

= Hank Williams =

Hiram King " Hank " Williams , ( / hæ?k w?lj?mz / ; September 17 , 1923 ? January 1 , 1953 ) was an American singer @-@ songwriter and musician . Regarded as one of the most significant and influential American singers and songwriters of the 20th century , Williams recorded 35 singles ( five released posthumously ) that reached the Top 10 of the Billboard Country & Western Best Sellers chart , including 11 that ranked number one ( three posthumously ) .

Born in Mount Olive , Butler County , Alabama , Williams moved to Georgiana , where he met Rufus Payne , a black street performer who gave him guitar lessons in exchange for meals or money . Payne had a major influence on Williams ' later musical style , along with Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb . During this time , Williams informally changed his name to Hank , as he had always fantasized about having that name . He moved to Montgomery , where he began his music career in 1937 , when producers at radio station WSFA hired him to perform and host a 15 @-@ minute program . He formed as backup the Drifting Cowboys band , which was managed by his mother , and dropped out of school to devote his time to his career .

When several of his band members were conscripted into military service during World War II , Williams had trouble with their replacements , and WSFA terminated his contract because of his alcohol abuse . Williams eventually married Audrey Sheppard , who was his manager for nearly a decade . After recording " Never Again " and " Honky Tonkin " with Sterling Records , he signed a contract with MGM Records . In 1948 he released " Move It on Over " , which became a hit , and also joined the Louisiana Hayride radio program . One year later , he released a cover of " Lovesick Blues " , which carried him into the mainstream of music . After an initial rejection , Williams joined the Grand Ole Opry . He was unable to read or notate music to any significant degree . Among the hits he wrote were " Your Cheatin ' Heart " , " Hey , Good Lookin ' " , and " I 'm So Lonesome I Could Cry " .

Several years of back pain , alcoholism , and prescription drug abuse severely damaged Williams ' health . He divorced Sheppard and was dismissed by the Grand Ole Opry because of his unreliability and alcohol abuse . Williams died in 1953 at the age of 29 , from heart failure exacerbated by pills and alcohol . Despite his short life , Williams has had a major influence on 20th @-@ century popular music , especially country music . The songs he wrote and recorded have been covered by numerous artists and have been hits in various genres . He has been inducted into multiple music halls of fame , such as the Country Music Hall of Fame ( 1961 ) , the Songwriters Hall of Fame ( 1970 ) , and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ( 1987 ) .

= = Life and career = =

= = = Early life = = =

Williams was born in Butler County , Alabama , the son of Jessie Lillybelle " Lillie " ( née Skipper ; August 12 , 1898 ? February 26 , 1955 ) and Elonzo Huble " Lon " Williams ( December 22 , 1891 ? October 25 , 1970 ) . His parents married on November 12 , 1916 . Hank Williams was of English ancestry . Elonzo Williams worked as an engineer for the railroads of the W.T. Smith lumber company . He was drafted during World War I , serving from July 1918 until June 1919 . He was severely injured after falling from a truck , breaking his collarbone and suffering a severe blow to the head . After his return , the family 's first child , Irene , was born on August 8 , 1922 . Another son of theirs died shortly after birth . Their third child , Hiram , was born on September 17 , 1923 , in Mount Olive . Since Elonzo Williams was a Mason , and his wife was a member of Order of the Eastern Star the child was named after Hiram I of Tyre ( one of the three founders of the Masons , according to Masonic legend ) , but his name was misspelled as " Hiriam " on his birth certificate .

As a child , he was nicknamed " Harm " by his family and " Herky " or " Poots " by his friends . He was born with spina bifida occulta , a disorder of the spinal column , which gave him lifelong pain ? a factor in his later abuse of alcohol and drugs . Williams ' father was frequently relocated by the

lumber company railway for which he worked , and the family lived in many southern Alabama towns . In 1930 , when Williams was seven years old , his father began suffering from facial paralysis . At a Veterans Affairs ( VA ) clinic in Pensacola , Florida , doctors determined that the cause was a brain aneurysm , and Elonzo was sent to the VA Medical Center in Alexandria , Louisiana . He remained hospitalized for eight years , rendering him mostly absent throughout Hiram 's childhood . From that time on , Lillie Williams assumed responsibility for the family .

