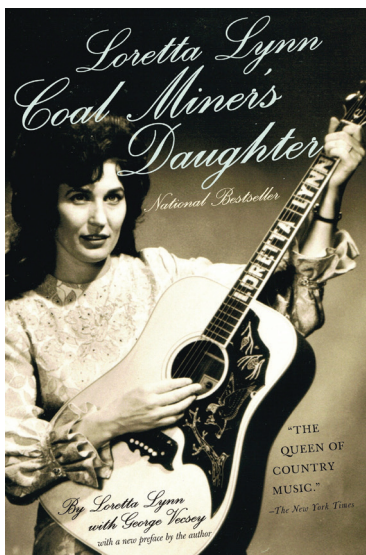
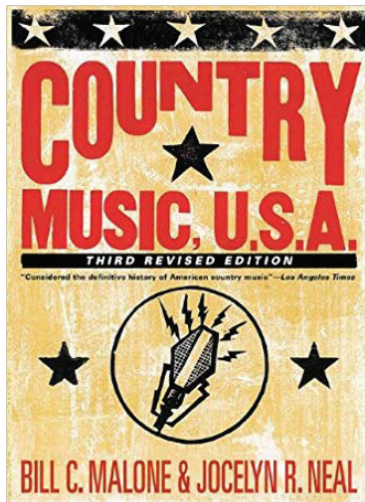
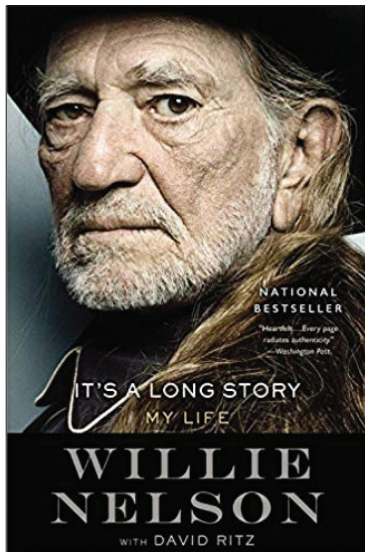
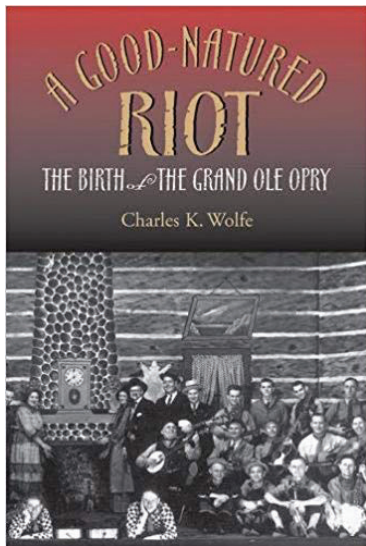
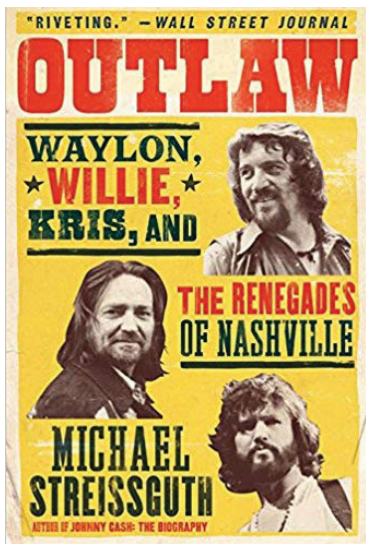
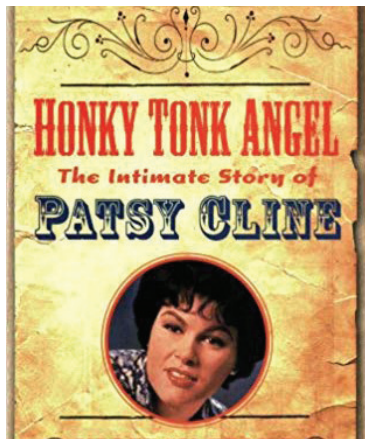
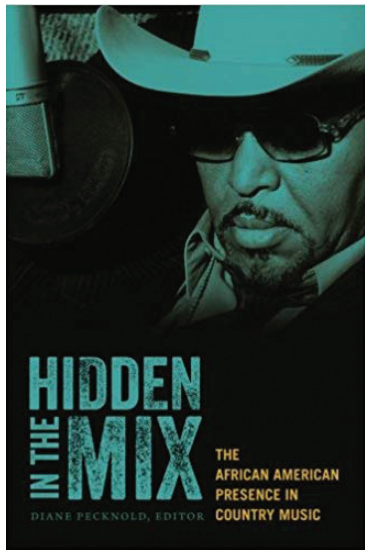


