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SUPERMAN **Way Ahead of His Time**

by Henry L. Morse



Introduction

The main focus of this article is to discuss an aspect of Superman that is not as well-known as the other information that is circulating about the man of steel. As early as 1945 and 1946 Superman spoke out against ethnic, racial, religious discrimination practiced during the period of time leading up to 1946. He was far ahead of his time because there was no federal civil rights legislation passed until 1957 and again in 1964. Yes, there were other efforts before these two major federal laws passed, but treatment of them is beyond the scope and intent of this writing. This writing is about the role of Superman in helping to dismantle the Ku Klux Klan.

Superman 101

In the beginning, the early 1930s, there was darkness upon America in the form of the great depression. There was a great need for a superhero to lead us out of the darkness. There

was among the people two teenage boys, what we would call nerds today, dedicated to the heroes of Science fiction and adventure. These two high school students were Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. Jerry fancied himself a writer and Joe an illustrator.

During the 1930s Jerry and Joe honed the persona of the character that would ultimately become the man of steel. Superman made his debut in the first issue of Action Comics in June 1938. Although Superman appeared in many entertainment mediums; comics, cartoons, movie serials, and television, this writing is mainly about Superman on Radio starting in 1940. He did help in the war effort in the pages of the comics, but not on radio.

There is much, much more information available on the Superman home page that includes the story of the creation of Superman and his journey from the dying planet of Krypton to fight

for truth, justice, and the American way.

Superman in WW2

On Radio, Superman fought crime, mad scientists, and even helped in WW2. But there was a problem with Superman joining any branch of the armed forces. Superman was so powerful that he could have won the war single handedly. Instead the writers conjured up a story that Clark had failed the eye exam and was judged 4F. Those of us who follow Superman closely know that because of his x-ray vision he, appearing as Clark Kent, mistakenly read the eye chart in the next office causing his ineligibility to serve. Thus Superman, in his guise as Clark Kent, served from Metropolis often being called upon for special missions to aid the war effort. His wartime exploits were in in the comics.

In 1946 the producers decided to look beyond his traditional role as a crime fighter and explore new options for storylines. Recalling Superman's anti-discrimination message on Christmas day in 1945, they decided to explore racism and discrimination as Superman's next radio opponent. There was a great deal of soul searching because the Superman radio show was entertainment and they had to find a way to give Superman a new task without alienating both children and their parents. The producers sought advice from a number of prominent organizations like the Anti-Defamation League and the Big Brothers. The show had to have the kind of punch and cliff hangers that would have listeners come back day after day and yet deliver a clear message against racism and discrimination of any kind.

1945 Superman Makes a Statement

Superman's first shot across the bow of intolerance was fired on Christmas day in 1945 when Bud Collyer, speaking in the voice of Superman delivered the following admonition at the begin-



Bud Collyer

ning of that days Superman adventure:
"Hello everyone, this is Superman bringing you best wishes for a very merry Christmas from Lois Lane, Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, and myself. After so many years of halfheartedly celebrating this wonderful holiday, while the world was at war and, while the many men and women we knew and loved were scattered all over the globe; Christmas today is very extra special because many of our friends are back home to celebrate Christmas with us, and because peace on earth and good will toward men is more than just a beautiful phrase. On this Christmas day let us all do everything we can to see that this remains a lasting peace on earth through the everyday practice of good will toward men. You see that wars grow out of misunderstanding, hate, and intolerance. All things



that were preached against by the prince of peace whose nativity we celebrate today. Now if we try to understand our fellow men and if we avoid hate, and banish intolerance; we could do away with the cause for war, and this scourge would forever disappear from the face of the earth. Try to remember always Abraham Lincoln said "all men are created equal". Regardless of race, creed, or color we are all humans entitled to the same respect. Here in America all of us; black, white, catholic, protestant, and Jew are all Americans. We must be able to live together peaceably at home, if we are to live in peace with the rest of the world. Let's see that forever thereafter that there is peace and good will toward men. A Merry Christmas to you all."

Hate Mongers Organization Storyline

The first storyline to fight discrimination was Hate Mongers Organization which aired from April 16, 1946 to May 20, 1946.

Hate Mongers Organization is a story of a group of Nazi-like terrorists run by religious big-

ots, led by a man called Frank Hill. The storyline opens with a group of arsonists that start a fire in a drugstore that ultimately consumes a whole city block. The organization is called the Guardians of America, and consists of a group of teenage thugs. In this story their mission is to prevent the Metropolis Interfaith Council from building a community center, called Unity House, which will be open to all boys and girls regardless of race, creed, or color. These so called guardians perpetrated all sorts of terroristic acts to prevent that, including invasion of a Jewish temple and the stabbing of a rabbi.

Clark Kent explains to Jimmy Olsen that the real mission of the Guardians is to stir up hatred among the protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Clark further relates that the Guardian strategy is similar to that of Adolf Hitler, who fomented chaos among groups, stepped in to pick up the pieces, and assumed leadership in his quest for a thousand year Reich.

Jimmy Olsen infiltrates the Guardians and ultimately meets Frank Hill in his luxurious penthouse headquarters. He learns that the backer of Unity House is a secret supporter of the Guardians. Jimmy is ultimately exposed as a mole, is captured, and thrown into the river. Superman comes to Jimmy's rescue saving him from certain death. Superman rushes to Guardian headquarters where he finds documents that show Frank Hill, the leader, is a former Nazi spy with designs of turning America into Fascist dictatorship. In the end that Guardian membership was furious about having been duped.

Superman said *"Remember this as long as you live: Whenever you meet up with anyone who is trying to cause trouble between people – anyone who tries to tell you that a man can't be a good citizen because of his religious beliefs –*



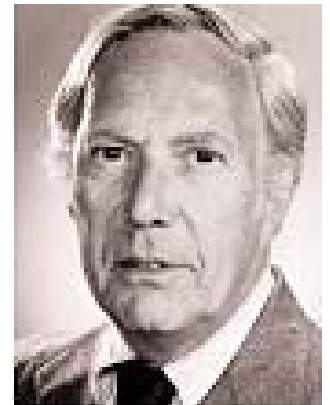
Joan Alexander
as Loin Lane



Jackie Kelk
as Jimmy Olsen



Jackson Beck
Announcer & Characters



Mason Adams
Misc Characters

you can be sure that the troublemaker is a rotten citizen himself and a rotten human being. Don't ever forget that."

