



# The Old Radio Times

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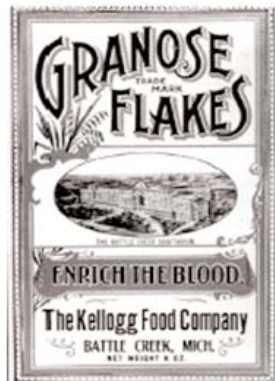
Number 50



# Kellogg's



The First Corn Flake (1895)



The First Wheat Flake (1898)

## Kellogg's uses radio as the perfect promotional vehicle to expand their products worldwide

by Dee Neyhart, The Digital Deli 2010©

Kellogg's developed an impressive stable of popular Radio Show sponsorships and both showing their understanding of their target audience as well as developing a continuing demand for their products:

1927-1928	Slumber Hour	Kaffee HAG Coffee
1931	Gilbert Martyn	<b>Kellogg's</b> Corn Flakes
1931-1936	Singing Lady	<b>Kellogg's</b> Corn Flakes
1939	The Circle	<b>Kellogg's</b> Cereals
1939	Howie Wing	<b>Kellogg's</b> Corn Flakes
1942	Breakfast at Sardi's	<b>Kellogg's</b> Cereals
1943-1947	Superman	<b>Kellogg's</b> Pep
1945	Breakfast Club	<b>Kellogg's</b> All-Bran
1945-1948	Breakfast in Hollywood	<b>Kellogg's</b> Cereals
1950-1952	Mark Trail	<b>Kellogg's</b> Pep
1952-1955	Tom Corbett	<b>Kellogg's</b> Cereals

**Slumber Hour** was billed as providing 'the sweetest music' of the era, presumably to underscore Kellogg's Kaffee HAG Coffee's absence of caffeine. One has to wonder how many



listeners fell asleep during the show, before all the commercial spots had aired. That may explain it's relatively short run. Indeed, soon after the demise of the program, Kellogg's Kaffee HAG Coffee was sold to General Foods in 1928, later to become the Sanka decaffeinated coffee we know today.

**The Singing Lady, or "Kellogg's Singing Lady"** was billed as the first radio network program directed at children. Irene Wicker was "The Singing Lady". The Singing Lady's songbook was made available to her listening audience as a promotion from Kellogg's. Indeed, in 1932, Kellogg's ran a promotion by which moms could acquire The Singing Lady's songbooks by redeeming Kellogg's boxtops. The promotion

was both a runaway success for Kellogg's and an eye-opener for the radio advertising agencies of the era. Irene Wicker not only sang songs to her audience, but actually did more story telling than singing. The Story Lady parody shorts of later years were based on Irene Wicker's delivery and program. Irene Wicker herself, is credited with 'discovering' Mel Torme, at the 1934 Chicago's World Fair, where she was judging the children's section of the singing contest. Torme was only 10 yrs old when he was judged the winner. In 1935, Kellogg published *When the Great Were Small*, a book developed to inspire children to pursue the great skills and talent of the artists and musicians who preceded them. In 1960, for her devoted work in children's media, Irene Wicker was later awarded a Peabody Award, in honor of her outstanding achievement in radio and television.



Irene Wicker Singing Lady Children's Mother Goose Action Circus circa 1938



Throughout 1939 Kellogg's sponsored the **Howie Wing**

**Program.** Howie Wing is a fascinating and relatively recent re-discovery in the World of Golden Age Radio. The airplane had great impact on our popular culture after the dogfights of WW-I. The Howie Wing Radio Program, created by Wilfred G. Moore, aired from 1938 to 1939. Howie Wing was a 21-year-old "junior pilot" whose adventures were typical for juvenile air fiction of the era. Wing was mentored by Captain Harvey, a WW-I Ace. Howie's girlfriend is Donna Cavendish and his fellow pilot was "Zero" Smith, one of the best "tough weather pilots" but cranky, devious, generally irascible, and sometimes suspected of working for the Germans. The true villain of the show is Burton York, posing as an insurance agent to discredit Captain Harvey, Howie Wing's mentor and father figure. Airlines had bridged both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans by then and the public interest in aviation had piqued. Kellogg's sponsored the First Air Express Round-the-World shipment to generate interest in the Howie Wing program. They prepared two suitcases; one to be sent Round-the-World by air in an easterly direction and the other westerly. The race was to see which suitcase would win its Round-the-World trip. The suitcases travelled on:

- Eastern Airlines
- American Airlines
- Pan American Airway
- France Airlines
- Airlines
- Airways
- United Airlines
- Transcontinental
- Western Airlines
- Chicago & Southern Airlines



The suitcases departed Battle Creek, Michigan on February 22, 1939, the Westerly suitcase arriving first back in Battle Creek 25 days later and the Easterly suitcase 29 days later each suitcase having made approximately 75 different stops while traveling 31,188 miles around the World.



Howie Wing Cadet Aviation Corps Handbook circa 1939



**The "Breakfast Programs"** were a natural for Kellogg's. From Breakfast At Sardi's, to The Breakfast Club, to Breakfast In Hollywood, the Breakfast shows were the perfect vehicle to underscore Kellogg's history-long campaign to convert the World to the idea of starting every day with a meal of one of Kellogg's Breakfast Cereals. Breakfast at Sardi's was actually the precursor

to Breakfast in Hollywood., Tom Brenneman hosting both shows, the second from his own restaurant, Brenneman's. Both C.W. Post and General Foods had joined as many as 40 other competitors to much of Kellogg's product line, from their Grain Breakfast Cereals, to their grain based Dog meal to their non-caffeinated hot beverages, their competitors were nipping at Kellogg's heels and both copycatting or outright stealing Kellogg's yearly product and marketing innovations. Breakfast in Hollywood was so successful that it was spun off into a full length movie of the same name in 1946.

**The Adventures of Superman** and Kellogg's sponsorship of the program once it moved to Mutual , proved to be one of the better natural



pairings of product to protagonist in the history of early radio advertising. Of the over 1300 episodes of The Adventures of Superman, well over half were produced under Kellogg's sponsorship. Indeed, so mutually beneficial was the relationship between Superman and Kellogg's, that when Superman moved from Radio to Television, it was a natural for Kellogg's to sponsor the TV version of the program. This was yet another long running program for Kellogg's, while further expanding it's juvenile demographic target to include a strong range of the fast growing adult viewer demographic.

**Mark Trail** was another natural juvenile adventure program well suited to Kellogg's Pep's target demographic during the Breakfast Cereals advertising wars of the 40s and 50s. Mark Trail



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had a highly successful New York Post syndicated, then King Syndicated comic strip penned by Ed Dodd in 1946, and later drawn by Jack Elrod from 1978 forward. Beginning with January 30, 1950, the Mutual Broadcasting System launched the Mark Trail Radio Program, featuring Matt Crowley as Mark Trail. Airing three times weekly, 174 thirty-minute episodes were produced, running through June 8, 1951. A second radio series, starring Staats Cotsworth, of Casey, Crime Photographer fame, aired by ABC beginning September 18, 1950, with 51 half-hour shows that ran three times weekly until January 1952. The series then switched to a 15-minute format, producing another 125 episodes that aired weekdays through June 27, 1952. Of the approximately 350 episodes originally committed to transcription, only 10 of the 15-minute episodes are known to have survived. Trail's adopted son, Rusty is the son of an alcoholic and abusive father. Mark Trail's intervention saved Rusty's life. Trail is accompanied by "Andy", his faithful Saint Bernard. Cherry Davis is Trail's longtime girlfriend. Cherry lived with Mark and her father (Doc) at Lost Forest. Doc Davis, a Veterinarian is Cherry's dad.

### Tom Corbett, Space Cadet

was a relatively short lived sponsorship for Kellogg's--on Radio, especially. It ran for five years on Television and only six months on radio from January 1952 through July 1952. A juvenile space adventure, it began on TV, then a year later on radio, three days a week for ABC. The program was loosely based on the famous Robert Heinlein science fiction novel, "Space Cadet" of 1946. Legendary voice talent Jackson Beck was the announcer. Direction was by Drex



Hines, with scripts from Richard Jessup, Jack Weinstock and Willie Gilbert, Don Hughes, and Gilbert Brann. Frankie Thomas was Tom Corbett, Al Markim was Astro and Ed Bryce was Captain Strong. Together they fought and vanquished criminals, space pirates, renegade Solar Guard officers, treacherous colonists and all manner of space disaster. Jan Merlin reprised his TV role as the ill-tempered Roger Manning, who tended to get into one scrape or another in almost every episode

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## Kellogg's History

From Battle Creek Sanitarium to Sanitas Nut Food Company to the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Co.

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Battle Creek Sanitarium (the former Western Health Reform Institute of the Church of The Seventh Day Adventists) circa 1880

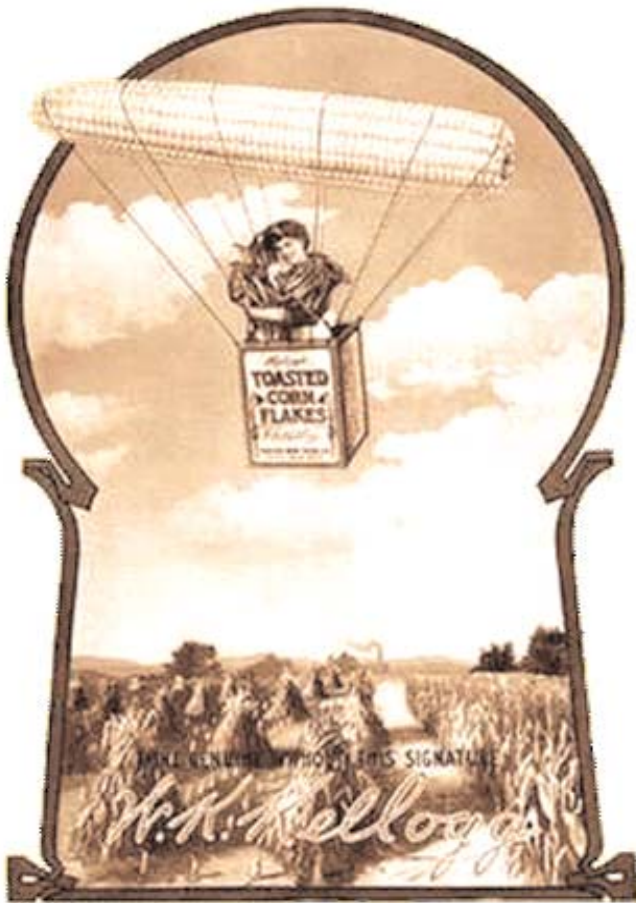
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The Kellogg story is a fascinating confluence of religion, colon health, and good old American entrepreneurialism. It all began in 1854 when the Adventist Church was established in Battle Creek, Michigan. By 1860, the Church changed it's name to Seventh-day Adventist (SDA): "Seventh Day," being their Sabbath day--Saturday, the seventh day of their week. "Adventist," because they were remnants of the Millerite movement that erroneously predicted the advent of

