

**IN JUNE 1997, OWEN BRADLEY DISCUSSED HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH “ROCKIN’ AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE.” HE PASSED AWAY ON JANUARY 7, 1998.**

**How did you get involved with Brenda Lee’s career?**

I worked with Paul Cohen, who was in charge of the country music department at Decca Records, and Brenda was an artist that he signed. I was Paul’s assistant, and then he was promoted to head of Coral Records. When he took that job, since I was an apprentice at Decca for about ten years, they moved me up and gave me the position of producing the country music people. Brenda was one of those artists. I also signed Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty, and worked with Patsy Cline, who I inherited from another label.

**Were you a part of Brenda’s first recording session in 1956?**

Oh yes, I played piano on those. I quit playing on most of the sessions in 1958 when I became a full-time A&R person. Up until then I used to do both.

**How did “Rockin’ Around” come to your attention?**

Johnny Marks used to pitch mostly Christmas songs in Nashville. He sent me the song on a little acetate record and a lead sheet. We made it up right in the studio with no music, and I just did it again recently for Brenda on another record. We did it as close to the original as we could.

**What did you think when you first received it?**

We weren’t really into rock and roll a whole lot because we had lots of country acts, but at that time we were trying to get Brenda into that. Actually that’s sort of the secret of making records anyway — finding the right material and getting it to



*Owen Bradley and Brenda Lee (c. 1960)*