Superman producers were delighted The Hate Mongers Organization broadcast significantly raised The Adventures of Superman in the ratings of children's radio programs. Numerous organizations such as the National Conference of Christians and Jews encouraged other broadcasters to follow Superman's lead.

Stetson Kennedy Infiltrates the Ku Klux Klan

Kennedy, not of the JFK Kennedys, was an author and activist for human rights causes, and was especially interested in the KKK. The KKK was, and still is, an extremely racist organization with biases against blacks, Jews, and Catholics. The KKK grew out of southern patrols that mainly focused on runaway slaves, capturing them, usually administering beatings and then returning fugitive slaves to their owners for a bounty. This first era of the KKK gradually diminished after the Civil War.

The reawakened KKK, now in its second era, became stronger in the 1920s. They increased in membership using the film Birth of a Nation as a recruiting tool. The KKK administered floggings, tar and feathering, and even lynched members of those groups they hated, which included blacks Catholics, Jews, and just about

anyone non-white. Lynching became so prevalent that congress considered a federal anti-lynching law on numerous occasions with such efforts always ending in failure. In 2005, after 105 years failing to pass anti-lynching legislation, the US Senate passed a resolution apologizing to all those lynched and their decedents. Some 4,000 were lynched between the late 1800s and 1950. The advent of WW2 saw a decline of KKK membership.

After WWII there was an effort to reawaken interest in Klan membership led Samuel Green in Atlanta, GA., thus beginning the third era of the KKK. Local citizens dressed in white robes and pointed, hooded masks terrorized all those they despised. Leadership often included prominent politicians, policemen, and other usually decent citizens. The individual members usually consisted of disaffected whites. Together they burned crosses on the lawns, bombed, set fires, administered beatings, and even lynching to elicit terror among the hated. In addition to just plain hatred and thoughts of white supremacy, the KKK fired up its members by pointing out that the blacks had taken all the good jobs during the WW2, while whites were fighting fascism – a bit ironic considering that blacks were part of the US armed forces.

Secrecy was the key to the success of the



KKK. They met in secret, dressed in robes and masks to conceal their true identity, have special names, and rituals.

Stetson Kennedy, with an accomplice whose true name is lost to history, decided to infiltrate the KKK and expose its inner secrets. When he, who had taken the alias John Perkins, was sworn in and was asked three questions:

1. Do you hate blacks?
2. Do you hate N-Words
3. Do you have ten dollars?

He was initiated into the KKK with a ceremony at the top of Stone Mountain, which is now a popular tourist attraction.

The KKK had all sorts of secrets designed to impress the membership as belonging to a seri-

ous, well run, organization. This invisible empire had a secret handshake – a left handed clasp of hands with a fish wiggle – sounds absurd doesn't it! Another was if one wanted to know whether a person was a Klansman or not he would ask, "Does Mr. ayak live near here— translates as "are you a Klansman". The proper response was "no but a Mr. akai does"— translates as "a Klansman am I". Klansmen had distinct titles depending on rank. The national head called the Grand Wizard. The Kludd was the Chaplin. Do you wonder why an organization dedicated to hatred and violence would need a Chaplin. The guard standing outside of a secret meeting was called the Klexter. Their secret password was Kigy, meaning "Klansman, I greet you". They even developed sort of a language not dissimilar to what we called Pig Latin during the time I was growing up. Sound familiar! In the KKK one would change the first letter of any word to "KL", for example, the word conversation would be "Klonversation". They actually called their sacred book the Kloran.

Once a member he went about to learn their secrets with an earnest desire to expose their innermost secrets to the world and hold them up to ridicule. Stetson contacted the producers of Superman. He, along with the other infiltrator passed KKK secrets to the writers of Superman. Legend has it that writers included many of these secrets, signs, symbols, and other details in the script of the Clan of the Fiery Cross. Although the information they provided influenced the story, no actual KKK secrets were part of the Superman scripts. The writers used this information to color the story and help Superman cause ridicule and scorn of the KKK

Synopsis of the Clan of the Fiery Cross

This adventure was sponsored by Kellogg's Pep and aired on the Mutual Network in 16



episodes beginning June 16, 1946. This synopsis is more detailed to highlight the writer's efforts to call attention to ridicule and loathing intended.

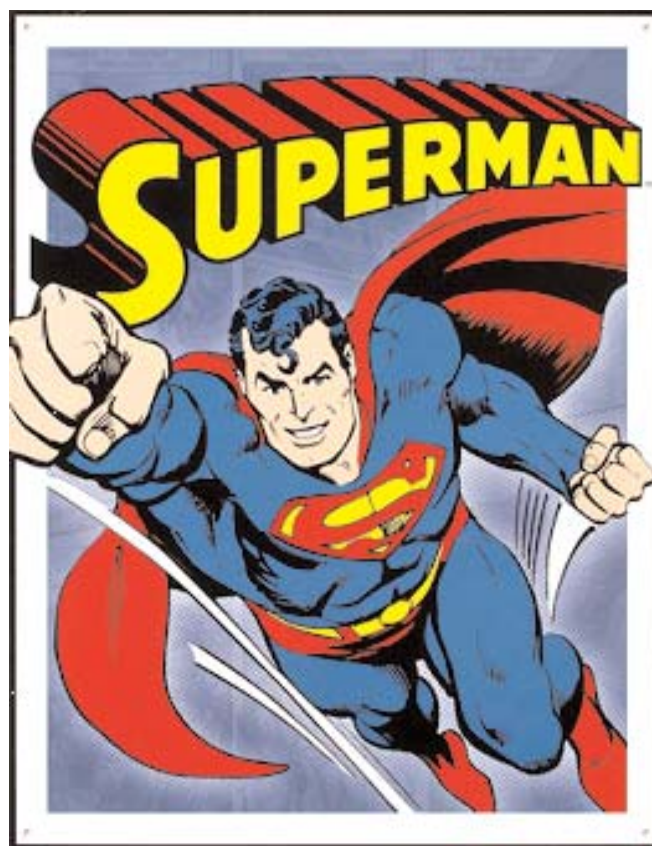
The story begins as Jimmy Olsen managing the Unity House baseball team has earned a chance at the city of Metropolis baseball championship. As you will recall, Unity House is the same multicultural recreation center mentioned in the Hate Mongers story mentioned above. Jimmy has just replaced his number one pitcher, Chuck Riggs, with an Asian boy, Tommy Lee, who has recently moved into the neighborhood. There is immediate bad blood between Chuck and Tommy that erupts when Tommy accidentally beans Chuck at batting practice. Chuck's Uncle Matt is furious and convinces Chuck that the beaming was not only accidental but meant to kill him. Matt invites Chuck to a meeting of true Americans to be held at a secret location that evening. When they arrive Chuck sees a lot of men dressed in sheets and hoods gathered around a burning cross. Chuck is told that this is a gathering of the Clan of the Fiery Cross

