The Old Time Radio Club



Number 315

December 2003



Season's Greetings

## 'Membership information

New member processing, \$5 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$17.50; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The Old Time Radio Club meets the first Monday of every month at 7:39 PM during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, NY 14225. The club meets informally during the months of July and August at the same address. Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The Old Time Radio Club is affiliated with The Old Time Radio Network.

## **Club Mailing Address**

Old Time Radio Club 56 Christen Ct. Lancaster, NY 14086 E-Mail Address: otrclub@localnet.com



Back issues of *The Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 postpaid

# Deadline for *The Illustrated Press* is the 1st of each month prior to publication.

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Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to: The Illustrated Press

c/o Ken Krug, Editor (716) 684-5290 49 Regal Street Depew, New York 14043

E-Mail address: AnteakEar@aol.com

Web Page Address: members.localnet.com/~robmcd

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### Treasurer, Back Issues, Videos & Records

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# CHARLES HERROLD, Inventor of Radio Broadcasting

by Gordon Greb and Mike Adams

Reviewed by Jerry Collins

This book was truly a labor of love by the two authors who put years into this book. It was extremely well researched and includes an extensive amount of primary material. The structure of the book is also quite unique. A large portion of the book is devoted to the life of Charles Herrold. Then a portion of the book is devoted to Gordon Greb's efforts to validate Charles Herrold's claim that he was radio's first broadcaster. The final portion of the book is devoted to Mike Adam's efforts to validate professor Greb's work and to gain universal acceptance for the work of Charles Herrold.

At this point you might be wondering about the accomplishments. In 1890 fifteen-year old Charles Herrold moved with his family to San Jose, California. Young Herrold was a very bright student and like his father a very creative and mechanically inclined individual. The two of them worked on microscopes, cameras, optics and lenses. In 1895 Charles Herrold entered Stanford University as an astronomy major. After his first-year he switched to a physics major. Unfortunately poor health forced him to leave school prior to his senior year.

With the return of his health in 1899 Charles Herrold entered the world of invention. His initial inventions were a watertight lamp for a diver's helmet and wireless signals to detonate underwater mines. He also joined the faculty at Heald's College in Stockton, California.

Next it was the San Francisco earthquake that changed Herrold's plans. his home and most of his possessions were destroyed in the earthquake. In 1908 Charles Herrold began to show a definite interest in broadcasting. By the end of the year he left Heald's College and soon after opened Herrold College on the vacant fourth floor of the Garden City Bank. On January 1, 1909 Herrold's technical and trade school was opened for the assembling and use of wireless equipment. The school would flourish under Professor Herrold's leadership until American involvement in World War I. Throughout this time period Herrold and his students did much to advance the cause of radio broadcasting.

It was also in 1909 that Charles Herrold established radio station KQW. It became the mission of our two authors to prove that radio broadcasting began on KQW and not on KDKA in Pittsburgh nor WWJ in Detroit. Both of these stations began broadcasting in 1920.

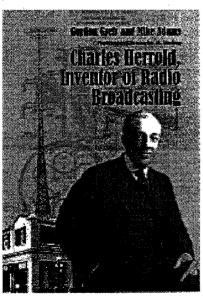
What was the basis of proof for KQW? It was the first station to send out regularly scheduled programs, specifically aimed at entertaining a known public audience. Robert Skull, the manager of Charles Herrold laboratory claimed that he and Ray Newby operated the radio station on a regular basis beginning between 1910 and 1912 and used the first radio commercials when they plugged the man who supplied the phonograph recordings. Emil Portal former student and Herrold assistant remembered the weekly programs of recorded music. Former San Jose city historian, Clyde Arbucle remembered the radio broadcasting in 1909. Student Simpson Reinhard recalls participating in some of Herrold's earlier broadcasts in 1909.

Years later RCA writer-archivist, George H. Clark, decided that a broadcaster had to have scheduled, preannounced, publicly advertised programs directed to a citizen audience. This certainly seemed to apply to Charles Herrold's radio station. In June of 1910, Charles Herrold wrote that, "We have given wireless phone concerts to amateur wireless men throughout the Santa Clara Valley." A similar message was carried in a 1910 edition of the Electro Importing Catalog. In 1934 Charles Herrold was interviewed in San Jose as part of the 25th anniversary ceremony for station KQW. The entire interview is included in the book. The interview goes a long way in verifying Herrold's claim as radio's first broadcaster.

