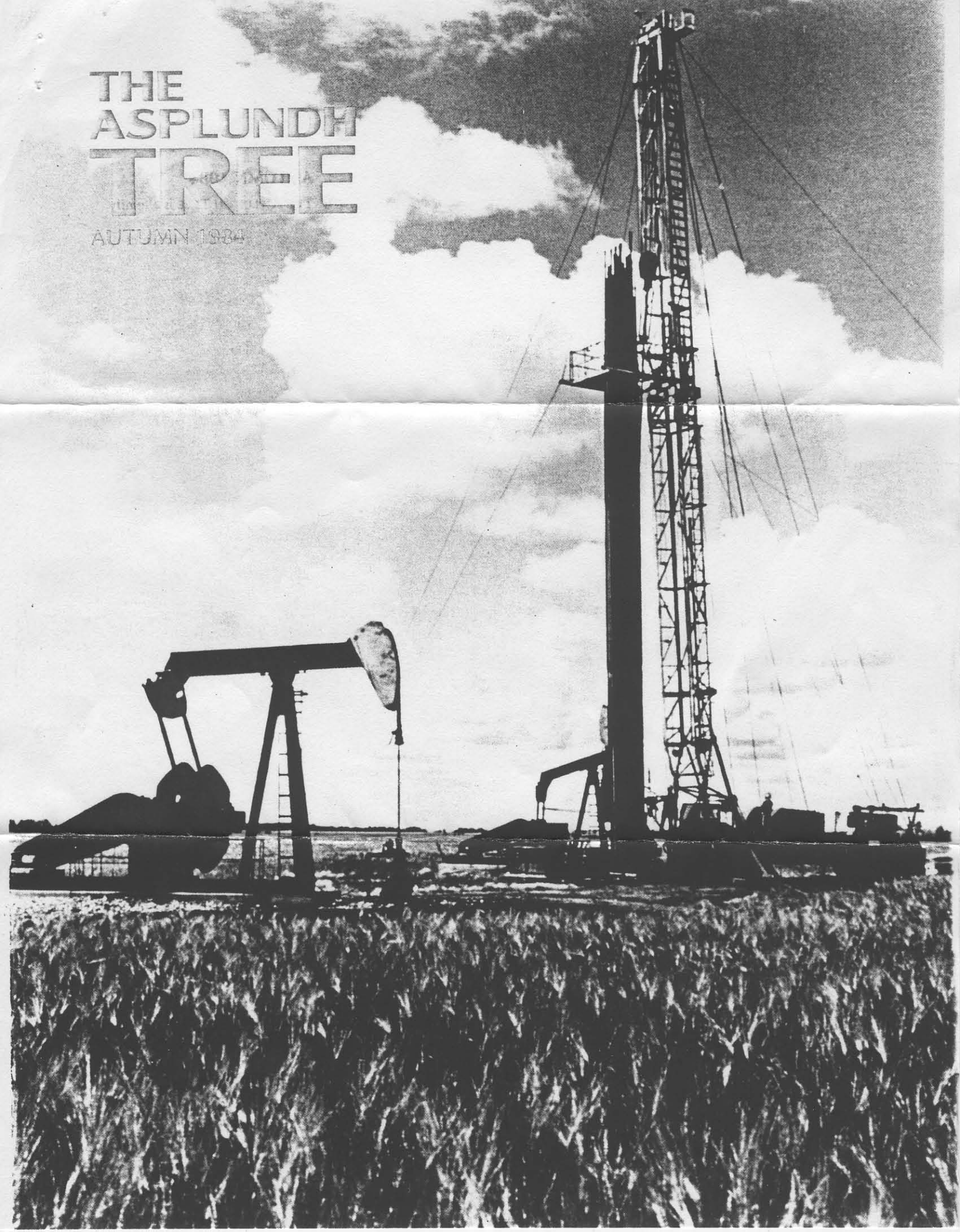