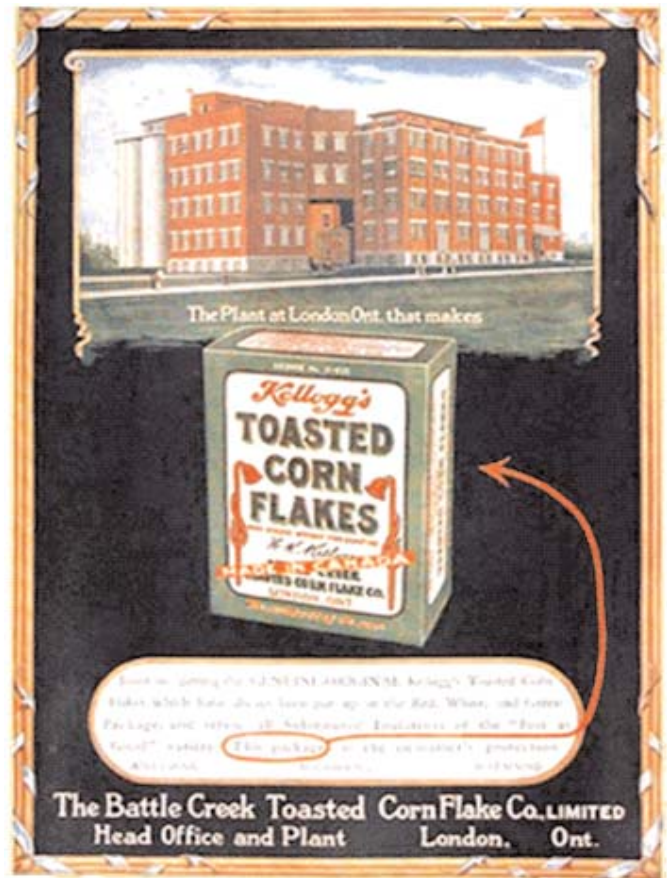


the Second Coming of Christ in 1844 (oops!). The Seventh Day Adventists believe in the sanctity of body and soul, and advocate temperance in all things, and preventive medicine, especially, as a way of life. In support of this belief, the Adventists opened their first health retreat in 1866 in Battle Creek--"The Western Health Reform Institute".

Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) took charge of the Institute for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1876, changing the name to The Battle Creek Sanitarium. He coined the word "sanitarium" to better reflect his idea of a sanitary retreat for both health restoration and training in contrast with "sanatorium," which customarily referred to a hospital for invalids or for treatment of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases of the era.



Kellogg's Corn Flakes Ad circa 1906



"Made In Canada" Corn Flakes Ad circa 1914

Both Dr. Kellogg and his younger brother Will Keith Kellogg, his bookkeeper and business manager (from 1880, on), were men of very short physical stature; Dr. Kellogg 5 feet four inches, and his younger brother the taller at 5 foot seven inches. But as history would bear out, they were both destined to become men of great stature as inventors, entrepreneurs, and humanitarians.

Among his various duties, W.K. Kellogg assisted his brother in food experiments. Dr. J. H. Kellogg, was the extrovert of the two, and somewhat more eccentric as well, later in life adopting a wardrobe of completely white outfits (shoes, socks, suit, shirt, tie, hat, coat, galoshes), further accentuating his white hair, mustache and goatee. By contrast, W. K. Kellogg heavier, bald, unsmiling and introverted. W.K. inconspicuously served his older brother for 26 years at the Sanitarium.

The 'shy' brother, W. K. Kellogg, is believed to have developed the first edible corn flake product, working after hours as business manager, in the food laboratory at the Sanitarium, though both Kellogg brothers were probably involved in the discovery. The most significant food products developed by the Kellogg brothers were the flaked cereals: Sanitas, the first corn flake (1895), and Granose, the first wheat flake (1898).

W.K. Kellogg sought an alternative to the nutritious, but tasteless, breads on the sanitarium's menu. He experimented with running boiled wheat through rollers in search of an alternative. The 'flake' discovery was somewhat serendipitous. Called away from their experiments, they were forced to leave the cooked wheat exposed to the air for a day. Upon returning, the brothers decided to run the wheat through the rollers anyway, despite the fact that it was no longer fresh. But this time, instead of the single, large sheet of wheat that they had been producing, the rollers produced a flake for each wheat berry. When baked, they produced a light and crisp flake. This flake, much like the breakfast cereals we know today, was first formed in 1894.

This new cereal, Granose, proved so popular with the patients at the sanitarium that many continued to request a supply, even after their time to return home approached. Inspired by the demand, the brothers started the Sanitas Food Company in 1898 to develop Corn Flakes cereal. W.K Kellogg, the general manager of the company, discovered that adding malt flavouring and using the grit or heart of the corn made the flakes even tastier! In 1906, W.K. Kellogg formed the Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flakes Company, which was officially named the Kellogg Company in 1922, heralding the beginning of the ready-to-eat cereal industry. ■



The Sanitarium Lab circa 1906



The First in a Series of Pep Ads Commissioning N.C. Wyeth for the Artwork, circa 1926

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## Book Review

by Doug Hopkinson

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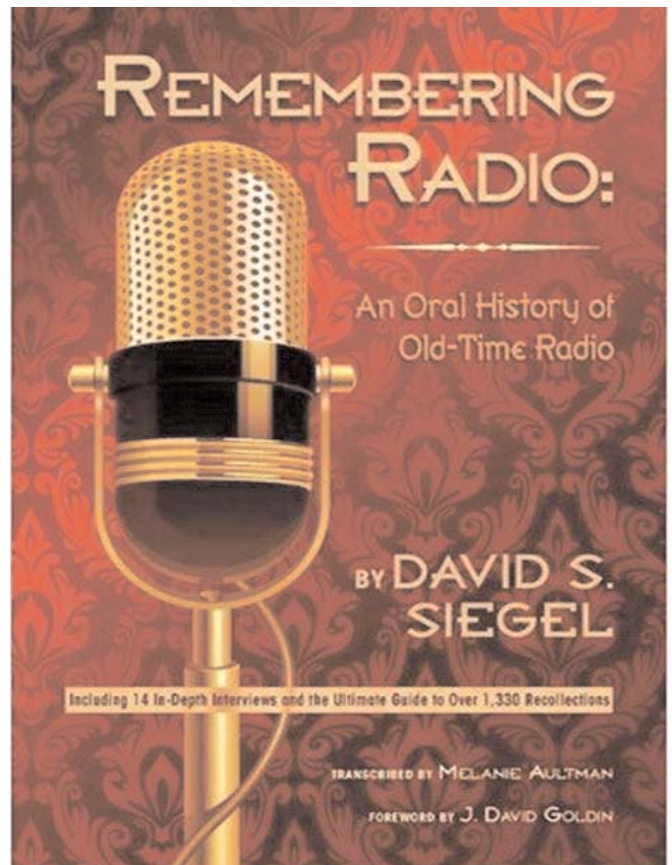
There is a new (and affordable) book out this month pertaining to Old Time Radio. It was conceived of and penned by David S. Siegel and published by BearManor Media. The title of the book is Remembering Radio : An Oral History of Old-Time Radio.

The book is a collection of 15 interviews with performers, producers and writers from the golden age of radio which are presented in the first 14 chapters comprising 383 pages of great reading. The interviews were personally conducted and recorded by Mr. Siegel over a 24 year period either in person or over the phone. Each audio recording was meticulously transcribed by the keen-eared Melanie Aultman. Mr. Siegel writes brief introductions at the beginning of each interview which are very interesting and insightful. The final two chapters of the book are a unique reference guide to well over 1300 more interviews conducted by many other people over the years. This guide lists almost 1000 personalities in alphabetical order. Each name is followed by a category code (which indicates what the person's primary association with radio was) and a source code (which indicates who conducted the interview). Mr. Siegel used 13 different sources for this guide and gives instructions on how to contact each one. While this guide is obviously not a complete or exact accounting it is the first of its kind and represents a great foundation upon which someone might build to create an all inclusive factual spreadsheet.

Interviews have a very important place to researchers if not to the collectors. They give us extra information about the shows and the performers themselves that enhance the listening experience. Interviews, as represented in this book, keep the performers alive long after they

have departed from this earth. Anyone that likes old time radio will certainly love reading this book. With its first-hand accounts and insights of the golden age of radio from people that were there when it happened plus the cross referenced guide to over a thousand more such interviews, this book definitely deserves a spot on your bookshelf.

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## Oklahoma's WKY:

The First Station West of the Mississippi"

by Bret Jones Copyright © 2010

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The beginnings of broadcasting are filled with pioneers, ground-breakers, and those who had little clue as to what this new wireless contraption could do. And when the race commenced for radio stations to establish themselves, people from many parts of the country bought equipment, set up a studio (usually in their



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house), and began broadcasting whatever programming they could devise. One such story is that of WKY, the first station set up west of the Mississippi River.

WKY began as many radio stations did—by passionate radio-philes eager to get into the broadcasting business. E. C. Hull and H.S. Richards were two such men who formed



a partnership based on their mutual love of radio. According to *Voices on the Wind: Early Radio in Oklahoma* (Allen, Gene), Hull grew up in Niagara Falls, New York and built his own receiver when he was a young man. During the Great War he was a radio instructor in New York City. After being discharged from the military, he ended up in Oklahoma City where he met Richards. Richards had also built his own receiver as a youngster and worked for a jewelry store.

Hull and Richards entered the airwaves as 5XT in the spring of 1921. The station's headquarters was in Hull's house in Oklahoma City. The living room of the abode acted as the studio and the garage housed the transmitter. According to Allen: "The transmitter, located in the garage, was a collection of bits and pieces of wire and other components entirely built by hand." (p. 11) With this humble beginning, Hull and Richards had established the first radio station west of the Mississippi.

5XT's big broadcasting time was on Sunday nights for a couple of hours. There are no broadcasting logs from the 5XT days of the station's history; however, it can be assumed that

Hull and Richards followed similar operating procedures of other stations from the period. The night's listening would consist of phonograph records, news, time signals, and weather forecasts. Also, standard practice during this era of broadcasting was to have "stand by" periods which were filled with silence; these were usually three minutes in length (Allen, 15).

