadillos+famous&hl=en&ei=9TWZTJeTKcKB8gahqsgn&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=lone%20star%20armaArmadillos%20famous&f=false on 3/14/16.

⁵⁵ Jerry Retzliff, interview with author, Gruene, TX. March 11, 2016.

⁵⁶ Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12, G. F. Jerry Retzliff Collection, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University.

Star beer advertising Lone Star as, “the biggest beer that Texas has ever known.” The second verse of the song connected Lone Star with night clubs and bars in saying that “If you’re looking for a beer that will quench your thirst, pourin’ Lone Star will always do it first. Drink it by yourself or drink it with your friends, Drink it anywhere you want the fun to begin. A honky tonk or bar and a nightclub too, Lone Star beers they’re a-waiting for you.”⁵⁷

A similar 1973 radio ad played a song called “Heaven” performed live by a polka band to an energetic audience. The song featured the tune of the German polka song “In Heaven There Is No Beer,” except with lyrics advertising Lone Star as the beer of Texas: “Texas has just one beer (Crowd yells: Lone Star!), that’s why we drink it here. And when we’re gone from here, all our friends will be drinking all our beer.”⁵⁸ An ad of the same year, called “Texas Coast,” associated Lone Star with beach parties and youth on the Texas coast. The song, done in a country waltz style, had a male protagonist searching for a good time on a beach: “Walking down the sunny beaches, wearing cut-off sandy britches. Sure feels good to get away, running in the ocean spray. Surfers riding on the curls watching all the pretty girls. Walk on by your pickup truck, you keep on walking and you cash your luck.” In the ad, the protagonist is able to find a party with plenty of girls, by “holding a Lone Star with a smile.” The song ends with the lines “Me and my friends and a bunch of Lone Star beer by the cases. Drinking that cold Lone Star

⁵⁷ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

beer and all them smiling faces. Drinking that cold Lone Star beer. Oh, honey come over here. Drinking that cold Lone Star beer.”⁵⁹

In 1974, Lone Star and Glenn Advertising continued to run “Of the Big Country Ads” that featured Ricardo Montalbán and advertised Lone Star beer as an exotic and manly beverage from Texas. Concurrently with the Montalbán ads, Lone Star ran ads in the same style with actor Warren Stevens speaking with a Western, Anglo accent, that invoked more directly the traditionalist, Anglo-Texas mystique. In one such 1974 ad with the same horn fanfare as an intro, Stevens explained to the listener:

This is the Big Country. Time was when a man on a horse was the living symbol of this country, he still is. But today, the Big Country is more than even he can dream: its great beaches timeless, its ranchlands endless, its lakes countless, its great cities stretching endless towards the sun. And the pleasure these things offer are more than a man can enjoy in one lifetime. One of these is Lone Star, the great lite beer brewed for the men who live here. They drink Lone Star because they like it and it tells the world who they are. Lone Star, with the fresh, clear taste of the big country—⁶⁰

Another Warren Stevens ad substituted the horns and majestic imagery for a storm on a cattle drive with two cowboys quietly trying to secure their herd before a stampede scatters it. After one of the cowboys wakes the other up so they can get to work, Warren Stevens explains to the listener:

When a storm comes to the Big Country, the cattle smell it coming and they get spooky. [Cowboy hollers] You got to keep them bunch up ‘til it’s over. It may take all night but you can’t settle back. You got to stay with them. Then it’s over.

⁵⁹ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

You're flat worn out but you're inside ready to settle down with a real beer. Lone Star, the great prime beer with a light taste for the greatest thirst of all, yours—⁶¹

In the midst of Glenn Advertising's push to reimage Lone Star beer, newly promoted district manager for Lone Star, Jerry Retzloff, moved to Austin in 1973. Retzloff's work in Austin for Lone Star over the course of the 1970s accomplished much in attracting the young people there to the Lone Star brand before they could become committed to other brands.⁶² A San Antonio native born the same year the Lone Star Brewery reopened in 1940, Retzloff grew up drinking Lone Star with his brothers and attending Central Catholic High School. After graduating in 1957, Retzloff worked briefly for his father Walter Richard Retzloff's firm that was a manufacturer's representative for electronic parts, components, and tool companies. In 1960, Retzloff served in the Coast Guard before returning to Texas and getting a job with the parts department (working with refrigerators and dish washers) at Philco Distributing in San Antonio in May 1961. On days off from working with Philco, Retzloff worked part time on a shrimp boat in Fulton, Texas, where he partied with locals and visitors and met his future wife, Sally. In June 1963, Retzloff applied for a job at the Lone Star Brewery for a chance to work with Harry Jersig, who was a friend and customer of Retzloff's father's fishing guide service.⁶³

After earning a job as a tax accountant (where he gained valuable experience dealing with monthly audits from the federal government), Retzloff became liked by Harry Jersig because of his friendly demeanor and the fact that he was not intimidated by

⁶¹ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

⁶² Retzloff, interview with author, Gruene, TX, February 26, 2016

⁶³ This was a second business owned by Walter Retzloff called the Port Aransas Fishing Guide. This was a service and boat business.

Jersig's status within the company. According to Retzloff, "I started there but I ended up working at all departments at the brewery because I saw that the sales department was royalty because he was sales and everybody thought he owned the brewery."⁶⁴ Jersig started grooming Retzloff to become a salesman but, "He told me I had to go through the plants and work and all that first so I would be a well-trained beer man." Becoming a beer man also required Retzloff to go back to school for a college degree. From 1966 to 1971, Retzloff attended St. Mary's University part-time and then got his degree in Marketing on January, 1971.

Partly because Retzloff was already in the plants frequently doing inventories to complete government audits, he was given a job doing maintenance part inventories in the bottle shop and brew house for the trade and work unions in December 1964 working night shifts. In this new position, Retzloff made friendships and earned the trust of the union workers (many of them a part of the International Brewery Workers' Union affiliated with the AFL-CIO)⁶⁵ in ways that upper management at Lone Star was not able to do. One day in 1968 during a beer break, Retzloff noticed that the employees at the plant (who were given free beer as a part of working at the brewery) were eighty percent of the time choosing to drink beer from the returnable glass bottles with the long necks instead of the cans or one way (or short neck) bottles. "I asked Ottmer Harmes, who was the head machinist for the old bottle shop [which filled returned long neck bottles]... 'God dog! I need you to tell me something, give me a hand here.'"⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Retzloff, interview with author, Gruene, TX, March 11, 2016.

⁶⁵ Jimmy Beock, interview with author, San Antonio, April 26, 2016.

⁶⁶ Retzloff, interview with author, Gruene, Texas, February 26, 2016.

Harmes, who was a Lone Star employee since it reopened in 1940, explained to Retzloff that the can lids are on a conveyor coming down and are sealed on the full can after CO² is shot across it to keep the impure air out. Harmes explained to Retzloff that the returnable bottles are “filled with a filling tube all the way to the bottom and then the ultra-sonic shaker shakes it on the next step and then it’s crowned... So essentially, what the shaker is doing and the tube down in the bottle its releasing CO² as the bottle moves and when it’s crowned it’s got less CO² in it.” As a result of this process, the cans ended up with more excess CO² in them than the returnable bottles. According to Retzloff, less carbonation in the drink was believed by the beer men to give the beer an easier and smoother taste allowing more beer to be consumed during their breaks.⁶⁷

Retzloff ran the parts department at the Lone Star Brewery for six years until 1971 when Jersig hired two former Schlitz employees, Charlie Stidham and Tom Roegge, to revamp Lone Star’s marketing department.⁶⁸ Under their direction, Lone Star had twelve new district managers in charge of maintaining connections with distributors in different parts of Texas. Retzloff, seeing the direction that Lone Star was going with its marketing, earned a promotion to district manager in charge of the sixteen distributors that brought Lone Star beer to the San Antonio West District in December 1972.⁶⁹ Later in August 1973, Retzloff transferred to the Austin district where Budweiser was aggressively marketing their beer to the college students. After relocating to Austin with his family, Retzloff opted for a new method of getting to know his market. Instead of working from his office at home, he joined the Lone Star truck drivers on their routes

⁶⁷ Retzloff, interview with author, Gruene, Texas, February 26, 2016.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ The San Antonio West district included the cities of Castroville, Catulla, Crystal City, Del Rio, Alpine, Kerrville, Junction, Fredericksburg, and Mason.

delivering kegs and packaged beer to venues and bars. “The real fertile market was the youth market and the on premise market where beer was sold on premise...The Armadillo World Headquarters was the second biggest keg account we had in Texas [and the largest in Austin]...The second biggest in Austin was the One Knite Lounge and that was a dive hippie bar.” The One Knite was also infamous for its blues musicians, billiards tables, and pinball machines, as well as Blues Monday events frequented by bikers. Retzloff befriended one of the owners of the bar, Roger “One Knite” Collins and established it as Lone Star’s second biggest keg account in Austin behind only the Armadillo World Headquarters.⁷⁰

Retzloff visited bars and music venues almost seven nights a week in order to establish connections within the progressive country music scene. His efforts paid off when he developed a relationship with Armadillo World Headquarters owner, Eddie Wilson who had previous experience in the beer industry through his work with Whole Sale Beer Distributors. Lone Star beer gave Wilson a quantity break (or discount price for buying a specific quantity of beer) to sell Lone Star beer on draft in the venue’s beer garden making it a popular drink among concert attendees. However, Retzloff still found his ability to win over hippies in the Austin scene to be limited due to his business attire. Recognizing that Heineken International’s California hospitality to the Grateful Dead had allowed them to earn the support of the band’s fans, Retzloff developed a new idea to promote Lone Star to the young people in Austin through the progressive country music scene. Around the same time, Jersig hired Barry Sullivan, a new marketing director, who was also interested in the idea of promoting beer to young concert goers. In an interview

⁷⁰ Roger Collins, interview with the author by phone, June 6, 2016

with *Texas Monthly*, Retzloff described pitching his idea to Sullivan at a Michael Murphey concert at the Armadillo World Headquarters. “When Murphey opened the second verse of his anthem, ‘Cosmic Cowboy part 1,’ by singing ‘Lone Star sipping and skinny-dipping,’ every hippie in the room raised a Lone Star to the rafters and screamed.” This convinced Barry Sullivan to allow Retzloff to make a pitch to Harry Jersig, who was uncomfortable with the idea of abandoning the image of being the beer of the ‘big country’. Originally challenged to raise sales of Lone Star in the area by fifteen percent, Retzloff pitched the idea that he would raise it by thirty percent on the condition that he could do it his way. “I’ve got to get rid of the shirt and tie and get some cutoff shorts and grow a beard... because I can’t sell beer to the youth market that way... I’ve got to become part of the in-crowd.”⁷¹

Becoming a part of the “in-crowd” of the Austin music scene allowed Retzloff to connect with local performers and venues across the city instead of merely running ads. Luckily for Retzloff, the Armadillo World Headquarters’ advertising agency TYNA/TACI (Thought You’d Never Ask, The Austin Consultants Incorporated) already approached Barry Sullivan about collaborating on an ad campaign for Lone Star. While Sullivan and TYNA/TACI handled official business between their respective organizations, Retzloff frequently visited the Armadillo and maintained a friendly relationship with the employees and visitors there. Retzloff even talked with the Armadillo’s resident artist Jim Franklin and shared his story of why the employees at Lone Star preferred returnable bottles to the cans. Franklin, with TYNA/TACI, produced an idea that combined his armadillos with the skinny, longneck Lone Star bottles. In a

⁷¹ John Spong, “Bottle Rocket,” *Texas Monthly*, (November, 2014) 127-135, 250.

later interview, Retzloff described the poster (that Franklin sold to Lone Star for one-thousand dollars) as “The atom bomb had just hit and blown everything off the landscape. The only two things still standing, the things that were absolutely invincible, were the armadillo and the Lone Star. And then he [Franklin] came up with the slogan: ‘Long live long necks.’”⁷²

The popular moniker of “longneck” used to describe the returnable Lone Star bottles was already occasionally used among Lone Star drinkers in South Texas prior to Franklin’s adaptation of the slogan.⁷³ However, its adaptation by Lone Star beer came about during a 1974 crew effort in Dallas.⁷⁴ While visiting a college bar on Greenville Avenue in Dallas with cases of Lone Star returnable bottles on ice, Retzloff offered three girls sitting at a table a Lone Star. According to Retzloff, one of them responded, “Oh Lone Star! They got longnecks here? That’s what they got in Luckenbach. Yes we want a longneck!” After the experience in the bar, Retzloff wrote a memo to Sullivan saying that in order to give Lone Star beer a regional identity they should adopt the name longnecks for their bottles. Sullivan agreed but kept the new marketing effort only for the youth market in Austin and not the rest of the state of Texas for the time being. Reflecting the limited scope of the progressive country movement itself, these advertisements were shown exclusively in Austin while in the rest of the state Lone Star continued to advertise itself as the beer “of the Big Country.”⁷⁵ To Retzloff (following the direction of Barry Sullivan), the rationale for focusing on Austin was that “We didn’t want it to drift into

⁷² Spong, 127-130, 250.

⁷³ Retzloff, interview with author, March 11, 2016.

⁷⁴ According to Retzloff, a crew effort was when an assistant sales manager would get four or five district managers together and have them go to a town and “blanket all the town and go to all accounts and talk to accounts and talk Lone Star.”

⁷⁵ Ennis, 118

places like Schulenburg because we didn't want those drinkers thinking we were a college beer. Old folks were so touchy back then.”⁷⁶

However, signs of trouble within the Austin music scene appeared on the horizon. Roger “One Knite” Collins recalls being introduced to a new drug through a friend of a friend in 1973: “In 1973, a friend took me over to the apartment of a Peruvian exchange student going to the University of Texas. This Peruvian exchange student just came back from Peru from his Christmas vacation and he had poured out about six ounces of a white powder on a table. And I had never, ever seen anything like it in Austin, Texas.” The Peruvian exchange student asked Collins if he would be willing to deal cocaine for him but Collins declined. Still, this new drug introduced to Austin was more addictive, expensive, and beginning to be used more by musicians affecting their initiative to perform and succeed.⁷⁷

Collaboration with the Armadillo World Headquarters continued after Harry Jersig left the company and retired in 1975.⁷⁸ Seeking a departure from the previous Glenn Advertising “From the Big Country” campaign, TYNA/TACI started producing radio spot ads for Lone Star. Their first ad featured *Rolling Stone* writer and music critic Chet Flippo and the Lost Gonzo Band, which included musicians Bob Livingston and Gary P. Nunn, (which at the time was the back-up band to Jerry Jeff Walker). One such ad featured Flippo introducing himself and then describing the progressive country music scene: “The scene is always changing and the new change right now is putting steel guitars and country rhythms in a new setting. Sometimes it’s called cross-country,

⁷⁶ Ennis, 133.

⁷⁷ Collins, interview with the author.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

sometimes it's called progressive country and it sounds like this. [Lost Gonzo Band plays] Two really good things: good music and Harry Jersig's Lone Star beer. It's really fun."⁷⁹

The song played by the Lost Gonzo Band in the commercial was called "The Nights, They Never Get Lonely" and was featured independently in its own radio ads. "The Nights They Never Get Lonely" was written by Gary P. Nunn not long after he filled in as a bass player for Willie Nelson on a short Texas tour with drummer Paul English. The tour culminated with Nelson's successful debut on August 12, 1972 with the band Greezy Wheels at the Armadillo World Headquarters.⁸⁰ Nelson's debut was a landmark moment for both Austin's progressive country music scene and Nelson's efforts to break away from Nashville that also opened up new opportunities for Nunn's music career. Soon after the show, Eddie Wilson contacted Nunn to write a song for Lone Star beer and the Armadillo World Headquarters and paid him five thousand dollars. After writing "The Nights, They Never Get Lonely" for Lone Star and the Armadillo, the song was used by several commercials in 1975 featuring different verses or done in different styles by other musicians. The ad played frequently and boosted Lone Star's sales in the youth market in not just Austin but in the Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio markets as well. One 1975 ad featured the first verse of the original slow country song heavy with pastoral Texas imagery: "Dancin' in the moonlight under Lone Star skies in the Lone Star State with a Lone Star high and the nights, they never get

⁷⁹ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

⁸⁰ Gary P. Nunn interview with author, Blanco, Texas, May 6, 2016. Note- Nunn was also a bass player for Michael Martin Murphey's band. Also, Michael Priest's poster of Willie Nelson's Armadillo debut confirms that Greezy Wheels was the other band on the bill. Priest's poster can be accessed at Briscoe Center for American History's online Texas Poster Art series at <https://www.cah.utexas.edu/feature/tpa/gallery.php>.

lonely.”⁸¹ According to Nunn, test market studies found that the key line with young progressive country fans was the phrase “Lone Star high.”⁸² The verse then transitions to the chorus with the line: “We watch the showers of April grow the flowers in May. We lay our cards on the table singing songs all day and the nights, they never get lonely. Loving with your lover in the evening breeze, Listen to the murmur of the Spanish oak tree, the sweet soul music brings you to your knee [brief pause] And the nights, they never get lonely—” As the song fades, an announcer chimes in with the tag “Harry Jersig’s Lone Star beer, it’s really fine.”⁸³

The second verse and outro of the Gary P. Nunn song ran in a separate ad: “Dancin’ in the moonlight under Lone Star skies in the Lone Star State with a Lone Star high and the nights, they never get lonely. We watch the showers of April grow the flowers in May. We lay our cards on the table singing songs all day and the nights they never get lonely.” These radio ads also included the chorus of the song: “Loving with your lover in the evening breeze, Listen to the murmur of the Spanish oak tree, the sweet soul music brings you to your knees [pause] And the nights, they never get lonely—” In this version of the ad, the song goes into an outro after the chorus where Mexican percussion begins to play as Gary P. Nunn and back up vocalists sing “Bean Taco and harina [flour] tortilla, all night long. Bean taco and harina tortilla, Lone Star beer.” As the music fades, a saxophone begins to solo and the same announcer from the previous commercial chimes in with the same tag: “Harry Jersig’s Lone Star beer, it’s really fine.”

