

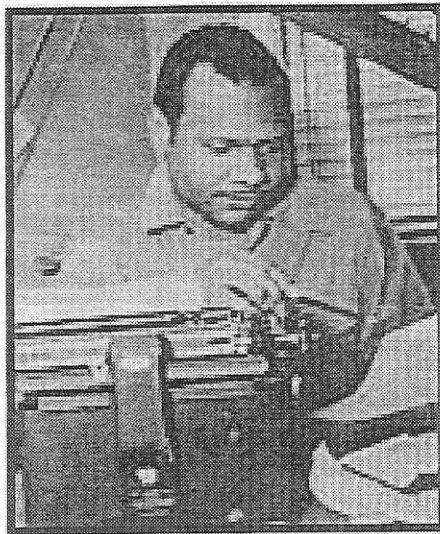


RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 24, Number 12

July, 1999



Richard Durham & *Destination Freedom*

"*Destination Freedom*, though it never appeared on a national network, was one of the most powerful and important shows of its day. It was a striking achievement, a voice whose passion and courage overcame every budgetary shortcoming to become perhaps the strongest plea for Negro rights ever heard on American radio." - From John Dunning, *On The Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio*.

Editor's Notes: The above picture of Richard Durham is from the collection of Clarice D. Durham. Much of this article is from the *Destination Freedom* Web pages on the No Credits Productions Web site. (See below for the Web site's URL.) A great deal of the information contained in these Web pages has been taken, with permission, from J. Fred MacDonald's book "Richard Durham's *Destination Freedom* - Scripts from Radio's Black Legacy, 1948-50."

Destination Freedom premiered on June 27, 1948 on Chicago radio WMAQ and consisted of 91 different scripts written solely by Richard Durham. *Destination Freedom* was a provocative half-hour show that showcased the lives and accomplishments of prominent African Americans. *Destination Freedom* demonstrated personalities that were in the words of the author "rebellious, biting, scornful, angry and cocky." Durham once told an interviewer that the goal of his program was to cut through the false images of black life propagated through the popular arts.

Richard Durham was born September 6, 1917 in Raymond, Mississippi and was raised in Chicago. He died April 24, 1984. Durham developed an interest for radio during the depression as a young dramatist with the Writers Project of the WPA. Durham studied at Northwestern University in Chicago and was the editor of the local black newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*. His first major radio experience came in Chicago with the series *Democracy USA*, which he wrote for the CBS station WBBM and with *Here Comes Tomorrow*, a black soap opera he wrote for WJJD.

The success of *Destination Freedom* was underscored in many ways. Durham was paid only 125 dollars per script. *The Chicago Defender* paid part of its costs for the first thirteen weeks and early in 1950 the Urban League of Chicago helped to sponsor several broadcasts. *Destination Freedom* was recognized for its contribution to public education and enhancement of race relations. In 1949 it was cited by the South Central Association of Chicago as "one of the finest programs of its kind" and "as a splendid contribution towards the democracy in our time." The *Destination Freedom* episode "The Heart Of

Continued on Page 3

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

Dedicated to the preservation of old time radio programs and to making those programs available to our members.

RHAC Board Meeting Thursday, June 3, 1999 - 7:30 PM

At

Maletha & Dick King's 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 303-761-4139

Old time radio is alive and well in Denver!

KRMA Channel 6 Secondary Audio Program, RHAC's show *Tribute to OTR* Sunday 2:00 PM

KEZW 1430 AM *When Radio Was* weekdays from 7:00 till 8:00 PM

KEZW 1430 AM *Radio Movie Classics* Sundays 5:00 till 6:00 PM

KFKA 1310 AM *Radio Memories* Sundays 6:00 to 12:00 PM

KUVO 89.3 FM *Destination Freedom* 3rd Sunday of the month 7:30 PM - **BROADCAST LIVE!!!!**

RHAC WEB SITE The RHAC web page and catalog is on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>

RETURN WITH US NOW... is the official publication of the *Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc.*, a nonprofit organization. Cost of membership is \$25.00 for the 1st year with \$15.00 for renewal. Each member in good standing has full use of the club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below.

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Reference Material:	Bill McCracken, address above	303-986-9863
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz, c/o RHAC, P O Box 1908, Englewood, CO 80150	
Open Reel Tape Librarian:	Maletha King, 900 W. Quincy Ave., Englewood, CO 80110	
Cassette Tape Librarians:		
#1 (1-499)	Marilyn J. Turner 2299 S. Sable Blvd., Aurora, CO 80014	303-751-4325
#2 (500-999)	David Gatch PO Box 70, Glen Haven, CO 80532	970-577-0805
#3 (1000-2000)	Dave Logan 5557 S Sherman Cir., Littleton, CO 80121	303-730-1430
#4 (5001 up)	Mika Rhoden 3950W Dartmouth Ave., Denver, CO 80236	303-937-9476

PICNIC



RHAC PICNIC!

