



The Accidental Texan: ***How Johnny Cuiello Became a Texas Playboy***

Deirdre Lannon



Drummer Johnny CuvIELLO had never been to Texas when he became one of Bob Wills's Texas Playboys in 1946. Nevertheless, when CuvIELLO worked up a drum-oriented song for the band, Wills insisted on titling it "The Texas Drummer Boy." After the tune became a hit, CuvIELLO himself would come to be known as The Texas Drummer Boy, a nickname belying the fact that he had visited the Lone Star State only briefly while on tour with Wills. CuvIELLO never identified as Texan, but during his time with the Texas Playboys, the patina of a fabricated Texas cowboy image tinted his role in the band, and thus his professional identity.¹ Ironically, the fact that he was not a true Texan, unlike many of the other band members, also may have played a role in the abrupt end of his tenure as a Texas Playboy.

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During the 1930s, Bob Wills, along with Milton Brown and others, had forged a new style of music that incorporated a uniquely Texan blend of jazz, blues, country, and Mexican influences. This fledgling musical subgenre eventually would come to be known as "western swing."² Although Wills left Texas not long after his career began to take off, he always maintained a close association with his home state. Many of his songs, such as "Texas Blues," the "Texas Two Step," and his huge hit "San Antonio Rose," included strong lyrical imagery related to the Lone Star State. No matter where he based himself, Wills made sure his band members knew that they were, and always would be, Texas Playboys.³

Following a stint in Oklahoma from the late 1930s until the early 1940s, Bob Wills relocated with his Texas Playboys to California in 1943. It was there in 1946 that CuvIELLO joined Wills's famed western swing band. Although CuvIELLO was a member of the group for only a couple of years, he left an

indelible mark on the band, just as his association with a “Texas-based” genre of music would shape his professional identity for the remainder of his life.

John Anthony CuvIELLO was born on August 8, 1915, to Italian immigrant parents in Fresno, California, deep in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Joseph CuvIELLO and Elizabeth Avigiano came from Maschito, Italy, to the United States in the 1890s, passing through New York with their young family on the way to California. An amateur wine-maker, Joseph had been to Fresno before to visit a relative and envisioned a promising future for his young family there among the region’s grape vineyards. “I’m the second John,” recalls Johnny CuvIELLO, referring to an older brother who passed away before the family left Italy. For a while, it seemed as if the CuvIELLOS might lose their “second John,” as well. With six children to care for in America, Elizabeth watched helplessly as her youngest baby, Johnny, refused to eat, and she prepared herself for the possibility of losing yet another son. However, the local pediatrician, Dr. Jorgensen, prescribed vitamin-rich powdered milk, and the infant soon began to thrive.⁴

the grapes he was supposed to be harvesting. Joseph handled the situation by flinging one of the drying trays at his son and yelling for him to get back to work. CuvIELLO recalls, “I don’t know how he did it, but he would swing it, and it would come right to me. Right there! He had a talent.”⁶

Johnny’s sister married an ex-surgeon who had his own grape farm on which the CuvIELLO family worked. In addition to fresh fruits and vegetables for their own consumption, the CuvIELLOS picked grapes together every year, leaving “the big farm” to travel as far as Santa Cruz, following the grape harvests. Johnny remembers that they were paid a respectable five cents per box, until the arrival of tens of thousands of Dust Bowl immigrants, who were willing to work for much less.

As the youngest child, Johnny never could pick a row of grapes as fast as his older siblings. So, he began looking for another source of income. While his brothers continued working out on the farms, Johnny found employment in Fresno. He sold ice cream from a wagon, served as a school crossing guard, and worked as a paperboy for the *Fresno Bee*. He took all of his

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Johnny CuvIELLO grew up very close to his mother, helping her bake bread in the outdoor oven Joseph built to resemble the ones they used back in Italy. Johnny’s early illness left him with a lifelong nervous stomach, but his mother’s minestrone soup and the fresh baked bread seemed to have a curative effect. He attended church with his mother, who cooked mashed potatoes and ravioli before leaving the house in order to ensure the meal would be ready soon after their return. Joseph CuvIELLO, at home amid vineyards but lost in the constrictive laws of the Prohibition era, began making his own wine. He sold small amounts to neighbors and family members who also missed their traditional drink, but he never considered it a business. At one point, someone took issue with his low-level bootlegging and alerted local authorities. The police did investigate, but they were sympathetic, cautioning Joseph to be careful and limit his activities. They left with a sample of the contraband but never bothered the family again.⁵