dedicated to making America a country with just one race. Matt reveals himself to be the Grand Scorpion, the leader, of this band of men. The men are told to place their hand over their hearts with two fingers pointed toward the burning cross. The members repeat a decidedly undemocratic oath to the Clan and are whipped into racially motivated frenzy by Matt's recounting of the incident between Chuck and the Asian boy Tommy calling for action against Tommy and his family. A cross was burned at the Lee home that very evening.

At the playoff game the next day there is an attempt on Tommy's life with a thrown bat and with a bomb under Tommy's bicycle – both foiled by Superman who doesn't even have time to shed his business attire just simply streaking in a blur. Matt incensed at the failure of his two plots decides that a group of men he calls the action committee will go to the Lee home that evening and kidnap Tommy. Tommy's father tries to prevent this but is beaten into unconsciousness by the mob. Tommy is then tossed into the back of a truck

and taken to a secret location where he is to be tarred and feathered. When Matt's men express fear that Tommy might be killed in the process, Matt says he does not care. While this is happening Chuck had followed the truck to the Lees home and saw Tommy taken away. Chuck is now remorseful about his feelings toward Tommy and attempts to contact Clark to tell him what has happened. Tommy, after reaching the secret location escapes and jumps into the river breaking his arm in the process.

Chuck, not identifying himself, finally reaches Clark who as Superman immediately, searches, finds Tommy, and takes him to the hospital. Clark reveals all this to Perry White, Editor of the Daily Planet, who establishes a reward of \$1000 for anyone who will reveal any members of the Clan. For this, Perry gets a burning cross on his front lawn. Perry, Jimmy, and Clark discuss the bigoted meaning of the burning cross. The Clan makes a visit to Perry's home and not finding him there beat up his housekeeper leaving the message that Perry should leave the Clan alone or else. Perry then ups the reward to \$5000. Later, while Perry and Jimmy are driving to Perry's home they are forced off the road, knocked unconscious, and wake up in a dark cave, bound and under guard by multiple Clansmen. A short while later Jimmy and Perry are taken before the Matt, the Grand Scorpion, in a clearing illuminated by a burning cross. In a serious confrontation Matt demands that Perry call off his campaign against the Clan. Matt spews venom as he rants on about the Lee family to which Perry argues have every right to be in America. Perry further argues, but to no avail, that America was built by immigrants of many races, colors, and creeds and that America has just fought a bitter war to preserve that right for all. Jimmy argues that the original Americans, the Indians,



did not have white skin nor did the individual tribes worship in the same manner. Perry says he will root out the Clan bigots and bring them to justice. Matt is further infuriated and tells the Clansmen to heat up the tar and prepare the feathers. When a Clansman reminds him that tarring and feathering could result in death, Matt says he does not care. It turns out that the Clansmen did not properly secure the barrels of tar and they broke loose spilling their contents into the nearby river. A scuffle ensues and Perry manages to pull off Matt's hood exposing his identity as Matt Griggs, a local contractor. Matt returns to town to secure another barrel, while Perry and Jim are returned to the cave.

Meanwhile Clark is still unable to find Perry and Jimmy and publishes an early edition of the paper with an open letter to the boy who called him; the boy we now know is Chuck Riggs, with a personal appeal to contact Clark. Chuck is

having breakfast with his mother who is now reading this early edition. She reads the letter and laments about a boy who is so cowardly that he will not contact Clark. She further questions how any boy would not act to save his country from the likes of the Clan of the Fiery Cross comparing, them to the Nazis. Matt returns to the secret location where they are holding Perry and Jimmy and an argument ensues with the action committee saying that Perry and Jimmy cannot be allowed to live as they will surely expose the identity of the Clan leadership and its members. Matt reminds them of their sacred pledge to rid America of all those who are not white or get in the way of their sacred mission.

