



## BOB MCDILL: GONE COUNTRY



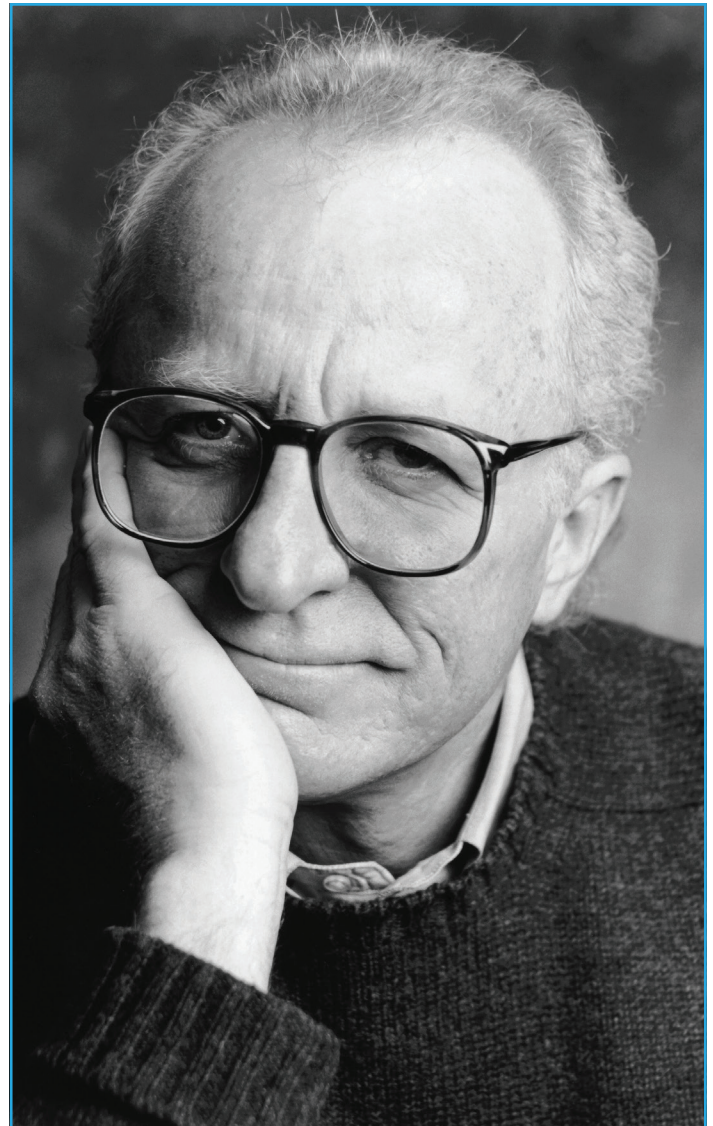
Songwriter Bob McDill brought a deep appreciation of southern tradition to country music when he arrived in Nashville in 1970. Over the next three decades, he wrote numerous #1 country hits, including “Amanda” and “Gone Country.”

Robert Lee McDill was born in 1944 and grew up near Beaumont, Texas. As a child, he enjoyed fishing, hunting, and saving up nickels to play Johnny Cash on the local jukebox. McDill received a guitar for his fourteenth birthday, and within a couple of years, he was writing his first songs.

In college, McDill became interested in folk music. He traded his electric guitar for a banjo and formed a band called the Newcomers. The band caught the attention of a publishing company that wanted to hire McDill as a songwriter, but McDill had plans to join the Navy. He signed the deal shortly before he left for duty, and his first songs were released while he was away.

Once he returned, McDill moved to Nashville and tried writing country music for the first time, which wasn't easy for him. He first noticed country music's depth and beauty when he heard George Jones's “A Good Year for the Roses” while riding around in a friend's Cadillac. McDill was “overwhelmed.”

McDill wrote the song “Amanda” in just thirty minutes. Artist Don Williams recorded it, as well as



many other McDill songs through the years. The song became a #1 hit when Waylon Jennings recorded it in 1979.

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### LISTEN

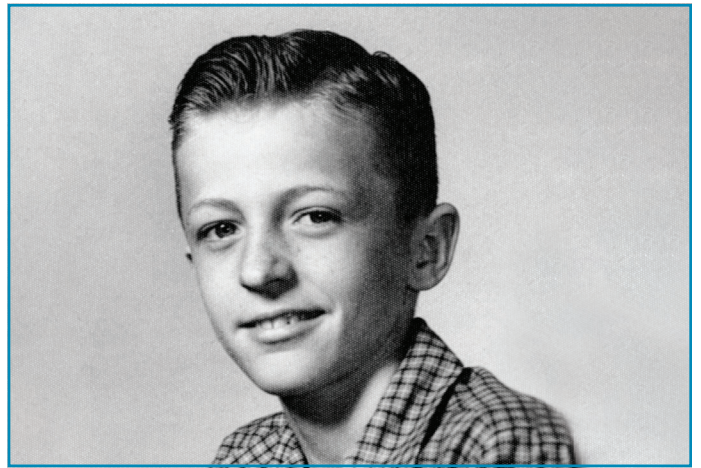
“Amanda” (Waylon Jennings), “Gone Country” (Alan Jackson), “It Must Be Love” (Don Williams)

**BOB MCDILL:  
GONE COUNTRY (CONTINUED)**

McDill loved to read and was given Robert Penn Warren’s novel *A Place to Come To* by a friend. Its story inspired him to write a song about the “real South” he remembered. The result was “Good Ole Boys Like Me,” which paired a gorgeous melody with memories of a southern childhood.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, McDill was a well-known Nashville songwriter with numerous hits—at one point, he had four songs in the top twenty.

McDill retired from songwriting in 2000 and has since written two books. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2023.



**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

1. How long did it take McDill to write his song “Amanda”?

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2. What is a jukebox (found in second paragraph)? How do you know? What do you need to make them work?

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3. How do you know that McDill appreciated southern traditions?

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