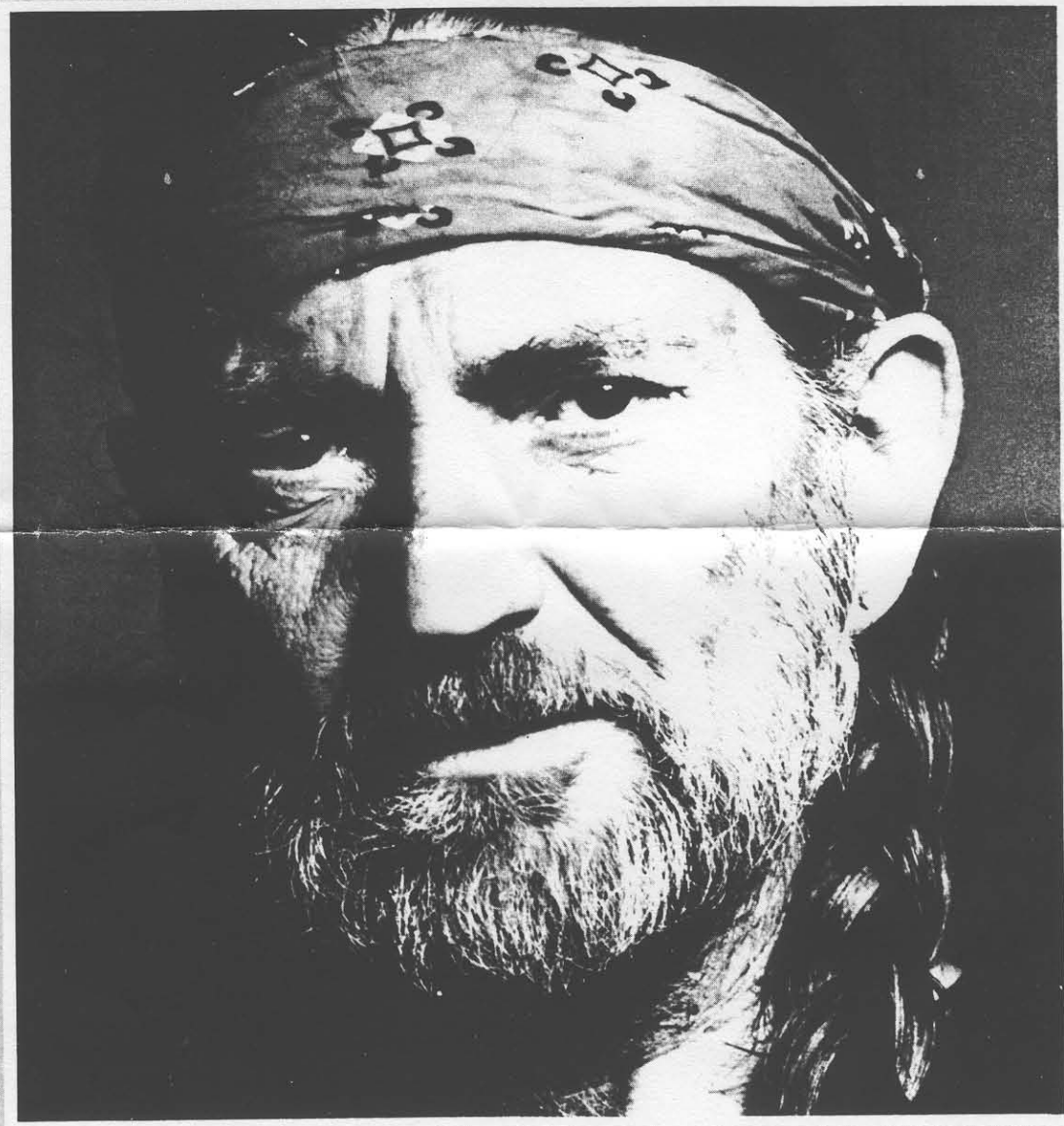