Before some 3.5 million people fled Texas and Oklahoma for the West Coast during the Dust Bowl of the mid-1930s, ethnic minorities comprised the majority of fruit pickers in California’s Central Valley. The CuvIELLO family, including young Johnny, worked in the grape fields hauling wooden trays and filling them with clusters of fruit to dry into raisins. The sheltered youngest child would often stop, hiding in the vines and eating

wages and handed them over to his mother, who, unbeknownst to him, set the money aside for his own use later. One of the fringe benefits of selling the *Fresno Bee* was the free weekly movie to which the newspaper company treated its delivery boys. CuvIELLO’s friends especially enjoyed watching films starring Rin Tin Tin, “The Wonder Dog,” although teenaged Johnny’s attention often was drawn to the pit band that played before and after the movie. The drummer, in particular, fascinated CuvIELLO, who was enthralled by the speed and control of the drum roll. “I really fell in love with that roll,” he recalls, “it just sounded so good to me.”⁷

Although they had a radio, the CuvIELLO family rarely listened to music around the house, preferring comedy programs, such as *Amos & Andy*. Johnny’s love for the drums came solely from his appreciation of the instrument. He did not think in terms of any specific musical genre or career path. Instead, he simply wanted to perform that “beautiful roll” on the snare and become the best drummer that he could be.⁸

As a teenager, CuvIELLO became more serious about learning to play music. After asking around, he found a classmate who was interested in selling his drums for \$14. He even promised to include basic drum lessons at no extra charge. The kit, which had a 28” bass drum adorned with the silhouette of a naked woman and a light inside for illumination, also included a snare



Johnny CuvIELLO with the Edison Jazz Orchestra, 1932. From the 1932 Edison Observer yearbook. Courtesy Fresno Public Library.

drum with a rope to provide the sibilant sound he wanted. CuvIELLO was thrilled and asked his mother if he could purchase the drums. She produced the money she had been saving on his behalf, and, after making sure her son was serious, allowed him to buy the set. Unfortunately, CuvIELLO's classmate never followed through on his offer of free lessons, so Johnny found himself in possession of what would become the tools of his profession without yet knowing how to use them properly.⁹

Undeterred, CuvIELLO approached one of his teachers in the Music Department, Mr. Bohasky, who agreed to give Johnny daily lessons each morning at 8:00 before school started. The two began with the bass drum, and after two or three weeks, moved on to the snare. Mr. Bohasky taught CuvIELLO how to read snare drum notes by playing eighth and sixteenth note runs on the flute while Johnny practiced alongside him on the drum set. After several lessons, CuvIELLO "got the feeling, and...was off."¹⁰

At home, CuvIELLO practiced incessantly. Perhaps surprisingly, the racket did not seem to bother his father, who would sip wine and listen approvingly. Although CuvIELLO's mother never voiced any disapproval, her son worried that his constant pounding would become an annoyance. So, he began honing his skills quietly on a rubber practice pad. One day when his mother was entertaining "some Italians who came to visit," Johnny rehearsed in his room, almost silently, on his rubber pad. Later that evening, she remarked that she had not heard him practice yet. CuvIELLO grinned mischievously and said, "I'll do it tomorrow, Mom!" Both of CuvIELLO's parents seemed to genuinely enjoy their son's burgeoning musical talents and wholeheartedly encouraged his development as a performer.¹¹

After studying with Mr. Bohasky, CuvIELLO met two other musicians in Fresno, from whom he would learn a great deal about playing. A young drummer named Terry Angell encouraged CuvIELLO to practice alongside him at no charge. This was how CuvIELLO learned to use his wrists and fingers to increase speed and dexterity without tiring out his arms. Although he took only two or three lessons, he practiced the technique tirelessly, and, after about a year, believed that he had it almost mastered. CuvIELLO also befriended a black drummer, whose stick-twirling made a lasting impression on Johnny. Often, his mother Elizabeth would make soup and sandwiches for the boys, as they practiced their intricate maneuvers.¹²