An article in the July 22, 1912 edition of the <u>San Jose Mercury Herald</u> informed readers that Charles Herrold was using wireless telephone in a much different way. KQW was engaged in broadcasting. For more than two hours they conducted a concert in Mr. Herrold's office in the Garden City Bank building, which was heard for many miles around The music was played on a phonograph furnished by the Wiley B. Allen Company. Reports from amateurs around the valley came in to Portal, Who solicited their requests for records.

If Charles Herrold did not fully establish his claims between 1909 and 1912. He certainly did it at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915. Station KQW broadcast music on a daily basis from San Jose to the foot of the Tower of Jewels where it was heard by people on the new Ultra-Audion receiving sets of Lee de Forest.

In the mid 1920s Charles Herrold also used advertising to show the effectiveness of his broadcasting. He frequently made the rounds of his clients. Invariably their sales increased after radio advertising. Herrold also offered to distribute free samples of incense for all listeners that called the station. Four thousand people responded.



I think after reading and evaluating all the evidence presented Gordon Greb and Mike Adams, I would agree with a statement located midway through the book. major significance Herrold's accomplishments is that he, before anyone else, began the transmission of regularly scheduled programs of entertainment and information

for an audience . All the evidence points To the fact that San Jose had the world's first regularly scheduled Broadcasting station in 1912.

At times the book becomes very technical and difficult to understand for the average layman. Other than that I can find little fault with the book. Charles Herrold did a very good job documenting his accomplishments. Gordon Greb and Mike Adams did an outstanding job in gathering this information to substantially prove that Charles Herrold was indeed the inventor of radio broadcasting. I enjoyed the book much more than I initially thought I would. A book definitely worth reading.

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# The 28th Friends of Old-Time Radio Convention

## by JERRY COLLINS

Since my wife and I did not arrive in Newark until late Thursday evening my review will begin on Friday. After visiting the dealer rooms Friday morning, I opened the afternoon session with Jack French's panel on San Francisco detectives. Jack was joined by Jay Rendon, a sound effects man on Candy Matson and Dave Amorall, a sound effects man on a number of other West Coast shows. Although Rendon was the eldest of the trio, he was quite humorous and contributed a great deal to the panel. After spending quite a bit of time on Candy Matson, Jack French led the discussion through Pat Novak for Hire, Johnny Madero, Sam Spade, The Abbotts, The Adventures of the Abbotts, It's a Crime Mr. Collins, Charlie Chan (mid 1940s) and the shows of Carlton Morse.

Jack French's panel was followed by Mitchell Weisberg's interview of Bob Hastings. The episode went from quite informative to very comical when Hal Stone and Rosemary Rice appeared on the scene.

Michael Hayde and actress Beverly Washburn joined forces to discuss the *Dragnet* radio and television shows. Hayde used numerous audio and video clips during the panel discussion. One video clip featured a very young Beverly Washburn. Another clip dealt with the death of Barton Yarborough who played Ben Romero.

Derek Tague then chaired a panel on radio comedians. Will Jordan, Hal Stone, Bob Hastings, Bobby Ramsen, Bob Mott and Betsy Palmer joined Tague on the panel. Once again audio and video clips were used especially humorous were those of Betsy Palmer on different TV quiz shows. A good deal of the discussion was devoted to Red Skelton, Jack Benny and Jackie Gleason.

The Absegami Emanon Players, a talented group of high school students, did an excellent recreation of a *Shadow* episode. As a native of Buffalo, New York, I was amused by the Blue Coal commercial. After being snowed in for two days Buffalo was saved by Blue Coal.

Friday evening's schedule featured four re-creations after dinner. The Dave Warren Players began the

evening with "Allen's Alley." Gary Yogge replaced the late Dave Warren as Senator Claghorn. Dave Swingler was at his best as Fred Allen. Valerie Thompson did a great job as Portland Hoffa, but it was Maggie Thompson who was the big star of the show as Mrs. Nussbaum.

The *Dragnet* re-creation featured Arthur Anderson as Joe Webb and Cliff Carpenter as Frank Smith. The show dealt with a series of dog killings.