⁸¹ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

⁸² Gary P. Nunn, interview with author in Blanco, Texas, May 6, 2016.

⁸³ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

This Mexican-themed outro received its own separate commercial that ran the same year.⁸⁴

While the Nunn ad was running on Austin's radio stations, Texas country musicians independently added references to Lone Star beer in their songs. One example was a song featured in the December 1976 issue of the music magazine, *Country Song Roundup*, by Johnny Paycheck and Billy Sherill. The song *11 Months and 29 Days* (a country and blues song with violin, electric guitar, and harmonica) featured a male protagonist arrested in Austin for "walkin' around in a daze." After being sent to the Huntsville prison for eleven months and twenty-nine days and told to shave his face, the protagonist sings the chorus, "Keep the Lone Star cold, the dance floor hot while I'm gone. Keep the Lone Star cold, the dance floor hot while I'm gone. Keep your hands off my woman, I ain't gonna be gone for that long."⁸⁵

Another song featuring references to Lone Star beer and Texas was a 1976 Western Swing song by Red Steagall entitled, "Lone Star beer and Bob Wills Music." In this song, Steagall (befriended by Retzliff but not under any contract with Lone Star⁸⁶) opines that he's been abandoned by his "Yellow Rose of Texas" and has since felt sad and lonesome. This leads up to the chorus where he exclaims, "Lone Star beer and Bob Wills music, when I hear "Faded Love" I feel at home. Lone Star beer and Bob Wills music have kept my heart alive since you've been gone."⁸⁷ A review of the album (by the same name) in the same issue of *Country Song Roundup* notes the diversity of the

⁸⁴ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

⁸⁵ *Country Song Roundup*, (December, 1976), 19.

⁸⁶ Retzliff, interview with author in Gruene, Texas, March 11, 2016.

⁸⁷ Lyrics accessed from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdIGAZq0ZEQ> on 3/16/16

progressive country scene in Austin by saying, “As big as Texas is, there is room for all kinds of music that can be called ‘Texas Music,’ Red Steagall’s music is west Texas dancing music.”⁸⁸ The review continues that “Steagall’s salute to the king of Western swing and home grown brew, the title song of the album, sets the pace for 10 short tunes that provide the best for dances of any kind.” As a pioneer in Western swing music in Texas, Wills’ widespread influence on musicians like Steagall extended to others in the 1970s Texas music scene such as Merle Haggard, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Asleep at the Wheel, and many others.⁸⁹ In pairing the image of the “king of Western Swing” with Lone Star beer, Steagall joined with many other country musicians in reinforcing for their listeners Lone Star’s connection to the Texas mystique.

While the Lone Star Brewing Company used the Gary P. Nunn ad to create a presence in Austin radio stations and other musicians began referring to Lone Star in their lyrics, surrealist poster artists followed in the footsteps of Jim Franklin, contributing both to the Austin music scene and Lone Star’s efforts to advertise beer to it. In 1975, poster artist Sam Yeates designed his first music poster for a friend’s band and, having just moved to Austin after graduating with a degree in Fine Arts from the University of North Texas in Denton, was already hanging out in the Armadillo and living with several of its employees. Upon moving to Austin, Yeates noticed how often people advertised different brands on their clothes in a way that people in the rest of the state did not. Yeates soon found employment with the *Austin Sun* biweekly, counter-culture newspaper, while continuing to produce posters for concerts in Austin. It was while working at the *Sun* an ad salesman named Deb Stahl who introduced Yeates to Jerry Retzloff and the Lone Star

⁸⁸ *Country Song Roundup*, 45.

⁸⁹ Hartman, 146.

Brewing Company. Retzloff, as a promo manager, needed a Spring Break poster and other seasonal illustrations for posters and print ads and struck a deal with Yeates that allowed him to keep his autonomy as an artist. Yeates was totally independent and worked directly with Retzloff while having minimal or no contact with brewery personnel or advertising agencies. As Yeates recalls, “They [Lone Star beer] needed an illustration I think for the back of Spring Break. One of the big....festival, concert things. So, they needed a color illustration for the back of the program or whatever... but they needed it really quickly. And it was like this hand came out of the water holding a beer.”⁹⁰ Despite Yeates’s view that the poster was not one of his best works, getting a quality poster out on short notice for Lone Star earned him more opportunities to design and draw poster ads for the company. Yeates’ illustrations were typically found in magazines like the *Sun* or *Texas Monthly*. One poster ad, drawn in 1978 and featured in *Texas Monthly*, had a group of white horses running through shallow water at the bottom of a canyon. The rock formations at the top of the canyon sprouting naturally from the earth were in the form of electric guitars. Above the guitar shaped outline of the picture was the Lone Star logo with a variant of the same tag being used in the Lone Star radio spots at the time: “Free Spirits and Good Times with the Great Taste of Lone Star” and then at bottom of the picture: “No Place But Texas.”⁹¹

Yeates in his artwork echoed many of the same themes of Texas regionalism that Lone Star’s radio spots linked with its beer. In another poster, Yeates drew a childhood friend from Stephenville, Texas, Woody Austin, as a rodeo clown drinking a Lone Star while sitting on a barrel in the shape of a giant can of Lone Star. The connection between

⁹⁰ Sam Yeates, interview with the author, Austin, Texas, April 25, 2016.

⁹¹ Yeates personal collection shared with the author.

bull-riding rodeos and Lone Star beer was also present in a 1978 poster Yeates did for Red Steagall (a musician who was at the time doing radio ads for Lone Star) and his band, the Coleman Cowboys. In the poster, Steagall's head floats in the center of a large, wooden outline of Texas. Hanging on the outline is a lasso on his left and poster (similar to a wanted poster) of a cowboy riding a bull on his right. At the top of the picture center, on Steagall's cowboy hat, is the Lone Star insignia.⁹²

The beach was also a prominent theme in many of Yeates' posters. One such ad called "the Loch Travis Monster," featured a woman in a bikini reclining and sunbathing on an inflatable mattress in the middle of Lake Travis. In the background, a large beach party with several sailboats and a giant, inflatable can of Lone Star are present with a large group of partiers. However, the woman's hand, holding a six pack of Lone Star has slipped under the surface of the Lake. At the bottom of the picture, a giant armadillo shell is presented in a Jaws-esque fashion as if the armadillo was attracted by the free case of Lone Star. Another ad Yeates completed in 1978 (called the "Beach Partners"), had a girl posing in cut-off shorts as she stares out at the waves crashing on a Texas beach. Though only the lower portion of her body is visible in the ad, in her left hand pressed up against her shorts an aluminum can is of Lone Star beer. Rather than the traditional Lone Star logo at the top of the ad, the words "Lone Star beer" are written in an aluminum font as if to emphasize that Lone Star also comes in a can and that it is still the beer of beach parties in Texas.

⁹² Yeates personal collection shared with the author.

In an issue of the *Austin Sun* dated August 1977, an appeared by Yeates ad with three giant cans of Lone Star floating down a river with rapids in inner-tubes.⁹³ Another common ad in the *Sun* was one featuring the front-man for Western Swing revivalists Asleep at the Wheel, Ray Benson, who became a personal friend to Retzloff. In the ad, Benson is taking a break during a practice by sitting on the edge of a stage and drinking a Lone Star. A caption to his left reads, “Ray Benson from Asleep at the Wheel takes a break” while one at the bottom reads, “the Musician’s Brew.”⁹⁴ Another back cover ad from a May 1975 edition of the *Sun* featured a different prominent member of the Austin music scene, Craig Hillis, posing with a Lone Star longneck in his hand. A caption to his left simply states, “Craig Hillis, performer, producer, studio musician, beer connoisseur.”⁹⁵

Retzloff also gained an indispensable ally in his efforts when approached by perhaps the biggest Texas musician in Austin’s music scene, Willie Nelson.⁹⁶ After becoming successful in the Nashville country scene, Nelson moved back to his native Texas in 1971.⁹⁷ He took the offer of a friend, Crash Stewart, for lodging at the Lost Valley Dude Ranch in Bandera (a small town west of San Antonio in the Texas Hill Country). It was there that Nelson not only developed a love of golf, but reconnected with his Texas music roots. According to Joe Nick Patoski’s biography of Nelson, *An Epic Life*, Willie was moved by “the soft bloom of springtime in the Texas Hill Country.

⁹³ *Austin Sun* issue no. 24 (August 3 1977), back cover.

⁹⁴ *Austin Sun* Vol. 1, no. 31 (Nov 14- Dec 1, 1975): back cover

⁹⁵ *Austin Sun* Vol. 1, no. 17 (May 1-14, 1975): back cover

⁹⁶ Hector Guerra, director of advertising for Lone Star’s Austin district, also played a huge role in establishing connections with Nelson after meeting him in a gas station near Oak Hill in Austin. Hector Guerra, Interview with author, Harlingen, Texas, April 19, 2016.

⁹⁷ Joe Nick Patoski, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, (New York, Boston, and London: Back Bay Books/Little, Brown, and Company, 2008), 213.

The sight of bluebonnets painting hillsides laced with creeks and rivers and of armadillos rooting in the caliche soil, the soothing sensation of soft Gulf breezes warming the skin, accompanied by cold bottles of Lone Star and Pearl to slake thirsts, and the sweet, stinky smell of burning marijuana flower tops did a number on his head.”⁹⁸ Since he was already playing a large number of his shows in Texas, Nelson made the decision to move back permanently. He later explained “I was raised in Texas beer joints, so I went back to my old beer joints. I was home again. I knew all the club owners. I met a lot of my old waitresses that took care of me. I was back in my element.” Nelson made his Armadillo World Headquarters debut with a live performance on August 12, 1972.⁹⁹ As he appealed to both the hippies and the rednecks who saw him as an outlaw from the Nashville music scene, his 1972 performance brought many from both groups together at the Armadillo and, in the process, served as an important event in the growth of the progressive country music scene.

Nelson’s offer to Retzloff was one by which they both profited and overcame a similar problem. According to Retzloff, Nelson told him that “They won’t drink your beer because Mom and Pop drink your beer and they won’t listen to my music for the same reason.” Nelson and Retzloff worked friendly favors (which Nelson insisted on because he was concerned he would be seen as a sell-out if their deal was in writing or contractual) where “Lone Star wouldn’t pay him anything, but I would buy ads to help

⁹⁸ Patoski, 217.

⁹⁹ Gary P. Nunn, interview with the author.

promote concerts—make posters and do concerts for him like that.” In return, “he’d drink Lone Star, which he already did anyway.”¹⁰⁰

Even though Nelson was not particular when it came to drinking Pearl or Lone Star, Lone Star’s popularity was something that Nelson saw as being able to connect his music with the progressive country scene.¹⁰¹ Lone Star also supplied beer backstage to Nelson and the other musicians who played with him at their concerts. Frequently, Retzloff personally delivered the beverages which allowed Retzloff to meet and make connections with other musicians in the industry. In a May 1978 issue of *the Rocky Mountain Music Express*, the magazine mentioned the names of several musicians (in bold) that joined Nelson and his band (the Family) for a jam session. Names on the list included Charlie Daniels, Jerry Jeff Walker, Spanky McFarlane, Gary Busey (who had just played Buddy Holly in *the Buddy Holly Story*), and Roger Miller. At the end of the article, it mentions “everyone was well-oiled on the 30 cases of Lone Star beer Jerry Retzloff had imported from San Antonio.”¹⁰²

Another poster by Jim Franklin (entitled “Texas Gold”) showed an oil rig with a giant Lone Star longneck in the middle gushing forth like a geyser of Lone Star beer from some previously untapped source. Like the Texans working the oil rig in the poster, Nelson and Lone Star greatly improved sales by tapping into the progressive country scene. Dwarfing his original promise to Jersig, Retzloff raised Lone Star’s sales in Austin by forty-six percent (which amounted to a two percent bump statewide). Along with Jim Franklin’s posters and Nelson’s endorsement, Lone Star launched a huge merchandise

¹⁰⁰ Patoski, 239.

¹⁰¹ Retzloff, interview with author March 11, 2016.

¹⁰² Stephen Peebles, “Private Express.” *Rocky Mountain Music Express* (May 1978), 28.

campaign with bumper stickers, shirts, jackets, belt buckles, hats, and hat pins all with the Lone Star logo. Magazine ads were frequent in local Austin publications like the *Austin Sun* where young people could also see a list of what performers were playing where across the city. The May 1975 issue of the *Sun* had a Lone Star ad on the back cover that features an empty pair of cowboy boots with an opened Lone Star longneck sitting on a log with tall brush behind it. In the upper left corner is the quote from the Michael Murphey song “Cosmic Cowboy:” “Lone Star sippin’ an’ skinny dippin’...”¹⁰³

Lone Star had no problem recruiting musicians to support its ad campaign with Willie Nelson symbolically on board. Nelson, after ditching the Nashville look for long hair, jeans, and a beard, became the most popular performer of the progressive country scene. *Billboard* rankings for the month of October 1975 listed Willie Nelson’s “Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain” as the number one hit single (staying on the chart at the time for thirteen weeks) and his album *Red-Headed Stranger* as the number one LP (staying in the chart at that time for seventeen weeks). The magazine also featured a regional breakdown that listed “Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain” as the number one single for San Antonio (Austin was not listed on the breakdown, but this is notable because San Antonio is also a part of the Central Texas area).¹⁰⁴ For Nelson, the success of the album *Red-Headed Stranger* meant more than just commercial success but a definitive statement of independence from the Nashville scene and his old record label, RCA. Rather than following the directions of a Nashville producer, Nelson, with full creative control, created an emotionally complex concept album about a former preacher turned Western outlaw (who shot his wife after catching her with another man) seeking redemption and

¹⁰³ *Austin Sun* Vol. 1, no. 17 (May, 1975): back cover

¹⁰⁴ *Billboard* (October 1975): 60.

love while on the run from the law in the West.¹⁰⁵ The album was also notable for using acoustic ballads with few accompanying instruments rather than a full backup band. Gaining success with his distinct songwriting and ability to connect with an audience, Nelson bucked the trends and solidified his reputation as an authentic, country music outlaw.

While radio ads from the 1970s advertised Lone Star beer, Lone Star also found ways to contribute to live events featuring progressive country artists. Starting on the July fourth weekend in 1973, Nelson threw a music festival he called his “4th of July Picnic” outside of the small town of Dripping Springs, Texas for which Budweiser sold concessions.¹⁰⁶ The Dripping Springs festival was beset by problems such as overcrowding and terrible amounts of traffic. Undeterred, Nelson decided to hold another “4th of July Picnic” for 1974 at the Texas World Speedway near College Station, Texas this time collaborating with Lone Star beer. The company not only provided free beer backstage to performers but sponsored the event through radio spots, print media, and posters. Aside from Nelson, other musicians (most from the progressive country scene) who performed at the festival included Leon Russell, Floyd Tillman (who performed with Freda and the Firedogs), Jerry Jeff Walker and the Lost Gonzo Band, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Doug Kershaw, Doug Sahm, Greezy Wheels, B.W. Stevenson, Michael Murphey, Steve Fromholz, and several others (many showing up only with purported notes written by Nelson saying they could play).¹⁰⁷ Retzlöff worked backstage beer hospitality for the

¹⁰⁵ Michael Streissguth, *Outlaw: Waylon, Willie, Kris, and the Renegades of Nashville* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers), 180-184.

¹⁰⁶ Retzlöff, March 11, 2016 interview.

¹⁰⁷ Patoski, 187. A tag is a short addition to a commercial that, in the case of Willie’s Fourth of July Picnic, encouraged Lone Star drinkers to go out to Willie’s festival.

performers and occasionally wandered out into the audience to get a feel for the festival. Under Retzloff's direction and with the support of Sullivan, Lone Star's presence permeated the concert. A photo by Texas A&M graduate student Terence Preston Yorks (who created a photo montage of the entire three-day festival) shows a sign for the picnic a little over one and a half miles from the festival with a large Lone Star logo on the left side marking an endorsement of the event.¹⁰⁸ As writer and professor William C. Martin walked up to the festival, he noted that the landscape was "barren of trees or other shade" and was surprised to see mostly hippies around the average age of twenty-five. "I began to realize that I stood out, because I was wearing an honest-to-goodness western shirt with pearl grippers and, at age 36, I was a Senior Citizen." In contrast, the dress chosen for most "dudes" at the festival was that of Levi blue jeans and sleeveless shirt while "chicks" mostly wore shorts and halters. Many in the crowd wore hats reflecting their beer of choice, Lone Star.¹⁰⁹ Reflecting Lone Star's endorsement (and preparedness for the large number of young people expected to attend), storage sheds were packed with large quantities of Lone Star beer. Yorks's timeline places Willie and the Family as the opening act to the festival who were able to relax and win over the crowd despite the heat up in the nineties. During Nelson's set, a fan had tossed up a Pearl beer on to the stage for him to drink. While wearing a Lone Star hat, Nelson held the beer up towards the audience and took a large sip of Pearl to the applause and laughter of the audience.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Terence Preston Yorks, *Silver Eagles Taking Flight: Willie Nelson's 'Picnic,'* (text copyrighted 1989 and 1994, photograph copyrighted 1974 and 1994) accessed at the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University November, 2014, photos 1-2.

¹⁰⁹ William C. Martin, "Growing Old at Willie's Picnic," in *Growing Old at Willie's Picnic and Other Sketches of Life in the Southwest*, ed. Ronald B. Querry (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983), 182.