In the fall of 1934 the Williams family moved to Greenville , Alabama , where Lillie opened a boarding house next to the Butler County courthouse . In 1935 the Williams family settled in Garland , Alabama , where Lillie Williams opened a new boarding house . After a while they moved with his cousin Opal McNeil to Georgiana , Alabama where Lillie managed to find several side jobs to support her children , despite the bleak economic climate of the Great Depression . She worked in a cannery and served as a night @-@ shift nurse in the local hospital .

Their first house burned and the family lost its possessions . They moved to a new house on the other side of town on Rose Street , which Williams ' mother soon turned into a boarding house . The house had a small garden , on which they grew diverse crops that Williams and his sister Irene sold around Georgiana . At a chance meeting in Georgiana , Hank Williams met U.S. Representative J. Lister Hill while he was campaigning across Alabama . Williams told Hill that his mother was interested to talk with him about his problems and her need to collect Elonzo Williams ' disability pension . With Hill 's help , the family began collecting the money . Despite his medical condition , the family managed fairly well financially throughout the Great Depression .

There are several versions of how Williams got his first guitar . His mother stated that she bought it with money from selling peanuts , but many other prominent residents of the town claimed to have been the one who purchased the guitar for him . While living in Georgiana , Williams met Rufus " Tee @-@ Tot " Payne , a street performer . Payne gave Williams guitar lessons in exchange for meals prepared by Lillie Williams or money . Payne 's base musical style was blues . He taught Williams chords , chord progressions , bass turns , and the musical style of accompaniment that he would use in most of his future songwriting . Later on , Williams recorded one of the songs that Payne taught him , " My Bucket 's Got a Hole in It " . Williams musical style contained influences from Payne along with several other country influences , among them " the Singing Brakeman " Jimmie Rodgers , Moon Mullican , and Roy Acuff . In 1937 Williams got into a fight with his physical education coach about exercises the coach wanted him to do . His mother subsequently demanded that the school board terminate the coach ; when they refused , the family moved to Montgomery , Alabama . Payne and Williams lost touch , though eventually , Payne also moved to Montgomery , where he died in poverty in 1939 . Williams later credited him as his only teacher .

= = = Early career = = =

In July 1937 , the Williams and McNeil families opened a boarding house on South Perry Street in downtown Montgomery . It was at this time that Williams decided to change his name informally from Hiram to Hank , a name he said was better suited to his desired career in country music . During the same year he participated in a talent show at the Empire Theater . He won the first prize of \$ 15 , singing his first original song " WPA Blues " . Williams wrote the lyrics and used the tune of Riley Puckett 's " Dissatisfied . " He never learned to read music and , for the rest of his career , based his compositions in storytelling . After school and on weekends Williams sang and played his Silvertone guitar on the sidewalk in front of the WSFA radio studios . His recent win at the Empire Theater and the street performances caught the attention of WSFA producers who occasionally invited him to perform on air . So many listeners contacted the radio station asking for more of " the singing kid " that the producers hired him to host his own 15 @-@ minute show twice a week for a weekly salary of US \$ 15 ( equivalent to US \$ 246 @.@ 90 in 2016 ) .

In August 1938 , Elonzo Williams was temporarily released from the hospital . He showed up unannounced at the family 's home in Montgomery . Lillie was unwilling to let him reclaim his position at the head of the household , so he stayed only long enough to celebrate Williams ' birthday in September before he returned to the medical center in Louisiana .

Williams' successful radio show fueled his entry into a music career. His salary was enough for him to start his own band, which he dubbed the Drifting Cowboys. The original members were guitarist Braxton Schuffert, fiddler Freddie Beach, and comedian Smith "Hezzy" Adair. James E. (Jimmy) Porter was the youngest, being only 13 when he started playing steel guitar for Williams. Arthur Whiting was also a guitarist for The Drifting Cowboys. The band traveled throughout central and southern Alabama performing in clubs and at private parties. James Ellis Garner later played fiddle for him. Lillie Williams became the Drifting Cowboys' manager. Williams dropped out of school in October 1939 so that the Drifting Cowboys could work full @-@ time. Lillie Williams began booking show dates, negotiating prices and driving them to some of their shows. Now free to travel without Williams' schooling taking precedence, the band could tour as far away as western Georgia and the Florida Panhandle. The band started to play in theaters before the start of the movies and later in honky @-@ tonks. Williams' alcohol problem started during the tours, on occasion spending an important part of the show revenues. Meanwhile, between tour schedules, Williams returned to Montgomery to host his radio show.