Although Hull and Richards were in the commercial broadcasting business, their source of income came from selling radio parts that they built out of their business, The Oklahoma Radio Shop. The process of building radio receivers took approximately two weeks to construct. When Westinghouse began cranking out receivers, Hull and Richard's days of staying in the receiver business were numbered.

Hull and Richards became creative with their broadcasting ventures with support for their efforts in the pages of *The Daily Oklahoman*. Some of their success was achieved by careful planning and hard work, others by acting on the spur of the moment and knowing how to "call an audible." One example is setting up a live broadcast of the soprano Alma Gluck. The two men had to pack up their equipment and move it to where Gluck would be performing. Upon her arrival, Gluck adamantly refused to have her concert on the air. Hull hid a microphone in the side curtains and broadcast anyway (Allen, 17).

When the Department of Commerce issued licenses in 1922 for stations in Oklahoma, two were given: one to 5XT, which was assigned the call letters WKY and Midland Refining, which was owned by W.G. Skelly out of Tulsa and assigned WEH. The *Daily Oklahoman* continued to support the station and printed programs for the Sunday night broadcasts.

With competition increasing for radio parts, The Oklahoma Radio Shop went bankrupt leaving Hulls and Richards to discover a way of

making WKY pay for itself. Financial troubles affected their ability to stay on the air for consistent periods of time. At one point their transmitter was confiscated because Hull and Richards didn't completely own it. This gave their listeners dead air for many months, thus were some of the struggles early broadcasters had to deal with.

Although Hull and Richards were pioneers in radio, they were not sales managers. Because of this, it hurt them financially and their ability to make WKY turn a profit. Even though the concept of commercial radio came about, it still wasn't their forte and the station was purchased in 1928 by E.K. Gaylord, the owner of The Oklahoman newspaper. He bought the station for \$5,000 (Allen, 53).

In December of 1928, WKY became an NBC affiliate and broadcast the network's programming. All other programming WKY supplied locally, which was similar to the larger radio stations in the east. The "golden age" of WKY's broadcasting era was from 1936-1951 when the station broadcast from the historic Skirvin Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City. The station's studio was constructed on the fifth floor of the hotel building. According to Allen:

The latest in radio technology went into the construction. Studio floors were laid on springs to minimize unwanted vibrations. There were two air conditioners, one for the studios and one for the offices, this in an era when movie theaters were almost the only other cool locations in town. There was also a studio for cooking with two complete kitchens. There had to be two: both Oklahoma Gas & Electric and Oklahoma Natural Gas were major sponsors, and no one was prepared for the possible financial consequences of choosing between electric and gas appliances.



Skirvin-Towers Station





In addition, a specially built Kilgen organ was installed in the studio with an organist brought in from Chicago to play it.

WKY broadcast remotes from the Silver Glade room in the Skirvin, which was a popular spot for entertainment during the 1930s. This was convenient as the Silver Glade was four floors below the WKY studio. The Silver Glade offered nightclub entertainment with dinner and dancing, which made the remotes popular.

Another item of note: for a one season run of twenty-six weeks, NBC broadcast the horror anthology series *Dark Fantasy*, which came from WKY. *Dark Fantasy* was written, produced, and acted by WKY staff. Scott Bishop, who would go on to pen stories for *Mysterious Traveler*, was the writer for the anthology; the producer for the program was John Prosser.

With the changing times, WKY had to change as well. In the early 1950s, the studio in the Skirvin was abandoned for smaller space in another part of Oklahoma City. Also, the format changed many times over the years. Some of the formats: Oldies, Country & Western, Adult Contemporary, Talk Radio, Christian, Top 40, and now Regional Hispanic.

Little did Hull and Richards realize the impact of their station on Oklahoma radio. The call letters WKY are now legendary, not just because of the longevity of the station, but for the accomplishments and record of service it has provided to its listeners. In addition, broadcasters of some notoriety had tenure at the station: Walter Cronkite, Mike Douglas, Danny Williams, Jimmy O'Neill, Frank McGee, and Ernest Istook, former House of Representatives member. WKY is a survivor and its legacy to Oklahoma radio, and national broadcasting, is long-lasting and helped shape the airwaves in the Sooner state. Work Cited Allen, Gene. *Voices on the Wind: Early Radio in Oklahoma*. Western Heritage Books, 1993. ■

## Editorial Policy of the Old Radio Times

It is the policy of The Old Radio Times not to accept paid advertising in any form. We feel that it would be detrimental to the goal of the Old Time Radio Researchers organization to distribute its' products freely to all wishing them. Accepting paid advertising would compromise that goal, as dealers whose ideals are not in line with ours could buy ad space.

That being said. The Old Radio Times will run free ads from individuals, groups, and dealers whose ideals are in line with the group's goals and who support the hobby.

Publishing houses who wish to advertise in this magazine will be considered if they supply the publisher and editor with a review copy of their new publication. Anyone is free to submit a review or a new publication about old time radio or nostalgia though.

Dealers whose ads we carry or may carry have agreed to give those placing orders with them a discount if they mention that they saw their ad in 'The Old Radio Times'. This is in line with the groups goal of making otr available to the collecting community.

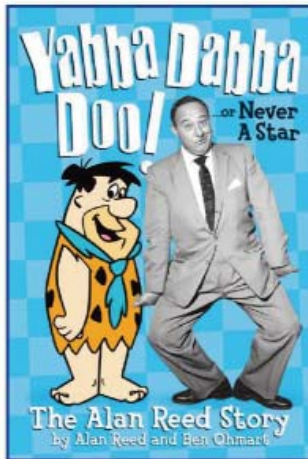
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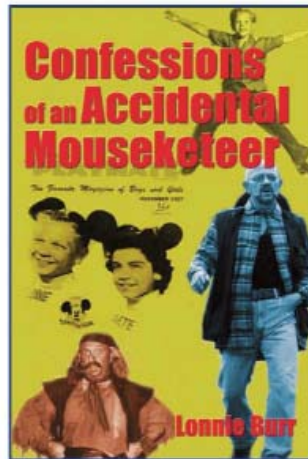
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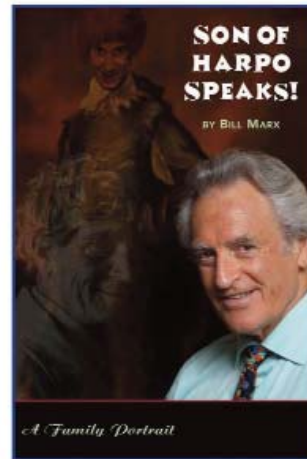
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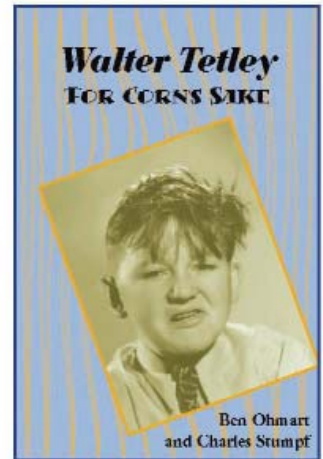
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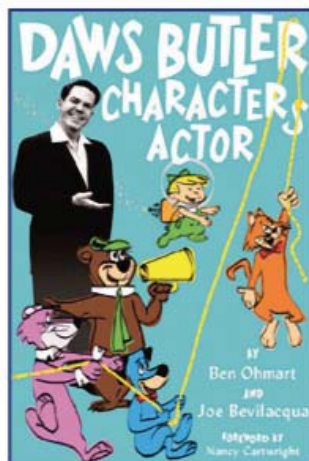
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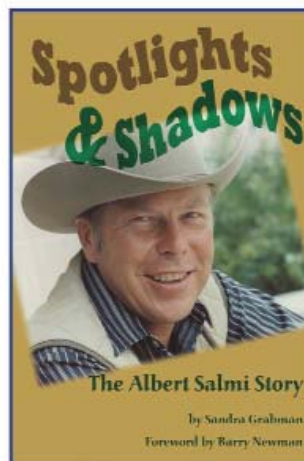
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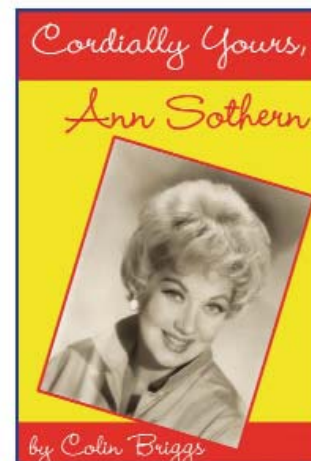
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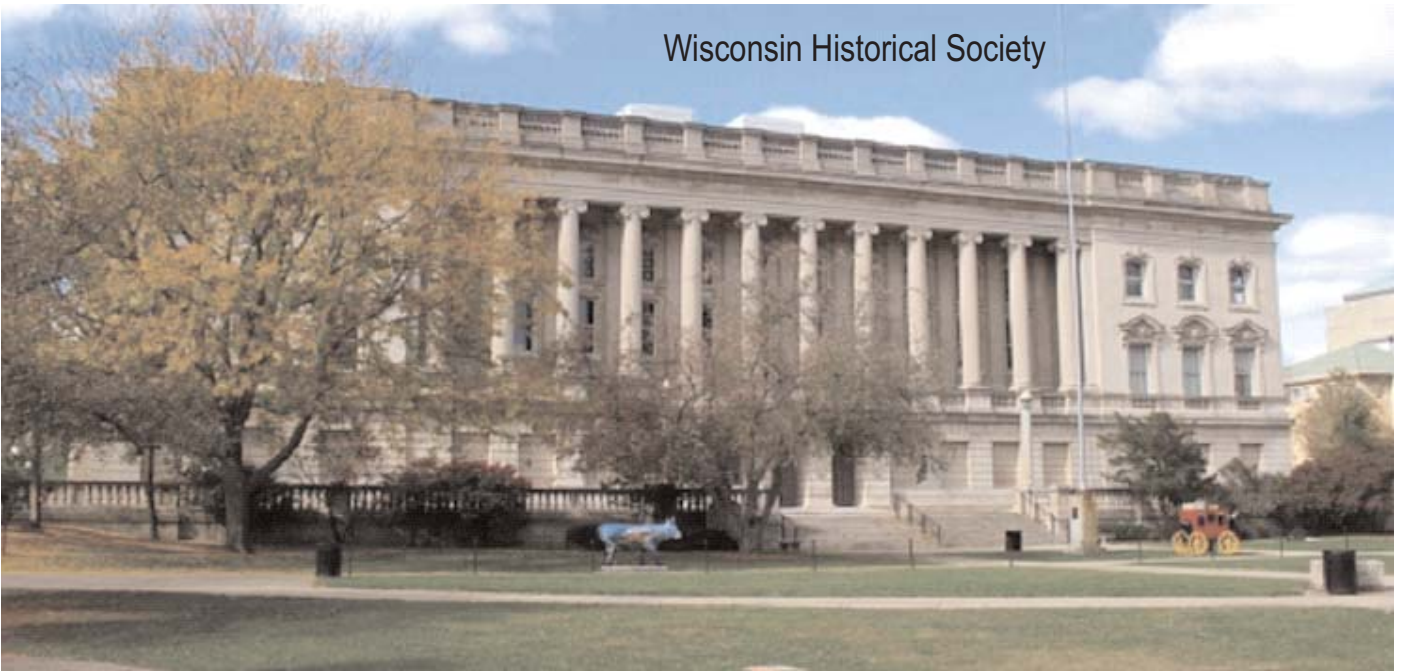
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## Wisconsin Historical Society



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### **Wisconsin Historical Society** by Kathy Hammel with Sally Jacobs

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Every day more finding aids are appearing on the Internet. These aids help researchers locate disparate items that are in a vast array of personal and professional collections residing in libraries, universities and other archives. Most of these archives have the charge of making items from the collections available to researchers, though some feel this obligation more keenly than others.