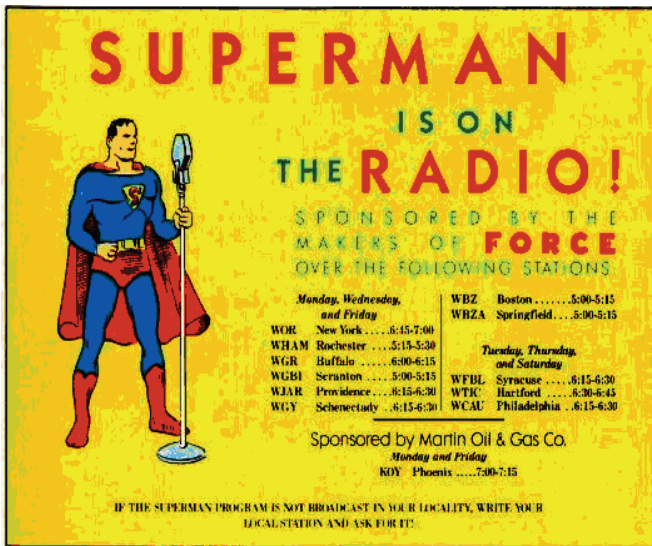
With no response to his open letter, Clark hatches a plan with Beanie Martin, Planet copy boy, to pose as a sports reporter and interview all the boys on the Unity House team at the game that afternoon. Clark knows he can identify Chuck by his voice and remains out of sight during the interviews. However, since Chuck is no longer on the team his voice is not recognized. Clark arranges to meet Chuck and immediately identifies him as the mystery caller by his voice. Chuck admits making the call but is afraid to speak out as the Clan is always watching. Clark allays his fears by telling him the Superman will protect him. Chuck relates that his uncle Matt is the Grand Scorpion, leader of the Clan. Since Chuck has been to a Clan meeting he and Superman fly off to find the meeting location to hopefully rescue Perry and Jimmy. Suspecting that Chuck has responded to the open letter he transports his captives to another location, where they are to be executed, that is unknown to his nephew Chuck. Superman and Chuck find the place where Perry and Jimmy had been held and finding it deserted, resume the search. They spot 3 rutted trails and Chuck



identifies them as being made by trucks from Matt's contracting business.

In the meantime Perry and Jimmy are lying on the ground in the new location watching Clan members dig their graves. Perry worries about the future of America and tells Chuck that many countries have secret organizations dedicated to hatred. He hopes America will wake up and eliminate organizations as the Clan of the Fiery Cross. Matt then exhorts the Clan's Defender, who has taken an oath to protect the Clan at all costs to shoot both Perry and Jimmy. Superman suddenly comes to the rescue freeing the captives and rounding up Clan members; he ties them up, throws them in the back of one of the trucks, and takes them and the truck to police headquarters. However, Matt has escaped into the surrounding woods.

Matt makes his way across the state line to the palatial home of Cedric Wilson, Grand Imperial Mogul and nationwide leader of the Clan of the Fiery Cross. Cedric tells him that he is foolish for coming to him and even more foolish for planning the murder of such an important person as Perry White. Cedric knows that both the police and Superman are looking for Matt. Cedric tells Matt that the Clan is engaged in a national membership drive and the publicity generated by his actions will cost the Clan ten



thousand new members, thus the loss of ten thousand \$100 membership fees and \$25 robe and hood fees. Matt is reminded of his take of the profits and tells Cedric that he doesn't care. All he wants to do is purify the country. Cedric asks Matt if he really believes the entire race, color, creed hokum. He tells Matt that he has no brains and has fallen for the same sucker stuff that is meant for the members and recruits. Cedric tells him that Clan members like to blame others for failure in their own lives. They can all them inferior so they can feel superior. Further, there is no such thing as a 100% American. Everyone in America is a foreigner except the Indians. Cedric explains that the Clan, and all its officials, is engaged in a business selling the oldest commodity on earth – HATE. Cedric says that your mistake is you believed in your own sales pitch. Matt, enraged, struggles with Cedric but the outcome is uncertain. Matt flies back to Metropolis only to find that his entire action committee has spilled the beans and the Clan of the Fiery Cross is exposed along with its local members. The members have turned on Matt.

Matt, intent on murdering his nephew Chuck creeps into his house through a secret passage

and creeps up the stairs to Chuck's room only to find him gone. He is confronted by Chuck's mother who refuses to tell him Chuck's location. The mother is tied up and locked in a closet and Matt proceeds to Jimmy's house where he suspects that Chuck is hiding. The house is guarded by police. Matt then learns that all three of his quarry will at the championship baseball game on this very afternoon and plots to kill all three of them. Clark, Jimmy, and Perry are at the game along with a considerable police presence. Chuck has been reinstated to the team and is pitching for Unity House. Matt, with a companion Lou, is perched on a rooftop overlooking the ball field. Matt is equipped with a high powerful rifle with a telescopic sight. Although Matt is quite distant from his targets he assures Lou that he can hit a running deer at a thousand yards. Clark notices a glint on the roof where Matt is hiding and quickly disappears behind the locker room to reveal himself as Superman. Superman intercepts all three bullets and then disarms Matt and takes him to police headquarters.

The happy ending is that the local Clan of the Fiery Cross has been destroyed. The Unity House team has won the championship and Perry awards trophies of golden baseballs to the team. Perry compliments the team for being able to play together even though their skin color is different. Chuck says that he doesn't deserve a trophy and would like to give his to Tommy as he would have surely been the starting pitcher if it were not for the Clan of the Fiery Cross. Perry tells him that he had an extra ball made up for Tommy and the team, along with Perry, goes to Tommy's house to present it to him.

This is the end of the adventure and of the Clan of the Fiery Cross.



Discrediting and Humiliating the KKK

Although none of the actual signs, symbols, or titles of the KKK was used in the radio story of the Clan of the Fiery Cross, there were enough similarities used to hold the KKK up to ridicule:

- **Episode 2** contains the burning cross, members in robes and hoods, the notion of a racially purified America, members pledging allegiance to the Clan and its mission, and the brainwashing of Chuck regarding the Lee family. The Grand Scorpion, in reality, Chuck's uncle Matt, is introduced.
- **Episode 3** characterizes the Clan as bigots and the notion of not judging a man by his race, color, or creed. Violence is introduced in the bomb under the bicycle seat of a child.

