



The Light Crust Doughboys Are on the Air: Celebrating Seventy Years of Texas Music (Evelyn Oppenheimer Series)

John Mark Dempsey

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Millions of Texans and Southwesterners have been touched over the years by the Light Crust Doughboys. From 1930 to 1952, fans faithfully tuned in to their early-morning and, later, noontime radio program, and turned out in droves to hear them play live. The Doughboys embodied the very essence of the “golden era” of radio—live performances and the dominance of programming by advertising agencies. Their radio program began as a way to sell Light Crust Flour. Their early impresario, W. Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel, quickly learned how to exploit the power of radio to influence voters, and he put that lesson to good use to become a two-time Texas governor and the model for Pappy O’Daniel in the movie, *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* But the group was more than a way to push flour; the talented musicians associated with them included Bob Wills and Milton Brown, each of whom receive credit for founding western swing. With the demise of their regular radio program, the Light Crust Doughboys had to remake themselves. Trailblazers in western swing, the Doughboys explored many other musical genres, including gospel, for which they were nominated for Grammys in 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2002. They continue to play together with versatility and wide-ranging talent—“official music ambassadors of the Lone Star State” as declared by the state legislature in 1995. Their legendary banjo player, Smokey Montgomery, was with the group for sixty-six years before his death in 2001. For the first time, here is the story of the Doughboys phenomenon, from their debut broadcast to their contemporary live performances. This is a rich slice of Texas musical and broadcasting history. Included inside is a bonus CD containing seventy-two minutes of Doughboys music, from early studio recordings to contemporary tunes.

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