Here's your chance to meet some of your fellow RHAC members and share your interest in Old-Time Radio.

Make sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, August 21st. The RHAC picnic will be held at the King's - 900 W. Quincy Ave, in Englewood. The picnic will start at 2:00 PM. The Kings will provide the hamburgers and corn. Members should bring a covered dish or salad to share. Also bring something to drink and a chair.



Coming - RHAC Garage Sale

Over the years, RHAC has inherited many pieces of equipment that are part of radio history. The big problem with this is storage. The warehouse that RHAC has used for many years is now going to be sold and we are looking for new homes for these historic items such as: several single portable turntables for transcription discs, one pair of turntables mounted into a single wood table, a large professional mixer, a power supply that was probably used for remote recordings

(it is very big), audio discs that have never been cut (in boxes of 25 each), and a large speaker. These items are all part of radio history, and we would be glad for them to find new homes. If any groups out there would like to avail themselves of some of these items, we would be glad to send them on to them. (Recipients would pay shipping costs.) If some individuals would like some of these items, a small contribution to RHAC would be in order.

In August, RHAC will hold a garage sale of items such as cassettes (mostly air-checks) and records and sets of commercial cassettes - all of which have some age, but are still in good shape. We also have some records - 78's and 33's.

We would like to find homes for the larger equipment first, and then have room to display and sell the smaller items. Dick may be talked into contributing a few tape decks, but not any Teacs or Pioneers. Anyone interested in any of the items should contact Dick King (or Maletha) this month at 303-761-4139, and have a chance to inspect them and move them out before the garage sale in August.

Richard Durham

Continued From Page 1

George Cotton" was Richard Durham's most praised radio production, one for which he was awarded first-place honors in a competition sponsored by the Institute for Education by Radio, and one that was restaged (as "The Heart of A Man") in 1957 on the prestigious *CBS Radio Workshop*. This drama is about the accomplishments of pioneering heart surgeons, Dr. Ulysses Grant Dailey (1885-1961), and Dr. Daniel Hale Williams (1856-1931). Durham showcased one of the most significant contributions made by black doctors to American medicine: the first successful suturing of the human heart as performed by Dr. Williams in

1893.

Reading the scripts 40 years after they were written, the perceptive vision of *Destination Freedom* remains apparent. *Destination Freedom* appeared a decade before Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement, but still managed to portray a positive vision for blacks.

By bringing many of these dynamic scripts back in 1998, No Credits Production Inc. hopes to enlighten, entertain and educate today's listeners through the magic of radio. The shows can be heard on Denver radio KUVU 89.3 FM at 7:30 p.m on the third Sunday of each month.

Editor's Notes: The Richard Durham scripts of *Destination Freedom* ran until August 13, 1950. When *Destination Freedom* reappeared as a series on October 15, 1950 and ran until November 19, 1951, the theme of the series had changed from Civil Rights to traditional American patriots. There are approximately 30 broadcasts of the original Richard Durham scripts in the RHAC Library. We also have a *John Dunning Interview* with Richard Durham. Please consult your tape library index for additional information.

Destination Freedom Lives On

The original *Destination Freedom* scripts are currently being presented LIVE monthly on National Public Radio station KUVU (89.3 FM) in Denver, CO. The April, 1999 broadcast marked the first anniversary of the *Destination Freedom* broadcasts on KUVU. Unfortunately, KUVU does not yet broadcast on the Web. Compact Discs of the KUVU *Destination Freedom* broadcasts are available through:

No Credits Productions Inc.

PO Box 471593

Aurora, CO 80047-1593

or through the following Web site.

To find out more about the

Richard Durham and the *Destination Freedom* project (including a chance to listen to a current production in RealAudio format) access the No Credits Productions Web site at:
<http://www.nocredits.com/>

Editor's Notes:

The chances to attend a LIVE broadcast of a radio drama are few and far between. The public is invited to attend the broadcasts of *Destination Freedom* at the KUVO studios in Denver, CO. *Destination Freedom* broadcasts are on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 7:30 P.M. (Mountain Time) from the KUVO Studios in the Five Points Media center at 29th and Welton in Denver. As the broadcasts are also used to raise funds for KUVO and the *Destination Freedom* project, an admission fee is usually charged.