Fred Foy played the Lone Ranger in "Burly Scott's Sacrifice." Ironically Foy actually narrated as well as played the Lone Ranger some fifty years ago on the original show. Paul Carnegie, who played Kato in the last thirteen episodes of the Green Hornet, played Tonto. Will Hutchins played the outlaw, while Beverly Wahburn played his daughter Sally. Jimmy Lydon, Will Jordan, Bobby Ramsen, Cliff Carpenter and Elaine Hyman all had supporting parts in the show.

After two hours in the dealer's room, I attended an extremely informative panel discussion on the Lone Ranger. Jim Nixon and Fred Foy held my attention for close to an hour in one of the best panels I have ever attended. Nixon used dozens of audio clips to discuss many different changes in the show. Derek Tague was kept busy handling the cassette player. Different origin theories were discussed, as well as different introductions, character transitions and Joan Barkley (Lee Allman), the closest the Lone Ranger came to having a girl friend. Nixon also speculated that the Lone Ranger's second career might have been as a professor of English literature. Numerous clips were used to present a good case for this. Fred Foy then contributed many anecdotes about the many people associated with the Lone Ranger show. He also mentioned George Trendle's ill-fated attempt to have Fred Foy take riding lessons in order to replace Brace Beemer during a tough negotiating period.

Max Schmid and the Gotham City Players put on another great performance. This time they re-created "For Pete's Sake" from the *First Nighter* program. Every little bit of nostalgia associated with this great show was included.

Anthony Tollin, Fred Foy and Elaine Hymen shared the stage to discuss the WXYZ radio station. Although it was somewhat of a duplication of the earlier Lone Ranger panel, the anecdotes were a lot of fun. Fred Foy talked about the one time he played the Lone Ranger, it was recreated Friday evening, as well as the one time that he played Sgt. Preston. One of my questions prompted the panel to discuss the role of Fran Striker. Nothing but compliments followed. Elaine Hyman called him a "genius," while Foy called him a "brilliant man."

Anthony Tollin called Fran Striker an "Amazing man." Tollin also commented on the voluminous amount of writing that Striker was responsible for as well as the fact that Fran Striker was one of radio's first great science fiction writer Jim Jewel's comment was also included, "Fran Striker, the greatest hack writer of all time."

The final panel of the convention was another one of Jay Hickerson's popular music panels. This time Stu Weiss and Brian Gari, Eddie Cantor's grandson led the musical event. The panel included Kathryn Crosby (widow of Bing Crosby), Seven Voyages of Sinbad and Operation Madball, Paul Peterson (singer, Mouseketeer and star of the Donna Reed Show), Rupert Holmes (writer of Ping Collada, creator of Remember When, Say Goodnight Gracie and producer of other Broadway shows), Lalia Madriguera (Latin singer), Eddie Rumba (popular singer and song writer of the 1960s, "Concrete and the Clay"), Diane Renay (popular singer, "Blue Navy Blue" and "Kiss Me Santa," and Quinn Lemley (Rita Hayworth impersonator.)

The afternoon session concluded with a re-creation of an episode of Mary Noble, Backstage Wife. George Ansbro was the announcer. If you have never seen a performance of a soap opera, it is worth the complete cost of the convention. Corinne Off played Mary Noble, while Jimmy Lyndon and Ruth Last played key roles in the show.

Following Saturday's cocktails, dinner, the raffle and awards, we were entertained by three re-creations. Bill Owens played Harlow Wilcox in a re-creation of the June 11, 1946 episode of *Fibber McGee and Molly*. Arthur Andersom directed the show and played Fibber McGee, while Pat Housely played Molly. Cliff Carpenter played Doc Gamble, Will Hutchins was Wallace Wimple, while Beverly Washburn starred as Mrs. Carstairs.

Paul Carnegie was the announcer, while Fred Foy played Doc Savage in a recreation of an episode of *Doc Savage*. Hal Stone played Monk, while Arthur Anderson played Ham Brooks, both assistants to Doc Savage.