¹¹⁰ Yorks, photo 6, 7, 22-23, 32, 38-39, 47.

After the festival, Retzloff (who sold merchandise at the festival with his wife Sally out of a van parked in the middle of the festival dubbed the “Love Machine.”) documented in a company memo that Lone Star sold “1,000 cases compared to Schlitz 200 and Pearl 100” at the concert and 2,000 cases sold in the towns of Bryan and College Station just in that weekend. The biggest bonus for Lone Star at Willie’s picnic was the goodwill built up personally by Retzloff with many of the musicians by simply offering Lone Star longnecks and hospitality backstage. “The effect of this will be seen in nightclubs and dancehalls across the state for months to come. The entertainers sincerely appreciated this and told me so on numerous occasions. Due to this, Lone Star was mentioned on stage continuously by them in front of the crowd and on the videotape being made there.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Spong, 129.

IV: TEXAS TRILOGY: THE CHANGING PERSONALITY OF TEXAS BEER

During the 1970s, Lone Star beer sought to give its product a novelty or personality that could appeal to the changing social climate of the state of Texas. In promoting itself as the drink of progressive country, Lone Star's advertising of the Texas mystique during this period expanded the traditional perceptions of being Texan to include a younger, urban, and more liberal audience. Marketing their products to this audience would only work if it was not blatant (or in Retzloff's words "It wouldn't work if Nelson looked like some bought-off whore."¹¹²) and Retzloff and Nelson had autonomy to market themselves the way they wanted. To better cater to their market, both of them changed their appearances. Originally, both were clean-cut, shaven, and professionally dressed (Willie followed the dress-code expected of Nashville performers, while Retzloff followed the dress-code laid out by Harry Jersig at Lone Star), but they quickly changed to beards, jeans, and cowboy hats.¹¹³ This style was in line with the "Cosmic Cowboy" image used by the young people in Austin during the 1970s. A cartoon by Doug Marlette, originally printed in May 1976, poked fun at the perceived differences in the progressive country fans (or the "Kosmic Cowboys"), the traditional country fans, and that "Amazingly, the Austin sound has managed to bring together bitter enemies, freaks and rednecks!" The Traditional Country fan had close-cropped hair, bloodshot eyes, cigar, a perpetually flushed, red neck, a "cheatin' but sentimental heart,"

¹¹² Spong, 126.

¹¹³ Box 2 Folder 3, G. F. Jerry Retzloff Collection, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University.

worn overalls, white socks, work shoes, a blue ribbon beer, and, as a result, a blue ribbon beer gut. The progressive country fan is stylistically different with a ten gallon hat, long hair, hash-addled brain with glazed eyes, one earring, a “throat hoarse from rebel yells,” rhinestone studs, a funny looking “cigarette,” pre-faded blue jeans, genuine cowboy boots (that according to Marlette are actually made in Japan), the optional choice of spurs, and a Lone Star beer.¹¹⁴

The distinction between Lone Star as the beer of hippies and Pearl as the beer of rednecks was one that certain members of the Austin scene played up. In a 1973 *Texas Monthly* article entitled “Farewell to LBJ: A Hill Country Valediction,” Billy Porterfield gave an account of Lyndon Johnson’s funeral in the former president’s native Johnson City, located in the Texas Hill Country. Although Porterfield gave many tokens of respect to the controversial president, he added that in speech making he was a “bore on the podium” reminding Porterfield of “Somebody’s middle-class Masonic Uncle, beaming a benign conservatism through his bifocals” and “pressing your flesh and looking you in the eye, or at his leisure with a Pearl beer in one hand.”¹¹⁵ However, both Lone Star and Pearl (both with breweries in San Antonio) saw their main competitors as the out of state beer companies such as Budweiser or Schlitz. Several musicians in the progressive country scene, such as Doug Sahm, were enthusiastic Pearl drinkers, while Pearl and Lone Star employees (salesmen and factory workers) frequently socialized

¹¹⁴ Doug Marlette, “Ironies of the hippie/redneck wars,” *Country Music* vol 10, no 1 (September 1981): 48. Originally published in May 1976.

¹¹⁵ Bill Porterfield, “Farewell to LBJ: A Hill Country Valediction,” *Texas Monthly* volume 1, issue 4 (May 1973): 37.

outside of business hours. Union members for both companies frequently had meetings at the Pearl Brewery during conflicts with upper management.¹¹⁶

According to the reviewers, the connection between Texas, Lone Star beer, and country music was something real and natural. Given the connection between Texas and successful businessmen (documented previously by Bainbridge) and that Lone Star was a Texas company, the idea did not sound artificial in many people's minds since they saw Lone Star as a regional company with roots in Texas. An October 1974 edition of *Pearl* (a monthly supplement to the University of Texas newspaper the *Daily Texan*) captured this attitude in an article called "The Texas Beer Trilogy."¹¹⁷ The article (made of four smaller articles) was from a trip that four staff writers took in one day to the Lone Star, Pearl, and Shiner breweries to find some real—in the words of one of the magazine's writers Joe Nick Patoski—"Texana" and its connection with beer.¹¹⁸ Writer Dan Jones described the different mystiques surrounding Texas beers saying that "for the earthier types, the Texas beers are indispensable. Lone Star is for the person that takes his earthiness too seriously. A Lone Star career drinker eventually graduates to Pearl. This is far down the road, though, and only the serious image-mongers drink Pearl for status reasons. Shiner is the pseudo-redneck favorite, although it also enjoys an equally if not more loyal following among oldsters who have drunk Shiner for years." This view of commodity as an expression of personality is further emphasized when Jones ends his assessment with the warning, "Be careful not to pick a beer that clashes with your

¹¹⁶ Jimmy Beock, interview with author, San Antonio, April 26, 2016.

¹¹⁷ Dan Jones, Don Parrish, Chris Child, and Joe Nick Patoski. "Texas Beer Trilogy." *Pearl* vol. 3, 2 (October 1974): 18-21.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 19.

personality— the results could be disastrous. Weigh the merits of each carefully, and if you're successful, settle in for a long and happy life behind the bottle.”¹¹⁹

Comparing the Lone Star Brewery with Shiner and Pearl, the writers gave Lone Star the title, “the Disneyland of Texas breweries” because of their focus on merchandise and image. As Floyd Schneider, Lone Star’s vice-president for public relations, explained in an interview, “We are a public relations oriented company.” After noting their aggressive marketing campaign, Chris Child also credited Lone Star beer with “personality behind it.” Childs described owner Harry Jersig as living up to the slogan “for the Big Country” in that Jersig “is an outdoorsman, a hunter, an aggressive businessman— a Texas stud.” Explaining the shift in marketing towards the younger crowd, Schneider explained, “Yeah, we’re changin’. We’re a young company, we can still do that. So we’re going after the young people, that critical mass of people. They move around. People who don’t move around don’t drink beer. We’re not running away from cowboys though – no not that. We want to make a profit; we’re profit oriented. But we’re also people oriented.” Childs also observed that, unlike Spoetzel brewery’s touched-by-man brewing (used to make Shiner), the Lone Star beer is not brewed by people but by “an analog computer, which automatically brews, funnels, cans, and takes the fun out of producing the 1.5 million barrels a year. But it is more efficient. And profitable.”¹²⁰

Until 1965, when it was surpassed by Lone Star, Pearl beer was the dominant beverage out of the three regional beers. However, Joe Nick Patoski noted that the reason

¹¹⁹ Jones, Childs, and Patoski, 18.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 20.

for this shift was not competition from Shiner or Lone Star, but from mega-beers (Coors, Budweiser, and Schlitz) that had moved into the Texas area. Pearl's Director of Civic Affairs, Bob Marsh, explained that "We don't want to knock Lone Star out. We don't want to knock little Shiner out. We want to knock out Schlitz, Budweiser, and Coors. If the Texas beers don't hurry up and get together, we're all going to go under. There used to be over 2,000 breweries in the U.S., now it's down to about 124. Schlitz, Budweiser, and Miller came down here and opened up these.... factories. Just a few men operating those massive machines." Marsh prided the Texas beers for having real breweries employing Texans with "strong in Union association" making the beer.¹²¹

At the end of the "Beer Trilogy" segment is another beer-related article by Lamont Wood entitled, "Pearl's Near-Great Beer Tasting Jamboree." According to the article, Pearl hosted a beer-tasting event in Fall of 1974 at Hector's Taco Flats on 5200 North Lamar in Austin to decide "for all eternity which Texas beer would be honored as 'numero uno.'" Acting as judges at the event were several Austin celebrities including Alvin Crow (of the band the Pleasant Valley Boys), Jeff Jones (1970 UT student body president and "famous radical of the evening"), Sue Doty (owner of Austin's drug crisis intervention center, Middle Earth), Judy Hutchinson (former weather-person of KTBC), Jim Franklin (artist for the Armadillo World Headquarters and the Lone Star beer ad campaign), and Hector Alvarado (the owner of Hector's Taco Flats). Wood described that "the judges were to receive three unmarked glasses of beer which they were to rate under the headings of aroma, flavor, color, fizz potential, heaviness, giddiness, and kidney

¹²¹ Jimmy Beock, interview with author, San Antonio, April 26, 2016.

excitation. Each criteria would get a number of one through six, one meaning disgusting, six meaning better than sex.”¹²²

While judges scored each of the three beers of Texas, the audience had given the opportunity to vote with cheers or boos. Wood noted that the crowd “seemed to prefer Lone Star in first place, Shiner in second, and Pearl last.” Opposite the audience, the judges (unaware of what they were drinking) placed “Pearl in first place, Shiner in second, and Lone Star last.” Whether this decision was considered controversial by the crowd at Hector’s Taco Flats is not mentioned. Wood ended his account by saying that “the affair quickly broke up after this historic revelation, the judges and spectators going back into the littleness of themselves, each aware that for at least one moment in his life he had been part of something infinitely larger than the mundane affairs of dreary living. Such is the making history.”¹²³

Other 1975 ads used the Gary P. Nunn song, “The Nights, They Never Get Lonely” in different styles or with revised lyrics from African-American and Mexican-American viewpoints. In this way, Lone Star beer in its marketing expanded the image of being “Texan” beyond the traditional vision to include other groups. However, the advertising was a part of Lone Star’s appeal to the rapidly growing, young and mostly Anglo progressive country scene and not a direct attempt to expand Lone Star’s appeal into African-American and Mexican-American markets. Still, in appealing to progressive country fans (both hippies and rednecks), Lone Star inadvertently pushed a more inclusive, metropolitan vision of the Texas mystique. Furthermore, focusing on a

¹²² Lamont Wood, “Pearl’s Near-Great Beer Tasting Jamboree” *Pearl* vol. 3, 2 (October 1974), 21.

¹²³ Wood, 21.

younger, Anglo audience did not mean Lone Star's marketing efforts cut squarely along racial lines. In San Antonio, Austin, and other major Texas cities, delivery routes continued to take Lone Star drivers to stores and bars in neighborhoods where older Anglos, African Americans, and Mexican Americans lived in order to sell beer.

One remake of Gary P. Nunn's "The Nights They Never Get Lonely" was a blues style rendition performed by the African-American blues guitarist, Freddie King (known as the "Texas Cannonball"), who was a frequent performer at the Armadillo World Headquarters and was known for hit songs like "Hideaway," "Going Down," and "Have You Ever Loved a Woman?"¹²⁴ King's version featured an original third verse to the song not present in Nunn's original version: "Bring your body over here next to mine baby. Bring some Lone Star beer let me tell you. The nights never get lonely." King's rendition of the song also featured a modified chorus that reflected an urban setting to the song rather than a rural one: "Love with your lover, dancing in the breeze. Listen to the mommas on the old main street. Sweet soul music bring you to your knees... And the nights never get lonely." The song then fades as female back-up vocalists sing a modified version of Nunn's outro: "Bean tacos and some chili, all night long. Bean tacos and some chili, Lone Star beer."¹²⁵

Similar versions of "The Nights Never Get Lonely" were also performed by African-American country-pop group, the Pointer Sisters (who were also popular performers at Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnic in 1974 at Bryan, Texas), and the Onda

¹²⁴ Hartman, 83.

¹²⁵ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

Chicana orquesta, Sunny and the Sunliners in Spanish.¹²⁶ Like Freddie King, the Pointer Sisters and the Sunliners worked directly through TYNA/TACI instead of an independent producer.¹²⁷ Freddie King also wrote an original blues song for an ad that ran the same year as his “The Nights, They Never Get Lonely” rendition. In the song, called “Bring Your Body,” King sung an ode to Lone Star beer with improvised electric guitar interspersed between his spoken word pitch to the viewer: “Hey. Look here. What’s happening. I’m Freddie King and that means I drink Lone Star beer. Right on. Play some guitar, make it pretty. Give me a beef taco and some chili. Mmm... all night long!” The song ends with the same line sung by woman vocalists and the announcer chiming in with the Harry Jersig tag. The following year in 1976, Freddie King passed away from bleeding ulcers and heart failure at the age of 42. A tragically early death cut King’s career short and limited the amount of popular notoriety he could have received from his collaboration with Lone Star beer.¹²⁸

While Lone Star radio ads featuring African-American and Mexican-American musicians lacked a direct political connotation (a complaint many leveled at progressive country as a genre¹²⁹), they were a more inclusive cultural revision of the pastoral and traditional visions of the Texas mystique. Despite Lone Star’s metropolitan rebranding of the Texas mystique, other beer companies during the 1970s, notably the JAX Brewing Company and Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company, were already able to successfully

¹²⁶ Peña, 173-175. While originally known for their rock and roll styled pop hit “Talk to Me” from 1963, Sunny Ozuna reformed the Sunliners and, by 1974, changed their style to reflect the emerging Chicano movement. During the 1970s, bands like Sunny and the Sunliners and Little Joe and La Familia fused elements of swing-jazz with traditional conjunto music to show pride in their Mexican roots in a way similar to Progressive Country musicians.

¹²⁷ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹²⁸ Hartman, 83.

¹²⁹ Mellard, 89-90.

market and earn the brand loyalty among African-American and Mexican-American markets (JAX beer with African Americans and Schlitz beer with Mexican Americans).¹³⁰ As the assistant sales manager for Lone Star in Austin, Hector Guerra recalled of the Mexican-American market, “Back then the biggest competition was Schlitz. That’s why we had very little success with the Mexican market. Because their warehouse was in East Austin and all the Chicanos drank Schlitz. That was their beer.”¹³¹ However, Lone Star delivery routes and salesmen in the city of Austin (such as Julian Vasquez, Johnny Garza, and Robert Mackey) crossed I-35 to the African-American and Mexican-American east side of town to directly sell Lone Star to popular bars and venues. As Guerra recalls:

They would go to the Mexican-American markets in the state of Texas and they would come into town and we would go, strictly Austin, to Mexican bars. They’d sit there and buy them beer. Never forced anybody. They would never say, I’ll buy you a Lone Star by the bottle. They’d say, I’ll buy you a Pearl or I’ll buy you a Schlitz or I’ll buy—compliments of Lone Star... Sometimes they appreciated it and sometime they didn’t. That’s how you play the game.¹³²

Outside of the Austin market, Lone Star brought and broadcasted Spanish language radio spots and had a distributorship on the west side of San Antonio headed by Pete Morales who specifically targeted Mexican-American customers who were willing to try another brand of beer. Marketing efforts for Lone Star also expanded into African-American markets. Aside from Freddie King and the Pointer Sisters, Guerra recalled that

¹³⁰ Jerry Retzliff, interview with author, Gruene, Texas March 11, 2016.

¹³¹ Hector Guerra, Interview with author, Harlingen, Texas, April 19, 2016. According to Jerry Retzliff, the price of Schlitz gave the company a huge advantage among the Mexican-American market. Retzliff recalls seeing an HEB in 1973 in the town of Del Rio priced at fifty-nine cents a six-pack as opposed to Lone Star’s seventy cents per six-pack.

¹³² Ibid.

Lone Star worked with “several African-American artists. Gatemouth Brown would come into town.” Aside from Antone’s and the One Knite, Guerra identified the East 11th Street club, Charlie’s Playhouse, as “a very well-known black club over on East Austin.” However, Guerra noted that “there were more whites in the place than there were blacks because they loved the black music. They’d go over there from the University [University of Texas].” Previously in 1959, Charlie’s Playhouse was the site of tremendous controversy as so many white college students crossed I-35 to go there on Friday and Saturday nights to see the in-house band, younger African Americans could not get into the club. As *Village* editor Tommy Wyatt recalled in a later interview about the music scene on East 11th, “many of the students, particularly from Huston-Tillotson [University] and so forth, didn’t think that was quite right you know. That we couldn’t go into any club on the west side, but yet we couldn’t go to our own clubs on the east side on Friday and Saturday night.”¹³³ As a result, African-American college students started picketing outside Charlie’s Playhouse on Friday and Saturday night which resulted in the white, University of Texas students going to other clubs. While integration in Austin benefited the African-American community by allowing whites and blacks to cross I-35 to the other side, the traditionally black east side of town (originally segregated by city planners)¹³⁴ still felt strain and tension as Austin saw an influx of young, white college students moving to the city.

¹³³ Michael Corcoran, “East Austin memories: blacks picketed Charlie’s Playhouse for catering to UT students on weekends,” accessed on 9/3/2016 at <http://www.michaelcorcoran.net/archives/2022>.