For more information on attending *Destination Freedom* broadcasts, call KUVO at 303-480-9272 during business hours (Monday through Friday 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.)

An Interview with donnie l. betts

Producer/Director of *Black Radio Days - Destination Freedom*

Editor's Note: On March 21, 1999 I attended the LIVE broadcast of the *Destination Freedom* episode "The Choir Girl from Philadelphia - the Story of Marian Anderson" at the KUVO performance studio in Denver, CO. After the broadcast, I was able to interview donnie.

How Did You First Get Interested in Richard Durham's Work?

In 1989 and 1990 I was living in Los Angeles working for Carol Burnett. One night I was at a Hollywood party. We just started talking about radio. There was a young lady there and she said "I know about this great series called *Destination Freedom* that has to do with African-American heroes and sheroes." I said, "Can I get a copy of

it, can listen to it?" She said, "I don't know how you can get a copy of it. I just heard of it."

When I moved back to Denver in 1990, I had a friend at "The Tattered Cover" bookstore conduct a search for me. We couldn't find anything. Finally we located J. Fred MacDonald's book "Richard Durham's *Destination Freedom - Scripts from Radio's Black Legacy, 1948-50.*" which was out-of-print, but we were able to get a copy of it. I read those scripts and absolutely and fell in love. Because they was so well-written and I could see the magic that hopefully a modern audience would appreciate. So that was what made me become interested in *Destination Freedom*. My background is in the Theatre and as a film director and actor. I had never worked in a dramatic sense in radio and that was new challenge for me. That's what I wanted to do.

How Long a Rehearsal Period Do You Have For Each Play?

It 's pretty brief actually; total rehearsal time comes to about three hours total. We do a table read a week before the show so the engineers can hear all the sound effects and make sure we have them done straight. It's for the actors, but more so for the Foley artists and engineers. We come back the day of the show. We rehearse from 5:00 to 5:30 P.M., take short break, we rehearse again from 6:00 to 6:30 P.M. for another run-through of the show. Then we do the show. That's basically it.

It doesn't take a long time, although certain shows do take longer than others. For example, "The Spirituals," which had a full choir and musicians, took more rehearsal time because there were more elements involved. The more elements involved, the more rehearsal time you need, because the more that can go wrong. It's a live broadcast, you only have one chance at it.

Am I Correct in Assuming That You Use Mainly Professional Actors?

I use actors from American Federal of Television and Radio Actors (AFTRA.) If they are not members when they do these shows, they have to join. The skill level is very high, people who do this for a living have a lot more at stake than someone who is just doing it for fun.

I try to choose actors that: a) are familiar with the format and have worked all the shows so far and b) I that know can give me that dramatic or comedic timing that's needed whichever the case may be. I am selective with the actors that I choose. I have worked in Denver for a long time as a theatre director, I know a lot of the performers around town. I know who I would comfortable with, because you have to be comfortable with those actors. You have to have confidence in them.

One of the things I wanted to accomplish was to employ actors. When Richard Durham originally did *Destination Freedom* that was what he was able to do. He was able to employ African-American actors, which before other shows like Durham's, there were white actors portraying black roles. I didn't want that. If it was a white role, I wanted I white actor, in this case I wanted an African-American actor in an African-American role. Not that another person couldn't do that, but if I did that, I would be going back to the old days when people were slighted for their talents and their skills. I wanted make sure that whatever the role was, I able to slot that role for a particular character.

You Mentioned this Evening That Not Only Are You Broadcasting on KUVO, but Also on Some Other Stations as Well.

We broadcast on three other NPR stations in February:

St Cloud, MN - KNSR 88.9 FM,
Winona, MN - KQAL 89.5 FM,
and Salt Lake City, UT - KUER 90.1 FM.

Hopefully these stations will pick up the *Destination Freedom* broadcasts

again in the Fall and other stations will as well.

Prior to this evening's broadcast, you mentioned that next seasons's *Destination Freedom* broadcasts will include some brand-new scripts.

Local critic and author Gregg Moody is working on a script about a famous African-American bicycle racer of the early 1900's.

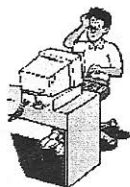
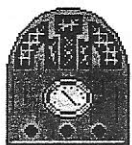


Radio Quiz

This month we feature Old-Time Radio Quiz by David Michael. Both the quiz AND answers will appear in the same issue. (See Answers on page 6.)

Give The Names Of At Least Two Characters Played By These Actors On Long-Running Shows And The Name Of The Shows.