- **Episode 4** shows the Clan's willingness to inflict violence by the thrown bat incident.
- **Episode 5** demonstrates violence in the kidnapping of Tommy with the intent of tarring and feathering him.
- **Episode 6** has Perry White naming the Clan as a bunch of cowards saying that real men do not hide behind bed sheets and hoods. The Clan's attempt to silence Perry with a burning cross on his lawn.
- **Episode 7** has Perry White and Jimmy Olsen kidnapped with the intent of tarring and feathering him.
- **Episode 8** Matt reiterates that he cares not if Perry and Jimmy are killed by tarring and feathering.
- **Episode 9** Chuck's mother laments over Chuck's apparent refusal to help America from the Clan of the Fiery Cross – comparing them to the Nazis.
- **Episode 10** Matt admonishes the Clan members to obey their sacred oath to rid America of all that is not white and anyone who stands in their way. The Clan must kill Perry and Jimmy.
- **Episode 11** Clan members are digging a grave for Perry and Jimmy and then order a member of his action committee, who he calls the Clan Defender to shoot them.
- **Episode 14** This is the most damaging of all. Matt goes to the palatial home of Cedric Wilson, the Grand Imperial Mogul, to seek his help. Matt is told of his foolishness in going after such a prominent person as Perry. Matt is further told the Clan of the Fiery Cross is a business intent on profiting from the initiation fees and robe fees paid by the Clan members.

He tells Matt that all the rhetoric about racial purity is bunk and there to encourage disaffected whites to join. He criticizes Matt for believing his own sales pitch and tells him that use of his behavior regarding Perry White will cost the Clan of the Fiery Cross some ten thousand members along with their \$100 initiation fee and \$25 robe and hood fee. Cedric reminds Matt of the percentage that he as a Clan leader would garner from this increased membership.

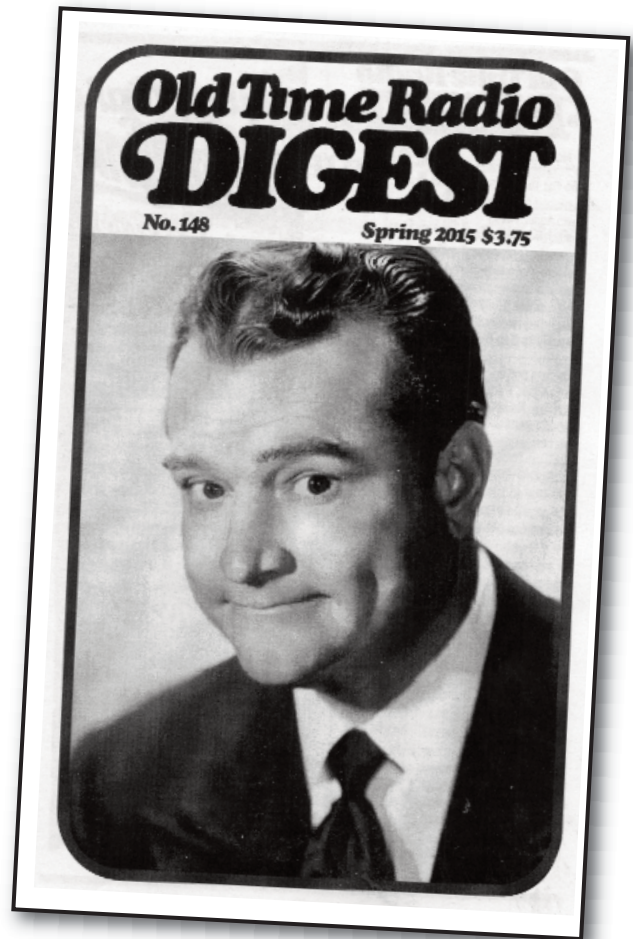
- **Episode 15** Matt attempts to locate and murder his nephew Chuck but cannot find him.
- **Episode 16** Matt attempts to murder Chuck, Perry, and Jimmy at a baseball game using a high powered rifle so as to remove them as potential witnesses against him. In an attempt to ridicule the Clan the writers relate that Matt says he can hit a running deer at a thousand yards, just to emphasize the absurdity of the Clan of the Fiery Cross.

During the entire 16 episode series there is constant mention of the Clan of the Fiery Cross, their beliefs, and intentions. Violence, burning crosses, tarring and feathering, attempted murder, beatings, and other mayhem fill the story of the Clan of the Fiery Cross painting a negative picture and holding them up to ridicule. And, of course, Superman was very instrumental in the local Clan's destruction.

Epilogue

Samuel Green, Imperial Wizard, had a plan to reinvigorate the KKK back to their membership levels enjoyed in the 1920s and 1930s. The ridicule caused by the Superman adventure, Clan of the Fiery Cross, negatively impacted that effort. Superman reached some 4 million children with this historic story line. Unfortunately, the Crossley Radio Rating Service had recently been dissolved so that no fully accurate listener statistics are available.

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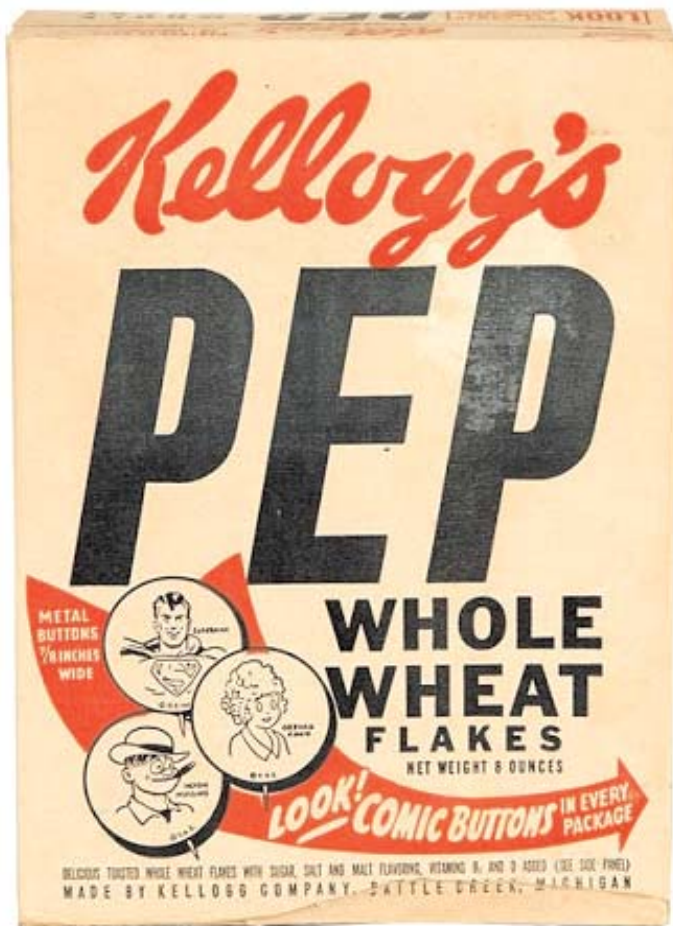
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There is a legend that Stetson Kennedy and Superman singlehandedly destroyed the KKK through the infiltration and exposition of KKK secrets during the radio broadcast. This is partially true but as the late Paul Harvey would say - there is the rest of the story. Yes the radio broadcast of Clan of the Fiery Cross reached a large audience. But it is doubtful that it reached very many of the “disaffected whites” that were the target of KKK recruiting. What is certain is that many parents listened to the broadcast as well as the target audience of children.