¹³⁴ *Handbook of Texas Online*, David C. Humphrey, “Austin, TX (Travis County),” accessed August 22, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hda03>. Uploaded on June 9, 2010. Modified on July 7, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

V: PASTORAL TEXAS AND THE WANDERLUST OF THE MODERN TEXAS: LONE STAR POST-HARRY JERSIG

In 1975, the Washington-based brewing company, Olympia, bought the Lone Star Brewing Company and Harry Jersig retired. Despite Jersig no longer working for the company, Lone Star temporarily continued to advertise itself as Harry Jersig's beer both as a sign of respect to Jersig and to keep the image of being a Texas beer with a strong personality behind it.¹³⁵ Although the change in ownership was the start of a new era for Lone Star, Olympia adopted a hands-off approach to its product that allowed Barry Sullivan and Jerry Retzloff to continue advertising Lone Star to the Austin music scene with full autonomy. In 1976, Lone Star beer no longer collaborated with TYNA/TACI as Jerry Retzloff and an advertising firm called Keye, Donna, Pearlstein shared in producing and recording radio spot ads and handled television marketing. In this section, I will analyze the diverse range of musicians who worked with Lone Star, the instrumental styles used by the performers, and the lyrical themes in Lone Star's radio ads in the post-Jersig era in order to identify how Lone Star's marketing campaigns changed in the mid-to-late 1970s. Two prominent themes that appeared in Lone Star ads from 1976 to 1978 were pastoral connections to the mythic Texas past and the traveling Texan that misses home after adventuring abroad. Both radio ad themes presented Lone Star beer as a drink that allowed the consumer to reenact the pioneer, cowboy past in a modern Texas.

The first theme I am going to analyze in this section is that of pastoral Texas from 1976 to 1977. In 1976, the Lone Star Brewing Company expanded its radio ads to include a wider range of musicians performing original compositions beyond doing different

¹³⁵ Guerra interview with author.

renditions of the Gary P. Nunn's "The Nights, They Never Get Lonely." While Retzloff ran Lone Star radio spots, Lone Star attracted musicians such as Commander Cody, Asleep at the Wheel, Rusty Wier, Steve Fromholtz, Navasota, Jimmy Rabbit, Freddy Fender, Calico, Sammi Smith, and Darryl McCall to perform songs in them.¹³⁶ However, the radio ads were not all contractual agreements, but in most cases musicians willingly volunteering to do the campaign (often after meeting Jerry Retzloff and becoming friends) in return for getting paid an amount equal to their previous year's highest paying gig and exposure.¹³⁷ Ads recorded in 1976 frequently continued to use the "Harry Jersig's Lone Star beer" tag at the end of their recordings but the line after was changed from "it's really fine" to "no place but Texas." Some radio spots lacked any tag at the end of their commercials at all and allowed the musicians to continue performing their original songs.

The year 1976 marked the first year where radio spots featured comedic skits performed by studio personalities that were crafted to appeal to the progressive country scene by utilizing pastoral characters and imagery. A series of Lone Star radio ads were produced by San Antonio radio personality Woody Roberts and ran from 1975 to 1976.¹³⁸ These ads featured a fictional country club called the Bunkhouse owned by a cowboy named 'Ramblin' Rose' and his band, the Sons of the Bunkhouse. In the first ad in the series, Rose announces to the rest of the Bunkhouse the news of their new sponsor, Lone Star beer: "Howdy. Howdy to all you folks out there gathered around on your radios. This here's the old Ramblin' Rose lookin' through my speakers at all you country kickers and pot lickers." A group of guys and girls begin to cheer and holler in the background as

¹³⁶ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹³⁷ Retzloff, March 11, 2016 interview.

¹³⁸ Retzloff interview with author, San Antonio, Texas June 6, 2016.

Rose continues: “Me and the Sons of the Bunkhouse out here learned us a new tune now didn’t we boys?” The band responds with a “Yeah!” before Rose announces their new sponsor: “We learned it for a new sponsor, Mr. Lone Star beer. [Cheers]” Rose then cues the band with a “Y’all ready? Me too.” Instead of a live band playing an original song played by a live band, the outro to Gary P. Nunn’s “The Nights, They Never Stay Lonely” plays. Ramblin’ Rose then delivers the line at the end of the commercial, “Y’all keep them cards and letters comin’! You keep on sipping Harry Jersig’s Lone Star beer. It’s really fine.”¹³⁹

Different ads in the Ramblin’ Rose series featured Rose and the cowboys at the Bunkhouse celebrating an album debut party, Lone Star’s returnable bottles or longnecks, and several different holidays including: Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Halloween, Christmas, and New Year’s Day. Most of these ads feature the Gary P. Nunn recording at the end of the song although a few also give the Freddie King or Freddie Fender renditions of the same song. Although the Bunkhouse is a fictional setting with a fictional band, this series of ads promoted Lone Star in a similar fashion to how it was being promoted in the progressive country scene. In their “New Album” ad where the fictional Bunkhouse band has an album debut party, Ramblin’ Rose and his band announces the name of the new album to be *Long Live Longnecks* after the slogan Jim Franklin produced for Lone Star beer. However, when the announcer asks the band where they got the name for their album from, Rose replies “Red, you see me and the

¹³⁹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

Sons have been drinking Lone Star beer for many years. We've just come to feel that nothing beats a Lone Star beer in a long cold bottle.”¹⁴⁰

In 1976, Keye, Donna, Pearlstein introduced a radio ad that featured for the first time country music performer Rusty Wier singing a song that also used Franklin's slogan, “Long Live Longnecks.” This song, recorded in a live venue format, extended Jim Franklin's long live longnecks slogan to all the good things that come naturally from the Lone Star state: “Long live the armadillo and them cosmic cowboys. Long live the Texas women, don't you know they're the real McCoys. Long live the rodeo and the longhorn steer. Long live longnecks and Lone Star beer.” At the mention of “Lone Star beer,” the cheers from an audience in the recording grows louder and Wier continues, “Long live longnecks and Lone Star beer. On the long hot Texas summers and the chilly winters too. So come on everybody, let's all give a cheer. Long live longnecks and Lone Star beer.” To end the commercial, Wier yodels the line “Long live longnecks and Lone Star beer” as the commercial fades with the roaring applause of the audience.¹⁴¹

Before 1976, Wier gained fame in the Austin music scene as an energetic live performer who brought a rock and roll attitude to country music.¹⁴² Wier's popularity can be seen in the fact that in the mid-seventies, he produced three different albums while performing in Austin: *Stoned, Slow, Rugged* (1974), *Don't It Make You Wanna Dance* (1975), and *Black Hat Saloon* (1976).¹⁴³ Although working with Keye, Donna, Pearlstein to produce his ads for Lone Star, Wier was also friends with Jerry Retzloff and performed

¹⁴⁰ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Reid, 169-173

¹⁴³ Obituary by Michael Corcoran, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/statesman/obituary.aspx?n=Rusty-Wier&pid=134202032#sthash.Y4T5mm6o.dpuf>. Austin American Statesman, accessed June 29, 2016.

on more than one occasion at Lone Star sales meetings.¹⁴⁴ Wier recorded a second ad for Lone Star that played on the radio in 1976 called “Sing it With CS (Country Song)” and was done in the style of a Southern Rock song with heavy electric guitar. The song links Lone Star beer with pastoral imagery to describe Texas as a place for music and good times: “Singin’ me a song in guitar heaven. Sittin’ ‘neath the Texas sky, stars are shining on me. Yeah, it makes me feel free and it gives me that Lone Star high.”¹⁴⁵ After using the same popular phrase from the original Gary P. Nunn song (“Lone Star high”), Wier emphasizes his pride of being a native born Texan and his preference for Lone Star beer: “I’m Texas born and raised on cold Lone Star. I sing a happy song. Hey, hey my friend. Everybody join in. C’mon and sing a long.” At this point in the song, the band and audience sing in unison, “Sing it with a Lone Star smile, sing a happy song. Smile and sing before it’s too late. C’mon and sing along. Sing it with a Lone Star smile, sing a happy song. Yeah smile and sing before it’s too late. C’mon and sing along.”

Another 1976 Lone Star ad featured a country waltz by B.W. Stevenson called “Old Grady” that continued the theme of partying with a heavy communal emphasis on sharing and fellowship. Stevenson was a former music student at the University of North Texas and later Cooke County Junior College who, after serving a brief period in the Air Force, was regularly playing shows in the Austin music scene by the mid-1970s.¹⁴⁶ With hits like “Say What I Feel” and “Texas Morning” (both recorded off of his second self-titled album on the RCA label) and hit 1973 singles “Shambala” and “My Maria,” Stevenson was already a successful musician by the time of his 1976 collaboration with

¹⁴⁴ Jerry Retzliff, interview with author, June 21, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁴⁶ Reid, 129-132.

Lone Star. In “Old Grady,” Stevenson does not specify who the character Old Grady is, but the listener does get the idea of him being an older cowboy and a friend to Stevenson. With an older cowboy at the party, the party-goers seemingly have a connection to the mythic Texas past. The listener is encouraged to throw away his worries and join the group:

Come sit down beside me compadre. Don’t you give me that left ear stare.
There’s plenty for everybody. There’s plenty for all to share. I don’t know
whether you meant it. Said you don’t buy beer you just rent it. I’ll show you good
times without whiskey or wine and know you won’t ever forget it. Find a couple
of ladies for me and Old Grady and a pitcher of Lone Star beer.¹⁴⁷

The year 1976 also marked a refinement in the format of Lone Star radio ads as they predominantly featured a song performed by a band to a cheering audience. Commercials typically started with the band playing their song and then having an announcer introduce them as if they were the headlining performers at a concert. One such ad featured a bluesy, disco tinged hard rock song with heavy bass and electric guitars by the band Navasota, a blues-rock band named after a small Texas town that gained popularity after the release of an album in 1972 called *Rootin’*.¹⁴⁸ After being announced, the lead singer of Navasota, Richard “Dicky” Sony, sings about getting a group together for a rowdy night of fun: “Won’t y’all come out tonight? With that moon shining bright! [guitar lick] We’re going to beat this crowd and let somebody choose it right.” Emphasizing that the group is partying in a small Texas town, Sony continues with “We’ll drink some old Lone Star, then we’ll go out through this town!” before

¹⁴⁷ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁴⁸ “Navasota,” Bad Cat Records, Accessed at <http://badcatrecords.com/BadCat/NAVASOTA.htm> on June 29, 2016.

ending the song with the line “be my Lone Star woman tonight. We’ll beat the morning light!” The song ends with the tag “Harry Jersig’s Lone Star beer. No place but Texas.”¹⁴⁹

Another radio ad featured famous Dallas disc jockey and musician, Jimmy Rabbitt (real name Eddy Payne, originally from Tyler, Texas), playing a country song called “Sundown at Sarah’s” with twangy electric and slide guitars. Jimmy Rabbitt was originally known for his British invasion, garage rock band from the 1960s but, after a move to the California music scene, rebranded his style in the form of a progressive country band called Jimmy Rabbit and the Renegade.¹⁵⁰ After the music starts in the ad, an announcer with a heavy country accent announces Jimmy Rabbitt and his band by saying “Well, everybody knows Jimmy Rabbit!” On cue, Rabbit sings the opening verse about meeting up with a group of friends at Sarah’s, a popular West Austin dive bar called Dry Creek Café owned by bartender Sarah Ransom,¹⁵¹ in West Austin for a night of fun, music, and beer: “Come to sundown in Austin time to head out Sarah’s way. The river’s got a glow and the jukebox starts to play. Ole Elm, was lookin’ there along with me and all the band. Together on the jukebox in this rockin’ country land.” While the lyrics of the song clearly represent a 1970s Austin setting, the mention of a meeting at sundown for a party and the country instrumentation of the song conjures back to an outlaw setting from a mythic Texas past. After setting the scene, Jimmy Rabbitt places Lone Star beer into the story: “With Lone Star on the table, just where it ought to be. The

¹⁴⁹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁵⁰ “Bio and Musicagraphy: Jimmy Rabbitt, Alias “The Rabbitt”, aka Eddy Payne” accessed on August 20, 2016, <http://www.therabbittreport.com/>.

¹⁵¹ John Kelso, “Sarah Ransom Obituary,” *Austin-American Statesman*. Accessed on October 28, 2016, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/statesman/obituary.aspx?n=Sarah-Ransom&pid=126315628>.

fields are home with Sarah, just Ole Elm, Rick and me. Well, the Sun goes down at Sarah's and the way across the room, you can hear Ole Elm, Rick, and me a howlin' at the moon." The song ends with "Yeah, we're all there at Sarah's just a howlin' at the moon" and the "No place but Texas" announcer's tag.¹⁵²

1976 was also the first year with Lone Star ads that featured Western swing songs done by Commander Cody (George Frayne), from the popular band Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen, and Asleep at the Wheel (a band known in the Austin scene for bringing back the sound of Texas icon Bob Wills).¹⁵³ Originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen was a rock band that frequently played energetic Western swing music in Austin and even recorded a famous live album at the Armadillo World Headquarters in 1973 called *Live From Deep in the Heart of Texas*.¹⁵⁴ Commander Cody, the band's piano player and vocalist, had by this point moved on from the band to pursue a solo career while maintaining his stage name. In his song, "Tall Cool Lone Star," Commander Cody delivers rapid-fire vocals about drinking Lone Star beer with appeals to working-class Anglo Texans and partying with friends in a Western Swing style similar to his former band: "Down in Texas in the noon day sun. Working all day and lookin' for fun. When I buy beer, you know the one. Talkin' about Lone Star. Tall cool Lone Star." Cody continues, "When the time is telling me what road is gettin' worn. Good tasting Lone Star beer. I'll try to wave my thirst good-bye." After repeating the last line two more times, Cody encourages the listener to "Pop that top, sit back down. Call your buddies from all over town. Open 'em up, pass 'em around." Cody

¹⁵² Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁵³ Hartman, 112.

¹⁵⁴ Reid, 82-82.

then repeats the chorus with back-up vocals: “Tall cool Lone Star. Tall cool Lone Star. Nature’s way of telling you your throat is gettin’ dry. Good tasting Lone Star beer. Pop a top and wave your blues good-bye.” After repeating the “pop your top line” several times, Cody ends the song in spoken word by delivering the line “Good-bye blues, hello Lone Star.”¹⁵⁵

The first 1976 ad to feature a female country musician was “Sammi’s Song” by singer and songwriter Sammi Smith, a performer who was friends with Willie Nelson (and was even married for a time to his guitar player, Jody Payne)¹⁵⁶ and collaborated with many “Outlaw” Country acts. Smith and other female country musicians followed a parallel tradition of feminine Anglo-Texan performers that mirrored the masculine tradition that dominated the progressive country scene.¹⁵⁷ Although not radical or revisionist like the burgeoning Austin feminist movement, this “cowgirl” tradition heavily mirrored the Texas cowboy tradition in independent swagger, a love of good times and partying, and a desire for a lover of the opposite gender. In the Lone Star radio spot, Smith is introduced to the crowd by the announcer as “the lovely Sammi Smith!” and begins to sing a seductive country ballad addressed to a Lone Star drinking cowboy. Notably, while male singers in progressive country songs are often suitors wanting a lover to lead, Smith makes a case for being led with a seductive, sensual style that a male suitor might find impossible to resist: “Where do you want to go? Will you take me along? ‘Cause I’ll pour you Lone Star, I’ll start your old car, and I’ll learn all your songs. ‘Cause you make me feel like dancing. Feel like clickin’ my heels.” After

¹⁵⁵ Retzlloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁵⁶ Reid, 226.

¹⁵⁷ Mellard, 110.

describing how her romantic interest makes her feel, she continues, “This is the place but honey let’s face it. There’s something about you that appeals [band stops as Smith holds out the note with a seductive sigh] to my better nature. I appreciate the ride. And you’re handy to have around. I laugh at your jokes...” Unlike the other ads, Smith gets the last line after the announcer’s tag when she asks the listener “So, which way do you wanna go?”¹⁵⁸

In 1977, the Californian, country rock band the Flying Burrito Brothers performed in two radio ads for Lone Star beer. Since its debut album *The Gilded Palace of Sin* in 1968 that pioneered the country-rock genre, many of the founding members of the Flying Burrito Brothers (notably songwriters and guitarists Gram Parsons who died in 1973 and Chris Hillman who moved on to other projects) were no longer in the band.¹⁵⁹ By 1975, a new incarnation of the Burrito Brothers, featuring former steel guitar player “Sneaky” Pete Kleinow and bassist Chris Ethridge, and new musicians to the band, released a new album called *Flying Again*, and the band was capitalized on the post-mortem popularity of Gram Parsons’ musical legacy.¹⁶⁰ The reformed Flying Burrito Brothers’ first Lone Star radio ad was “Write A Song” and started with an opening melody played by blaring electric guitars as an announcer introduced them to an energetic live audience. An original song written for Lone Star, the lyrics follow a similar working class theme found in many progressive country songs of a hard-working male Texan having fun with his girlfriend after work: “The day’s work is through. I’ll soon be with my baby! It’s time to

¹⁵⁸ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁵⁹ Stephen Thomas Erlewine, “Biography of Flying Burrito Brothers,” allmusic. Accessed on September 4 2016. <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/the-flying-burrito-brothers-mn0000194703>.