1. Arthur Q. Bryan
2. John Brown
3. House Jameson
4. Billy Idelson
5. Bea Benaderet



OTR FOR THE DIGITAL AGE: Recovery of Old Program Material Part 1

By: Jim Hougen

For most of us, the term Old Time Radio means broadcasts from the period 1926, when the NBC Red and Blue Networks were formed, to

about 1960 when most live music and drama programming had disappeared. A few live radio programs remained in the early 70's. In the early years most network programs originated in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Programs were recorded (transcribed) so that they could be broadcast in a similar time block for the Western States. The desired audience potential for the advertisers in each of the time zones was thus assured. Before tape recording became universal, the recording medium of choice was the 16" transcription.

The 16" transcription size was chosen to preserve program fidelity. The minimum inner diameter used for recording was about 8". This meant a groove velocity at the inner diameter was similar to that of a 78 rpm recording. The 16" outer diameter meant there was ample space for a full 15 minutes of uninterrupted recording using the same groove width as the 78. A 60 minute broadcast required 4 sides. The usual plan was to use two disks with alternating sides. In this way the station, equipped with two turntables, could play the entire program without interruption.

The physics of disk recording requires the addition of diameter equalization. As the cutting stylus moves closer to the center of the disk, frequencies in the region of 7000 Hz. are gradually increased to compensate for high frequency roll-off. Early disk recorders used by many radio stations required a manual adjustment of this equalization. The station engineer would often be distracted and forget one or more the adjustment intervals, then make a drastic compensation. This resulted in uneven quality throughout the disk. Later model disc cutters included automatic adjustments. Until the advent of hot stylus and microgroove recording, the fidelity at the outer diameter was better than at the center of a disk. To minimize the change in quality noticed by the radio listener, it was common practice for the recording

engineer to record the beginning of a program from the outside and move toward the center of the disk. The second disk would be recorded from the inside and move to the outer diameter. Thus when the live station announcer was heard at the end of the program, there would be no perceptible change in quality.

Tape recording became common with the Bing Crosby programs in the mid 40s. When high quality microgroove recording came along, the 12" lp (long playing) disk was used with 15 minutes per side. Disk recording quality was often superior to that of the broadcast lines. Bulk duplication via the pressing process allowed high quality broadcasting to be distributed even in remote areas of the country where network line quality, provided mostly by the Bell Telephone Company, was less than ideal.

In the early 40's the Bell System began use of the newly developed digital 'T-Carrier'. The T-Carrier permits 24 independent telephone conversations on a single pair of wires. If several of the channels are combined, a high fidelity circuit with a frequency response of 50-15,000 Hz can be provided for the broadcasters. These, Class A, circuits were quite expensive for the station and many could not afford a full frequency response circuit. They often reasoned that their transmitter could only pass audio signals up to 7,000 Hz, so why bother with the extra expense. They would opt for the lower cost Class B or C circuits with a more restricted frequency response. True High fidelity AM transmitters were not used in many cases because of other FCC (Federal Communications Commission) technical reasons and cost. Even though early FM stations were capable of high fidelity broadcasting, most were not network affiliates. A few stations did simulcast their AM sister station with remarkable quality.

For all of these reasons, recordings of early radio programs

differ widely in sound quality. Those made at the station of origin are nearly always of superior sound quality. Serious collectors always try for these. Off the air recordings were of lower quality because of the broadcast transmitter and receiver limitations. With the advances in tape recording in the early 50's, most stations switched to this medium. When the broadcast had been aired, the stations re-used the tape and thus the original recording would be lost forever. The disk medium is permanent and so these recordings persist.

As stations switched to tape, 16" turntables became a dinosaur of the past. The equipment was discontinued in manufacture, the equipment fell into disuse and was eventually scrapped. Stations scrapped transcription libraries. Some went to recycling, others to the garbage heap. A small percentage of transcription disks were salvaged by collectors. The large disks were cumbersome to ship and to handle. Many were abused during use and in later storage, these disks constitute our legacy of Old Time Radio.

Tape transfers of these old programs were often done with inferior equipment. Most collectors wanted to save cost and storage space and so they used slow speed, 3.75 ips, recording. Quarter track monaural recording was done on 1/4" 1 mil tape to get 6 hours of recording on a single 7" reel. This effort also reduced quality. Tapes have been traded, copied and poorly stored. So, as we near the end of the Century, the serious collector has lots of source material, but only a small percentage is of the original 'broadcast quality'.