Of particular interest to many of us in the OTR realm, are the many transcription disks that find their way into archives all over the country. In some instances, archives do not make this material readily available, but even when an archive does open their holdings, they may not always have the equipment to play or record the 16 inch transcription disks.

Fortunately that's not always the case. I recently found another archive that has 16-inch transcriptions and tapes of some radio shows from the 1930s, 40s, 50s and 60s. This archive, The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), in

Madison, Wisconsin, not only treasures these holdings, but also has staff that feel strongly they are there to share.

I recently noticed - in the online Finding Aid - four recordings of the little known Howie Wing radio show (a juvenile 15 minute aviation adventure show from 1938-39). I fired off an email to the WHS and was lucky enough to find Sally Jacobs. Sally is the Audio & Accessioning Archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society, and is, apparently, all about customer service. Within a couple of weeks she had located the recordings, verified there were two actual episodes and duplicates of each. Once she knew that, Sally even went through the trouble of figuring out which of each recording was the better one, and using that to make the digital copy for me.

Nor was any of this an easy task. While audio is only part of Sally's responsibilities, she admits, it's her favorite part. Favorite, however, does not mean it's the easiest part, as you're about to find out...

Recounting the saga of looking for the Howie Wing discs, Sally says:

The Howie Wing discs Kathy was looking for are part of the Earl Wilson Papers. All the discs in this collection have the call number Disc 151A. When our audio has a "processed" call number, the number also tells you its location. But when I went to the vault to retrieve the discs, I found, to my horror, that the numbers went from 150A to 152A -- no 151A in sight!

This was upsetting because not only did it mean that 331 disc recordings were unaccounted for, it also meant a certain dedicated, tenacious researcher might not get to hear the recordings she discovered online. So we pressed on.



Only one option occurred to me as a possible next step: A shelf check of the vault. A shelf check is exactly what it sounds like. My assistant Emily started on one side and I began on the other. I was the lucky one who spotted the disc boxes, and I'm not kidding when I say I let out a big victory WHOOP as soon as I did! Turns out they had been shelved according to accession number, which is not supposed to happen after it's been assigned a "processed" call number.

I was starting to feel like I had fallen into my own nail-biting adventure serial. ...

Next up? Creating a digital copy to bum to CD for our customer. My feeling of giddiness about finding the discs quickly vanished as I took the first one out of the sleeve for digitizing. "Why are there stars on it?" asked my Audio Tech Hilary.

"Those aren't stars ... " I said with a sense of horror and dread: "Those X's are scratches! Someone tried to kill this disc!"

When making the copy, Sally had to stand by to pick up the needle and move it over the worst of the slashes. It took her quite a few tries to be satisfied with the results. Her efforts paid off, as the final recording has only a few repeats. The \$40 fee was a small price to pay for Sally's extreme service, and copies of two more episodes of this "lost" series.

The Howie Wing transcription discs came to the archive some years ago from the family of Earl Wilson. Mr. Wilson, nicknamed Midnight Earl, was a golden era gossip columnist and radio personality. He kept his eye on New York's Broadway scene, reporting on all the latest news and interviewing the famous and fabulous of the times. The collection also contains many recordings of his radio shows, quite a lot of his print columns and even a few books he authored. He had a long career that spanned from the early 1940s on into the 1980s.

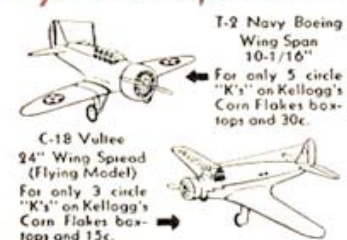
While we're not sure how it came about that a couple of recordings of Howie Wing ended up in the Earl Wilson collection, Sally speculates that, because copies of his show are on the reverse side of each of the Howie Wing episodes, and the Howie Wing side is scratched out quite purposefully, it may be that the Howie Wing discs were used as 'scratch paper'. Since the show was



Get your Wings, Cadet Aviation Handbook and Certificate of Membership at once—and become a member of this national organization of red-blooded aviation enthusiasts. Just send 2 circle "K's" from Kellogg's Corn Flakes box-tops and 5c for this material and you're ready to go.

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*Howie Wing*  
COMMANDING OFFICER



only 15 minutes, it would only have filled one side of the disc. If the transcription (which I suspect is an Air Check) only used one side of the disc, as sometimes was done, then the blank side could have been cut - in studio - during Mr. Wilson's broadcasts. Whatever the reason, I'm grateful these episodes survived, so I can add to my research into Howie Wing, A Saga of Aviation.



Though my primary interest is in this 15 minute serial, there are many other audio, print and film resources within the Wisconsin Historical Society's audio holdings that tickle the OTR researchers curiosity. There is a fairly extensive finding aid on line at: [http:// digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?page=simple;c=wiarchives](http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi/f/findaid/findaid-idx?page=simple;c=wiarchives).

To find recordings you can key word search on "disc recordings" or "disc", "tape" or "recordings". This will bring up any collection that has any discs. Not all are radio shows, of course. Many discs contain music, as well as news broadcasts and speeches. If you're looking for specific shows, you can search for those by name. Check out Mr. Earl Wilson's collection, though, as it does contain what appears to be some recorded interviews with (or gossip about) familiar names such as Shirley Booth, Les Tremayne, Fred Allen and Frank Sinatra.

The good news is the Wisconsin Historical

Society is planning to build a home specifically for their Audio and film resources, but that won't be for a while yet. In the meantime, the Society's entire holding is not yet completely catalogued, and, with the aforementioned slim staffing levels, it may be some years before everything is included in the finding aids. If any of you live in the Madison, Wisconsin area, and have some free time, Sally Jacobs would be interested to hear from potential volunteers. The Wisconsin Historical Society Library and Archive is located at 816 State St., Madison, WI 53706. Sally's email is:

[sally.jacobs@wisconsinhistory.org](mailto:sally.jacobs@wisconsinhistory.org). Voice mail can be left for her at (608) 264-6420. The Society's main web page can be accessed at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/>. Enjoy!

A few final notes from Sally about requesting copies: Archival best practice says to create a master preservation copy of every audio recording as it is accessioned into our collections. There is no question that this is a great idea, and we would do it if we could. Unfortunately, our staffing levels have never been high enough to

make this possible. Instead, we have a policy of Mastering on Demand. What this means, practically speaking, is that we create a preservation master of every piece of audio that is requested by researchers. As they request them. On demand.

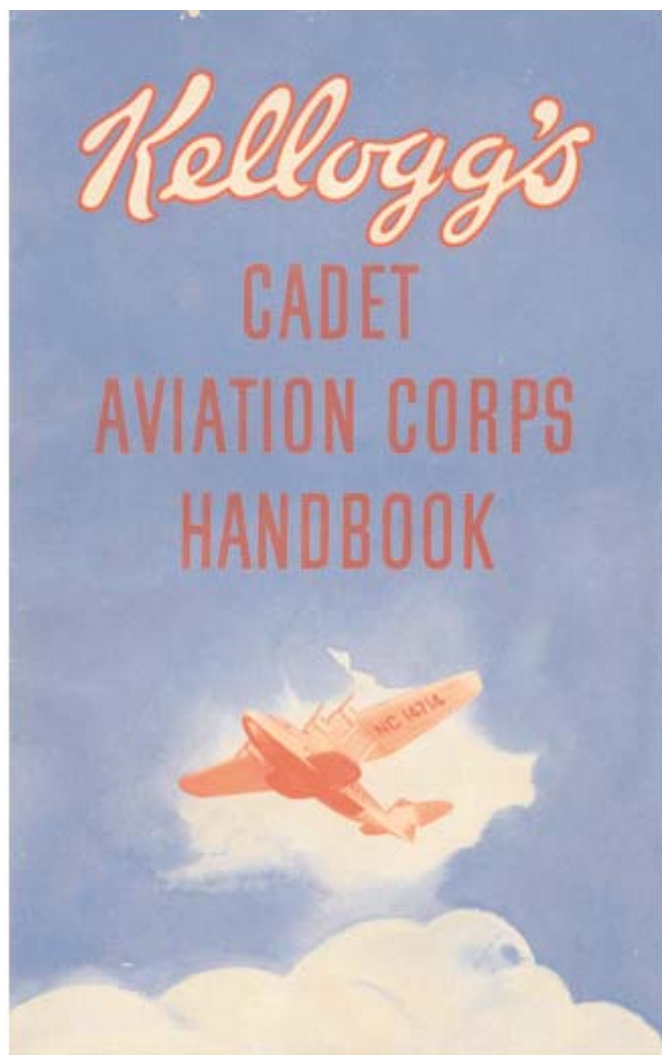
There are three important caveats: (1) Until you find a

A rectangular radio advertisement with a black border. At the top, it says 'NOW on the Air!' in bold. Below this is a black and white illustration of a pilot wearing a helmet and goggles, sitting in a cockpit and reading a book. Underneath the illustration, the text reads 'HOWIE WING' in large, bold, black letters. Below that, in smaller text, it says 'The Thrilling Story of a Young Aviator'. The next line reads 'EVERY MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY'. Below this, it lists two radio stations: 'CFCF—Montreal, Que. (5:15-5:30 p.m.)' and 'CBO—Ottawa, Ont. (5:30-5:45 p.m.)'. At the bottom, it says 'PRESENTED BY' followed by the 'Kellogg's' logo in its signature script font.

recording on one of our finding aid lists, I can't copy it for you. In other words, we do not have enough staff to search our collections for you. That part is up to you. We step in when it comes to creating copies.