¹⁶⁰ Stephen Thomas Erlewine, “Gram Parsons Biography,” allmusic. Accessed on September 4, 2016. <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/gram-parsons-mn0000987491/biography>.

pour a brew. Or two or three or maybe! I'll write a song, the feeling is strong when I hold her hair. The music is Lone Star! Lone Star beer!" After singing the words "Lone Star beer," the audience in the recording gets louder as the electric guitars repeat the opening melody of the song. The volume of the concert as a whole fades as an announcer gives the same tagline found in the 1977 ads to end the commercial: "There's good times and great beer brewing in Texas. Lone Star!"¹⁶¹

In 1977, the rock band Firefall from Boulder, Colorado (that featured former Flying Burrito Brothers Rick Roberts and Michael Clarke) produced two radio ads for Lone Star beer that made use of the imagery of seasons changing.¹⁶² The band, known for a mellower, pop country-rock sound than the Flying Burrito Brothers, released a self-titled debut album the previous year and would produce a number of successful albums in the late 1970s before eventually declining in popularity. The first of their songs was an acoustic guitar and saxophone-driven, Margaritaville-style song called, "Seasons Are Changing." After being announced to the live audience, the lead singer performs the opening verse: "Seasons are changing the feeling is right. The weather is sunny and clear. I know I'll be having a good time tonight, sittin' hear, sippin' my Lone Star beer." Not being a Texas band, the pastoral imagery used by Firefall does not connect the listener to a Texas mystique until the line "sippin' my Lone Star beer." The saxophone then goes into a solo before the lead singer repeats the Lone Star beer line, the song fades, and the announcer comes in with the 1977 Lone Star radio tag: "there are good times and great beer brewing in Texas. Lone Star!" A second song Firefall wrote for Lone Star in 1977 was "Summer is Here" and more directly connected Lone Star beer to pastoral Texas

¹⁶¹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁶² Jerry Retzlöff, interview with author in Gruene, TX, June 21, 2016.

imagery. Instead of the main melody played by a saxophone, “Summer is Here” features an electric guitar melody played over a hard rock rhythm. After being announced, the singer sings “Summer is comin’, the spirits are high every time of the year. Warm Texas Sun and a blue Texas sky. Sittin’ here, sippin’ my Lone Star beer!” Similar to their previous ad, a guitar plays a short solo before the singer repeats the phrase, “sippin’ my Lone Star beer!” and the song fades out.¹⁶³

1977 was also the first year that country musician and comedian Kinky Friedman performed a series of radio ads for Lone Star beer. Previously in 1973, Friedman originally contacted Retzloff and they arranged a meeting at a coffee shop near Retzloff’s apartment where they befriended each other. Friedman started writing songs that heavily featured Lone Star beer shortly thereafter.¹⁶⁴ A University of Texas graduate and former Peace Corpsman, Friedman (with his backup band the Texas Jewboys) was known for his Jewish Cowboy persona, sarcastic wit, and sense of humor which generated controversy over a couple of his songs.¹⁶⁵ Although Retzloff had to work with Friedman’s producer to edit many of Friedman’s song proposals to make them appropriate to air on the radio, Friedman approached writing songs for Lone Star with a great deal of enthusiasm and sought to write songs reflecting his unique personal style. Fearless in what he made fun of in his music, Friedman used the cowboy mystique to subtly poke fun at the cowboy mystique. By overplaying the cowboy’s outgoing personality and ties to consumerism, Friedman’s ads poked fun at the cowboy’s loyalty to beer while advertising beer brands.

¹⁶³ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁶⁴ Jerry Retzloff interview author, June 21, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Reid, 179-184.

The first ad Friedman did for Lone Star was for the 1977 4th of July and mirrored other country musicians that held outdoor concerts (or in Willie Nelson's case a picnic). Instead of being in the style of a live concert, this ad featured the comedic skit of a mock radio interview with Friedman where he connected his larger than life persona with drinking Lone Star beer. The announcer introduces Friedman by saying, "Live from Radio Cairo, your choice is our rejoice. Mr. Longneck himself, Kinky for Kinky Fried—Kinky..." On the last word of this line, the announcer trails off as if he is looking around for Friedman. Friedman then starts talking to the audience in his own unique style: "Whenever I'm rolling in and out of Rio Duckworth, Texas or New York [he howls this word in cowboy fashion] in my brand new Yom Kippur clipper, I always try to fill her up with about twenty gallons of ice, cold Lone Star beer. We get about two or three hundred miles to the ten gallon hat." Then, as if delivering a public service announcement, Friedman advises the audience "So when you're out on that highway this Fourth of July to pick up some cherry bombs and a case of longnecks, drive friendly. The neck brace you save could be mine. The case of longnecks you save could also be mine." Instead of the Lone Star tag used in other 1977 ads, Friedman ends his announcement with his own witty tag: "Remember, if you're driving, don't forget your car. If you're looking for some beer, make it a Lone Star." The ad then cuts to an excerpt of a Kinky Friedman song called "Flyin' Down the Freeway" that connects the subject of the radio ad (driving safely on the highway on the Fourth of July) with one of Friedman's songs. The radio spot ends with Kinky singing the line "Ain't nobody casting asparagus on me. You'll find out a freeway." The line "flying down the freeway" repeats as the commercial slowly fades.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

Friedman performed in a second 1977 radio ad for Lone Star called “Sold American” a song and album of Friedman’s with the same title. In this ad, a fast-talking bidder auctions off Lone Star longnecks. The auctioneer announces the winner of the longnecks with a “Sold American to Kinky Friedman.” After Friedman wins the Longnecks, he gives a thank you to the rest of the auction house: “Thank you, thank you. Thank you for being an American. And now, before we get back to our movie ‘The Cosmic Cowboy vs the Smog Monsters’. Here’s a few more words for Lone Star beer—” The bidder interrupts Friedman by continuing his fast-paced bidding. Trying to gain control back from the bidder, Friedman tells him “That’s cute but cut it, all I was going to do was say a few words about—” The bidder interrupts Friedman again and Friedman lets off a death yell before telling the audience as if in agony “Get a grip on a Long neck. Get a hold of one today” as the bidder continues the auction with “going once, going twice. Sold American!” Like his previous ad, an excerpt is played of the Kinky Friedman song “Sold American” where Friedman sings “And everything’s been sold American. The lonely night is mourning for the death it never dies. Everyone’s been sold American...” and the song fades.¹⁶⁷ While the commercial puts a comedic twist on the song “Sold American,” the full lyrics to the song reveal a country singer’s lament of his faded popularity as if he was just another consumer good with no lasting value. In presenting a commercialized image of the Texas mystique, Friedman echoes the revisionist vision of the Texan as a rootless adventurer without a lasting connection to a folk community:

¹⁶⁷ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

Faded jaded falling cowboy star, pawnshops itching for your old guitar. Where you're going, God only knows. The sequins have fallen from your clothes. Once you heard the Opry crowd applaud. Now you're hanging out at Fourth and Broad, on the rain wet sidewalk remembering the time, when coffee with a friend was still a dime.¹⁶⁸

True to Friedman's style, his music critiqued capitalism and consumerism while at the same time encouraging the consumption of Lone Star beer to his fans. In the ad called "El Paso," Friedman followed the same theme but this time in the setting of a concert in El Paso in clear reference to his 1976 album *Asshole From El Paso* (a parody of Merle Haggard's conservative anthem "Okie From Muskogee"). As a concert audience cheers, the announcer introduces Friedman by saying "Now straight from the heart of Texas, the man you all love so well. It's the original Roly Poly from Austin. The one and only, Mr. Kinky Friedman!" Friedman then comes out and greets his Texan audience and listeners with a thick, country accent: "Well alright now! I don't care if you're from El Paso. I don't care if you're from Dallas or from Austin or from Houston! In fact I don't care where you're from but if you elect me governor, I'll reduce the speed limit to 54.95." Similar to "Sold American," Friedman parodies the Texas mystique and commercialism, while ironically promoting not just longnecks but Lone Star's aluminum cans as being just as Texan: "and in the meantime, get a'holt [with an emphasis on the 't'] of something cold. Grab yourself one of them Lone Star longnecks. In fact you might even want to grab yourself one of them alumenium [mispronounced on purpose] cans. They just as good, they got the old Lone Star flavor just like a longneck." Friedman ends his announcement with the line "Try it, you'll like it!" to which an audience member

¹⁶⁸ Lyrics accessed at

https://play.google.com/music/preview/Twuk7tmphmyj643m6wiestn5khm?lyrics=1&utm_source=google&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=lyrics&pcampaignid=kp-lyrics on September 4, 2016.

responds with “Louder!” causing Friedman to repeat the phrase several times. The Kinky Friedman song “Kinky” plays as the ad slowly fades.¹⁶⁹

Lone Star also featured the Friedman song “Waitret, Please Waitret” (about a cowboy hitting on a waitress in a café) in a 1977 radio ad. The rhyme scheme of the song (a possible parody of accents from North Texas and Oklahoma) mispronounces words with the letter ‘s’ at the end with a ‘t’. The chorus of the full song even featured a reference to Lone Star beer:

“Oh, waitret, please, waitret, come sit down on my fate, Eatin' out ain't cheatin', lord it ain't no disgrace. Oh, bring me a Lone Star, make it a case. And, waitret, please, waitret, come sit down on my fate.”¹⁷⁰

In this ad, Friedman orders a large amount of food and Lone Star beer from a waitress (pronounced “waitret” in the ad) in a thick country accent. The ad starts with an announcer giving Friedman a melodramatic introduction: “The number one band and the number one now [echoes], from the electric matzaball in downtown Palestine, Texas. [Switching to a normal voice] Here’s Kinky Friedman.” Friedman then calls for his “waitret” and orders “some fish ice cream and a chicken fried snake. Also, how about some tortilla chips and huevos rancheros?” After ordering food Tex-Mex and Southern-fried food, Friedman continues with, “And give me one of them longnecks. I want to put a lip lock on a longneck. Buy Lone Star.” Friedman also included in the commercial a promotion for Lone Star’s aluminum cans that he mispronounced (like in his previous ads) as “alumenium” but still has “that same old longneck flavor.” Friedman then

¹⁶⁹ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁷⁰ Lyrics accessed at [http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Kinky_Friedman:Waitress, Please, Waitret](http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/Kinky_Friedman:Waitress,_Please,_Waitret) on September 4, 2016.

proceeds to pop a can, let out a holler, and continues with “Waitret that’s darn good beer. It’s good [howling] Waitret. I’ll tell it to your face.” The commercial ends with a Kinky Friedman song playing as Friedman continues to bother the waitress as a clip of the original song plays to end the commercial: “Well, I pulled into Dallat on a cold December day. Poured coffee and a donut at the Greasy Spoon Café. Spot me a pretty young waitret—”¹⁷¹

The second theme found in Lone Star radio ads in 1976 and 1977 was that of the traveling Texan who, while fulfilling a desire for adventure by traveling abroad, yearned for home where he can drink his favorite beer, Lone Star. Singer and songwriter Steve Fromholz made a 1976 Lone Star radio spot called “Ain’t It Nice” that drew heavily on this theme of Anglo-Texan wanderlust and longing for home in modern Texas. Fromholz was a former University of North Texas music student who had a style of performance (relaxed and mellow but with often melancholy, narrative song lyrics) that many record labels did not know what to do with.¹⁷² Still, his 1973 album *Texas Trilogy* about the demise of a small, Texas town earned him respect within the Austin music scene where he frequently performed. In Fromholz’s song, “Ain’t It Nice,” Lone Star beer is one of the things (along with his favorite lover) that he enjoys upon returning to Texas after traveling and touring among the larger United States:

I’ve a need to going wrong but I love to come back home. I fly out to play a date
but then I miss the Lone Star state. You’re my favorite lover too. I can’t get

¹⁷¹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁷² Reid, 111-116.

enough of you. When I'm gone I'm on my own. It is nice to be back home. It is nice to be right here with a good old Lone Star beer.¹⁷³

Fromholz's song, addressed to the female lover he is returning to in Texas (with the implication that there are several elsewhere), invokes the traditional image of the larger than life Texan, who in the modern era, is conflicted by an independent thirst for adventure outside of Texas (what he calls "wanderlust") but a longing for his home. Fromholz finishes the song restating his need for a life of travel and adventure while confessing his love to his Texas lover: "I have had the Wanderlust. We can't sit together in dust. When I wander off to find, I leave here behind. Lone Star lady be my own. It is nice to be back home [repeated three times]."¹⁷⁴

The band Calico, a short-lived Texas progressive country band,¹⁷⁵ recorded an ad that played in 1976 called "Ridin' Down the Highway" and featured group vocals, piano, and twangy, steel guitar. Like Fromholz's song about his Texan urge to travel (or "wanderlust"), Calico's song is about returning to Texas after a long trip on the highway and feeling at home by drinking Lone Star beer:

Well, ridin' down the highway singing songs I used to know. Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth town, headin' down to El Paso. Around the corner and down the bend, see an old familiar sign. So I drew the reigns to slow her down 'cause I know it's Lone Star time.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Jerry Hudson, "Calico," Eagleaudio Recording 2009, Accessed on September 4, 2016. http://www.eagleaudiorecording.com/1973_calico.htm. This account of the band is by the group's audio engineer, Jerry Hudson.

¹⁷⁶ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

As if in an old western saloon, the band enters a bar and greets the bartender with a “howdy neighbor!” In return, the bartender then “Hands me my longneck friend. Been a long hot day on the road like when the West began. So I tip the waitress and give a smile. It’s time to hit the rack. But before I leave, I think I’ll have one more six pack to go.” The song then repeats the last line a few more times before fading out and before the announcer gives the “No place but Texas” Lone Star tag at the end.¹⁷⁷

The biggest country musician to record a radio ad for Lone Star beer in 1976 was rising Mexican-American country-rock star Freddy Fender. After his hit 1975 song “Before the Next Teardrop Falls,” Fender achieved a country superstar status by topping the greatest hits charts and received the “Single of the Year” award from the Country Music Association.¹⁷⁸ The album *Before the Next Teardrop Falls* went on to earn gold and even platinum status. Fender found a link to the Armadillo World Headquarters (where he only performed twice) and Lone Star beer through his producer Huey P. Meaux from the SugarHill Recording Studios in Houston. However, Fender had personal connections with Lone Star through the Austin director of advertising, Hector Guerra, who was a childhood friend from San Benito, Texas.¹⁷⁹ Fender’s connections with Lone Star (a beer he already preferred to drink) led to two ads recorded in 1976. The first song was a piano-led blues song called “Cryin’ in my Beer.” The song was unique among Lone Star radio ads involving the Lower Rio Grande Valley, because instead of being sung from the perspective of an Anglo-Texan visitor (with references to Tex-Mex food, conjunto music, and beautiful Mexican women who give the Valley an exotic image), it

¹⁷⁷ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁷⁸ Andy Bardley and Roger Wood, *House of Hits: the Story of Houston’s Gold Star/Sugarland Recording Studio* (Austin: University of Texas Press), 191.

¹⁷⁹ Hector Guerra, interview with author.

was sung from the perspective of a resident of the Valley visiting Texas to the north and missing home. After being announced to the audience in the ad, Fender sings “Left my home down in the Valley, headed north in my pickup truck. Must have tracked in out of town, out of friends and out of luck. Since I don’t have any here, I’m crying in my Lone Star beer and tears keep falling down. You’re not around, I’m lonely here.” The ad reaches an emotional peak when Fender begins to sing in Spanish “When I am alone, of you I will remember my life—” before the song fades and the announcer gives the ending Lone Star tag.¹⁸⁰

Fender’s style of singing sections of his songs with emotional force in Spanish and including Mexican instrumentation originally came about because of a fluke accident of improvisation during the recording of “Before the Next Teardrop Falls” at SugarHill Studios. While recording the song, Fender accidentally dropped a page with lyrics on it and proceeded to improvise the verse by singing it in Spanish. Nashville producer Shelby Singleton, who originally gave the song to Huey P. Meaux to use with one of his musicians, later recalled “I have always felt that the Spanish that Huey and Fender put in the song was the main reason it became a big hit.”¹⁸¹ The bilingual style Fender featured on “Teardrop” found great commercial success by Fender on many of his other songs and Lone Star radio ads. Emphasizing a life of overcoming hardship and adversity, Fender’s friends and fans saw him as a hero breaking barriers and achieving success in the United States. A second Fender ad from 1976 was a conjunto song called “I Love My Rancho Grande” and was more upbeat and happy than “Cryin’ in My Beer.” Instead of an emotional rock and roll ballad about missing the Valley, the song reflected a working

¹⁸⁰ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁸¹ Bradley and Wood, 193-194.

class aesthetic found in conjunto music that emphasized hard work and having a good time.¹⁸² An acoustic guitar plays staccato notes as partiers holler and Fender sings: “I love my rancho grande. We love our happy fiestas. We work hard in the day time and sing away our night time while drinking Lone Star beer.” After holding the word “beer,” Fender then switches to Spanish and finishes the commercial with the line “We’re going to have a party and enjoy life. Take a very cold Lone Star.”¹⁸³

Both 1976 and 1977 featured two original songs by up and coming Western swing revivalists Asleep at the Wheel. Asleep at the Wheel was originally a band formed in West Virginia in 1970 but, after frequent performances with Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen in California, relocated to Austin on the advice of Willie Nelson and Doug Sahm.¹⁸⁴ Their musical ability and Western swing style caught the attention of many in the Austin music scene where they played frequent shows at the Armadillo World Headquarters and the Soap Creek Saloon. In a 1973 article by the *Austin American Statesman* of their debut album *Comin’ Right at Ya*, the reviewer compared Asleep at the Wheel’s musical ability to the Western swing musicians of the 1940s and 50s by exclaiming that “these youngsters really CAN play western swing.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Peña, 86.

¹⁸³ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁸⁴ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Deirdre Lannon, “Asleep At the Wheel,” accessed June 25, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/xga02>.

¹⁸⁵ Townsend Miller, “Oldtimer Going to Nashville Fanfare” Saturday, June 2, 1973, *Austin American Statesman*, p. 32.

