

Pure Oil Sponsors Radio's Dean Of The Commentators

"Be Sure With *Pure*."

--- Gene Hamilton



Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

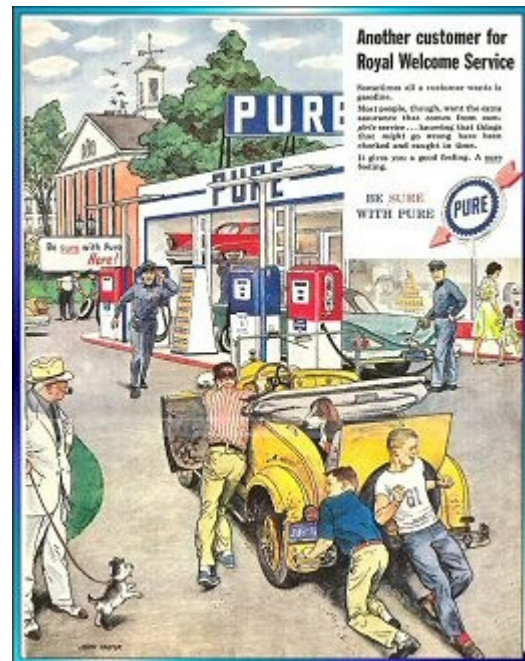
On Saturday, April 6, 1940, radio commentator H.V. Kaltenborn aired his first broadcast for **NBC's Red Network** after serving 13 years with the **Columbia Network**. The newscast also began a long sponsorship with the **Pure Oil Company**. It was a major catch for **Pure**, because it was sponsoring one of radio's most distinguished and respected journalists.

H.V. Kaltenborn was the pioneer of radio journalism. He was the very first newscaster to comment on the current events of the day. At first, this form of journalism wasn't allowed as he would find out the hard way.

Kaltenborn began his radio career in 1923 at station **WEAF** in New York. His commentary of the news got him in trouble with the management of the station. Ironically, Kaltenborn's comments weren't much different from what was printed in his column in *The Brooklyn Eagle*--- yet the reaction was drastically different. While his column didn't stir up much fuss, those same comments presented on the air were considered controversial. The root of the problem was that **WEAF** didn't want to make waves or be caught in the middle with those people with opposing viewpoints. Despite the popularity of the newscast and the protests of the radio listeners, **WEAF** abruptly terminated Kaltenborn.

Kaltenborn made his network radio debut in 1927 with the new **Columbia Broadcasting System**. He continued to comment on the news as before--- only this time he didn't have to worry about the network firing him, since **Columbia** was trying to attract listeners from **NBC's** established **Red** and **Blue Networks**.

The radio listeners tuned in to hear Kaltenborn's famous brisk, staccato speaking voice comment on the latest news of the day. It wasn't long before other radio journalists began their own commentary of the news that Kaltenborn originated. Once was taboo before the creation of network radio, commentary of the news quickly became a routine part of a journalist's newscast.



Kaltenborn will be remembered for his reporting the late breaking news during the Munich Crisis. He was at the **Columbia** studios during the entire 18 days of the crisis. When he wasn't reporting the news, Kaltenborn was resting on a cot just outside the studio. When the crisis ended with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain proclaiming, "**Peace In Our Time,**" Kaltenborn knew Nazi Germany wouldn't stop there--- and said so on his newscast. He stated, "**Today, they ring the bells, tomorrow they may wring their hands.**" Unfortunately, Kaltenborn's grim forecast proved correct.

While he was precise in what he reported on the air, Kaltenborn wasn't always right. On Election Night in 1948, he was presenting the latest Presidential election returns between President Harry S. Truman and challenger Thomas E. Dewey for **NBC News**. Throughout the evening, the returns were too close to call. As the evening progressed, Kaltenborn could see a swing in Dewey's favor. It was enough for him to project Dewey the winner, despite the returns were still close. What Kaltenborn didn't foresee was another swing in the votes going to Truman. As evening turned to early morning, Kaltenborn retracted his original projection and announced Truman as the winner.

On his newscast, Kaltenborn described how Truman did an impersonation of the journalist describing how he (Truman) was losing the election. Kaltenborn took the President's comments with class as he stated, "**We can all be human with Truman. Beware of that man in power who has no sense of humor.**" Kaltenborn laughed at himself while everyone else were laughing with him.

Kaltenborn's association with **Pure** established the oil company as a major sponsor of nightly newscasts on the **NBC Radio Network**. It was also an interesting program/sponsor relationship, because the newscast was heard on a national basis, yet **Pure** was a regional oil company (serving the states of the Midwest and Southeast). The commercials informed those listeners who didn't live in the 2 regions of **Pure's** powerful gasoline **Solventized Woco-Pep** and **Solventized Pure-Pep**. Both contained **Pure's** exclusive "**special chemical combination**" for a cleaner, more powerful fuel. Hopefully, if those people happened to be in the Midwest or Southeast, they would stop in at the station with the familiar blue and white **Pure** sign and fill up their car or truck with its powerful, but clean burning gasoline.