By the early 1930s, Johnny CuvIELLO had become the primary drummer in all three musical groups at his high school, Edison High. The Edison Band marched at festivals and parades, while the Edison Orchestra performed "for all junior high assemblies and for special programs on request."¹³ Although he excelled at military rhythms in the marching band and the classical pieces performed by the orchestra, CuvIELLO also sought to expand his musical horizons by joining the seven-piece Edison Jazz Orchestra. This group, comprised primarily of students of Italian and Mexican descent, played weekly noon-time dance concerts, as well as "many programs and clubs including...the Junior-Senior Prom."¹⁴

CuvIELLO, who also played with a jazz ensemble outside of school, recalls that it was in these jazz bands that he "really got the experience."¹⁵ The saxophonist and trumpeter in his school band, who were fairly accomplished musicians, showed CuvIELLO how to make their songs swing. They all read music

and played such jazz standards as “It Had to be You” and “My Confession” from music charts.¹⁶ This solid grounding in jazz would prove crucial to his future involvement with western swing, a musical genre that superimposed jazz methods, songs, and styles onto stringed instruments primarily associated with country music.¹⁷

Although the members of the Edison Jazz ensemble were teenagers, the advanced level of their musicianship allowed them to perform at professional engagements, such as weddings, parties, and community functions.¹⁸ One member of the group was the brother of boxer Young Corbett III, who won the worldwide welterweight championship in February 1933. The band played several events for the sports hero, even making a trip north to San Francisco, a noted jazz hotspot.¹⁹

CuvIELLO’s drumming skills brought him local acclaim and eventually led to a job offer from a burlesque show in Fresno’s Chinatown neighborhood. Although his teachers advised against taking the position, since he was still in high school, CuvIELLO decided to consult with his biggest supporter and the ultimate authority figure in his life—his mother. As he recalls, “I told her...they got a job for me over here, but that’s where the women—they’re naked, but they got a string on them.” After thinking it over, his mother decided that Johnny could take the job playing his beloved drums for money, despite the racy nature of the show.²⁰

As a result, CuvIELLO’s first steady professional gig turned out to be performing in a burlesque theater, even though he was still in high school. “I learned to play shows on stage—stage shows,” CuvIELLO said of his first real job as a drummer. “It was a good training for me.” The piano player and trumpeter particularly impressed CuvIELLO, who “learned hard” from these seasoned professionals.²¹ He would get out of school at 3:00 P.M., rush over to the theater for his first show at 3:30, and play one more at 6:00. His brother-in-law accompanied CuvIELLO to the theater and stayed with him through the shows, making sure he kept out of trouble and got home safely. Wide-eyed, Johnny collected autographs from all the dancers and musicians, yet never compromised the importance of his craft.

After graduating from high school, CuvIELLO continued to work in burlesque, appearing at the Rex Theatre in Fresno, and taking odd gigs as they came. He attended Fresno State College, where he played in the concert, symphony, and military bands.²² Despite being a paid professional and also performing at the college, CuvIELLO continued taking private lessons and worked incessantly to hone his skills. He made a weekly trip to Los Angeles to learn from a drummer whom his friend Terry Angell had recommended, practicing exercises for control and dexterity. “I started gettin’ wise,” he remembers, “I learned the basics real good.”²³

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December

1941, CuvIELLO received his draft notice from the United States Army. Despite his enthusiasm for joining the military, his frail physique almost kept him from serving. The weight requirement for his height was 120 pounds, and at the time he weighed only 119. However, the night before his physical, his mother cooked a big spaghetti dinner for him, and, the next morning, he weighed in at exactly 120 pounds. Stationed in Hawaii, CuvIELLO played not only in the military marching band, but also in a jazz ensemble organized to perform for the officers club and at dances. After nearly five years of service, CuvIELLO was released from the Army “on points” just as World War II ended.²⁴

Bob Wills also had served in the Army, albeit briefly. Upon his release in 1943, he relocated with most of his band from Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Los Angeles, California. Although Wills was a native Texan and had formed his first western swing bands in the Lone Star State, he had moved to Oklahoma in 1934, in part, because of conflicts with influential Texas radio personality and future governor, W. Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel.²⁵ Musicologist Jean Boyd notes that it was this first relocation, from Texas to Oklahoma, that caused Wills to change his band’s name from “The Playboys” to the “Texas Playboys” as a way to emphasize his historical and cultural ties to his home state.²⁶ With this new move to California taking Wills so far from his original base of operations, he had perhaps even more reason to underscore his ties to Texas.