= = = 1940s = = =

The American entry into World War II in 1941 marked the beginning of hard times for Williams. All his band members were drafted to serve in the military, while he got a 4 @-@ F deferment from the military draft after falling from a bull during a rodeo in Texas. Many of their replacements refused to continue playing in the band because of Williams' worsening alcoholism. He continued to show up for his radio show intoxicated, so in August 1942 radio station WSFA fired him for "habitual drunkenness." During one of his concerts Williams met backstage his idol, Grand Ole Opry star Roy Acuff, who later warned him of the dangers of alcohol, saying, "You've got a million @-@ dollar talent, son, but a ten @-@ cent brain."

He worked for the rest of the war in a shipbuilding company in Mobile, Alabama, as well as singing in bars for soldiers. In 1943 Williams met Audrey Sheppard on a medicine show in Banks, Alabama. Williams and Sheppard lived and worked together in Mobile, Sheppard later told Williams that she wanted to move to Montgomery with him and start a band together and help him regain his radio show. The couple were married in 1944 in a Texaco Station in Andalusia, Alabama, by a justice of the peace. The marriage was declared illegal, since Sheppard's divorce from her previous husband did not comply with the legally required sixty @-@ day trial reconciliation.

In 1945, when he was back in Montgomery, Williams started to perform again for radio station WSFA. He wrote songs weekly to perform during the shows. As a result of the new variety of his repertoire, Williams published his first song book, Original Songs of Hank Williams. The book only listed lyrics, since its main purpose was to attract more audience. It included ten songs: "Mother Is Gone", "Won't You Please Come Back", "My Darling Baby Girl" (with Audrey Sheppard), "Grandad's Musket", "I Just Wish I Could Forget", "Let's Turn Back the Years", "Honkey @-@ Tonkey", "I Loved No One But You", "A Tramp on the Street", and "You'll Love Me Again". Williams became recognized as a songwriter, Sheppard became his manager and occasionally accompanied him on duets in some of his live concerts.

On September 14, 1946, Williams auditioned for Nashville's Grand Ole Opry but was rejected. After the failure of his audition, Williams and Audrey Sheppard tried to interest the recently formed music publishing firm Acuff @-@ Rose Music. Williams and his wife approached Fred Rose, the president of the company, during one of his habitual ping @-@ pong games at WSM radio studios. Audrey Williams asked Rose if her husband could sing a song for him on that moment, Rose agreed, and he liked Williams' musical style. Rose signed Williams to a six song contract, and leveraged this deal to sign Williams with Sterling Records. On December 11, 1946, in his first recording session, he recorded "Wealth Won't Save Your Soul", "Calling You", "Never Again (Will I Knock on Your Door)", and "When God Comes and Gathers His Jewels". The recordings "Never Again" and "Honky Tonkin" became successful, and earned Williams the attention of MGM Records.

Williams signed with MGM Records in 1947 and released "Move It on Over", which became a

massive country hit . In 1948 he moved to Shreveport , Louisiana , and he joined the Louisiana Hayride , a radio show broadcast that propelled him into living rooms all over the southeast appearing on weekend shows . Williams eventually started to host a show on KWKH and started touring across western Louisiana and eastern Texas , always returning on Saturdays for the weekly broadcast of the Hayride . After a few more moderate hits , in 1949 he released his version of the 1922 Cliff Friend & Irving Mills song " Lovesick Blues " , made popular by Rex Griffin . Williams ' version became a huge country hit ; the song stayed at number one on the Billboard charts over four consecutive months , crossing over to mainstream audiences and gaining Williams a place in the Grand Ole Opry . On June 11 , 1949 , Williams made his debut at the Grand Ole Opry , where he became the first performer to receive six encores . He brought together Bob McNett ( guitar ) , Hillous Butrum ( bass ) , Jerry Rivers ( fiddle ) and Don Helms ( steel guitar ) to form the most famous version of the Drifting Cowboys , earning an estimated US \$ 1 @, @ 000 per show ( equivalent to US \$ 9 @, @ 945 @. @ 5 in 2016 ) . That year Audrey Williams gave birth to Randall Hank Williams ( Hank Williams , Jr . ) . During 1949 , he joined the first European tour of the Grand Ole Opry , performing in military bases in England , Germany and Azores . Williams released seven hit songs after " Lovesick Blues " , including " Wedding Bells " , " Mind Your Own Business " , " You 're Gonna Change ( Or I 'm Gonna Leave ) " , and " My Bucket 's Got a Hole in It " .