READ

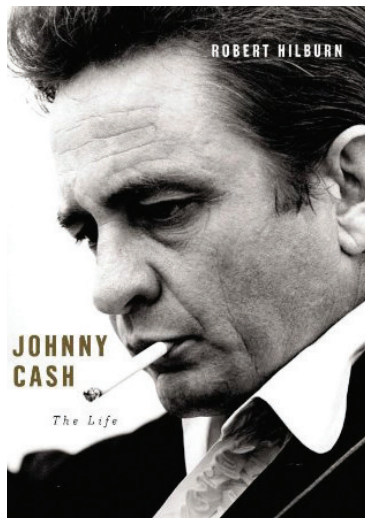


EXPLORE

COUNTRY



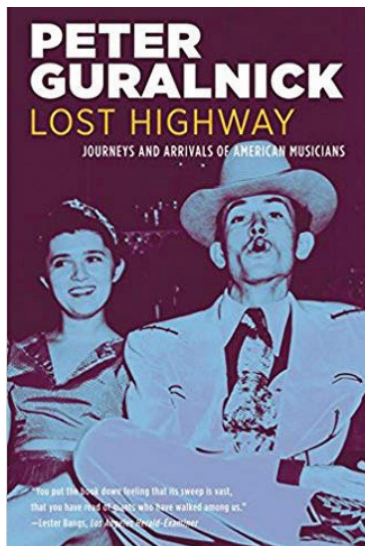
MUSIC



PBS BOOKS LIST

WATCH

Ken Burns' Country Music  
New Eight-part Series  
September 15-25, 2019







# BOOKS

SEPTEMBER  
2019

## SUGGESTED READING LIST

**COUNTRY MUSIC** is a uniquely American art form that has deep roots in ballads, blues and hymns that evolved from small rural and mountain settings in the South and West during the 20th century. In many ways, this music has become known to Americans through the stories and music of artists like **Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, Garth Brooks**, and many others. In September 2019, PBS will debut the documentary film "Country Music." Directed and produced by **Ken Burns**, this film is an **eight-part, 16 hour documentary series** that explores the evolution of country music, while focusing on the biographies of fascinating characters and their unforgettable stories. While the complementary "Country Music" book by Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan will release this September, PBS Books has compiled a list of books for you to explore your curiosity in "Country Music" further.

### **Honky Tonk Angel: The Intimate Story of Patsy Cline** « **Ellis Nassour, Dottie West**

The "Honky Tonk Angel" was able to secure an elevation to legendary status even though her time on Earth was tragically shortened to just 30 years. Game changer, icon, pioneer, they all apply; Cline broke through the boys' club of the music business in the 1950's and was integral in trailblazing a new Nashville sound with her poignant lyrics and versatile, soulful voice. Nassour, a veteran New York Times reporter, interviewed several country music stalwarts like Loretta Lynn and George Jones, to create an intimate portrait of the singer of "Crazy" and "I Fall To Pieces."

### **It's a Long Story: My Life** « **Willie Nelson**

The iconic singer of "On The Road Again" describes his autobiography as "... a story of restlessness and the purity of the moment and living right." Along with that come his experiences in barrooms, studios, small stages, big stages, tour buses, his close friendships, and anecdotes that are both poignant and piquant, from his days selling vacuum cleaners and encyclopedias while hosting a radio show, to his perseverance as a songwriter through some wild times. Nelson covers 80 years of his life with a compelling narrative rhythm that keeps the pages turning.