The media heaped much praise on Superman with Newsweek declaring that “Superman is the first children’s program to develop a social consciousness”. The Radio Mirror published a full page tribute the man of steel. Superman was praised by the United Parents Organization

and the Boy’s Clubs of America. However not everyone was thrilled. An anti-semitic commentator Gerald Smith denounced Superman as a “disgrace to America”. The New Jersey KKK tried reaching out to children to promote their narrow point of view. The Atlanta KKK orchestrated a telephone campaign against the Mutual radio affiliate in Atlanta.

The Washington Post’s Sonia Stein penned:

“Of all the late afternoon little dramas for little people, Mutual’s “Superman” had received most comment and most laurels – all in tribute to the years-old battle against intolerance ... Superman’s move was brave and well intentioned ... and it did drive the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan to try to get the sponsoring product, Pep, banned from his town. But it is doubtful that the results lived up to the motivation”

Superman’s Clan of the Fiery Cross and Kennedy’s infiltration, while not striking the death knell, had a significant effect on America and the KKK. By 1947 and 1948 the KKK was under serious attack. Even the mafia also was against the KKK. There was considerable pressure on the KKK from various law enforcement agencies. The Anti-Defamation League succeeded in getting laws passed in a number of states that prohibited people from parading with their faces covered by masks. Assistant Attorney General Daniel Duke also took on the KKK in Atlanta. He crusaded to ensure that convicted KKK members served their full jail sentences when convicted of KKK atrocities.

Ralph McGill, of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution penned the following:

“There are not many Catholics in Georgia which is a pity in a way because they are almost invariably good Christians, good citizens and worthwhile members of the community, some-

thing that has not been possible to say because of all the members of the Ku Klux Klan Klaverns in the state. ... There are not many Jews in Georgia but they too are good citizens. Their contribution is one of hard work and decency. There is no reason to have an organization formed to promote hate and antagonism to Catholics, Jews, foreign-born citizens or any minority groups ... If you could get through all the mumbo jumbo business of the Kleagles, Cyclops, nighthawks and all the claptrap, you would still find it to be silly, unchristian and dangerous to the peace and dignity of the people.”

In August of 1949, Samuel Green, Grand Dragon of the KKK passed away. With him gone there was no driving force behind a national revival of the KKK. Today, there are still continuing and sporadic efforts to establish local KKK Klaverns (local chapters), but they have had little success in comparison to the number of members in eras 2 and 3. In fact, when they announce any sort of KKK public appearance they are usually outnumbered by protestors and law enforcement has to keep them separated. We collectively owe Stetson Kennedy and Superman a vote of thanks.

About the Author

Henry Morse is an amateur radio historian who has lectured extensively at libraries, senior centers, and art centers in New Jersey. Henry will be teaching a course on old time radio at Rutgers starting this spring at their center for continued learning. He is a member of the Old Time Radio Research Group and has written other articles for Radio Times. ■



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"We'll Meet Again" **The 2015 Cincinnati Nostalgia Expo Report** by Ryan Ellett

As I write this, the 2015 Cincinnati Nostalgia Expo is a few weeks behind us and I've had time to reflect on the this final Expo. This was Mike Wheeler's third year at the helm of the Expo after taking over for Bob Burchett who had been running the Old Time Radio Convention since its beginnings in 1987. This year's schedule was certainly the best in some time, with activities scheduled for pretty much the entire weekend.

The Expo opened Friday morning, May 15, in much the same way the recent conventions had opened. Martin Grams presented a one-hour video montage of film clips and film shorts built around the theme of radio in the movies. One of the highlights for me was a rare Baby Snooks television broadcast recorded on kineoscope. I strongly dislike the Baby Snooks radio sketches and, frankly, found the television content no less grating. However, early live television was so drastically different than what I'm familiar with, I

appreciated seeing how sponsor messages were interwoven into the program and how they pulled off such things as stage changes and special effects, all live on screen.

Grams' hour was followed by Doug Hopkinson's presentation on radio personality Jim Hawthorne, a figure with whom I – and most of the audience – was unfamiliar. Doug's presentations have been a highlight of the conventions for me for the past several years and I'm glad he chose to present after taking last year off. Technical issues threw Doug off his rhythm but, like a seasoned pro, he moved through a massive amount of material in his allotted hour. Look for the full write-up of his Hawthorne research in the April and May issues of SPERD-VAC's Radiogram.

In the past few years Friday afternoons had been a bit of a dry spot on the convention calendar, but not this year. Charlie Summers and his daughter Katie conducted back-to-back interviews after lunch, first with featured guest Kathy Garver (of television's Family Affair) and then with Mel Simons (author of numerous books, including some on old time radio trivia).



Ryan Ellett, Travis Conner, Doug Hopkinson



Both sessions were enlightening with both Garver and Simons entertaining the audience with stories and memories.

Once the interviews wound down, attendees could choose whether to try out for the numerous recreations on the schedule or watch Milton Berle's *Whispering Ghosts* (1942). This is the first time I can remember the inclusion of a film showing in the weekend's events.