= = = 1950s = = =

In 1950 , Williams began recording as " Luke the Drifter " for his religious @-@ themed recordings , many of which are recitations rather than singing . Fearful that disc jockeys and jukebox operators would hesitate to accept these unusual recordings , Williams used this alias to avoid hurting the marketability of his name . Although the real identity of Luke the Drifter was supposed to be anonymous , Williams often performed part of the material of the recordings on stage . Most of the material was written by Williams , in cases with the help of Fred Rose and his son Wesley . The songs depicted Luke the Drifter traveling around from place to place , narrating stories from different characters and philosophizing about life . Some of the compositions were accompanied by a pipe organ .

Around this time Williams released more hit songs , such as " My Son Calls Another Man Daddy " , " They 'll Never Take Her Love from Me " , " Why Should We Try Anymore " , " Nobody 's Lonesome for Me " , " Long Gone Lonesome Blues " , " Why Don 't You Love Me " , " Moanin ' the Blues " , and " I Just Don 't Like This Kind of Living " . In 1951 " Dear John " became a hit , but it was the flip side , " Cold , Cold Heart " , that became one of his most @-@ recognized songs . A pop cover version by Tony Bennett released the same year stayed on the charts for 27 weeks , peaking at number one .

Hank 's career reached a peak in August ? September 1951 with his Hadacol tour of the U.S. with actor Bob Hope and other luminaries . During the tour , Hank was photographed signing a motion picture deal with MGM . In October Hank recorded a demo , " There 's a Tear in My Beer " for a friend , " Big Bill Lister " , who recorded it in the studio . On November 14 , 1951 Hank flew to New York with his steel guitar player Don Helms where he appeared on television for the first time on " The Perry Como Show . " There he and Perry sang " Hey Good Lookin ' . " Photos but no existing footage remain of his appearance .

In November 1951 Hank suffered a fall during a hunting trip with his fiddler Jerry Rivers in Franklin , Tennessee . The fall reactivated his old back pains . He later started to consume painkillers , including morphine , and alcohol to ease the pain . On May 21 , he had been admitted to North Louisiana Sanitarium for the treatment of his alcoholism , leaving on May 24 . On December 13 , 1951 he had a spinal fusion at the Vanderbilt University Hospital , being released on December 24 . He lived during his recovery with his mother in Montgomery , and later moved to Nashville with Ray Price .

During March and April 1952 Hank flew to New York with steel guitarist Don Helms , where he made two appearances with other Grand Ole Opry members on " The Kate Smith Show . " He sang " Cold , Cold Heart , " " Hey Good Lookin ' , " " Glory Bound Train " with other cast members , and a duet , " I Can 't Help It if I 'm Still in Love with You " with Anita Carter . Footage remains of this

appearance . That spring he had a brief affair with dancer Bobbi Jett , with whom he fathered a daughter , Jett Williams ( born January 6 , 1953 , two days after his interment ) .

In June 1952 , he recorded " Jambalaya , " " Window Shopping , " " Settin ' the Woods on Fire , " and " I 'll Never Get out of this World Alive . " In early July , Audrey Williams divorced Hank . The next day he recorded " You Win Again " and " I Won 't be Home No More . " About this time he met Billie Jean Jones , a girlfriend of country singer Faron Young , at the Grand Ole Opry . As a girl , Billy had lived down the street from Hank when he was with the Louisiana Hayride , and now Hank began to visit her frequently in Shreveport , causing him to miss many Grand Ole Opry appearances .

On August 11 , 1952 , Williams was dismissed from the Grand Ole Opry for habitual drunkenness and missing shows . He returned to Shreveport , Louisiana to perform in KWKH and WBAM shows and in the Louisiana Hayride , for which he toured again . His performances were acclaimed when he was sober , but despite the efforts of his work associates to get him to shows sober , his abuse of alcohol resulted in occasions when he did not appear or his performances were poor . In October 1952 he married Billie Jean Jones .

During his last recording session on September 23 , 1952 , Williams recorded " Kaw @-@ Liga , " along with " Your Cheatin ' Heart , " " Take These Chains from My Heart , " and " I Could Never be Ashamed of You . " Due to Williams ' excesses , Fred Rose stopped working with him . By the end of 1952 , Williams had started to suffer heart problems . He met Horace " Toby " Marshall in Oklahoma City , who said that he was a doctor . Marshall had been previously convicted for forgery , and had been paroled and released from the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in 1951 . Among other fake titles he said that he was a Doctor of Science . He purchased the DSC title for \$ 35 from the Chicago School of Applied Science ; in the diploma , he requested that the DSC be spelled out as " Doctor of Science and Psychology " . Under the name of Dr. C. W. Lemon he prescribed Williams with amphetamines , Seconal , chloral hydrate , and morphine .