The evening concluded with a re-creation of the "Tunnell Under the World" episode of the X-1 show. Bob Hastings, who played in more episodes of X-1 episodes than any other performer, played Henry Swenson. Cliff Carpenter played Swenson's associate, Guy Burkardt, while his wife was played by Rosemary Rice. George Ansbro was the announcer, while Cynthia Pepper and Larry Robinson played key roles in the show.

Following breakfast on Sunday we were treated to a panel discussion hosted by Anthony Tollin. The panel was comprised of Beverly Washburn, Hal Stone, Bob Hastings, Cliff Carpenter, Paul Peterson, Pat Housely, Bob Mott and Jimmy Lydon.

Once again Bob Mott and Bart Curtis handled sound effects, Bill Siudmak was the sound engineer and Ed and Nina Clute supplied the music throughout the convention. It was another excellent job by Jay Hickerson and his many associates. He was able to bring back some of his veteran performers. His associates continue to improve upon the music panel. The other panels were also some of the best I have ever attended. The amateur acting groups continue to play a very significant role at the convention.

## The Bill Stern Show

## By Tom Cherre

Attention all you sports fans, you too Mr. Bork. In fact anyone who likes a good yarn hankering for a story book ending, you have to listen to the Bill Stern Show. It may be a little bit schmaltzy, Did I say a "little"? The show was presented by Colgate shaving cream with a catchy opening sing-a-long jingle by a really great



harmonizing group. It started out with "Bill Stern the Colgate shave cream man is on the air" and he had stories rare. Bill Stern at his prime was probably the most popular and knowledgeable sportscaster of the 1940s. He was a little before my time, but I remember seeing him occasionally in some old movies and once in a while in the early TV days.

I for one think Stern and his stories were amazing. As amazing as they appeared, I still had my doubts as to the authenticity of many of them. But I didn't care. It was great entertainment. Many of his yarns revolved around either the First or Second World War. They usually hinged upon some poor soul who may have saved the life of someone who was to achieve greatness in the world later on. Case in point is the story of a young officer who

escaped from German troops finding his way to the American lines. He eventually remained with this unit. Shortly after they were ambushed by German troops who lobbed a hand grenade in his direction. The officer covered it with his body sacrificing himself to save a young Army Captain. The captain survived, and was later destined to become the president of the United States. That man was Harry S Truman. Talk about timing or karma (look it up Frank) it was like a book of "It's a Wonderful Life" stories that affected events that would change the course of history. I also enjoyed his special guest stars, who might include people like Hank Greenberg, Paul Whiteman, Harry James, Henny Youngman and Milton Berle just to mention a few. These stars would often reveal something that happened early in their lifetime that would either surprise or astound you.

Being an avid sports fan of years ago, and also I like to think of myself as somewhat of a history buff, the Bill Stern Show has all the ingredients for nostalgia and a bittersweet source of folklore mixed in. Most of his tales were gathered up by hearsay and legend, and I'm sure it would be next to impossible to check for validity. That truly golden age of sports is gone, but can be relived by the few shows in our library or from the collection Frank Boncore was nice enough to let me borrow. So when I hear "Bill Stern the Colgate shave cream man is on the air" I make sure my ear soaks in all I can. I take it for what it really is, just entertainment.

\* As a footnote, I received this interesting tidbit relating to Harry James when he was a guest on Bill Stern's show. Harry stressed that you also had to play baseball to be in his band. Our eye doctor, Dr. Mel Balsom recalls his dad, Meyer Balsom was a violin player in Shea's Theater pit band. As a youngster he remembers quite vividly watching his dad's band playing ball against Harry James' band at Front Park a couple times. I can attest that this story is true.

## A Note from Jerry Collins . . .

If you haven't noticed the Old Time Radio Club's Cassette Library is growing at a very rapid rate. Much of this growth can be attributed to the frequent donations made to the library. Substantial donations were made at the Friends of Old-Time Radio Convention in Newark, New Jersey. We wish to thank Tom Monroe and Ted Davenport of Radio Memories, Gary and LaDonna Kramer of Great American Radio and Leo Gawroniak. They will be at the Cincinatti convention. Stop by, say hello and possibly place an order. Their addresses are on the next page if you wish to mail in an order.

