

## Mary "Sunflower" Calvas



(Undated post card.)

Fans of old time "hillbilly" music might be interested to know that the first girl singer for the legendary *Doc Williams & the Border Riders* was Big Sewickley Creek Road's Mary Calvas. Originally from West Virginia, the Calvas family was living in then Franklin Township when teenage Mary began singing with a Pittsburgh area group featuring "Doc" Williams and his younger brother "Cy", real names Andrew and Milo Smik. They joined WWVA's Wheeling Jamboree in 1937 and quickly became its most popular performers. Their Saturday night Jamboree appearances and daily radio broadcasts reached loyal fans across the Eastern United States and Maritime Canada. The *Border Riders* also performed locally, including gigs at the Big Knob Grange in Economy. Doc's wife "Chickie" replaced "Sunflower" after Mary left the group. Long time Bell Acres resident Esther Batykefer Calvas and Mary were sisters-in-law.



***Doc Williams & the Border Riders*** with Mary seated on left.  
(Wheeling Jamboree Photo)