### **Country Music, U.S.A.: Third Revised Edition Paperback**

« **Bill C Malone and Jocelyn R. Neal**

Documentarian Ken Burns validated the lasting praise for this book, sustaining its legacy as "the most authoritative history of this uniquely American art form." First published in 1968, it definitively illuminates Country music's roots in traditional folk music from the rural South. Bill Malone is the featured historian in Burns' forthcoming 2019 documentary, and his 50th Anniversary edition has revised versions of each chapter to offer new insights.

### **Outlaw: Waylon, Willie, Kris, and the Renegades of Nashville** « **Michael Streissguth**

After Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, and June Carter, there came a new wave of woolly rogues and tougher-talking troubadours who were rougher around the edges, and brought a

bit of swagger to the table. Nelson, Jennings, and Kristofferson began vying for record deals in the tumultuous 60's and made a substantial impact on the recording industry, as well as their signature genre; establishing a prominent influence on the next generations to come.

### **A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry** « **Charles K. Wolfe**

A radio broadcast of some old-time fiddle tunes on a Nashville station back in 1925 spurred a groundswell of musicians and music lovers to begin clamoring for a chance to perform on what became the Saturday night "barn dance" hosted by George Hay. Wolfe's book follows this musical phenomenon throughout the proceeding decades, from a radio show to the stage of the Ryman Auditorium, as well as looking into the lucrative business side of country music's ascendance in popular culture.

### **Loretta Lynn: Coal Miner's Daughter** « **Loretta Lynn, George Vecsey**

The new Country Music documentary provides the perfect occasion to pick up this classic 1976 memoir of the incredible life led by Lynn, the first woman to be named Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association. Her vibrant voice tells her story with élan and earnestness, from being raised in poverty, to getting married at thirteen, raising six children and then becoming a grandmother by the age of 29. Lynn's story charts her rise to becoming one of the most influential and prolific songwriters (16 number-one singles, 15 number-one albums) in modern country music.

### **Hidden in the Mix: The African American Presence in Country Music** « **Diane Pecknold (editor)**

The names of Lesley Riddle, Rufus 'Tee Tot' Payne, and Arnold Schultz have received less recognition than the white artists they influenced, like Hank Williams Sr., Bill Monroe, or Ike Everly. A dozen writers/scholars contribute essays to this collection, illuminating the ways African American musicians and musical traditions enriched and informed the development of the Country genre, both before and after its commercial rise in the 1950s, reframing it as

a culturally constructed music style. Issues of identity and integration are explored, as well as revealing lesser-known subgenres like "hick-hop," along with the influence "southern soul" had on country music.

### **Lost Highway: Journeys and Arrivals of American Musicians** « **Peter Guralnick**

Guralnick starts his book with "Honky Tonk Heroes" like Ernest Tubb and Bobby Bland, then moves on to profiles of "Hillbilly Boogie" artists such as Charlie Feathers ("The Last of the Rockabillys") and of course Elvis Presley. This book also looks at "outlaws" of country music, like Waylon Jennings, Hank Williams Jr., and Merle Haggard. For each of these artists, the road becomes their existential reality, an odyssey-like magnet that pulls them from their initial musical aspirations, perhaps providing them escapism, augmenting pressures, or worse, finding themselves detached from their roots.

### **Johnny Cash: The Life** « **Robert Hilburn**

You can't have a Country Music reading list without the Man In Black. Cash's legacy looms among the largest of the genre's iconic singers, and Hilburn, who was actually present during the famous recorded Cash performance "Live at Folsom Prison" finds the humanity beneath the mythos. With extensive research and exclusive interviews, Hilburn creates a comprehensive portrait, detailing Cash's career, his contemporaries, his lasting influence, his marriage, his faith, his addictions, and his enduring mission of making music that could lift the spirits of his listeners.

### **Smart Blonde: The Life of Dolly Parton** « **Stephen Miller**

This list wouldn't be complete without Dolly; like Loretta Lynn and Patsy Cline, she blazed a trail through a male dominated music industry and has influenced generations of singers over the last five decades. "Talent isn't going to get me where I'm going," Parton says in Miller's book, although that is an undeniable facet to her rise, but the book shows that it is her "faith and determination" that kept her going through a life that would eventually attain icon status. Miller's book tells the story not just of her signature charm, but her ambition and persistence.