(2) Speaking of copies, our copies are for research purposes, not for publication or resale. Ownership of the physical recording does not mean the Wisconsin Historical Society owns the intellectual property. Sometimes we do. Keep in mind that copyright clearances are the responsibility of the researcher.

(3) Some of our collections have restrictions, which prevent us from making copies. If this is the case, the catalog record will have a clear statement about that restriction. ■



## Himan Brown,

who created radio's "Inner Sanctum Mysteries," in the 1940s.

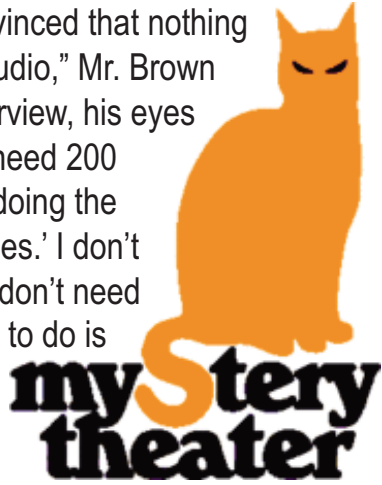
His granddaughter Melina Brown confirmed the death.



Another of Mr. Brown's creations was the radio drama "Grand Central Station," but probably his most memorable was "Inner Sanctum Mysteries," whose ominous opening of a creaking door and menacing farewell of "pleasant dreams" became signatures not just of the show but also of the heyday of radio itself, when listeners sitting on the family sofa or curled under quilts attached their own fanciful images to the sounds coming out of a box that had no screen. While radio dramas are now celebrated as wistful nostalgia by people in their 70s and 80s, Mr. Brown never stopped believing in the form. In 1974, when radio drama was all but extinct, he began a nightly series called CBS Radio Mystery Theater that ran until 1982 and even revived the creaking door. He continued to produce radio dramas about influential Americans into his 90s for Brooklyn College's station.



“I am firmly convinced that nothing visual can touch audio,” Mr. Brown said in a 2003 interview, his eyes sparkling. “I don’t need 200 orchestra players doing the ‘Ride of the Valkyries.’ I don’t need car chases. I don’t need mayhem. All I need to do is creak the door open, and visually your head begins to go. The magic word is imagination.”



In his prime, in the 1930s and 1940s, he was a jack-of-all-trades, once estimating that he produced or participated in over 30,000 shows. He wrote and doctored scripts, sold shows to advertisers, and directed actors like Orson Welles, Helen Hayes, Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre. As a teenager, he was the voice of the first Jake, Molly Goldberg’s husband, in the earliest version of the show about the Goldbergs, a homespun Jewish family in the Tremont section of the Bronx. But he also played the Italian father in another ethnic soap opera called “Little Italy.”

He became an expert in sounds that could instantly epitomize a character or a city. Foghorns and the clang of Big Ben became London. A belly laugh was a fat man.

“Grand Central Station,” an anthology show, was one of Mr. Brown’s first big hits, with its portentous opening declaring that the terminal was “the crossroads of a million private lives, a gigantic stage on which are played a thousand dramas daily.”

It was characteristic of his self-confidence that when listeners complained that the chugging sounds of a steam engine were not what you ordinarily heard at the terminal, he would reply: “You have your own Grand Central Station.” Mr. Brown grew up in Brownsville, Brooklyn, the son of immigrant tailors from the outskirts of

Odessa in Ukraine. Yiddish was the dominant sound in his neighborhood, but also important was a violin, which his parents insisted he learn to play well. He was entranced by the idea of catching the next wave to success, and a shop teacher at Boys High School told him, “There’s a new thing now, radio.” He was told that he could hear WLW in Cincinnati with a copper wire wrapped around a Quaker Oats box. “What a revelation that was right here in Brooklyn,” Mr. Brown said.



Having done some acting at a local synagogue dramatic club, he persuaded the young NBC station WEAJ that he could read a newspaper column in a Yiddish dialect. One of his listeners was Gertrude Berg, the resourceful inventor of the Goldbergs. Within a year, and with his help packaging the show, “The Rise of the Goldbergs” started a run that with its conversion to television would last 30 years. But after six months, Mrs. Berg fired him, buying him out for \$200, he said.

Mr. Brown continued to work in radio as an independent producer while attending Brooklyn College. At a time when companies financed shows and attached their names to them, he would try to sell a potential sponsor, like the Goodman’s Matzo Company, on an idea for a

radio play and, if successful, put the show together. One result was "Bronx Marriage Bureau," about a matchmaker.

The degree Mr. Brown received from Brooklyn Law School aided his ascent: it helped him acquire the rights to fictional characters like Dick Tracy, Flash Gordon, Bulldog Drummond and the Thin Man. "The Thin Man" also had a typical Brown touch: the sound of a pull on a lamp chain as the self-styled detectives Nick and Nora Charles went to bed. "It was as sexy as I could get," he said.

As he prospered in radio, Mr. Brown became a perceptive art collector. The eight-room Central Park West apartment he shared with his first wife, Mildred Brown, and his second, Shirley Goodman, a force in the growth of the Fashion Institute of Technology, was filled with paintings by Renoir, Degas and Picasso.

Mr. Brown owned a weekend home in Stamford, Conn., where he once rented a studio out to a young writer, J. D. Salinger, who at the time was working on "Catcher in the Rye," according to his granddaughter.

Both of Mr. Brown's wives died before him. Besides Melina Brown, he is survived by a son, Barry K. Brown; a daughter, Hilda; another grandchild; and four great-grandchildren.

Mr. Brown did not weather the shift to television. He turned "Inner Sanctum" into a syndicated TV show, but it did not last. Once characters were visible, viewers were no longer enchanted. The creaky door had lost its spell.



## OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTIONS

From a Dealer's Perspective  
by Bob Burnham



*This photo was taken at the 1981 Friends of Old Time Radio Convention. Jay Hickerson (with no grey hair), Dr. Joe Webb and Bob Burnham (with hair). It may have been the first time we all got together.*

Conventions for the old-time radio fan have a long heritage. I have been lucky enough to experience many of them first hand.

I have long been a writer in the OTR "hobby" – something I began doing in another decade – along with being a broadcast engineer. The two interests or professions for me have always been linked together, along with the conventions.

My introduction to OTR conventions began as one of the editors of Collector's Corner in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Collector's Corner was one of the leading OTR hobbyist magazines of its time. It was a joint project of (then) convention Co-Chairman, Joe Webb, Bob Burchett and myself. After producing the magazine a couple years, we finally all met in person! That happened in Bridgeport, CT (before the Friends of



OTR convention was moved to Newark).

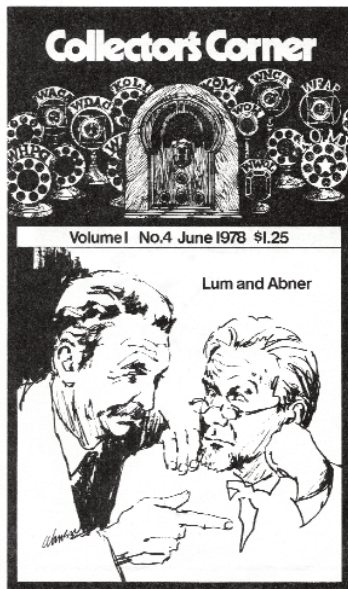
By 1983, I had established a dealer presence at the convention. During that decade, I never missed a convention. I ran workshops and helped to record the events while also transporting thousands of cassettes, books and videos and equipment back and forth from Detroit

to the east coast. Bob Burchett would later be the guiding force behind the Cincinnati conventions, although he credits his local radio club for providing the incentive to start it in the first place.

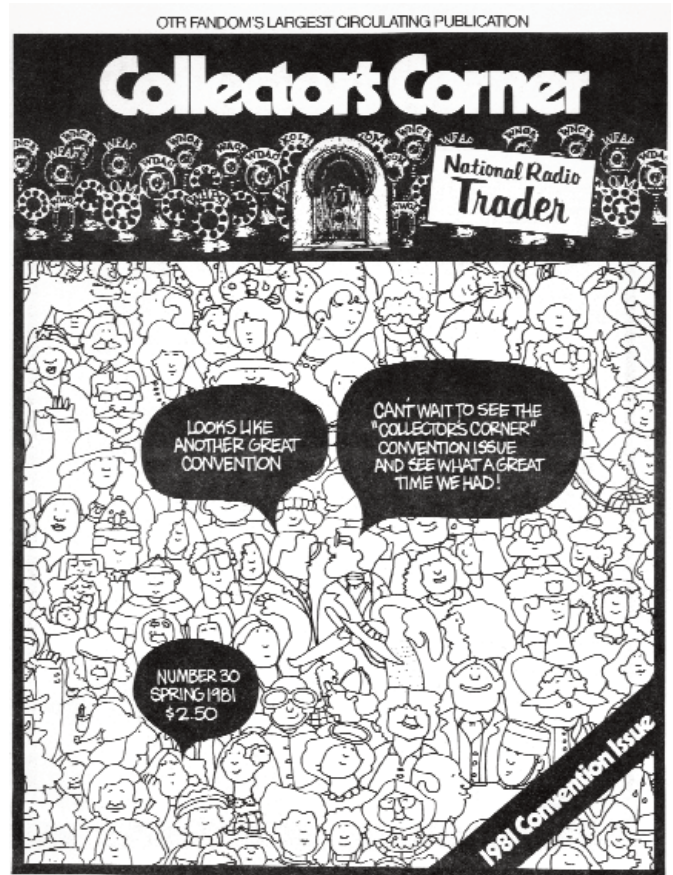
Cincinnati was a half days' drive from Detroit (compared to Newark's 12-hour trip) and I was happy to make the trip, especially if there was some longevity and success to the event. Twenty-four years later, I think that question has long been answered.

Nonetheless, we all STARTED pretty much in Newark. My greatest successes as a dealer were in Newark back when people were listening mostly to cassettes and the larger collections were on reel-to-reel tapes. The highlights of those events have always been seeing people who have supported my efforts throughout the year.