= = = Death = = =

Williams was scheduled to perform at the Municipal Auditorium in Charleston , West Virginia on Wednesday December 31 , 1952 . Advance ticket sales totaled US \$ 3 @, @ 500 . That day , because of an ice storm in the Nashville area , Williams could not fly , so he hired a college student , Charles Carr , to drive him to the concerts . Carr called the Charleston auditorium from Knoxville to say that Williams would not arrive on time owing to the ice storm and was ordered to drive Williams to Canton , Ohio , for the New Year 's Day concert there .

They arrived at the Andrew Johnson Hotel in Knoxville , Tennessee , where Carr requested a doctor for Williams , as he was feeling the combination of the chloral hydrate and alcohol he had drunk on the way from Montgomery to Knoxville . Dr. P.H. Cardwell injected Williams with two shots of vitamin B12 that also contained a quarter @-@ grain of morphine . Carr and Williams checked out of the hotel ; the porters had to carry Williams to the car , as he was coughing and hiccuping . At around midnight on Thursday January 1 , 1953 , when they crossed the Tennessee state line and arrived in Bristol , Virginia , Carr stopped at a small all @-@ night restaurant and asked Williams if he wanted to eat . Williams said he did not , and those are believed to be his last words . Carr later drove on until he stopped for fuel at a gas station in Oak Hill , West Virginia , where he realized that Williams was dead . The filling station 's owner called the chief of the local police . In Williams ' Cadillac the police found some empty beer cans and unfinished handwritten lyrics .

Dr. Ivan Malinin performed the autopsy at the Tyree Funeral House . Malinin found hemorrhages in the heart and neck and pronounced the cause of death as " insufficiency of the right ventricle of the heart " . That evening , when the announcer at Canton announced Williams ' death to the gathered crowd , they started laughing , thinking that it was just another excuse . After Hawkshaw Hawkins and other performers started singing " I Saw the Light " as a tribute to Williams , the crowd , now realizing that he was indeed dead , sang along . Dr. Malinin also wrote that Williams had been severely beaten and kicked in the groin recently . Also local magistrate Virgil F. Lyons ordered an inquest into Williams ' death concerning the welt that was visible on his head .

His body was transported to Montgomery , Alabama , on Friday January 2 and placed in a silver coffin that was first shown at his mother 's boarding house for two days . His funeral took place on Sunday January 4 at the Montgomery Auditorium , with his coffin placed on the flower @-@ covered stage . An estimated 15 @,@ 000 to 25 @,@ 000 people passed by the silver coffin , and the auditorium was filled with 2 @,@ 750 mourners . His funeral was said to have been far larger than any ever held for any other citizen of Alabama and the largest event ever held in Montgomery . Williams ' remains are interred at the Oakwood Annex in Montgomery . The president of MGM told Billboard magazine that the company got only about five requests for pictures of Williams during the weeks before his death , but over three hundred afterwards . The local record shops sold out of all of their records , and customers were asking for all records ever released by Williams . His final single , released in November 1952 while he was still alive , was titled " I 'll Never Get Out of This World Alive " . " Your Cheatin ' Heart " was written and recorded in September 1952 but released in late January 1953 after Williams ' death . The song , backed by " Kaw @-@ Liga , " was number one on the country charts for six weeks . It provided the title for the 1964 biographical film of the same name , which starred George Hamilton . " Take These Chains From My Heart " was released in April 1953 and went to # 1 on the country charts . " I Won 't Be Home No More , " released in July , went to # 3 , and an overdubbed demo , " Weary Blues From Waitin , ' " written with Ray Price , went to # 7 .

= = Personal life = =

On December 15 , 1944 , Williams married Audrey Sheppard . It was her second marriage and his first . Their son , Randall Hank Williams , who would achieve fame in his own right as Hank Williams , Jr . , was born on May 26 , 1949 . The marriage , always turbulent , rapidly disintegrated , and Williams developed a serious problem with alcohol , morphine , and other painkillers prescribed for him to ease the severe back pain caused by his spina bifida . The couple divorced on May 29 , 1952 .