During his years in Oklahoma, Wills had established a touring circuit centered on his home base of Tulsa. Although he periodically traveled to more distant locations, touring within a small radius allowed the band to drive home after each engagement, which was Wills’s preferred mode of operation. Wills found the performance circuit in Los Angeles to be very competitive. Although he got regular work in western movies and continued to sell out local dance halls, Wills was never truly comfortable in Hollywood. In addition, being located in southern California made it difficult to tour the rest of the Golden State. So, in 1945, Wills moved his band and family to a ranch outside of Fresno in central California’s San Joaquin Valley. Here he hoped to replicate the type of successful touring circuit he had built back in Tulsa.²⁷

By 1946, Johnny CuvIELLO had finished his military service and returned to Fresno, where he quickly found work with the Shorty Wells band, playing frequently at the Fresno Barn. CuvIELLO also was hired by Jack O’Neil to play on Fresno radio station KMJ. There CuvIELLO performed twice weekly with a three-piece band and provided percussive sound effects, such as using a wooden block to imitate the sound of a horse galloping. Although immersed in music, CuvIELLO was still relatively unaware of the popular music of the day, preferring to learn his songs from sheet music or from whichever band leader hired him.²⁸

While working at KMJ, Cuiello learned that a nine-piece band would be arriving to perform on the air. Since he had been playing primarily with Wells's five-piece combo, Cuiello was intrigued by the thought of such a large ensemble. So, he decided to go down and listen. After fortifying himself with a bowl of his mother's minestrone soup, he headed to the station, not knowing that he was about to make the acquaintance of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys.²⁹

When Cuiello looked through the studio window and saw the band setting up, he decided he wanted to meet the drummer, who was tuning his snare drum. Cuiello walked over and shook hands with the young man, who introduced himself as Billy Jack Wills, Bob Wills's younger brother. Cuiello told Billy Jack that he also played drums, and Wills immediately asked Johnny if he would finish adjusting the snare. "I was tuning his drum up. I was tuning it the way I like it, with nice tension and everything," Cuiello recalls, and after hearing him try the drums out, the younger Wills asked him to sit in for a few songs. Billy Jack

only because his clothes did not match those of the rest of the band, Cuiello gladly accepted the position after Wills offered to provide the western shirt, ten gallon hat, and cowboy boots that comprised the standard Texas Playboy uniform in the mid-1940s. Cuiello, the California jazzman of Italian heritage, was suddenly and irreversibly "westernized."

Cuiello soon played his first dance with Bob Wills in Selma, California, a small town north of Fresno. Accustomed to the loose structure of the burlesque band, Cuiello was surprised at the length of the sets they performed. "The band just kept playing, no break...we kept playing. And that was the first job with him, and I was getting tired, you know, and you keep going."³³ Hungry, tired, and unsure as to when they would stop, Cuiello unwrapped a sandwich his mother had packed for him. "I was eating the sandwich while I was playing. Well, the guys all looked at me like, 'hey, you are gonna get canned, man. You're eating that sandwich while you're playing with him.'"³⁴ After the show, guitar player Junior Barnard spoke

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Wills "was drumming [for the Playboys] whenever they didn't have a drummer," Johnny remembers, "but he wanted to go back on the bass fiddle."³⁰

Cuiello was reluctant to jump in, since he had never played with a nine-piece band before. However, Billy Jack Wills urged him to try and assured him that it was only practice. So, Cuiello agreed to try a song or two. The band, none of whom he knew, began a loose practice session, jamming on segments of songs and making sure their instruments were in tune. Cuiello played along without inhibition or nervousness, completely unaware that he was performing with one of the top acts in the nation.

