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The WBT Briarhoppers: Eight Decades of a Bluegrass Band Made for Radio

Tom Warlick, Lucy Warlick

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In 1934, WBT radio announcer Charles Crutchfield formed a spur-of-the-moment musical group to satisfy a potential sponsor looking for a "hillbilly" radio program to showcase its products. Known as the WBT Briarhoppers, this group went on to become one of the longest lasting bluegrass/country ensembles in America, staying on the air until 1951 and then continuing to perform. Compiled from firsthand interviews, this work tells the story of the WBT Briarhoppers, analyzing the band's history and its connection to the growth of American radio and radio advertising. Using the Briarhoppers as a common thread, it examines changes in culture and the group's contribution to country and bluegrass music. The work also discusses legendary performers including the Tennessee Ramblers, The Johnson Family, and Bill and Charlie Monroe. A discography is included.

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