In June 1952 , Williams moved in with his mother , even as he released numerous hit songs , such as " Half as Much " in April , " Jambalaya ( On the Bayou ) " in July , " Settin ' the Woods on Fire " / " You Win Again " in September , and " I 'll Never Get Out of This World Alive " in November . His drug problems continued to spiral out of control as he moved to Nashville and officially divorced his wife . A relationship with a woman named Bobbie Jett during this period resulted in a daughter , Jett Williams , who was born five days after Williams ' death . His mother adopted Jett , who was made a ward of the state and then adopted by another couple after her grandmother died . Jett Williams did not learn that she was Hank Williams ' daughter until the early 1980s .

On October 18 , 1952 , Williams and Billie Jean Jones Eshlimar were married in Minden , Louisiana by a justice of the peace . It was the second marriage for both ( both being divorced with children ) . The next day two public ceremonies were also held at the New Orleans Civic Auditorium , where 14 @,@ 000 seats were sold for each . After Williams ' death , a judge ruled that the wedding was not legal because Jones Eshlimar 's divorce had not become final until eleven days after she married Williams . Williams ' first wife , Audrey , and his mother , Lillie Williams , were the driving forces behind having the marriage declared invalid and pursued the matter for years . Williams had also married Audrey Sheppard before her divorce was final , on the tenth day of a required sixty @-@ day reconciliation period .

Williams was a lifelong Republican and was a vocal supporter of Dwight D. Eisenhower . According to singer Jo Stafford , he sent Eisenhower a telegram on his birthday prior to the 1952 presidential election informing him that Williams considered it a personal honor to endorse a military figure to lead the nation in its coming future .

= = Legacy = =

Hank is widely recognized as " The King Of Country Music " , a title he shares with fellow artists Roy Acuff and George Strait .

Alabama governor Gordon Persons officially proclaimed September 21 " Hank Williams Day . " The first celebration , in 1954 featured the unveiling of a monument at the Cramton Bowl , that was later placed in the grave site of Williams . The ceremony featured Ferlin Husky interpreting " I Saw the Light . "

Williams had 11 number one hits in his career ( " Lovesick Blues " , " Long Gone Lonesome Blues " , " Why Don 't You Love Me " , " Moanin ' the Blues " , " Cold , Cold Heart " , " Hey , Good Lookin ' " , " Jambalaya ( On the Bayou ) " , " I 'll Never Get Out of This World Alive " , " Kaw @-@ Liga " , " Your Cheatin ' Heart " , and " Take These Chains from My Heart " ) , as well as many other top ten hits .

On February 8 , 1960 , Williams ' star was placed at 6400 Hollywood Boulevard on the Hollywood Walk of Fame . He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1961 and into the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in 1985 . When Downbeat magazine took a poll the year after Hank 's death , he was voted the most popular country and Western performer of all time ? ahead of such giants as Jimmie Rodgers , Roy Acuff , Red Foley , and Ernest Tubb . In 1977 , a national organization of CB truck drivers voted " Your Cheatin ' Heart " as their favorite record of all time . In 1987 , he was inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame under the category Early Influence . He was ranked second in CMT 's 40 Greatest Men of Country Music in 2003 , behind only Johnny Cash . His son , Hank Jr . , was ranked on the same list . In 2004 Rolling Stone ranked him number 74 on its list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time . The website Acclaimedmusic , which collates recommendations of albums and recording artists , has a year @-@ by @-@ year recommendation for top artists . Hank Williams is ranked first for the decade 1940 ? 1949 for his song " I 'm So Lonesome I Could Cry " . Many artists of the 1950s and 1960s , including Elvis Presley , Bob Dylan , Jerry Lee Lewis , Merle Haggard , Gene Vincent , Carl Perkins , Ricky Nelson , Jack Scott , and Conway Twitty recorded Williams songs during their careers .

In 2011 Williams ' 1949 MGM number one hit , " Lovesick Blues " , was inducted into the Recording Academy Grammy Hall of Fame . The same year Hank Williams : The Complete Mother ? s Best Recordings ? .Plus ! was honored with a Grammy nomination for Best Historical Album . In 1999 , Williams was inducted into the Native American Music Hall of Fame . On April 12 , 2010 , the Pulitzer Prize Board awarded Williams a posthumous special citation that paid tribute to his " craftsmanship as a songwriter who expressed universal feelings with poignant simplicity and played a pivotal role in transforming country music into a major musical and cultural force in American life " . Keeping his legacy alive , Williams ' son , Hank Williams , Jr . , daughter Jett Williams , grandson Hank Williams III , and granddaughters Hilary Williams and Holly Williams are also country musicians .