I remember the phone conversation Joe Webb and I had when Collector's Corner was eventually sold to Ron and Linda Downey of "World of Yesterday" publishing fame. Their old-time radio publication, "The Golden Years of Radio & TV," did not survive for very long, how-



*Collector's Corner started out 5 1/2" x 8 1/2"*



*Not sure when it changed to the 8 1/2" x 11"*

ever, Bob Burchett started "Old Time Radio Digest," and both Joe and I contributed a word or two, and I kept showing up at the Cincinnati and Newark conventions as a dealer.

There are always significant costs associated with being a dealer at a convention and we always hope that at least some of the costs associated with being a dealer are offset by on-site sales. This was never a problem in the earlier years. In fact, at times we would do so well, we flew out to Los Angeles the following month for the SPERDVAC convention.

Some years, however, attendance was down. We never knew whether or not we were attending "the last" convention. Most of the conventions for me by then had become public relations events, but I also had a successful broadcast engineering contract business which covered old-time radio if necessary. I felt obliged to con-

tinue the dealer presence as well, although many dealers who were there in the early days had disappeared: People like Gary Dudash of "AM Treasures", Andy Blatt of "Vintage Broadcasts," Rudy Schwartz of "Burlington Audio", and Don Aston "Aston's Adventures / Avpro" no longer attend these conventions.

The economy in general, put a strain on my business and my ability to attend these events at all. The most difficult part for a dealer who is not within short driving distance of a convention is the cost of transportation. Having the right selection and quantity of products is the only way to have any success, however, the cost of transporting by U.P.S. ground (for example) 2,000 CD's and other products was my single largest cost. So how could I afford to offer those CDs at the 2010 Cincinnati convention for \$1 each? Simply because I didn't have that cost.

At the last couple conventions, I was pleased to have one of the largest selections of titles on regular CDs (you don't need a computer to play them), however, there is cost associated with that selection. When the "professional" side of a business -- shall we say -- isn't doing as well -- it takes creativity in order to even make it to a convention in any form. Nonetheless, I associate these events with some of my best friends, and the programs themselves (and what they meant to my life). If there's anyway I can put a trip together, I do it. Old-time radio at one point changed my life for the better. I will always do what I can to improve, promote and preserve the shows and what they have meant to so many.

The reason I attend these conventions is NOT to Make Money As a Dealer. Those days are long gone. The reason I'll show up is because there are 20 years of Suspense, and a lot of years of Jack Benny, Gunsmoke, any many other detectives, comedies and mysteries literally flowing in my veins. Apparently, there are a

bunch of people out there who are feeling the same way who represent my "other" excuse for attending these conventions.

A "niche" hobby? Yup.

Many eccentric people involved? Absolutely. Make a lotta money with a mail-order OTR business? Not any more (that was never the prime motivation in the first place).

But to NOT support efforts of events led by people like Bob Burchett and Jay Hickerson?

It ain't happenin' in this lifetime with OTR flowing in the veins.

I can't guarantee I'll never miss a convention, nor that my selection will be as large every year, but if I can, I'll be there.

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## Internet Archive & OTR

by: Ethan Nobles 1 May 2010  
87 views 2 Comments

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After receiving a very positive response to an article here at [First Arkansas News](#) about [Lum and Abner](#), it is apparent there are still a good number of old time radio (OTR) fans out there and more than a few of them have taken to the Internet to talk about — and study up on — those broadcasts that dominated popular entertainment before the advent of television.

Mike Davis, a Springdale resident and administrator with the [Old Time Radio](#) section of the [Internet Archive](#), said he hopes a lot of those fans make their way over to his favorite corner of the Web. Why? He said they'll find somewhere between 30,000 and 50,000 OTR programs available in MP3 format available to listen to on the site or download.

"The problem is, not a lot of people know about it," Davis said of the OTR section, adding that he has an interest in seeing that people learn of the resource. "Actually, I kind of started it."

Back in 2000 and 2001, Davis, other members of the [Lum and Abner Yahoo! group](#) and other fans of the program had a large collection of episodes in MP3 format. The collection

spanned 12 compact discs and fans would share them by mailing them here and there and generally doing what they could to make them available.

A major problem, Davis said, was that there were very few places on the Internet where people could permanently store such collections and make them available to the public. The Internet Archive, however, was built for archiving such material.



*Lum and Abner*

Eventually, Davis said Internet Archive representatives decided to permit the *Lum and Abner* collection.

"*Lum and Abner* was the first collection there," he said, adding that other classic radio programs were soon made available through the Internet Archive. "It just grew from there."

Davis said a fan of *The Great Gildersleeve* program uploaded his collection next, X Minus 1 came along soon after that and a host of shows soon followed. And we're not talking about small collections, either — he said there are about 1,600 *Lum and Abner* episodes available, around 500 episodes of *The Great Gildersleeve* and entire collections of some series.

Today, Davis said the Internet Archive is the pre-



Walter Tetley, Harold Perry, Mary Lee Robb

ferred destination of OTR fans around the world who want to download programs or listen to them through a built in player on the site. For those who want to share programs to people visiting their sites, they can grab the HTML code for the player from the Internet Archive and embed it on their sites.

Davis was quick to point out that downloading MP3s from the Internet Archive is vastly different from downloading illegal music through the Internet. The material stored at the Internet Archive is no longer under copyright, whereas the controversial files available for download through other sites is copyrighted.

He said the Internet Archive is home to everything from old television programs to about 2,000 Grateful Dead concerts and more than a few unsigned bands and performers. That material, Davis said, is either public domain or protected under a Creative Commons license — which does allow individuals to use copyrighted material with specific limitations — as per site requirements.

In the case of the OTR programs on the site, Davis said the original owners of the shows chose not to renew the copyrights on them. By the time the option to renew those copyrights came around, television had changed the

entertainment industry and most people who owned the rights to OTR programs decided there was no profit in keeping those shows out of the public domain.

Of course, there are exceptions to that rule. At one point in time, episodes of *The Shadow* were available for download at the Internet archive. As soon as it was discovered those shows were still copyrighted, however, they were removed, Davis said.

He pointed out that the OTR section exists for the convenience of fans wanting to listen to episodes of their favorite programs and researchers. Most serious fans don't like MP3s, Davis said, explaining they want either the original, analog media used to record the programs or high-quality Waveform Audio File Format (WAV) files — digital recordings, often of the original masters.

MP3s are, certainly, more compact than WAV files. Perhaps three or four 30-minute shows can be stored on a compact disc in WAV format while hundreds can be stored on that disc in MP3 format. However, MP3s are “lossy” — those small file sizes come at the expense of some fidelity. WAV files are lossless in terms of fidelity.

Most MP3 files in the collection are stored at the data transfer rate 32 kilobits per second (kbps) rather than the now standard 128 kbps. Davis said that's because most OTR MP3 collections were created when dial-up modems were standard — the emphasis was on smaller files because download rates were so slow.

Now that broadband Internet connections are the norm, file sizes aren't as much of a concern and larger, better-sounding files are becoming more common at the Internet Archive. One group

that has made a high-quality set of *Lum and Abner*



**THOUSANDS OF RADIO SHOWS NOW WITHIN REACH!**  
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shows available through the Archive is the [Pine Ridge Project](#) — a group that mastered its collection at 128 kbps.

Davis said the MP3 files for most collections sound good even at 32 kbps. One problem combated by the OTR section has to do with labeling — errors can be made when people covert a show to MP3 format and that could result in people downloading some episodes other than the ones they want to hear.

Fortunately, Davis said collectors and fans are generally a thorough bunch. [The Old Time Radio Researchers Group](#) (OTRR), for example, has uploaded over 70 series and you can find those collections by running a search for OTRR in the OTR Section at the Internet Archive. The OTTR is made up of a core of over 600 OTR fans and a distribution network of over 1,000 people, said OTRR Founder Jim Beshires.

So why do people like Davis and the OTRR members spend so much time labeling, archiving and restoring radio programs? Davis said it's certainly not for the money in that most people involved in the hobby of preserving those files do it on a voluntary basis. As far as he's concerned, working with the Internet Archive in preserving shows is a great way to make sure a vital part of our entertainment history is kept in tact.

Also, Davis said focusing on *Lum and Abner* is his way of preserving a part of Arkansas' past.

"There are so many people in Arkansas that don't know who they were," Davis said. "That's a shame. I think they were one of the greatest comedy pairs in history."

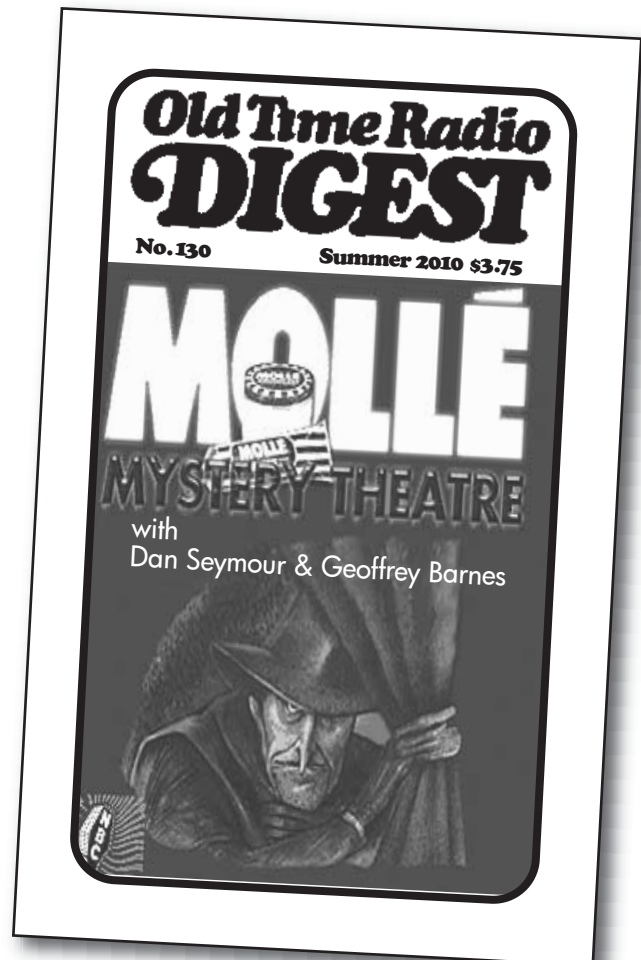
***For more information, head on over to the [OTR section at the Internet Archive](#) and run a search or two.***

About Ethan:

***Benton resident. Former journalist. Recovering attorney.***

***Email = [Ethan@FirstArkansasNews.net](mailto:Ethan@FirstArkansasNews.net).*** ■

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## **OTRR ACQUIRES NEW EPISODES & UPGRADED SOUND ENCODES FOR MAR/APR**

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The following is a list of newly acquired series/episodes. They may either be new to mp3 or better encodes. These were acquired by the Group during the months of March and April 2010. They were purchased by donations from members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers. If you have cassettes that you would like to donate, please e-mail

[beshiresjim@yahoo.com](mailto:beshiresjim@yahoo.com).