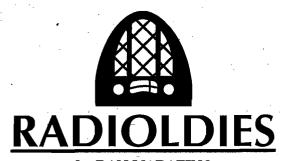
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by DAN MARAFINO

Animal Imitators, Baby Criers, Doubles, Mimics and Screamers

Most of the programs in early radio were "live", not recorded or taped. Thus, since animals, babies, and often actors couldn't always be relied on to bark, cry, or scream precisely on cue, a number of people were gainfully employed during radio's golden age to create the howls of wolves for *Renfrew of the Mounted*, to cry for Baby Robespierre (Baby Snooks' brother), or to scream for other actresses in the horrific situations on *Lights Out*.

Among the better known animal imitators were Brad Barker and Donald Bain, who could imitate with their voices anything from a single canary to a pride of lions. Like all actors, Barker and Bain "lived" their parts and often seemed to take on the appearance and menner of the animal they were impersonating. Mary Jane Higby, in her book "Tune in Tomorrow", relates that once an actor jokingly told her that he had just seen Brad Barker running down Madison Avenue carrying Donald Bain in his mouth! Other animal imitators were David Dole, Earl Keen (Lassie), Clarence Straight (Animal News Club), Harry Swan and Henry Boyd, whose clear bob white whistle was used on the Rinso White comercials.

Several actresses spent a lifetime crying like babies. It was a strange sight indeed to see an otherwise well dressed and distinguished looking lady walk to the microphone and suddenly gurgle, whine, or bawl like an infant. Some of them used a pillow to cry into to help achieve the desired effect. Among the more familiar "babies" were Sarah Fussell, Madeleine Pierce, and Leone Ledoux.

Imitating other peoples voices kept many radio mimics busy too. On such programs as *The March of Time* the voices of actual celebrities in the news were re-created by imitators. In addition, many variety programs featured the skills of such mimics as the "Radio Rogues" (Jimmy Hollywood, Ed Bartell and Henry Taylor), Sheila Barrett, Arthur Boran, and Florence Desmond.

Many actors and actresses "doubled" for other performers in cases where the voices of the originals were either too heavily accented or where someone had deemed their speaking voices "not right for radio". While Dave Rubinoff, for instance, actually played the violin on the Eddie Cantor Show, his speaking voice was done by Lionel Stander or Teddy Bergman. On Shell Chateau, Mary Jane Higby was the speaking voice of singer Nadine Conner who, someone decided, sounded just fine singing but not right talking. Allyn Joslyn did the same thing for Lanny Ross in the early days of Show Boat.

Finally, while most actresses were adept at reading their lines, when it came to screaming with fear they were often unable to do so or risked the possibility of straining their voices. "Screamers" were employed to fill the gap—actresses who made a specialty of screaming loud and clear—such as seventeen year old Nancy Kelly to whom fell the responsibility of screaming on Gangbusters, Front Page Farrell, and The March of Time.

(Reprinted from The Big Broadcast 1920-1950)



In the October <u>Illustrated Press</u> I did a review on the book "Walter B. Gibson and The Shadow". I wrote that Mr. Gibson created the character Nick Carter. I was in error. It should have been Mr. Gibson wrote

stories about *Nick Carter*. This character was around "before Duz could do it". My apologies to the author and those of you who may have been offended. Someone "in the know" caught the error and informed me. I thank him for that. I stand corrected. Dan Marafino

# The Great Radio Voices



Radio demanded voices that were unique and distinctive. The radio actor's voice was his bread and butter. It was a tool, so to speak, and his ability to use this tool is what either made his career or put him in the unemployment line. Some of the voices made it big, while others, even though just as talented, remained in relative obscurity. We'll try to touch on a few from both categories.

WILLIAM CONRAD — His powerful voice made him perfect in either the role of hero or villain. He is the big man that so many of us grew to love on Escape or Gunsmoke. You could tell, without ever seeing him, that this was not a man to "mess" with! His acting talent equalled his voice quality and assured continuing work for him in radio. For a while it seemed he did every show on radio.

PAUL FREES - One of the best of them all, with a voice so powerful that it DEMANDED your attention. More often than not he was a program announcer and/or narrator. With his voice of doom he was able to set the mood of a story with just a few introductory words. He had an unusual way of phrasing sentences that other actors could not even try to copy. This phrasing made him a one-of-a-kind performer. Like Conrad he was a utility actor, able to do any type of role that came along whether it was drama or comedy . . . although drama seemed to be his most effective style.