Asleep at the Wheel's early days in the Austin progressive country scene involved living and eating out of the band bus.¹⁸⁶ Through live concerts at the Armadillo, Jerry Retzloff eventually developed a friendship with the band (particularly with the front man Ray Benson) and even took his wife Sally to see them play at an Austin concert at the Soap Creek Saloon. This connection led to Asleep at the Wheel's first radio ad for Lone Star. In the Western swing male and female duet featured in the ad, "Lone Star Beer Sign," allusions to the bands touring across country are present as the Lone Star beer sign is clearly a sign seen from the highway that marks Texas. To start the song, a jazz fiddle plays the lead melody with Bob Wills-styled "Ah-Ha's!" interspersed. Singing in unison, the male and female singers deliver the opening jingle, "If there's a Lone Star beer sign then you can bet that it's a sure sign that you're getting you the best beer in the West." The chorus of the song features a short point-counter point sequence where they both sing "In a bottle or a can" then the male vocalist sings "With a gal" and the female lead sings very enthusiastically "With your man!" before both leads come back together to sing "If you're drinking Lone Star beer, you've got the best." The song ends with a line where the male lead mentions the band's hit Texas anthem "Miles and Miles of Texas" that was released the previous year before the announcer gives the ending tag: "open up a bottle, this is what I'll see. Miles and miles of Texas, staring back at me."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Jerry Retzloff interview with author, June 21.

¹⁸⁷ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

Asleep at the Wheel's original song from its 1976 ad also played in 1977 along with two new, original songs by the Western swing revivalists, "Lone Star Sky" and "Boogie Woogie." The song "Lone Star Sky," a Western swing song with slide guitar and fiddle playing the main melody, featured the same theme found in other Lone Star songs of the traveling musician happy to return to Texas and drink Lone Star beer. After being announced to the audience, Ray Benson sings, "When I get back to Texas and want to have some fun. I know the place to go at night. I'll hit some dance hall here in town and drink some Lone Star beer down. Lone Star beer is the best that I can buy." Benson repeats the phrase "Lone Star beer is the best that I can buy" as the song ends and the announcer delivers the "Good Times and Great Beer" tag.¹⁸⁸

The song "Boogie Woogie" departs from Asleep at the Wheel's Western swing style for a piano driven boogie woogie beat with a female lead singer as opposed to Benson. Similar to Asleep at the Wheel's previous ad, the song was about traveling down to Texas (this time from Virginia) and drinking Lone Star beer to get the feeling of being a Texan: "Came down from Virginia, lookin' for a real good time. I had me a case of that Lone Star and it nearly blew my mind." For the chorus, a group of female singers join in by singing "Lone Star" as a deep male voice chimes "She's been drinkin'." The point-counterpoint repeats itself three times and then on the fourth refrain of "Lone Star," the lead singer replaces the deep male voice with the line "Sure makes a Texan out of me." On the second verse of the song, the lead singer sings about her preference for Lone Star beer at parties: "Well, I went to a party

¹⁸⁸ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

where everything was free. Well they offered me wine and whiskey but that ain't good enough for me." The verse ends with the line "Gotta have me a..." before going repeating the chorus with the female singers and the deep male voice. The song then fades and ends with the "Good Times and Great Beer" tag.¹⁸⁹

Aside from Asleep at the Wheel, there were several other country and western-styled bands from outside of the state that made Lone Star beer ads advertising the theme of travel and the Texas mystique. The second 1977 ad by the Flying Burrito Brothers was called "Big Bayou" and featured a song originally off of their 1976 album *Airborne*.¹⁹⁰ Echoing a theme common to progressive country songs of the urban cowboy who misses his pastoral home, the song starts with the main chorus: "Big Bayou where did you go, to the river running slow? Into the Gulf of Mexico, big Bayou carry me home!" After announcing how homesick he is, the singer then opines that after moving to the city, he "spent all of my hard earned money, havin' fun drinkin' Lone Star beer." While the line was originally "spent all of my hard-money, I had saved to put me there," the modified version played in the radio ad placed Lone Star beer as both the source of the fun the singer had in the city and, as a consequence, the reason he became broke. Similar to other Lone Star ads, the cheers of the audience become louder after the band mentions the word "Lone Star beer" before repeating the chorus. The song fades and then the announcer gives the same "Good Times and Great Beer" tag to end the ad.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁹⁰ Ken Dryden, "Review of *Airborne* by the Flying Burrito Brothers," Allmusic. Accessed on September 4, 2016. <http://www.allmusic.com/album/airborne-mw0000845195>.

¹⁹¹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

A new 1977 addition to Lone Star's ad campaign was African-American multi-instrumentalist Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown who was an occasional performer at the Armadillo World Headquarters and a regular at Antone's club. Originally from Orange, Texas, Gatemouth was well-known for being a versatile guitar and fiddle player with numerous popular hit songs (notably his hit single "Okie Dokie Stomp")¹⁹² during the post-World War II era.¹⁹³ Brown considered himself a master of Texas musical styles including blues, country, Cajun, and bluegrass. Brown also had a personal connection to Jerry Retzloff and his father from performances he did at the Eastwood Country Club in San Antonio in the 1950s.¹⁹⁴ Through Retzloff, Brown wrote three songs for Lone Star beer that were recorded and used in separate ads.¹⁹⁵ The first was a country song called "Good Drinkin' Friend," where Brown related his travels across the country (echoing the pastoral, "Wanderlust" theme found in previous ads) and how he never had a beverage he enjoyed as much as Lone Star. After a fiddle plays the opening melody and the announcer introduces Brown to a cheering audience, Brown sings with a gruff country voice, "I've traveled around this country, many times before. Arizona desert to the Gulf of Mexico. I've heard about your whiskey, I've heard about your gin. Talk about good drinkin' friend, try our Lone Star beer." Brown ends the song to the roaring applause of the audience as he repeats the phrase "Talk about good drinkin' friend, try our Lone Star

¹⁹² Retzloff, interview with author, February 26, 2016.

¹⁹³ Bill Dahl, "Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown Biography," Allmusic. Accessed on September 4, 2016. <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/clarence-gatemouth-brown-mn0000129547/biography>.

¹⁹⁴ Retzloff, interview with author, February 26, 2016.

¹⁹⁵ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

beer” followed by the song fading and the “Good Times and Great Beer” announcer tag.¹⁹⁶

Gatemouth Brown’s second ad with Lone Star, “Gate’s My Name,” was unique in that it was a blues song with a full horn section that diverged from the usual progressive country stylings of other musicians who recorded for Lone Star. The ad starts with the horn section laying down a melody with Brown improvising blues riffs on electric guitar. The announcer yells to the audience, “Let’s welcome, Gatemouth Brown!” and Brown begins to sing, “Gates’ my name, fame’s the game. Wanna stay on top? They got to work to sing.” While the song “Good Drinkin’ Friend,” gives a more direct connection to the theme of travel, Brown relates that after getting famous and trying all sorts of drinks, nothing beats a cold Lone Star: “You can drink your coffee. Whoa people, you can drink your tea. [blues guitar lick] Nothing in the world but Lone Star beer for me.” The crowd roars in approval at the mention of Lone Star beer before the commercial fades and the announcer gives the “Good Times and Great Beer” tag to end the ad.¹⁹⁷

A third 1977 ad Brown produced for Lone Star featured a swing song called “Fame’s the Game” that was similar in tone (featuring the same horn section and electric guitar) and subject matter (Lone Star beer being Brown’s preferred drink after achieving success) to “Gates My Name.” However, the song was different in that a walking bassline gave it a rhythm more reminiscent of swing-jazz than blues. After being announced, Brown sings, “Back up buddy, don’t be a waste. Drink good stuff inside and find your taste. You claim there’s whiskey, save that gin. [the band stops] What’s the drink for all

¹⁹⁶ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

good men?” The horn section plays a bluesy melody before Brown sings a second portion of the song where he backs up his previous assertion with experience gained by traveling and performing: “Went to cities, most towns. Son, I bet Lone Star’s the best beer around.” As the audience applauds, Gatemouth begins a guitar solo before fading out and the announcer ends the commercial with the “Good Times and Great Beer” Lone Star tag.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

VI: LONE STAR BEER AND THE “DEATH” OF PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY MUSIC

While the Lone Star Brewing Company and Jerry Retzloff greatly expanded the number of musicians involved in their radio ad campaigns in 1976 and 1977, the company also expanded its advertising efforts to build on what was working in the early 1970s while keeping up with changing trends in Texas culture. Following the success of the 1974 4th of July Picnic, Lone Star continued to sponsor later annual picnics in Liberty Hill, Gonzales, and even outside the state in Oklahoma. However, dysfunction at the 1976 picnic in Gonzales seemed for some a signal of the decline of the progressive country music scene. In an article written later that year called “Who Killed Redneck Rock?,” *Texas Monthly* writer Jan Reid (who also documented the rise of progressive country in a book called *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock*) documented the changing atmosphere of a scene full of drug abuse, violence, and machismo-fueled misogyny. As Reid recalls of the previous year’s picnic, “According to one count, Willie Nelson’s last Fourth of July Picnic at Gonzales inspired eighteen overdoses, fifteen stabbings, and seven rapes.” While Reid considered the cosmic cowboy of the early 1970s as a cultural high mark of Texas music, he critiqued how the “outlaw” mystique of Nashville ex-patriots such as Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson was being used by country singers like David Allen Coe to promote an attitude in their audience that was, in Reid’s opinion, much the opposite of Cosmic Cowboy idealism. Reid quotes Coe as flat out rejecting progressive country as stale and out-of-date: “I’m sick and tired of somebody saying, ‘I’m a cowboy from Texas, gimme a longneck. I can’t drink nothing

but longnecks.’ I’m sick of hearing that. It’s like the hippie cult before that and the surfin’ cult before that.”¹⁹⁹

Others saw the budding cocaine market in the late 1970s as a sign of the Austin music scene’s decline. According to Roger “One Knite” Collins, “the scene changed drastically” as “recreational users of drugs became addicts. It affected everything in the music industry. It took all the money out... and every club owner basically in town [Austin] pretty much became involved in heavy cocaine use” often selling a gram of cocaine in return for another gram to satisfy their addictions.²⁰⁰ In the opinion of Sam Yeates, cocaine and the money made from dealing was even beginning to fuel a real estate boom in Austin.²⁰¹ Around the same time on July 4, 1976, the Internal Revenue Service shut down the One Knite Bar after the owners lost the ability to continue to pay their bills (partly due to competition from other newly opened venues, but also the prevalence of bikers at the bar that scared off perspective customers).²⁰² The owners, including Collins, moved on to other business ventures in the city.

Retzloff’s involvement in promoting Lone Star began to shift away from personally visiting keg accounts and other venues in Austin on a weekly basis to representing Lone Star at any number of local events and gatherings throughout Texas. In one such 1977 event in Victoria (a chili cook off), Retzloff’s daughter, Jill, earned the title of “Queen of Chili” after a vote among the festival’s attendees. A picture of the event with Jill Retzloff receiving a ribbon headlined the local newspaper, the *Victoria*

¹⁹⁹ Jan Reid, “Who Killed Redneck Rock?” *Texas Monthly* (December 1976)

²⁰⁰ Roger Collins, interview with the author.

²⁰¹ Sam Yeates, interview with the author.

²⁰² Collins.

Advocate, the following day.²⁰³ The previous year in Victoria, on May 30, 1976, Lone Star distributor Arthur Dillon sponsored an event called “the Great Guinea Glide” where a helicopter dropped a flock of guinea fowls from the sky onto a target below (an X drawn in the middle of a field called Fox’s Bend) with the assumption they would glide safely to the ground. Instead at the event (which was a part of a larger chili cooking festival), many of the guineas were disoriented from the updraft of the helicopter causing several of them to drop to the ground and perish. Horrified, many residents called for the arrest of the organizers of the event, including Dillon. Although Dillon was not arrested, subsequent chili festivals in Victoria did not feature a Guinea Glide.²⁰⁴

Lone Star also sponsored and provided merchandise for other events such as the 1976 Freddy Fender Day in the popular Chicano guitarist’s home town of San Benito.²⁰⁵ The event featured a parade through the streets of San Benito and a ceremony held in the high school football stadium.²⁰⁶ In the previous year, an article written in the *Chicano Times* documented the reason for Fender’s (whose real name was Baldemar Huerta) popularity among Mexicans living in the United States and Texas: “Some Chicanos might criticize the fact that Huerta did not use his real name. The emergence of the name Freddy Fender is but one chapter in the life of a man who, like so many other talented Chicanos, have been cheated and exploited by the people in the music business.”²⁰⁷ Fender’s rise in popularity in country music was due in large part from his popularity among Chicanos who empathized with Fender’s background of overcoming hardship

²⁰³ *Victoria Advocate*, “Fun Times at the Big Chili Event in Park,” May 30, 1977.

²⁰⁴ Henry Wolf, “Gliding guineas made for a strange event” *Victoria Advocate*, May 31, 2007.

²⁰⁵ Lone Star Brewing Company memo on ticket sales for Freddy Fender Day, accessed through the Huey P. Meaux Papers at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, TX.

²⁰⁶ Map of Freddy Fender Day, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.

²⁰⁷ “Baldemar Huerta- The Man Behind the Legend,” *Chicano Times*, November 29 through December 13 issue, 15.

(expulsion from the United States Marine Corps and time served in jail for a drug conviction) and achieving an unprecedented level of success in the country music industry. Fender gave back generously to personal friends from San Benito as well as using his newly acquired profits to buy a home for his mother in the neighborhood he grew up in, El Jardin.²⁰⁸

Despite both Lone Star's and progressive country music's continued popularity, by the late 1970s the scene in Austin rapidly changed with the influx of harder drugs like cocaine that got many people in the music scene addicted,²⁰⁹ and new clubs that played other genres (like rock or disco) began to open up for business.²¹⁰ The scene, built on a large group of young people attending local progressive country shows, began to dilute with the advent of new clubs playing different kinds of music for a new group of young people who grew up even farther from the ranch or farm than the previous one. This shift could be seen in Eddie Wilson's involvement in a disco club called the White Rabbit in 1978. In an issue of the *Austin Sun*, writer John Moore wrote that "if Eddie Wilson of the laid-back early 70's days of Armadillo was a man well suited for his time, then hardly anything has changed. Today, screaming into the '80's to the accompaniment of high volume rock and roll, Hell's hinges seem ready to come loose, and nobody could be more prepared than Wilson. Gone is the beard and Jim Franklin T-shirt, replaced with a white sidewall haircut, neatly trimmed moustache, a tuxedo, and a ruffled shirt. 'It's the same haircut I had in 1958,' Wilson said. Full circle in 20 years." In describing the transition in genre and style from progressive country to disco, Wilson explained that the "Armadillo

²⁰⁸ Hector Guerra, interview with the author.

²⁰⁹ Roger Collins, interview with the author.

²¹⁰ Retzlöff, March 11, 2016 interview.

saw the number of places where music is performed grow from 12 to 50. Seems that would hurt. A lot of people talk about there being too many places in town, therefore nobody makes as much as they should be making if there were fewer... In one form or another, all these places that have music are theatre... There is a similarity in all discos that is impersonal as hell, but the similarity makes it possible for an Austin disco freak to walk into a disco in Boulder, CO and feel right at home.”²¹¹

In 1978, the Lone Star radio ads, then run completely by Keye, Donna, Pearlstein,²¹² featured a different style that departed partially from the live venue format. The radio ads instead featured studio songs (with no live audience) about Lone Star that emphasized different regions of Texas and were played in conjunction with television commercials. Lacking bands popular in the progressive country scene, the series of ads still emphasized Texas pastoralism and the uniqueness of the state with each of these commercials ending with a region-specific version of the of the “No place but Texas” tag. The first of these was an ad called “Beach Party.” In this song, an electric guitar player provides a main melody over a tropical, electric keyboard rhythm as the lead singer performs the opening verse (without any announcement or introduction), “I’m watchin’ the Gulf Wind blow. I’m watchin’ the waves roll down. Sun and the sand, getting’ a tan and I’m back on the beach again.” The singer then lists his favorite beach side activities: “Sippin’ a cold Lone Star. Watchin’ the hot dogs grill. Surfin’ and singing, Frisbee flingin’ and I’m back on the beach again.” The singer continues, “there ain’t nothing bringing me down. I left it all behind. We’re getting’ it all and havin’ a ball. Back on the beach again. [guitar fill] Feelin’ the Texas sun, drinkin’ a Lone Star beer. The surf and

²¹¹ John Moore, “The Embattled Rabbit: Will Disco Spoil Eddie,” *Austin Sun* 4, no. 19001 (May, 1978), 8-11.