For reel-to-reels, contact [david0@centurytel.net](mailto:david0@centurytel.net) and for transcription disks

[tony\\_senior@yahoo.com](mailto:tony_senior@yahoo.com).

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### **Arthur Smith And His Crackerjacks**

48-09-19 First Song - I Hear You Talking.mp3

48-09-20 First Song - Columbus Stockade Blues.mp3

4-04-15 First Song -A Sinner's Prayer.mp3

49-04-18 First Song -Someone.mp3

### **Arthur Smith's Corner Store**

50-xx-xx First Song -I'll Sail My Ship Alone.mp3

50-xx-xx First Song -Peter Cottontail.mp3

52-11-10 First Song -I Gotta Hurry, Hurry, Hurry.mp3

52-11-11 First Song -Talking To My Mule.mp3

52-11-13 First Song -Til The End Of The World.mp3

52-11-14 First Song -Are You Seeing Me.mp3

52-11-17 First Song -The Angels Are Lighting Gods' Candles.mp3

52-11-18 First Song -I'm Saving My Coupons.mp3

52-11-19 First Song -A Mighty Pretty Waltz.mp3

53-11-20 First Song -If It Ain't One Thing.mp3

53-11-24 First Song -Long Gone.mp3

53-11-26 First Song -The Love Bug Itch.mp3

### **Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater**

xx-xx-xx The Cobra In The Kindergarten.mp3

### **Checkerboard Time**

3x-xx-xx (180) First Song -Somebody Stole My Gal.mp3

3x-xx-xx (181) First Song -Telling It To The Daises.mp3

3x-xx-xx (182) First Song -She Wore A Yellow Ribbon.mp3

3x-xx-xx (183) First Song -Ragtime Cowboy Joe.mp3

3x-xx-xx (184) First Song -Banjo On My Knee.mp3

3x-xx-xx (185) First Song -Runaway Train.mp3

3x-xx-xx (190) First Song -Great-grandad.mp3

3x-xx-xx (191) First Song -Mary Lou.mp3

3x-xx-xx (210) First Song -Riding Down The Trail.mp3

3x-xx-xx (211) First Song -Darby's Rime.mp3

3x-xx-xx (212) First Song -The Green Grass Grew All Around.mp3

3x-xx-xx (213) First Song -Camptown Races.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -A Red Schoolhouse.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -Buffalo Gal.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -Deglendy Burke.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -Hold On Little Doggies.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -I Left My Gal In The Mountians.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -Keep On Smiling.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -Side By Side.mp3

3x-xx-xx First Song -Those Cumberland Mountains.mp3

### **Excursions In Science**

xx-xx-xx (148) Simple Experiments For The Home.mp3

### **The Hedda Hopper Show**

50-12-31 Guest -Jean Hersholt.mp3

51-01-07 Guest -Richard Conte.mp3

51-01-14 Guest -Dean Jagger.mp3



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51-01-23 Guest -Fernando Lamas.mp3  
51-03-18 Guest -Carroll Naish.mp3  
51-03-25 Guest -Ethel Barrymore.mp3  
**Holliday Wilde**  
xx-xx-xx Mr Fortune.mp3  
**I Confess**  
52-10-17 Teenage Runaway.mp3  
**Log Of The Black Parrot**  
50-05-06 Audition.mp3  
**Lux Radio Theater**  
52-12-18 (807) The African Queen.mp3  
**The Queen's Men**  
54-xx-xx The Rustlers.mp3  
**Results, Inc**  
45-01-01 New Years.mp3  
**Sammy Kaye -Swing And Sway**  
xx-xx-xx First Song -Embrasable You (AFRS).mp3  
xx-xx-xx First Song -I Still Care (AFRS).mp3  
**Silent Men**  
52-03-19 (22) Confess Or Die.mp3  
52-03-26 (23) Murder In Vienna.mp3  
**Speed Gibson**  
37-01-02 (1) The Octopus Gang Active.mp3  
37-01-09 (2) Speed Is Inducted into Secret Police.mp3  
37-01-16 (3) Heading for Hong Kong.mp3  
37-01-23 (4) A Shooting Attempt.mp3  
**The Old Corral**  
41-xx-xx (27) First Song -Shiloh Ranch.mp3  
41-xx-xx (28) First Song -When Payday Rolls Around.mp3  
41-xx-xx (33) First Song -Out West To Texas.mp3  
41-xx-xx (34) First Song -My Dear Old Arizona Home.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (100) First Song -Yodel Your Troubles Away.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (103) First Song -Way Out There.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (104) First Song -Go Long Mule.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (69) First Song -Renfroe Valley

Trail.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (70) First Song -Ride Ride Ride.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (79) First Song -Buckaroo Sandman.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (80) First Song -Wagon Train.mp3  
xx-xx-xx (99) First Song -Echoes From The Hills.mp3  
W. C. Fields Bits  
xx-xx-xx.mp3

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## **OTRR CLUBHOUSE RAMBLINGS**

by Jim Besires

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A number of our members have requested a way to keep up with all the goings on in the OTRR, since we have several websites and a number of Yahoo sites. Hence – the Clubhouse Ramblings – which will be a mumbled jumble of info on our group.

The certified series teams are hard at work in the back room with a number of series in the works. The most anticipated is 'Suspense', the basis of which was put together by Dr. Joe. This was also the last series worked on by Ed. S, before health issues forced him to give up old time radio. Good Health Ed! David O. took over the series and is whipping it into shape. Dr. Joe is still running across better sounding encodes and also picking up some AFRS programs.

Two very unusual series – 'Pinto Pete In Arizona', and 'Pinto Pete and His Ranch Boys', are almost ready to go to Andrew S. for final vetting. Information on these series was really hard to come by. So we would really appreciate any information that you might run across.

There have been some rumors that 'Lux' might be the next biggie tackled by the group, but we'll have to wait and see. Dr. Joe is working on another revision of 'Casey, Crime Photographer', and I hear some rumblings that Gunsmoke v5 might see the light of day later

this year. I know that our guy working on it has found some better encodes, put music bridges back in and restored more commercials. Everyone said that v04 was the best, so v05 should blow everyone out of the water. Stay tuned for more details.

Ron S. has been working on 'Roy Rogers' for some time now, and has found a source for many more episode titles, and perhaps some previously unavailable episodes. I personally am look forward to that series being released!

The amount of material available from the OTRR Library continues to increase, last reports showed over 75,000 episodes available for FREE downloads, and our librarians still have several 10's of thousands to upload.

Borrowers now stand at 1659 and we are still adding several each day. In June those borrowers paid over 6,000 visits and downloaded 223 gigs of programs. That brings the total for this year to 2121 gigs of programs downloaded and all provided free by the members of the OTRR.

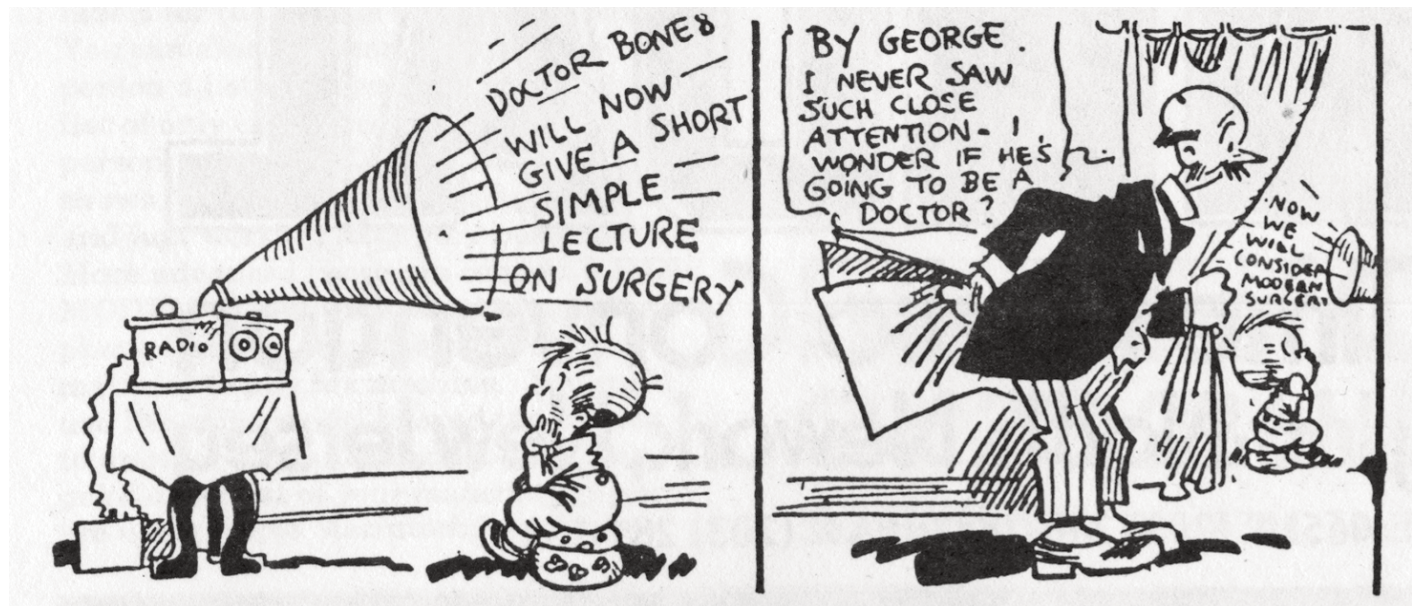
While things are kinda slow with the main OTRR site right now, that may be about to change!

Drum rolls, please - OTRR has hired its first

paid staff member!! ( Well, second, if you count Ryan E. the editor emeritus of 'The Old Radio Times'. His salary was .25 cents per year and all the beer he could drink at the Cincy con). If you could see the floor in my office, you would understand the need. I currently have about 1,000 old time radio magazines that need to be scanned in and made available to the public via the Archival Library, but there is no free time. So we have hired a college student to begin to clear the back log. In addition, I have at least that many more already scanned in and ready to upload, but Comcast puts a limit on me – it's 250 gigs a month, and you would think that would be enough, but you don't know me.

Our good member Al G. continues to find magazines from the Golden Age of Radio, and he scans them in and sends me the pdf files to upload.