THE ASPLUNDH TREE

AUTUMN 1984





Willie Nelson

*Curly, Keep a job open for me,
I may be back!*





Willie Nelson—1952
Photo dedicated to Asplundh Foreman Ed Ingram

Willie Nelson

Long before Willie Nelson sang his huge hit "On the Road Again," he was on the road for Asplundh Tree Expert Co. In the early '50s, Willie was part of a crew in Texas. When he left Asplundh to seek his fortune with his music, he told Asplundh Foreman Ed Ingram to save a job for him, that he might be back.

After many years of struggle, it looks as though Willie won't need that job after all.

While with Asplundh, Willie worked with R.E. Davis, Louis Burks, Curran Dempsey, Zeke Varnon and Billy Bessire, currently a general foreman in Vice President Tom Levertz's division. Billy also played in Willie's band, performing in tough clubs such as the Nite Owl outside of Waco, Texas. Willie was struggling in those days. Billy and Zeke, Willie's roommate at the time, remember how Willie would hock his guitar on Monday morning and redeem it on Friday in time for their gig at the Nite Owl.

Willie served as a driver and as a climber for Asplundh. His first day behind the wheel of an Asplundh truck was not auspicious. He ran over a child's red wagon and lost a full day's pay replacing it.

Willie Nelson, his real name, was hired on January 14, 1952, as a climber at the pay rate of 80 cents an hour. Age 18 and single, he signed on with Ed Ingram, retired supervisor.

When Willie separated from the company to go to Oregon to see his mother, Ed recommended reemploying him.

Though he no longer has need of a job with Asplundh, success did not come easy for Willie Nelson.

In the music business, they speak of a performer "paying his dues." Willie's are paid in full.

The unique Willie Nelson music comes from his life experience. His music is his autobiography, he has said. He played in bars where he collected his pay at gunpoint. He scratched out an existence, going from job to job and playing at night. He tried college, the military and marriage with little success.

In addition to his work with Asplundh, Willie taught guitar, sold used cars, peddled encyclopedias and bibles door-to-door, and worked as a janitor and as a plumber's helper, all while believing music was his life. He finally went to Nashville, the Mecca of country music, to make his fortune.

He established himself as a song writer but had to sell his songs cheaply to survive. Though convinced he could sing, Willie was unable to persuade the country music establishment and was considered an outlaw. A second marriage went bad, and Willie's house burned down. It was the early '70s, and he decided to venture back to his Texas roots and his own unique, progressive country sound. The rest is history.

Success has not changed Willie. He makes a concerted effort to be accessible to his fans, scorning those stars who have bodyguards. He wants to touch and be touched by his many admirers.

His music has gained universal acceptance, and he has numerous platinum records and several movie roles to his credit. He has achieved success.