²¹² Retzlöff interview with author, June 21, 2016.

the sand, I'm getting a tan well I'm back on the beach again." At the end of the commercial, an announcer gives the tag: "Padre Island and Lone Star beer, No place but Texas."²¹³

The second radio spot in 1978 was a bluesy, rock and roll song called "Big Bend" that advertised a road trip through Big Bend National Park in the Trans Pecos Region of West Texas: "Ridin' down that highway one place on my mind. The Big Bend of Texas where the Rio Grande is wide. About this time tomorrow, we'll be by the fireside in the Big Bend of Texas, where the Rio Grande is wide." Playing to a spiritual connection to the rural areas of Texas away from big cities, the singer continues, "Sleep beneath the heavens. Ain't no city sounds here. Just some friendly conversation and some good old Lone Star beer. So come on along, bring a friend don't you dare get left behind to the Big Bend of Texas, where the Rio Grande is wide." The commercial ends with tag: "Big Bend National Park and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²¹⁴

Another radio ad featured a slow, romantic, piano-led ballad with a woman singing about an old romance connected to the San Antonio River Walk and Lone Star beer: "you've been fine, the years have been kind since we walked our separate ways. But I remember your smile and your quite talks down on the San Antonio River Walk. The sunny days, the smile on your face, canal boats covered with flowers. Our favorite bar and the cold Lone Star gave the nights a magical power." At this point, the rest of the band joins the piano as the singer continues, "it's been great, maybe it's not too late to bring those memories back again. So take my hand and we'll take a walk, down to the

²¹³ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

San Antonio River Walk. We'll share a cold Lone Star and a quiet talk down on the San Antonio River Walk." The ad ends with the tag, "The San Antonio River Walk and the Great Taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²¹⁵

One 1978 Lone Star radio ad featured the Guadalupe River using an upbeat Southern rock song. The singer, an older man with a country accent, tells the listener about his love for the rapids of the Guadalupe River: "Well, cross your fingers. You better hold on tight 'cause this a water is turnin' like boilin' soup. You're going to need a whole lot of skill and just a little bit of luck when you're rowing down the Guadalupe." Despite the danger of the river, the singer finds navigating the rapids rewarding because of "this calm, clear water and a cold Lone Star. A-wadin' down the Guadalupe." After that phrase once more for the listener, the song fades and announcer delivers the tag "Floating down the Guadalupe and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²¹⁶ In another radio ad, a mellow, country song with acoustic-guitar finger picking and slide guitar advertised Lone Star in association with the "Piney woods" of East Texas. After a brief intro, the singer echoes the common theme of returning home to Texas after traveling abroad with "I'm takin' it back to East Texas, where the skies are always blue. Takin' it back to East Texas. California, I've had enough of you." Upon returning home to East Texas, the singer decides to have some fun with old friends and drink Lone Star: "I'll buy friends a cold Lone Star 'cause we'll have a round or two. 'Cause I'm takin' it back to East Texas to the Piney woods. Ah the Piney Woods...I'm coming on home to you." The song ends with the line, "I'm makin' some tracks and it's a

²¹⁵ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

sure enough fact. I'm coming on home to you" and then the announcer chimes in with the tag "The Piney Woods and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²¹⁷

Aside from regionalism and natural landmarks, Lone Star beer ads also advertised Tex-Mex food as being uniquely Texan. In one such 1978 ad, a singer with a rock and roll band backing him up tells the listener, "You know I've traveled this land from east to west, I've seen the worst and I've seen the best. But if there's two things in life that I hold dear it's that Tex-Mex food [band stops] and Lone Star beer." The singer continues to explain the virtues of Tex-Mex food: "Give me an enchilada and a taco, a beef burrito and a side of nacho. Flour tortillas and a whole lot of butter and a hot sauce that'll make me stutter. [stop] Just the thought makes my taste buds flutter." The singer finishes the song by emphasizing how there is no food or beverage that suit him like in Texas: "Now I've eaten food from LA to Maine. Tried more beers than you could name but if I'm asked what I hold dear I tell 'em Tex Mex food [stop] and Lone Star beer." The announcer tag at the end tells the viewer "Tex-Mex Food and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²¹⁸

One Lone Star ad from 1978 advertised the State Fair of Texas with a song with clean electric guitar and circus style electric keyboard. In the song "State Fair," the singer asks the listener "Why don't you come on along, lose your troubles and cares, At the State Fair of Texas, the king of state fairs. There's nothing quite like it. Nothing really compares to a cold Lone Star and our own State Fair." In ending the song, the singer reveals that he's speaking to a girl with a romantic interest when he says, "So come on

²¹⁷ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12..

²¹⁸ Ibid.

along, lose your troubles and cares. Grab a Lone Star beer, Baby, I'll meet you there. Yeah, grab a Lone Star beer and baby I'll meet you there." The ad ends when the announcer delivers the tag, "The State Fair and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²¹⁹

Returning to the Texas Coast, another 1978 Lone Star radio spot advertised sailing, fishing, and partying in Port Aransas with Lone Star beer. Set to an acoustic guitar driven rock song with an electric keyboard playing the melody, the singer set the scene for the listener by describing a day in Port Aransas: "Watchin' the Sun break, off of my boat's wake. Port Aransas is slippin' away. It's a deep sea round here. And I've gotten my hopes up. That I'll be hookin' a big one today." After a long day of fishing, the singer fast-forwards to later that night where he cooks his catch and parties with friends and Lone Star beer: "So boil up the shrimp and I'll warm up the band and we'll be dancin' and singin' all night. I'll be drinkin' Lone Star from that winter's cup. If I can only get me a bite." The commercial ends with the tag, "The Port Aransas Deep Sea Round Up and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²²⁰

Even though Lone Star beer radio ads in 1978 were predominantly studio produced commercial recordings, ads featuring the older live-venue style with popular Texas musicians still were recorded and produced. Red Steagall (whose song "Lone Star Beer and Bob Wills Music" off his album *Here We Go Again* was already popular)²²¹ produced several different ads for Lone Star in 1978. The first ad was called "Texas Talk" and featured a Western swing, fiddle-driven song about unique cultural aspects of

²¹⁹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Jerry Retzlöff, interview with author, June 21.

different areas of Texas and feeling at home after traveling abroad. Similar to the studio ads on Texas regions from the same year, the shift indicated that by 1978 Lone Star was more than comfortable with expanding the Austin marketing campaign to broader sections of the state. Steagall sings in the ad, “If chili and cook off is your thing, Terlingua is your place. It’s Junction or Uvalde if your horses like to race. If you like fairs then Dallas is the place you ought to go. Fiesta is the time to be in good old San Antone.” Steagall then switches to the spoken word: “There are several things about Texas that make a body feel at home. Like the feeling of belonging, the sight of blue bonnets and live oaks waving in the wind. The smell of honey suckle and roses waving in the fresh air. And the great taste of Lone Star beer.” After the mention of Lone Star beer in the ad, the song goes into a chorus that emphasizes the uniqueness of the state of Texas as a whole: “There ain’t no place but Texas course we all know this is true. Where country is our music and Lone Star is our brew.” The ad ends with the announcer tag “The music of Red Steagall and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas.”²²²

Steagall’s second 1978 ad (featuring another Western swing-styled song called the “Texas Song”) repeated the same theme of Texas as a unique place but, instead of emphasizing regions of Texas, contrasted the state with countries around the world. After a brief fiddle intro, Steagall sings the first verse the song which lists a number of different tourist attractions from around the world: “Spain has got her bull rings, England’s got her Queen. Canada’s got the Mounties and Ireland’s got the green. Australia’s got the kangaroos and Egypt’s got the Sphinx. Hawaii’s got the hula girls and the Swiss have got the cheese.” In this song, Steagall uses the same chorus as “Texas Talk”: “But there ain’t

²²² Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

no place but Texas course we all know this is true. Where country is our music and Lone Star is our brew.” After this chorus, the second verse of the song returns to highlighting cultural attractions of Texas and Steagall’s preference to them over anything he could find in other countries: “From the wheat fields of West Texas to the walk in San Antone, from El Paso on the border, to Houston’s Astrodome. [repeating the chorus] There ain’t no place but Texas course we all know this is true. Where country is our music and Lone Star is our brew.” The song ends with the same “No Place But Texas” announcer tag as the previous Red Steagall commercial.²²³

A different Red Steagall ad from 1978 connected Lone Star music with line dances popular in country dance halls. Starting with a similar Western swing intro with a fiddle playing the main melody, Steagall delivers a spoken-word explanation of unique Texas line dances: “When you think of Texas, you think of dance halls. And when you think of dance halls, you think of unique dances like the Cotton-Eyed Joe, or the Schottish, or the Two-Step.” Steagall revives the Jim Franklin term “Lone Star longnecks” as being another natural, unique cultural aspect of Texas: “and when you think of dancing, you think of beer. And when you think of beer, you automatically think of Longnecks. And of course when you think of Longnecks, you just naturally think of the great taste of Lone Star beer.” After connecting the dots to Lone Star beer and a brief instrumental interlude, Steagall then reuses the same chorus from his previous Lone Star ads: “There ain’t no place but Texas course we all know this is true. Where country is our

²²³ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

music and Lone Star is our brew” and the announcer tag ends the ad as the music fades.²²⁴

In 1979, Lone Star continued making radio ads through Keye, Donna, Pearlstein but returned somewhat to the live venue format with new musicians and new styles of music popular in Texas. However, studio bands still produced the majority of 1979 ads rather than bands from the progressive country scene. Lone Star’s first ad was a disco-themed ad entitled “Disco Bubba” about, not a cowboy, but a disco dancer from Lubbock named Bubba. Given the disco-backlash that was happening in certain regions of the United States by fans loyal to rock and country music (even causing a riot in Chicago where disco albums were burned in Comiskey Park during a White Sox double header),²²⁵ Lone Star cutting a commercial with disco-music was a bold move. However, there is no indication of a potential backlash against Lone Star by progressive country fans because of the ad.²²⁶ The ad begins with electric guitar playing a funk rhythm with slap bass while two falsetto-singing male vocalists set the scene of the ad of a Saturday night at a disco club: “The Disco floor was becoming a bore. It was the same old Saturday thing. Until into the bar with a cold Lone Star came a dude I’d never seen.” At this moment, a group of female background singers accent the male singers with a falsetto “Oooo” as the verse continues, “he said, ‘My name is Bubba and I’m here from Lubbock where they call me a dancing fool’. He started doing the Shop and a Cotton-Eyed Hustle that broke every disco rule [Background singers continue to accent].” In Bubba’s Cotton-Eyed Hustle, disco’s emphasis on group dancing combined with

²²⁴ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²²⁵ Mellard, 185.

²²⁶ Jerry Retzloff interview with author, June 21, 2016.

traditional country line-dancing in a new image for youthful masculinity. Following the chorus, the singers describe Disco Bubba's dance: "Just move your hips [Background singers accent with 'Disco Bubba!']. Put a smile on your hips [Background singers accent with 'Oh Bubba!'] Let me hear that old familiar call." At this point in the song, a tenor saxophone starts soloing a melody that leads into a final refrain of the chorus, "He said, my name is Bubba and I'm here from Lubbock where they call me a dancin' fool." However, to end the song Disco Bubba implores the listener, "Wherever you are grab a cold Lone Star, I'll do the Cotton-Eyed Hustle with you." While Texas locals are mentioned in the songs, the themes of pastoral Texas or the traveling Texan missing home are notably absent in the song. Still, the announcer tag at the end of the song brings back the earlier 1976 tags of "Good times and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas."²²⁷

Despite a noticeable shift towards studio produced ads, Lone Star's 1979 radio ads still continued to feature popular Texas country musicians. The Cooder Browne band (a Southern Rock band from San Marcos that signed to Willie Nelson's Lone Star record label in 1978)²²⁸ recorded two songs for Lone Star beer that the company listed as "Cooder Friend" and "Cooder Jalapeño." The radio ad "Cooder Friend" featured a rockabilly and western swing influenced country song where the connection to Texas regionalism was not conveyed through pastoral imagery but assumed by the style and accent used in the song. A fiddle plays the main melody followed by the first verse: "If you want to see one happy man. Just put a Lone Star longneck in my hand. [fiddle lick] If you want to see me grinning from ear to ear. Just give me one of those good ole Lone

²²⁷ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²²⁸ Jerry Retzlöff, interview with author, June 21.

Star beers. [piano and fiddle trade solos]” Lacking a definite verse and chorus structure, the singer continues emphasizing how Lone Star beer makes him happy: “If you want to see one happy man. Just put a Lone Star longneck in my hand. There’s just one beer that we drink down here. You know it has a taste that we like. Well, Lone Star is the one for good times and having fun.” To end the song, the announcer delivers the tag “Cooder Browne and the great taste of Lone Star beer. No place but Texas.”²²⁹

The song “Cooder Jalapeño” featured the fiddle playing the main melody similar to a western swing song but with a conjunto beat and accordion parts found in Tejano music. In this song, the lead singer uses the theme of the traveling Texan going to exotic South Texas: “I travelled way down south and by the Rio Grande. Down where the jalapeños are eaten just like candy [held long with a vocal harmony]. We heard conjunto music and watched the señoritas [Hollering].” In the chorus, the singer connects his love for Tex-Mex food to Lone Star beer as all of them come from Texas: “Drinking cold Lone Star and eatin’ hot fajitas. Lone Star beer [held]. Lone Star beer [held]. From the land of Texas to the places far and near.” While the inclusion of Lone Star beer with Tex-Mex food expanded the idea of being “Texan” to encompass Mexican culture, the exoticism in the song described South Texas in terms meant for outsiders or Anglo tourists from up north without a deeper cultural connection to the largely Mexican culture or people living there. The song ends with a spoken word line from the lead singer while the band encouraging visitors to South Texas as the band continues to holler in the

²²⁹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

background: “You’ll find a place that’s made it great year after year. Long live longnecks and Lone Star beer.”²³⁰

The year 1979 was also the first year where the country comedy duo, the Geezinslaw Brothers (Sammy Allred and Dewayne "Son" Smith), produced several radio ads for Lone Star beer. Allred was a DJ with the radio station KVET in Austin, but had been playing with Smith in the musical duo since the 1950s.²³¹ Through playing live shows in Austin, the Geezinslaws met and befriended Jerry Retzloff and his wife, Sally. The first of their Lone Star ads was called “Wife” and was a country song featuring an electric guitar picking a main melody with short, staccato blue grass-style notes. In the song, the singer sings about his wife who works at home and is trying to find ways to attract her husband who is never home because of his time in bars and making songs on the radio. “My wife never did get out of the house much. She loved to wash and iron, scrub and soap. And she found out why I did never go home much. Makin’ songs that she heard on the radio. She heard of cousins hanging out in beer halls, of swinging signs of neon and glee.” After hearing her husband’s songs on the radio, the wife decides “if them’s the things that attract my husband. I’ll fix it so he’ll stay at home with me.” The wife completely transforms the house into all the things that would appeal to her cosmic cowboy husband, notably Lone Star beer and Texas music: “So she puts her long necks in the ice box. There’s armadillo racers in the hall. We’ve got a chili cookoff in the kitchen. And lots of ice cold Lone Star for us all.” Then, an electric guitar plays before the singer finishes the song with the closing line instead of an announcer, “I said lots of ice cold

²³⁰ Retzloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²³¹ Jerry Retzloff interview with author, June 21, 2016.

Lone Star for us all. Good music, good times for the Geezinslaw Brothers and Lone Star beer [howling] No place but Texas.”²³²

Another Geezinslaw Brothers ad from 1979 was called “New York” and was a southern rock song about the brothers dealing with a slick, northern businessman up in New York. Comparisons, like in this song, between Texas and New York (with the first representing bravado and swagger while the latter a corruption and malaise) was a common theme found in narratives in 1970s and matched the regional bravado that partially defined progressive country music.²³³ Notably, in New York City businesses like the Lone Star Café, the image of being a Texan and the influence of progressive country music extended beyond the confines of Texas. After an intro with acoustic guitar playing the rhythm while an electric guitar strums the main melody, one of the Geezinslaw Brothers comes in singing a story about the brother’s adventures up in New York: “Me and my brother come to New York City, we was kind of quiet and shy. Seen this building on 34th street, reached way up in the sky. Looked at each other with a marble in our eyes said ain’t that the sight.” In spoken word, the singer continues to tell the story, “When this smooth talking fellow in two tone shoes came over and asked us, Would y’all like to buy it?” The businessman in the suite sweetens the deal with other extras: “I can get you guys a part in Willie Nelson’s new movie and I know a place where you can get some cold Lone Star longnecks.” The Geezinslaw brothers respond with “You wouldn’t put the shuck on me would you stranger? [loud thud] Now, you’re talking about no place but Texas!” The rest of the band then joins into the song, “[Band plays] Don’t take for granted that I’m dumb and stupid just because I got a Southern accent.

²³² Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²³³ Mellard, 172-173.

Lots of people say y'all and talk with a drawl including the President." After the reference to the President, Democrat and Southerner Jimmy Carter, the song fades as a guitar solos.²³⁴

Even though the similarity in the progressive country scene began to be diluted (a further blow dealt to the scene with the closure of the Armadillo World Headquarters in 1980²³⁵), progressive country musicians still regularly performed in Austin and Lone Star continued marketing their beer to the scene. The 1980 movie *Urban Cowboy* starring John Travolta gave Lone Star beer heavy exposure and led to an increase in sales of both beer and merchandise.²³⁶ The movie crew and workers, set in Pasadena's famous country and western bar Gilley's, received hospitality in the form of longnecks and merchandising (through the prop man on set). Gilley's was the club where the locals and visitors went to be western cowboys. Mainly frequented by oil refinery workers and blue collar employees, Lone Star beer was a part of the personality of the Gilley's scene making its exposure in the movie a necessity. Because of this collaboration, the Lone Star Brewing Company increased its sale of merchandise at the San Antonio and Houston rodeos. Lone Star even gained national exposure beyond Texas through the movie. However, the company changed marketing styles in 1981 when it was bought by the G. Heileman Brewing Company.

The next radio ads to come out for Lone Star were in 1981 and reflected broader changes in the company as a result of not only with the changing music scene but with its

²³⁴ Retzliff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²³⁵ *Handbook of Texas Online*, John Wheat, "Armadillo World Headquarters," accessed March 16, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/xda01>.

²³⁶ Retzliff, March 11, 2016 interview.

acquisition by G. Heileman.²³⁷ Under Heileman's direction, the focus switched from advertising and promotions (at a time when Lone Star could have capitalized on the national exposure gained through *Urban Cowboy*) to lowering the price to compete with national beers. Paradoxically, this created the image in Lone Star's target markets that the quality of its beer was somehow affected. However, Lone Star did continue to promote with radio ads that featured several Texas musicians that previously worked with the company including Gary P. Nunn, the Geezinslaw Brothers, and, a newcomer, Isaac P. Sweat. By 1980, Gary P. Nunn's Lost Gonzo Band had broken up, and Nunn set out on a solo career and began performing his own music.²³⁸ One song entitled "What I Like About Texas," which he wrote for Lone Star beer, quickly became one of his most popular, spawning three commercials featuring different verses or the chorus. The beginning of the song featured acoustic guitar and bass playing the rhythm while a slide guitar accents. A piano plays the main melody and continues it as Nunn sings the first verse with a heavy emphasis on pastoral Texas imagery: "You ask me what I like about Texas, it's bluebonnets and Indian paintbrushes. It's swimming the icy waters of Barton Springs. It's body surfin' the Frio. It's Friday night in Del Rio. It's crossin' over the border for cultural exchange. Yee-Haw!" An electric guitar then comes in with a lick as the song moves into the chorus: "It's another burrito. It's a cold Lone Star in my hand. It's a quarter for the jukebox bar play the songs of a mother lovin' bunkhouse band." In the second verse, which was featured in a separate commercial, Nunn continues with "You ask me what I like about Texas, I tell you it's the wide open spaces. It's everything between the Sabine and the Rio Grande. It's the Llano Estacado, it's the Brazos and

²³⁷ Retzlöff, March 11, 2016 interview.