As the Texas Playboys warmed up, two men "in civilian hats" walked into the room. "I didn't know Bob Wills or Tommy [Duncan, lead vocalist]. I said 'these are promoters' to myself 'I might get a job!' I thought they were promoters." Duncan took his place at the microphone, and Wills took his fiddle out of the case. After the briefest of introductions, Wills called out for his hit song "San Antonio Rose," asking rhetorically "ready boys?" The band took off. Johnny's jazz technique and obvious talent blended seamlessly with the group, and although he was completely unfamiliar with the song, he performed well enough to be invited to join the band.³¹

As Cuiello recalls, when the song ended, "Wills asked 'Do you want to go to work for me?' We rehearsed another hour. Then we made a transcription [recording]."³² Hesitant

with the new, unfamiliar member of the band. "I didn't know who Bob Wills was, so Junior Barnard had to tell me 'hey, that's the big Bob Wills, he's a famous man, a big man!'" Barnard said if Wills had seen anyone eating on the bandstand, he would have fired him. Cuiello was impressed and recalls, "the next night I didn't eat no sandwich!"³⁵

Although Cuiello's stint with Bob Wills could have ended as abruptly as it began, they would go on to play together for two years. Among other accomplishments, their musical partnership resulted in the *Tiffany Transcriptions*, a series of songs recorded for radio, which historian Charles Townsend and others believe reveal the unmatched breadth of Wills music and his band's unparalleled musical versatility. Currently available through Rhino Records, the *Tiffany Transcriptions* sound as vital and potent today as they did sixty years ago.³⁷

In early 1947, after more than a year with the Playboys, Johnny Cuiello contributed the only song to the band's repertoire which highlighted the drums. He had started composing a song with lyrics, so he brought his words and melody to Playboy steel guitarist Herb Remington, who had become a good friend and frequent roommate on the road. In a hotel room in Chicago, Remington picked out the melody as Johnny sang it. Using only a practice drum pad and an un-amplified steel guitar, the two arranged the song as an instrumental, in which several instruments would trade verses with the drums. After about an hour, Cuiello

and Remington believed they had something special, so they approached Bob Wills. As Cuiello recalled, “I went to Bob. I said ‘Bob, I got a song I’d like to do, with the drums.’ He said ‘Sure!’ That was one great thing about Bob. If you had any song you wanted to sing, yes sir, he would give it a chance.”³⁸

At the time, the Playboys were making a studio recording for MGM Records, and Wills was more than willing to try out the new song during the session.³⁹ Since Cuiello had only performed

it on a practice pad, he had to improvise quickly on his drum kit. “I just started off naturally and picked up on a tom-tom.”⁴⁰ The improvisational nature of jazz was never more evident in a Texas Playboys recording session. “I picked it up and did it, and I felt—I felt something swinging.”⁴¹ Influenced by another song in the Texas Playboy repertoire, “Hawaiian War Chant,” this uncharted adventure allowed for extended hot solos from Tiny Moore’s electric mandolin and Herb Remington’s steel guitar.



Johnny Cuiello performing with Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys on an ABC radio broadcast, 1946. Courtesy Johnny Cuiello.

The result was a lively, drum solo-driven tune featuring the Texas Playboys with their California-born percussionist, recording an improvisational jazz number, which had been written in Chicago, Illinois. Although other soloists had contributed songs to the group's repertoire and even had tunes named after them, this was the first time a drummer had taken the spotlight for more than a short solo. Wills believed the song would be a hit, so he featured it, along with Cuiello's

rousing drum solo, in the band's live performances. Reflecting his identification with his roots, both true and fabricated, Wills named the song "Texas Drummer Boy," a nickname which, from that moment on, would be inextricably linked to Fresno, California's Johnny Cuiello.

Despite the success of their musical collaboration, differences between Cuiello and certain other Texas Playboys began to cause friction within the band. Cliques formed, and although he considered Herb Remington and Junior Barnard to be close friends, Cuiello felt increasingly isolated from the rest of the group. Cuiello recalls that Eldon Shamblin, in particular, seemed to dislike him, and since Shamblin acted as road manager for the band, this created tension. "Eldon was kind of jealous of me. I didn't drink with them, and I wasn't from Texas. Some of the guys—they didn't want me in the band—they wanted the other drummer to come back."⁴²

The Playboys remained headquartered in Fresno for the duration of Cuiello's tenure, and the tour bus would regularly pick him up and drop him off at his parents' house. However, in late 1947, according to Cuiello, the bus dropped him off but never came back to pick him up. He heard later that Eldon Shamblin had told Bob Wills that Cuiello had not shown up at the specified time.⁴³

With "Texas Drummer Boy" due for release in early 1948, the dismissal of Cuiello proved to be short-sighted, since the intricate drum rhythms he had played on the song were difficult to replicate. The record was released, and it did indeed become a hit, as audiences requested it at Texas Playboys concerts throughout California and the Southwest. Wills asked successive drummers to play it, but few could match Cuiello's skill and unique style. Eventually, Wills dropped the song from the band's repertoire.⁴⁴ Johnny Cuiello, the Italian-Californian had left his mark on the Texas Playboys, and the title of Texas Drummer Boy would forever be his and his alone.