We currently have slightly over 1,100 magz in the Archival Library. Our Librarian there, Terry C. does a yeoman's job of indexing each of them. So if you're researching a particular series or star, you can check the index to see what info is available, without having to look at all of them.





OTRRpedia has been in the doldrums lately since we lost our webmaster there. We are still looking for someone with great computer, programming and all around skills to fill that job. However, some information is still being entered and even more when the members of Team OTRRpedia are running at full blast. Dave W, Chris W, Brian A, and Rich M answered the call for volunteers to do some special work there. I've already had a training session with Rich M, and am looking forward to training the others.

As for funds to run the Clubhouse, I see the treasurer counting coins on the kitchen table. Looks to me like we've received \$3593.00 in donations and spent \$2040.85 in acquiring new materials this year. While OTRR receives much material in the form of reel-to-reels, cassettes, Audio CD, and mp3, we are buying quite a lot of transcription disks. I think the last purchase totaled about 40 disks of previously unavailable or first generation episodes. Thanks to Tony J. for the fine job he does of keeping our finances straight!

According to the records, we have 60 people who each contribute \$5.00 per month to fund the group, and several other people who make regular donations.

Thanks to our supporters!

Our publication- 'The Old Radio Times', continues to enjoy increased readership, even though we purged about 250 bad e-mail addresses from the database. Bob B., our editor, does an excellent job of attracting the top notch authors in the old time radio field, and many of our members are stepping up to the plate and contributing articles.

So over all the OTRR is doing pretty good. Of course we have some problems like most organizations, we have put in place measures to correct those problems.

Keep up the good work, everyone!

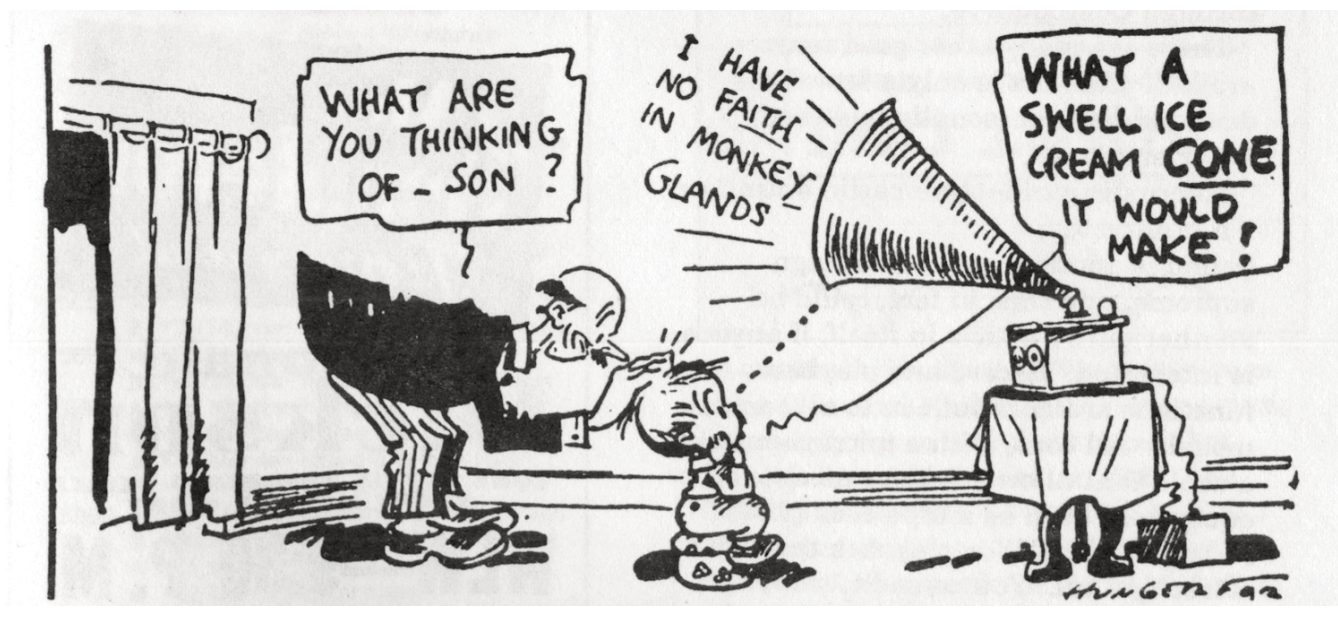
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## A little rehearsal time

by Jim Cox

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The current issue of Time devotes a whole page to "the end of an era" as it marks the passage of *As the World Turns* into oblivion, set to occur Sept. 17 after 13,858 installments, all of them new (no reruns). It's the last of P&G's daytime dramas, the company that produced and/or sponsored more hours than anybody in the business. After 54 years since its

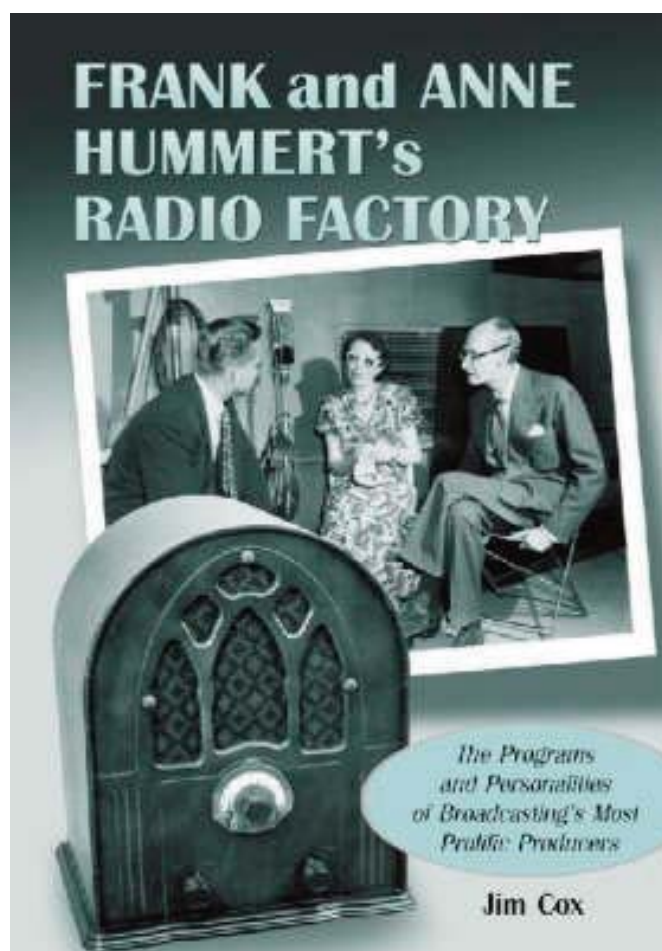


debut as the first half-hour serial on April 2, 1956 (later expanded to an hour), ATWT set a lot of precedents, won a lot of awards, and weathered many trials and tribulations. This is a milestone about to be marked in the lineage of soap operas and one wonders, with the durable Guiding Light having succumbed not long ago, is the form now marking time until its extinction?

Cost is everything in the business today. Time notes that ATWT applied all sorts of expense-saving measures like using fewer actors, shooting outdoor scenes to avoid building costly sets, and speeding production to the point that at least some or all rehearsing on the set was omitted entirely with scenes simply blocked and filmed. As I detailed in my 2006 release "The Daytime Serials of Television, 1946-1960" (<http://www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-2429-0>), many pages focused on the pivotal ATWT as well as contemporary narratives, painstaking effort was given to rehearsals every day. This included numerous hours of literal walking through every scene and saying every line at least once, usually twice or three times before airing live or taping.

When I read the Time piece, I thought back to Radioland and how they handled rehearsals for daily washboard weepers. Some producers, hired by advertising agencies, required what almost seems like inordinate time for practice with peers. Florence Freeman, who played Wendy Warren, told me she had to be in place at the studio every morning at 10:30 a.m. for the 12 noon broadcast of Wendy Warren and the News. By the time it was over, she'd been at CBS almost two hours for a 15-minute broadcast. Yet her commitment of 90 minutes before going on the air was typical of shows produced by virtually anybody except those under the flag of Air Features, Inc., owned by the medium's most prolific producers, Frank and Anne Hummert.

Always cutting corners to save a few bucks, the Hummerts could get blood out of a turnip. Like a mother hen Anne clucked over as many as a dozen quarter-hour drainboard dramas airing at any given time in the heyday of the industry. And to keep expenses down, even though they paid actors, musicians, announcers and directors the least minimal wages allowed by AFRA regulations, one of their sure-fire methods was to cut practice to the bone.



Vivian Smolen, who for 14 years was the beleaguered Our Gal Sunday, an Air Features production, told me in the 1950s that she and her colleagues assembled at 11:45 a.m. for their daily 12:45 p.m. broadcast, a half-hour less than Wendy Warren rehearsed and presumably most other non-Hummert vehicles required. And George Ansbro, the illustrious announcer of the



Hummerts' enduring Young Widder Brown at 4:45 p.m., declared that he didn't have to be present until 4 p.m., just 45 minutes ahead of the live broadcast! Hummert announcers, who usually remained in the fold for decades, may have done their jobs so long they were given special dispensation (directive?) not to show up for work as early as the rest of the cast. (Translation: the Hummerts saved 15 minutes of time they'd be paying George if he was at work!)

Of course, spending less time in rehearsals could be a meal ticket for casts, too: if they could get out of one studio in an hour or 75 minutes as opposed to nearly two hours, they could often walk to another studio (or catch a cab to another network) and perform in several other dramas on the same day. In doing so they were, like the Hummerts, lining their own pockets, albeit at poverty levels (if all their work was for Air Features). Staats Cotsworth, who was journalist David Farrell on Air Features' Front Page Farrell, revealed to a Newsweek reporter in 1948 that he was working a half-dozen shows several days a week. And Anne Elstner, in the namesake role of Air Features' Stella Dallas, once claimed she was appearing on as many as 12 shows in one day! (If so, it must have been the all-time record for a non-news series.)

Julie Stevens, who was the memorable Helen Trent forever, expressed disappointment when she saw the figure on her initial contract as she was to be the heroine. But the Air Features attorney who gave it to her to sign (the Hummerts seldom showed up for such trivial ceremonies), on seeing her crestfallen face, explained: "Don't worry. You'll be taken care of. You'll be used on plenty of other Air Features shows, and you'll see your income rise to a respectable sum." Ms. Stevens noted years later, "It happened just the way he said it would." ■

**Editor's note:** This is a photo of the the record found at the Wisconsin Historical Society. It arrived after I had already finished the article, so I wasn't able to include it with the article. Thought it might be of interest.



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