Editor's Note:

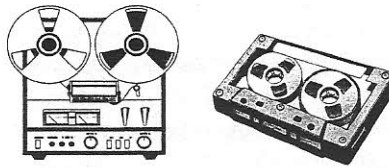
Jim's article will continue for the next two months.

Radio Quiz Answers

Answers For Names Of Characters

1. Doc Gamble (*Fibber*) – Floyd, the barber (*Gildersleeve*)

2. Mr. Willoughby (*Day In The Life of Dennis Day*) - Broadway (*Damon Runyan Theatre*) - Jim Gillis (*Life of Riley*) - Digger O'Dell (*Life of Riley*) - Melvin Foster, Judy's father (*A Date With Judy*)
3. Inspector Renfrew (*Renfrew Of The Mounted*) - Sam Aldrich (*The Aldrich Family*) - David Harding (*Counterspy*)
4. Cousin Willie (*Cousin Willie*) - Skeezix (*Gasoline Alley*)
5. Gloria, the maid (*Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet*) - Millie Anderson, mother of Dennis Day's girlfriend (*Day In The Life of Dennis Day*) - Gertrude, telephone operator (*Jack Benny*)



New in The Tape Library

By Maletha & Dick King

This month we are back to the Contributor's Library. For those of you who were not *Lum and Abner* fans before, you need to sit down and listen to the whole series as one story just builds into the next. We were not fans of this series years ago, but have certainly developed a great respect for it now.

Although these shows were produced in 1942, a lot of the stories fit in 1999. If Mousy Gray were here in 1999, he would be one of the most noted and called upon financial advisors of the time. Only that nasty thing called reality keeps some of his ideas from being the best investments of the day. Chester Lauck and Norris Goff, who wrote the series and portrayed Lum and Abner and the rest of the characters in the stories, had not only great imagination, but a true understanding of people and their weaknesses.

Our club is certainly privileged to have these shows that were contributed by Earl Ross Jr.

The last of the shows entered last month is the first of a series contributed by Jack Mandik. *The Charlotte Greenwood Show* is one that we do not remember in this part of the country, not on the West Coast, but was very popular in the Central and Eastern parts of the country. Although the sound on these shows is not very good, the comedy is clean and a great addition to our library. Hallmark Greeting Cards was the sponsor and they certainly picked a good show to be associated with.

It All Depends on You!

We are running VERY low on articles, your help is needed and would be appreciated. To keep the RHAC newsletter interesting, articles from our members are needed on a regular basis. You don't have to be a professional writer to submit an article. Write about your favorite Old-Time Radio series, personality, or on whatever radio-related topic you want. But, please write.

Send your articles to Stewart Wright. My addresses, regular & E-Mail, are listed on page 2 of the Newsletter.



In the coming months, watch for articles in *Return With Us Now*. . . on:

OTR on the Web,
Yours Truly - Johnny Dollar,
Radio Memories from Lon McCartt,
OTR for the Digital Age,
Radio Detectives,
From the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound Showcase VII, and
???????



Kitty Keene

Kitty Keene, Inc. was the only soap opera to have a private eye in the leading role (unless you want to count radio's *Perry Mason*). This series ran for four years, beginning in September 1937. It was sponsored by Dreft and was on CBS for one year and Mutual for the remaining three. Like most soaps, it was a 15-minute serial.

Through the years, at least three actresses played Kitty Keene: Beverly Younger, Gail Henshaw and Fran Carlon. Day Keene shared the script writing responsibilities with Wally Norman. Kitty was an "ex-Follies gal" who started her own detective business, although since this was a

soap, it took her umpteen weeks to solve each crime.

In the four surviving episodes, Kitty sounds tough but tender, with no clue to her age. However by the fourth year on the air, her grown daughter had given birth so this may also be radio's only grandmother detective. No pushover even then, Kitty berates a grand jury who almost exonerated a rackets boss, and gets an indictment.

KITTY KEENE, INC.

(1937-41, CBS, Mutual)

15-minute episodes

Writing: Day Keene, Wally Norman

Starring: Beverly Younger (later Gail Henshaw and Fran Carlon) as *Kitty Keene*

Distaff Detectives

Editor's Note: Our series women radio detectives by Jack French, the editor of *Radio Recall*, the newsletter of the Metro Washington OTR Club concludes with *Kitty Keene, Inc.* These articles can also be found on Kevin's Smith's *Thrilling Detective* Web site. Kevin's site is located at: <http://www.colba.net/~kvnsmith/thrillingdetective/>

Radio Historical Association of Colorado
P.O. Box 1908 Englewood, CO 80150



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