²³⁸ Gary P. Nunn interview with author, May 9, 2016.

Colorado. It's the spirit of the people who share this land." The song then goes back to the chorus and ends with a piano slide and a guitar solo as it slowly fades. A third commercial from the same sing featured only the chorus.²³⁹

In 1981, the Geezinslaw brothers also returned for a Lone Star ad featuring a Southern Rock song entitled, "Country." In the ad, the Geezinslaws sing about how the image of the Texan has spread all across the country but still to be a real Texan, you have to be in Texas. The commercial also has the distinction of being the first to market Lone Star as the "National Beer of Texas." After a brief intro with acoustic guitar playing the rhythm and an electric playing the main melody, the Geezinslaws sing a verse about how being "Texanness" has popular around the wider United States: "They're wearin' blue jeans up on Broadway now and Stetsons in Seattle. They're doing the Cotton Eyed Joe out in LA. They got Yankees punchin' cattle." However, the Geezinslaws explain that "if they want to be real Texans, they're gonna have to come down here. 'Cause here's the home of Lone Star and that's the Texas National Beer." In the chorus, the Geezinslaws list all the things that Texans are proud of: "They got the Cowboys and the Oilers to be proud of. And Luckenbach is hot there is no doubt. People say, if you live real good in Austin, when you die you go to Willie Nelson's house."²⁴⁰ The commercial ends with a slow fade as a guitar solos. Notably, the Geezinslaws in their comedic style amplified the theme found in previous Lone Star ads of Texas regionalism (with references to pastoralism and travel beyond the state) by positing Texas as a nation. By advertising Lone Star beer as the National Beer of Texas, the Geezinslaws presented to Texans the

²³⁹ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

idea that even in a modern, metropolitan world they could still prove their “Texanness” by drinking Lone Star beer.

Another Geezinslaw Brothers commercial from 1981 featured a rough, cowboy character in a bar ordering a Lone Star while on the run from a giant armadillo (a reference to both the popular Lone Star television commercial playing at the time and Jim Franklin’s armadillo drawings²⁴¹). After a dramatic intro with a heavy bass line, one of the Geezinslaw’s narrates “Well, here he comes, really kickin’s up a fuss. Got a Bob Wier headband he’s built like a Greyhound bus. Got a live rattlesnake around his hat over an evil frown. And if you try to slow him up, he’ll slap you down. He’s over seven feet tall, he’s got a growlin’ drawl.” While in the bar, the cowboy “snarled in the mirror, he screamed at the wall. He chewed up some pool balls and broke the mechanical bull.” After causing trouble, he then quickly tells the bartender, “I need a Lone Star quick ‘cause I gotta flee. There’s a big ole armadillo chasin’ me.” The band then goes into a country rhythm in a brief chorus: “You got the National Beer of Texas, Lone Star” followed by a guitar solo as the song fades.²⁴²

Later that year, Lone Star beer returned to the live venue format in a radio ad featuring Isaac P. Sweat and his band (the Texas Sweat Band) playing a version of the famous country dance “Cotton-Eyed Joe” refitted with lyrics for Lone Star. A fiddle plays a brief intro as an announcer introduces the band: “Now this is Isaac Payton Sweat, King of the Cotton-Eyed Joe along with the Texas Sweat band!” The audience cheers and the fiddle then plays the main melody of the Cotton-Eyed Joe followed by the first verse:

²⁴¹ By the mid-80s, Jim Franklin was not working with the Lone Star Brewing Company and felt that the company was ripping off his armadillos by using them in their latest advertising campaigns.

²⁴² Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

“Now I’d of had a beer a long time ago if it had not of been for that armadillo. Where did it come from, Where did it go? We’ve got to catch that armadillo.” The fiddle then plays a second melody followed by a short electric guitar solo and the chorus mirroring the call and response from the Cotton-Eyed Joe. Instead of the front man yelling “Now what’d you say?” and the crowd responding with the line “Bullshit!” Sweat yells out “Now what’d you say?” and the crowd responds with by yelling “Lone Star!” The rest of the chorus continues in the same vein: “Sweat: Y’all say what? C: Lone Star! Sweat: One more time! C: Lone Star! Sweat: Cotton-Eyed Joe.” Electric guitar then solos before the fiddle returns to the main melody of the song. Instead of singing a second verse, the song repeats the chorus: “Sweat: Now what you say? C: Lone Star! Sweat: A little bit louder! C: Lone Star! Sweat: I still can’t hear you! C: Lone Star!” The fiddle plays the main melody as the song slowly fades and the announcer delivers the tag “The National Beer of Texas!” on the final chord of the song strummed by the guitar.²⁴³

Another series of Lone Star radio ads from 1981 produced by Keye, Donna, Pearlstein ditched the bands and the live music venues for a skit where a cowboy delivers a speech like preacher to an auditorium full of Texans on their nationalistic loyalty to Lone Star beer (with a focus on the brand’s light beer). In the first of these spots called “Experimentin’” (the larger series of ads were called “Preacher”), the cowboy starts his speech while a few people cough and shuffle in their chairs: “I want to talk to you about that light beer you’ve been drinkin’. And the fact that I brew Lone Star Light and the fact that it just so happens to be the best light beer you’ve ever tasted, That’s the furthest thing from my mind right now because I want to talk to you about experimenting.” A few

²⁴³ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

attendees cough uncomfortably as if they'd been called out as the cowboy continues to deliver hard truths about Texans drinking other beers: "Now, I know Lone Star is not the only light in your life. I know it's hard to be 100 percent loyal all the time. When you turn on that television there's nothin' but five minutes on there where there's not some beer from Manhattan or Amsterdam or Milwaukee talkin' to you and whisperin' in your ear!" After calling out Lone Star's competitors by name, the cowboy forgives the audience for not being faithful to the Lone Star brand: "So, you try one every now and then. You do... Experiment. You think I don't know? Well, here I am, I'm making this thirst quenching lite-tasting nectar right here under your nose. Well, that's all in the past." The speech ends with an ultimatum: "It's time for you to stand up. Will you do that with me right now? [chairs scoot across the floor as people stand]. Stand up for Lone Star Light. The National Beer of Texas."²⁴⁴

A second commercial called "Forgettin'" gives a second speech by the Preacher where he continues to market Lone Star Light Beer. The speech begins with "We're going to talk you and me about your choice in Lone Star beer. And just because I brew Lone Star Light— just because I sacrificed any personal life just so I could devote myself to makin' the best light beer a man could make has nothing to do with what I want to say." The cowboy then mentions the previous lecture, "Now last time we agreed that tryin' one of those other light beers, experimenting we called, is sort of normal as long as it didn't get out of hand." He then gets to the point of his speech "But now we're going to talk about, forgettin'. Who ya are! You're from Texas. Texas! You think we made that name Lone Star up? You think we shipped that light-lovin' liquid in here from Nagasaki?

²⁴⁴ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

Or St. Louis?” After reminding the audience of their Texas identity, the cowboy ends his speech with another ultimatum “Well anyway, that’s behind us now. We bought this radio time friends to tell you to come home. It’s time to come home from Lone Star Light, the National Beer of Texas.”²⁴⁵

The final ad in this series, called “Showin’ Off,” starts with the Preacher again referencing to his previous speech and reestablishing his credibility to the audience: “We’ve been talkin’, you and me, about that light beer you’ve been drinkin’. And I think you know by now the fact that I brew Lone Star Light, the fact that not one drop of that golden drop leaves Lone Star without my say-so has nothin’ to do with my speakin’ to you objectively as a friend.” The speaker gets to his main point about drinking fancy beverages over Lone Star beer: “I’d thought we’d talk today about, showin’ off. Now you’re gonna say, Not me. But I’m gonna say, Yes, you! You just stop to think about the last time you showed up in one of them fancy places where they don’t let you park your own car and they’re showing light beer in there from Denmark and Denver and Tierra del Fuego. And what did you say? Did you say, Listen partner just give me a Lone Star Light ‘cause that’s as good as a light gets?” After a dramatic pause the cowboy continues “No sir, you had to show off, didn’t you?” The cowboy ends his lecture with another ultimatum to the audience “Now we don’t need to talk about that anymore. I know that you mean to do the right thing, that’s why I’m here. Right here where I’ve always been. Making Lone Star light, the National Beer of Texas.” While this series of ads still promoted loyalty to Texas as a reason why Texans should drink Lone Star beer, it notably

²⁴⁵ Retzlloff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

differed from previous ads in that Texas nationalism was not connected to progressive country music or any musicians in Texas.²⁴⁶

Sam Yeates's poster art for Lone Star intensified in the 1980s even though G. Heileman took over the company and shifted the focus of advertising away from live music radio ads. Still, the emphasis on Texas pastoral imagery enlarged by Yeates's surrealist art style was a prominent feature of Lone Star poster art in this era as it was back in the 1970s. One popular poster done by the artist in 1981 was called "the Returnable." In this ad, a giant Lone Star longneck is given NASA space shuttle engines and fuel tanks as it sits in the middle of a Houston platform ready to be launched into orbit.²⁴⁷ As the space shuttles are reused on several different missions, Yeates drew connections to Lone Star Longnecks in also how they are also recycled and reused. In explaining the popularity of the poster, Yeates explained "I think everyone really liked the space shuttle. It's something innovative and positive in terms of America moving forward and our space program. I think it was very positive to read news and this thing was used over and over again. . . . Returnable. It comes back and you use it again. And so, I think on several levels this works as far as the positive thing of a recycled and returnable bottle being used again instead of being thrown away."²⁴⁸ Another poster, done in conjunction with a Lone Star television commercial, featured a giant armadillo attacking a Lone Star beer truck (which referenced back Franklin's original armadillo art of the early seventies). In this Yeates illustration, called "Out of Hibernation," a black and yellow highway caution sign with the outline of an armadillo is in the foreground

²⁴⁶ Retzlöff, Lone Star radio ads, Box 1 Folder 12.

²⁴⁷ Yeates personal collection

²⁴⁸ Yeates interview with author.

closest to the viewer. In the background is a giant armadillo burrow with giant footprints that indicate the creature's advance toward a demolished Lone Star beer truck sitting on the side of the highway. The armadillo is moving towards the city of Austin (with the famous Skyline music venue in the horizon) while Spuds McKenzie (the dog mascot for Lone Star's competitor, Budweiser) is fleeing in the opposite direction in terror.

Several Yeates posters from the 1980s featured Texans eating bowls of chili. One 1982 ad, called "Trail Ride Night Stop," featured a group of male and female cosmic cowboys sitting around a campfire with a pot of chili cooking. Several Lone Star longnecks are visible in the hands of the chili-eaters as a Lone Star delivery truck sits parked in the background sending the message that in drinking Lone Star beer, customers can reenact the trail rides from the mythic Texas past. Another ad from 1982, called "A Taste of Texas," featured a collage of different cultural icons that defined pastoral Texas regionalism in anticipation to the upcoming 1986 Texas Sesquicentennial. In the center of the picture, a cowboy plays an electric guitar over an outline of Texas made up of an oil pump, longhorn steer, and a bell tower from a San Antonio mission. Peeking over the outline of Texas where the cowboy's head should be, is a Yellow Rose, a symbol dating back to the Texas legend. In the corners of the picture, is a Houston city skyline, a rodeo, sailboats off of a Texas beach, and in the bottom left-hand corner a picnic table in a desert landscape. Sitting on the table is a bowl of chili, jalapeño peppers, and, notably, a Lone Star longneck. In another ad four years later called "Lone Star Chili," a cowboy (whose face is out of frame) is eating chili out of a Texas-shaped bowl in the middle of a

canyon. In view where the cowboy sits are several Lone Star longneck-shaped rock formations emerging from the earth.²⁴⁹

Under Heileman's direction, the focus was on making Lone Star more affordable. However, decreasing the market price of Lone Star beer created the impression that the quality of the beverage had diminished and allowed other brewing companies (particularly the Shiner Brewing Company) to market as premium. Jerry Retzloff's method of personal endorsements with country singers was rejected by the company which refused offers from up and coming Texas country singers like Clint Black and George Strait to follow in Willie Nelson's footsteps by associating themselves with Lone Star beer. To make matters worse, Retzloff's casual dress and style clashed with the new owners at their first board meeting. Under Heileman, Retzloff switched from being a salesman to being a special events manager who made appearances for Lone Star at local festivals.²⁵⁰ One event that Retzloff put together for Lone Star under Heileman was a promotion following the 150th year anniversary of the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1986. Using a western movie-prop town owned by Willie Nelson and previously built for the movie *Honeysuckle Rose* in Luck, Retzloff's friend Red Caldwell wrote up a second Texas Declaration of Independence promising to protect the "funseekers" of the state from the influence of northerners crossing the Red River with their condos and regulations. After consulting popular Texas historian T.R. Ferhenbach for historical accuracy, Retzloff with his 150 fellow funseekers signed the document at

²⁴⁹ Yeates personal collection.

²⁵⁰ Retzloff interview with author, March 11, 2016.

the western town of Luck as a part of a larger celebration for Texas Independence.²⁵¹ Sam Yeates captured the signing of the document in a painting of the event that later became a poster ad.²⁵² In the picture, a large crowd of cosmic cowboys, women, and men observe the signing of the document by Jerry Retzloff on a wooden table. Also included in the picture are many notables connected to progressive country music, some who were present at the signing, others who were not. This included Sally Retzloff (pictured next to Jerry), Willie Nelson, Billy Gibbons, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Austin hatmaker Sammy Gammage, and friends of Yeates: Bill Hood and Sam Richardson, and even Yeates himself in the foreground of the picture with his back facing the viewer and a Lone Star longneck in his hand.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Lone Star beer Texas Declaration of Independence accessed through Jerry Retzloff's personal memorabilia from event.

²⁵² Sam Yeates, interview with the author

²⁵³ Yeates personal collection.

VII: CONCLUSION

Over the course of the 1970s, progressive country music developed as a grassroots movement in Austin merging 1960s counter culture with the image and tradition of the Anglo-Texas cowboy. Although reflecting the idealism and anti-authoritarianism of the 1960s anti-war and civil rights movements, progressive country musicians and fans represented their counter-cultural leanings through country music and live venues where they reenacted the mythic Texas past. Borrowing from traditional, revisionist, and pastoral visions of the Texas mystique, the style reflected an increasingly urban Texas where many of the young people were moving from small towns into cities and the wider world. The efforts of Lone Star Brewing Company promotion managers like Jerry Retzloff (who worked with Lone Star's advertising and sales team) to tap into this emerging market included radio spots, poster art, Fourth of July picnics, local festivals and collaborations with popular musicians that invoked the themes of pastoral Texas and the traveling Texan "wanderlust" meant to appeal to progressive country fans. Through working to establish friendships and become a part of the scene, Retzloff and the Lone Star Brewing Company were able to give Lone Star beer a personality in the minds of progressive country fans that reflected their music scene. However, as cultural movements are formed by one generation of young people, so are they abandoned by the next generation looking for new ways of expressing identity. The budding cocaine epidemic in the 1970s did much to zap the Austin music scene of its vitality as recreational drug users became addicts. Venues like the Armadillo World Headquarters and the One Knite with the emergence of newer clubs playing new styles of music in a

rapidly growing Austin while the Lone Star Brewing Company was sold to new owners lacking the same drive to promote their product through live music. Even though progressive country music and Lone Star beer's appeal were not as strong to later generations of young Texans moving to Austin, both remained a staple of the Austin music scene and Texas culture at large well past the 1970s. Even with ownership of the company switching hands, the "National Beer of Texas" continued to promote itself through the Texas mystique and remained a staple of Texas culture.

In a 1990 Lone Star Brewing Company publication marking the fiftieth anniversary of the company, Retzloff offered a recollection of his twenty-seven years with the company. After summarizing his career and friends made along the way, he made two points. First, "Bringing back the armadillo [the symbol of the progressive country movement] would be like bring back the feeling the first time you fell in love, shot an 8-point buck, or caught a 10 pound speckled trout, but times have changed. I say let's get back to the basics, work with our present tools and always keep an eye out and ear open for new creative promotional deals." Second, "the music association of Lone Star was fun and unique. It is interesting to note Lone Star virtually pioneered this approach to selling beer which is presently being used by Budweiser, Miller, Canada Dry, and many other corporations." Retzloff then used the opportunity to clear up a common misconception about how he sold beer: "To recap, the music artists and the bands didn't physically sell beer for us, but they caused image and endorsements to happen. This in turn led to a consumer relating the product to fun and good times, which caused consumer sampling and increased beer sales." As if to offer a rallying cry for the next generation of Lone Star salesmen, Retzloff ended the article with the same tag used in the

radio ads from the 1970s: “Good Times, Great Music and the smooth taste of Lone Star beer – No Place But Texas.”²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Jerry Retzloff, “Lone Star Longnecks, Willie Nelson and Armadillos: No Place But Texas,” *Lone Star Fifty Years*. Lone Star Brewing Company, 1990, 8-9. Accessed at the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University-San Marcos

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