Name WILLIE H. NELSON
(Please Print) First Middle Initial Last Name

Home Address Box 25
Street

ABBOTT TEXAS
City or Town State

Social Security Number 453-42-1580

Date of Birth or Age 18 Married _____ Single

Date Hired 1-14-52

Hired As CLIMBER Rate \$.80

Former Employee of Asplundh? Yes _____ No

When? _____
Exact Year Approx. Month

Veteran Yes No _____

I am enclosing W-4 form signed by above Yes No _____

Foreman's Name Edward Ingram

THE ASPLUNDH TREE EXPERT CO.
SEPARATION SLIP

Mail today - Do not wait until end of week

Mr. WILLIE NELSON Soc. Sec. No. 453-42-1580

Address GEN. DEL ABBOTT, TEXAS

Years with us _____ Age 9-6-52

Has left the employ of our Company as of _____ for the reason checked

Quit Voluntarily Discharged for misconduct Lack of work Other

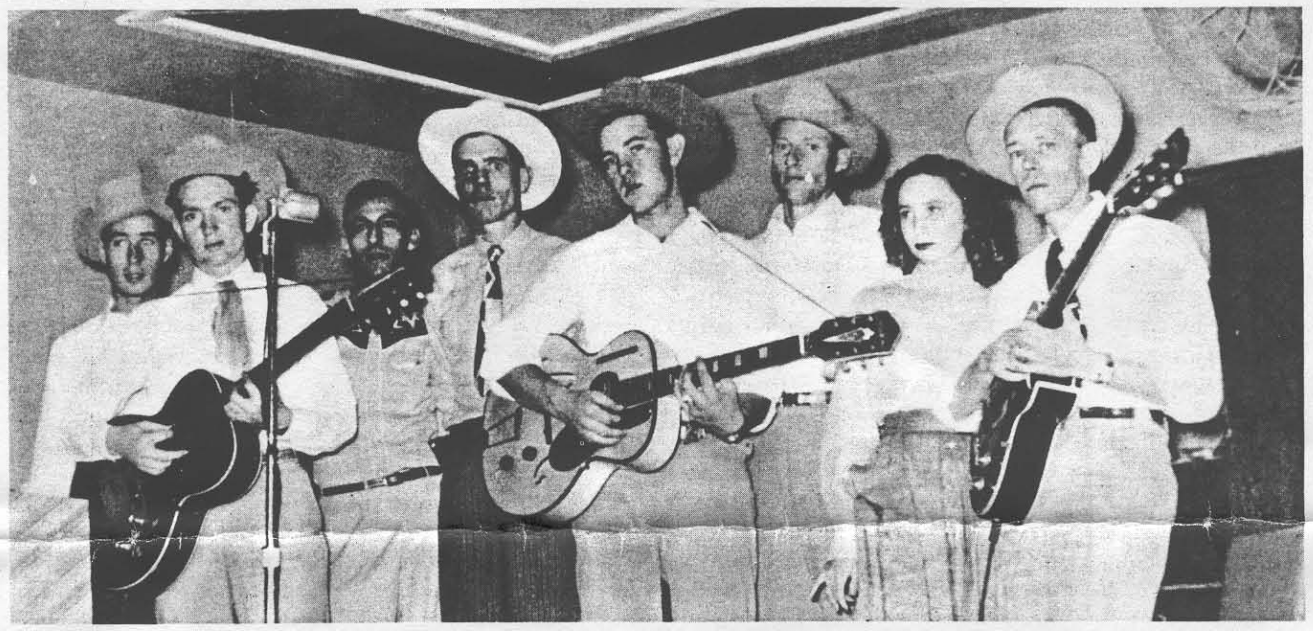
Explain fully WENT TO OREGON TO SEE HIS MOTHER

I recommend reemploying him I do not recommend reemploying him

Are all his debts paid up? YES

Send his checks to _____
Signed _____ Foreman Edward Ingram

Employment and separation slips for Willie H. Nelson



Early career — Willie Nelson (second from left) teamed with his brother-in-law Bud Fletcher (with guitar, center) and Oliver Barnes (far right) to provide the guitar accompaniment for Bud Fletcher and the Texans. His sister Bobbie, who sang with the group in 1947, still tours with Willie.

Robert Redford, co-star with Willie in the movie "The Electric Horseman," said of him, "Willie was like working with your favorite shoe—comfortable, durable and special."

He is happy now, with a good marriage, children and several grandchildren.

Willie Hugh Nelson was born in the hamlet of Abbot (population 375) in the Texas cotton-farming country north of Waco in 1933. His father was a mechanic who seemed to travel a lot. When he was six months old, his mother left to find work and never came back. He was raised by his grandparents and aunts.

His grandfather was an old-fashioned, forge-and-hammer blacksmith, an immensely friendly and cheerful man in his grandson's memory. He owned a Sears Roebuck guitar and had a mail order music degree. He gave Willie his first and last music lesson at the age of six.

"My grandad had taught me a few chords on the guitar before he died. So I bought me a \$6 guitar and a chord book. I taught myself to play by putting my fingers on those black dots in the book," Willie has said.

Willie joined his first band at the age of 10, a Bohemian polka band, which was formed by his brother-in-law, Bud Fletcher. Willie played the guitar and sang, his older sister Bobbie played the piano, the high school football coach played the trombone, and Willie's father, a musician who dropped back into town during his travels, played fiddle.

Since then, it's been night life for Willie Nelson. He worked day jobs only to support his music.

Willie's generosity and loyalty to his friends is legendary. His former workers at Asplundh speak with great pride and affection about their friend and former roommate, Willie Nelson. They remember his sense of humor, his love of life and his commitment to his music.

The next time you listen to a Willie Nelson tune, who knows, it could be based on his Asplundh experience.

Don't worry Willie, your job is still open!



Old friends — Willie Nelson, left, remains friends with former Asplundh crew mate, Zeke Varnon. They see each other often and are shown here lunching in the Village Cafe in Hillsboro, Texas, on April 4, of this year.



Modern-day Willie Nelson