LES TREMAYNE — Highly effective in old radio, his smooth and cultured voice made him perfect for the role of the leading man. Strong in both comedy and drama, Tremayne was a radio staple in the 30s, 40s and 50s. The star of many radio series, he was a voice that was in much demand throughout radio's "Golden Age".

ORSON WELLES - Possibly the most famous name ever even remotely associated with OTR. His radio career peaked early in his life with his "War of The Worlds" broadcast. If you hadn't heard of Welles before that, you sure knew him after it. He was never able to top that broadcast but, nevertheless, had a string of radio series and guest appearances that anyone would be envious of. One of his series The Third Man, aka The Lives of Harry Lime continues to be an enjoyable and highly collectable program even today. No listing of great radio voices would be worth it's salt without the name of Orson Welles on it!

BILL STERN — A sportscaster with a difference — he was also a story-teller and entertainer. His show blended the show business world with the sports world and presented tales, often bizarre and built on a slender thread of truth, that were fascinating to hear even if a bit hard to swallow. So what if the stories were farfetched? The audience didn't seem to care. They enjoyed Stern and he never seemed to run out of stories. His show ran for years, remaining a favorite during that run. Bill Stern - sportscaster? . . . entertainer? ... both? Take your pick.

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- 3245 Fred Allen Show "The Perfect Crime" 10/19/47 Fred Allen Show "The Haley & Allen Show 10/26/47

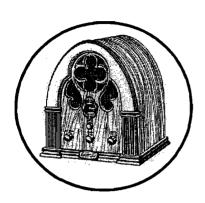
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- 3263 Rocky Jordan "The Man With No Name" 10/9/49 Rocky Jordan "Quest For Tomina" 10/16/49
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  - Fibber McGee & Molly "Make A Pal of Your Wife Week" 3/12/40
- 3273 Fibber McGee & Molly "McGee's After Dinner Speech" 2/21/39
  - Fibber McGee & Molly "Mouse In The House" 2/28/39
- 3274 Our Miss Brooks "Helping Hands" 9/11/55 Our Miss Brooks "Oo-Oo-Me-Me-Tocoludi-Gucci-Moo-Moo" 9/18/55
- 3275 Father Knows Best "Betty's Screen Test" 5/18/50 Father Knows Best "Superstitious Folk" 5/25/50
- 3276 Tales of The Texas Rangers "The Lucky Dollar" 12/10/50
  - Tales of The Texas Rangers "The Cactus Pear" 12/17/50
- 3277 Mysterious Traveler "Murder Goes Free" 3/31/45 Mysterious Traveler "Death Is The Visitor" 8/25/46
- 3278 Mysterious Traveler "If You Believe" 12/29/46 Mysterious Traveler "New Year's Nightmare" 1/5/47
- 3279 Mysterious Traveler "Death Is The Judge" 6/15/47
- Mysterious Traveler "Locomotive Ghost" 7/6/47
- 3280 Mysterious Traveler "Hideout" 12/11/51 Mysterious Traveler "Christmas Story" 12/25/51
- 3281 Burns & Allen "Does George's Income Tax" 1/15/48
  - Burns & Allen "Gracie Wants A Fur Coat" 2/5/48
- 3282 Burns & Allen "With Kay Kyser" 2/12/48 Burns & Allen "No Decisions For George" 2/19/48

## The Old Time Radio Club

49 Regal Street Depew, NY 14043



## FIRST CLASS MAIL

# He's been a Ruth, a Dempsey, a Barrymore



"I can be tough ..."

"and obstinate . . . "

"and so sweet . . . "

NEW YORK, Jan. 00—Walter Tetley's the clever kid of radio. In fact he's been called the outstanding child actor on the air. In 1935 the young NBC star participated in more than 150 programs, including Show Boat, The New Penny starring Helen Hayes, The Lady Next Door and Town Hall Tonight. For versatility it's hard to find his equal. Walter has played on the air the boyhood roles of such outstanding personalities as Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, the Barrymores, Richard Barthelmess. Young Tetley, who is a boy of as many faces as roles, is shown above in a series of candid camera closeups.