After a lull for supper, things resumed Friday evening with two recreations, *Dragnet's "The Big Bounce"* and *The Great Gildersleeve's "Engaged to Two Women."* I missed the *Dragnet* effort but made sure to attend the *Gildersleeve* production, one of my all-time favorite series. Admittedly, a part of me was expecting a bit of a train wreck; after all, who could even approach the masterful *Gildersleeves* of either Hal Peary or Willard Waterman? I was pleasantly stunned by Chicagoan Richard Maher's performance. His interpretation will surely be as close as I will ever come to hearing the genuine Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve in person.

The first day's festivities were capped off with Dan Hughes' nostalgia trivia bowl. There were

perhaps a record number of teams, around eight, and guest Kathy Garver's team walked out with the upset win. Surely her team benefited by one set of questions focusing on her career, but no one complained too loudly. Despite grumbling over the toughness of some questions, the bowl was a herculean effort by Dan each year and added some much-needed excitement to Friday night when he introduced the contest a few years ago.

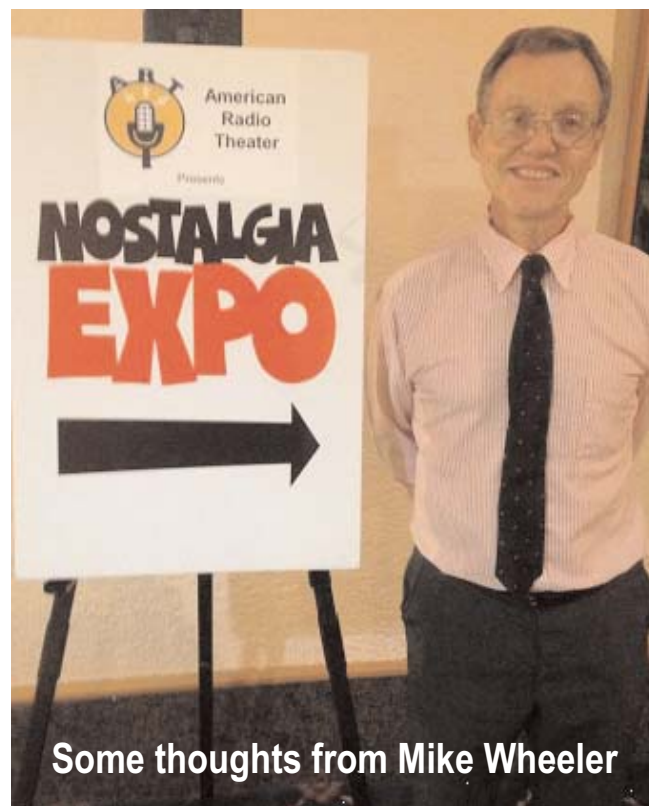
Saturday opened with a great interview with West Coast actor Larry Albert, the star of numerous Jim French productions. Moderated by Joy Jackson, the low attendance was disappointing. It was a unique chance to hear from one of the very few actors in this country still getting paid to perform in radio drama. Soon after the interview concluded, Martin Grams' dove into his presentation on *Truth or Consequences*, the subject of a new book which is tentatively scheduled for a December release. Whether or not the subject area is of special interest to the listener, Grams' presentations always expand one's knowledge not just of a particular show but of old time radio in general.

Saturday afternoon featured two more recreations, Suspense's "Dead Ernest" and The Fat Man "Murder Makes Headlines." These were to be followed by a Mel Simon's interview with John Alsedek, author of a new Suspense script. But in what was one of the biggest disappointments of the weekend, Mr. Alsedek was unable to attend. The afternoon then finished with Dan Hughes' drawing names for the annual fundraiser raffle prizes and script auction.

Saturday night featured yet three more recreations, "The Proof in the Pudding," an original Suspense script written by John Alsedek, Magnificent Montague "Starring Role in Radio," and Our Miss Brooks "The Cow in the Closet." All well done, I was especially impressed with All Ears Theater's Magnificent Montague performance. I was completely unfamiliar with the series but the performance may have been even better than the original, which I had to listen to while driving home.

Usually a festive time, the closing ceremonies were short and somewhat subdued, due to rumors suggesting that Mike Wheeler was stepping down from heading the convention, thus likely bringing the event to an end. The event awards were consolidated into the Bob Hastings Award, recognizing service to the Cincinnati Expo. Named in honor of the long-time guest Bob Hastings, Dan Hughes and Charlie Summer were both well-deserved recipients. Then Mike shared that he would not be continuing the convention, a not-unexpected announcement and an understandable one considering the massive investment of time and money necessary to carry it off. Not entirely unexpected, it was nevertheless very disappointing for all present. The audience participated in a farewell sing-along,

Visit the Old Time Radio Researchers Facebook page to see Ryan's pictures of the 2015 Expo.



Thanks to everyone who made the last three years of Nostalgia Expo possible.

For those who did not attend the 2015 Expo and who may not already know, I announced at the end of the Saturday evening program that I am stepping down as chairman of Nostalgia Expo. It has been a very rewarding three year run and I will cherish the memories of what we all accomplished together.

Nostalgia Expo was the result of the hard work of a group of very dedicated volunteers. If I try to name them all I will almost certainly leave someone out. Suffice to say, you all know who you are and the folks who attended the conventions do, too. We all owe you a big debt of gratitude.

So, is this the end of the convention? I certainly hope it isn't. While I am sure there will be new similar events to carry on the traditions of what was originally the Cincinnati Oldtime Radio and Nostalgia Convention, its continua-



tion in Cincinnati is seriously in doubt. To the best of my knowledge there are no plans currently afoot to have another such convention in Cincinnati.

As I announced at the 2015 Expo, my current plans are to host an event in Lexington, KY, probably in the late Spring of 2016, which we are tentatively calling Radio Studio East. It will be similar to an event that American Radio Theater has been having annually in Seattle, WA each autumn since 2005. It is a radio workshop with invited guests like those we featured in Cincinnati who come to work with attendees to produce and record audio dramas for the ART podcast. Watch this page for further information. If you are interested in oldtime radio recreations and audio drama, you may want to attend this new event.

