

Volume 15

Number 002

Patsy Cline Part II

Lead: In 1963, thirty-year-old Patsy Cline, at the top of her game, at the pinnacle of success, died on the way home in an airplane accident in stormy weather just 90 miles from Nashville.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts

Content: By the 1950s, country music was making its place in the world, but it was still a male-dominated conclave. All of this began to change in 1957 when a little lady from Winchester, Virginia won the Arthur Godfrey Talent Show. Patsy Cline reached the top of the country

charts with “Walking After Midnight” and then the song crossed over and became a mainstream popular music smash. She sold millions of records in her brief career and raised the visibility of and respect for female country music artists. Soon she was performing regularly at the Grand Ole Opry and was the first female country music star to sing at Carnegie Hall. She is considered one of the finest vocalists of the twentieth century, changing more than just the bottom line. Cline shocked the conservative country music establishment when she gave up cowgirl boots and tassels and started wearing sexy cocktail dresses and heavy makeup.

While recovering in the hospital from a near fatal head-on car crash in 1961, Cline heard on the radio a new singer, Loretta Lynn, sing “I Fall to Pieces,” as a tribute to Patsy and soon they became fast friends.

On March 3, 1963, Patsy and fellow musicians, Dottie West, Hawkshaw Hawkins, George Jones and others performed a benefit concert in Kansas City to help the family of a local disc jockey who had recently died. Two days later, anxious to get home to her two young children, Cline refused West’s offer to drive to Nashville, and chose to fly back in a Piper Comanche piloted by her manager, Randy Hughes. They stopped at Dyersburg, Tennessee to refuel, and took off just

after 6:00 PM. Thirteen minutes later, in severe weather, the plane crashed in a wooded area near Camden, Tennessee, killing all on board.

Cline's fame was so widespread and her influence so pervasive that she was mourned by family, friends, colleagues and fans far beyond the music community. She was buried in her hometown of Winchester, Virginia at Shenandoah Memorial Park. Each day, at the time of her death, hymns are played from a bell-tower erected by Dottie West and Loretta Lynn.

Research by Ann Johnson, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

A Tribute to Patsy Cline. 25 January 2009.

<<http://www.patsy.nu/>>.

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<http://www.patsycline.info>.

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