In 2006 , a janitor of Sony / ATV Music Publishing found in a dumpster the unfinished lyrics written by Williams that had been found in his car the night he died . The worker claimed that she sold Williams ' notes to a representative of the Honky @-@ Tonk Hall of Fame and the Rock @-@ N @-@ Roll Roadshow . The janitor was accused of theft , but the charges were later dropped when a judge determined that her version of events was true . The unfinished lyrics were later returned to Sony / ATV , which handed them to Bob Dylan in 2008 to complete the songs for a new album . Ultimately , the completion of the album included recordings by Alan Jackson , Norah Jones , Jack White , Lucinda Williams , Vince Gill , Rodney Crowell , Patty Loveless , Levon Helm , Jakob Dylan , Sheryl Crow and Merle Haggard . The album , named The Lost Notebooks of Hank Williams was released on October 4 , 2011 .

Material recorded by Williams , originally intended for radio broadcasts to be played when he was on tour , or for its distribution to radio stations nationwide resurfaced throughout time . In 1993 , a double @-@ disc set of recordings of Williams for the Health & Happiness Show was released . Broadcast in 1949 , the shows were recorded for the promotion of Hadacol . The set was re @-@ released on Hank Williams : The Legend Begins in 2011 . The album included unreleased songs . " Fan It " and " Alexander 's Ragtime Band " , recorded by Williams at age fifteen ; the homemade recordings of him singing " Freight Train Blues " , " New San Antonio Rose " , " St. Louis Blues " and " Greenback Dollar " at age eighteen ; and a recording for the 1951 March of Dimes . In May 2014 , further radio recordings by Williams were released . The Garden Spot Programs , 1950 , a series of

publicity segments for plant nursery Naughton Farms originally aired in 1950 . The recordings were found by collector George Gimarc at radio station KSIB in Creston , Iowa . Gimarc contacted Williams ' daughter Jett , and Colin Escott , writer of a biography book on Williams . The material was restored and remastered by Michael Graves and released by Omnivore Recordings .

In June 2014 it was announced that British actor Tom Hiddleston would portray Williams in the upcoming biopic *I Saw the Light* , based on Colin Escott 's 1994 book *Hank Williams : The Biography* . Marc Abraham is directing the film . Filming took place in October through December 2014 and the film is set to release sometime in 2015 .

== Lawsuits over the estate ==

After Williams ' death , Audrey Williams filed a suit in Nashville against MGM Records and Acuff @-@ Rose . The suit demanded that both of the publishing companies continue to pay her half of the royalties from Hank Williams ' records . Williams had an agreement giving his first wife half of the royalties , but allegedly there was no clarification that the deal was valid after his death . Because Williams may have left no will , the disposition of the other fifty percent was considered uncertain ; those involved included the second Mrs. Williams and her daughter and Hank Williams ' mother and sister . On October 22 , 1975 , a federal judge in Atlanta , Georgia , finally ruled Jones Eshlimar 's marriage was valid and that half of Williams ' future royalties belonged to her .

=== WSM 's Mother 's Best Flour ===

In 1951 , Williams hosted a fifteen @-@ minute show for Mother 's Best flour in WSM radio . Due to Williams ' tour schedules some of the shows were previously recorded to be played in his absence . The original acetates were in possession of Jett Williams , while existing duplicates were found and intended to be published by a third party . In February 2005 , the Tennessee Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling stating that Williams ' heirs ? son , Hank Williams Jr . , and daughter , Jett Williams ? have the sole rights to sell his recordings made for a Nashville radio station in 1951 . The court rejected claims made by Polygram Records and Legacy Entertainment in releasing recordings Williams made for the Mother 's Best Flour Show . The recordings , which Legacy Entertainment acquired in 1997 , include live versions of Williams ' hits and his cover version of other songs . Polygram contended that Williams ' contract with MGM Records , which Polygram now owns , gave them rights to release the radio recordings . A 3 @-@ CD selection of the tracks , restored by Joe Palmaccio , was released by Time @-@ Life in October 2008 titled *The Unreleased Recordings* .

=== Tributes ===

== Awards ==

== Discography ==

=== Books ===

=== Journals ===

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