Cuiello went on to perform with many other acts in the burgeoning California country music scene. In addition to having played years earlier behind the popular comedy group, The Three Stooges, Cuiello also worked with such prominent artists as Buck Owens. Cuiello played sessions for Capitol Records, led his own band at the legendary Blackboard Club in Bakersfield, and became a successful songwriter. In the 1960s, however, he married and left professional music for a more stable career at Lockheed. By the early 1990s, western swing had experienced a resurgence in popularity, and Cuiello found himself in demand at Texas Playboy reunions and other western swing events throughout the country. Today, Johnny Cuiello, still known as the Texas Drummer Boy, continues to play his signature song to appreciative crowds across the country, going strong at 93 years of age. ★



Notes

1. Analysis of the phenomenon of western clothing and the “cowboy image” in country music can be found in, Bill C. Malone, *Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers: Southern Culture and the Roots of Country Music* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), Bill C. Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, Second Revised Edition, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), and Holly George-Warren and Michelle Freedman, *How the West was Worn* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001).
2. For more on the evolution of western swing and the history of Bob Wills, Milton Brown, and other pioneers of the genre, see Deirdre Lannon, “Swingin’ West: How Hollywood Put the ‘Western’ in Texas Swing,” M.A. Thesis, Texas State University-San Marcos, 2007, Charles R. Townsend, *San Antonio Rose: The Life and Music of Bob Wills* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1986), Cary Ginell and Roy Lee Brown, *Milton Brown and the Founding of Western Swing* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), Jean Boyd, *The Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), Rush Evans, “Bob Wills: The King of Western Swing,” *Journal of Texas Music History*, Volume 2, Number 2, 16-29, John Mark Dempsey, *The Light Crust Doughboys are on the Air: Celebrating Seventy Years of Texas Music*, (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2002), Jean Boyd, “We’re the Light Crust Doughboys from Burrus Mill”: *An Oral History* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).
3. Louise Rowe, conversation with author, May 23, 2005.
4. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
5. Ibid; See also James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), for a discussion of the Dust Bowl migration and its role in transplanting the regional culture of Texas and Oklahoma to the West Coast.
6. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
7. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, Sept. 7, 2005.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. *The Edison Inventor Yearbook*, 1933 (Fresno County Library), 49.
14. Ibid.
15. Jean Boyd, *Oral Memoirs of Johnny Cuiello and Steve Hathaway, An Interview Conducted 7 July 1993* (Waco: Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 2001), 17.
16. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
17. Boyd, *Jazz of the Southwest*, 2; See also Malone, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 158-174; Gary Hartman, *The History of Texas Music*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 143-147; Duncan McLean, *Lone Star Swing: On the Trail of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997).
18. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
19. Michael Egan, “Johnny Cuiello,” *Western Swing Newsletter*, September 1990, 3.
20. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, Sept. 7, 2005.
21. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
22. Egan, “Johnny Cuiello,” 4.
23. Ibid.
24. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, September 7, 2005.
25. Charles R. Townsend, “Bob Wills,” in Roy Barkley, ed., *The Handbook of Texas Music*, (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2003), 356-357.
26. Boyd, *We’re the Light Crust Doughboys from Burrus Mill*, 13
27. Townsend, *San Antonio Rose*, 235.
28. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, Sept. 7, 2005.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Boyd, *Oral Memoirs of Johnny Cuiello*, 44.
34. Ibid.
35. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
36. Townsend, *San Antonio Rose*, 250.
37. For more information, see: www.Rhino.com
38. Johnny Cuiello, conversation with author, May 20, 2004.
39. Cuiello remembers recording at a studio in the Wrigley Building in Chicago, but Townsend’s discography lists the location as Hollywood. The song was also recorded for the *Tiffany Transcriptions*.
40. Boyd, *Oral Memoirs of Johnny Cuiello*, 16.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.