Don Ramlow, who has been producing and directing the vast majority of the recreations in Cincinnati for as long as I can remember, will continue to do so for his group in Kalamazoo, MI, All Ears Theatre. In addition, Don is working on plans to possibly have a Cincinnati style convention in Kalamazoo in 2016. If it all comes to-

gether, this will be a convention with invited celebrity guests, a dealers room and presentations, just like the convention in Cincinnati that we have all come to know and love. I will post any further information I receive from Don regarding his progress on this web page.

If a person or group steps forward to continue Nostalgia Expo or a similar convention under another name in Cincinnati, I will be happy to assist that person or group in any way I possibly can but, for now, Radio Studio East and the potential convention in Kalamazoo are the two most likely successors to the Nostalgia Expo ideal.

Once again, thanks to everyone who supported and attended Nostalgia Expo during the last three years. I consider each and every one of you a personal friend and I hope that I see you again, either at Radio Studio East, Kalamazoo, or one of the other OTR/Nostalgia conventions around the country

Now, I have to get busy planning Radio Studio East, 2016! ■

My very best to all of you. Mike Wheeler

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Fort Laramie: MacDonnell and Meston Redux

By Elizabeth McLeod

If the thirties were the age of the personality-variety program and the forties marked the golden age of the crime thriller, then the fifties stand out as the golden age of the Adult Western. Not the black hat-white hat kiddie oaters, but serious, grown-up dramas of tension, violence, and the darker side of human nature, set in the harsh and unforgiving world of the late-19th-Century frontier. It was *Gunsmoke*, the landmark of the genre, that started the trend, and its prime creative movers—producer-director Norman Macdonnell and head writer John Meston—set its standard for quality. It was a standard few approached, with *Gunsmoke* enduring into the 1960's as the definitive and, in the end, the final radio western. But, while Macdonnell and Meston might not have topped that accomplishment, they produced another program which, if not the equal of *Gunsmoke*, is certainly worthy of being mentioned in the same breath—the atmospheric military western *Fort Laramie*. The doings of frontier cavalymen have long been a mainstay of Western fiction, as the guardians of the farthest outposts of the expanding frontier, but they were surprisingly late in coming to radio. Kiddie western heroes such as *The Lone Ranger* occasionally found themselves dealing with cavalry troopers, but there was no radio program focused entirely on the exploits of the frontier-era Army until 1956, when Macdonnell and Meston followed up on the success of *Gunsmoke* with a new Sunday afternoon series.

The mid-fifties were an unexpectedly fertile period for radio drama, despite the steady erosion of its audience in the face of television. As affiliate pressure gouged ever deeper into the



Raymond Burr and Vic Perrin

network schedules, the CBS Radio Network focused more and more on weekend slots for its remaining dramatic features—and, in a brave show of determination not to let radio drama entirely disappear, introduced several new programs. *Fort Laramie* joined the schedule in January of 1956, as a variation on the *Gunsmoke* theme of rugged men facing the uncertainties of violent, unpredictable times. But Matt Dillon, as a U.S. Marshal, was a lone agent of authority. At *Fort Laramie*, his counterpart, Captain Lee Quince, though no less steely and authoritative, had the backing of an entire troop of equally determined men in dealing with the threats facing his remote Wyoming outpost. But, Quince also held the lives of those men in his hands.

Quince was a complex character—in his own way as much so as the tormented Matt Dillon. To portray this figure, Macdonnell and Meston turned to a brooding-young actor who had



gained notice as a dark, noirish villain in various films of the postwar era. Raymond Burr broke into show business on the stage in the last few years before World War II, and turned to film after the war -- the sort of reliable contract actor who could turn in a dependable performance in whatever role was required. Radio and television also beckoned, with Burr gaining valuable microphone experience alongside Jack Webb on *Pat Novak for Hire*, *Dragnet*, and *Pete Kelly's Blues*. He also supported Frank Sinatra in the adventures of *Rocky Fortune*. He first came to Norman Macdonnell's attention in 1951, starring in a particularly hell-for-leather episode of *Escape*. While actor and director went their separate ways after that performance, Macdonnell remembered the intense young performer.

Burr was not, however, Macdonnell's first choice for the role of Capt. Quince. The audition program for *Fort Laramie* cast the director's favorite actor, John Dehner, in the lead role. Dehner was perhaps the busiest member of the CBS stock company at that particular time, turning up again and again in every dramatic program then in production, and at the last minute he dropped out of the series. The lead role went instead to Raymond Burr, who brought the perfect note of icy earnestness to the part. Quince was a career soldier, a man of honor and integrity— but, he also knew that the formalities

of rules and regulations didn't always go on the frontier, and that certain moral ambiguities could not be allowed to distract him, or his men, from the accomplishment of their mission. Quince had to deal with a wide range of challenges in the course of his duty, from maintaining a delicate balance in his dealings with local Indian tribes and the settlers pushing ever outward along the Oregon Trail, to maintaining firm but compassionate discipline over the men under his command.

The Captain's chief sounding board, his "Chester," if you will, was (in the tradition of military dramas down through the ages) an inexperienced young officer whose enthusiasm sometimes overcame his common sense. The second-in-command, Lieutenant Siberts, was played by Harry Bartell. A fixture in the network's various anthology dramas, *Fort Laramie* gave Bartell a rare chance to develop a continuing characterization, and he brought the role to vigorous life. Siberts was competent-but-green -- though it seemed clear that, under Quince's guidance, he would outgrow his shortcomings to develop into a fine officer. Other key members of the regular cast were Vie Perrin as Quince's grizzled top Sergeant, maintaining the key link between the commanding officer and his troops, and Jack Moyles as Quince's superior officer, Major Daggett. CBS regular Sam Edwards filled many rank-and-file roles in the troop, most frequently appearing as the reliable Trooper Harrison.

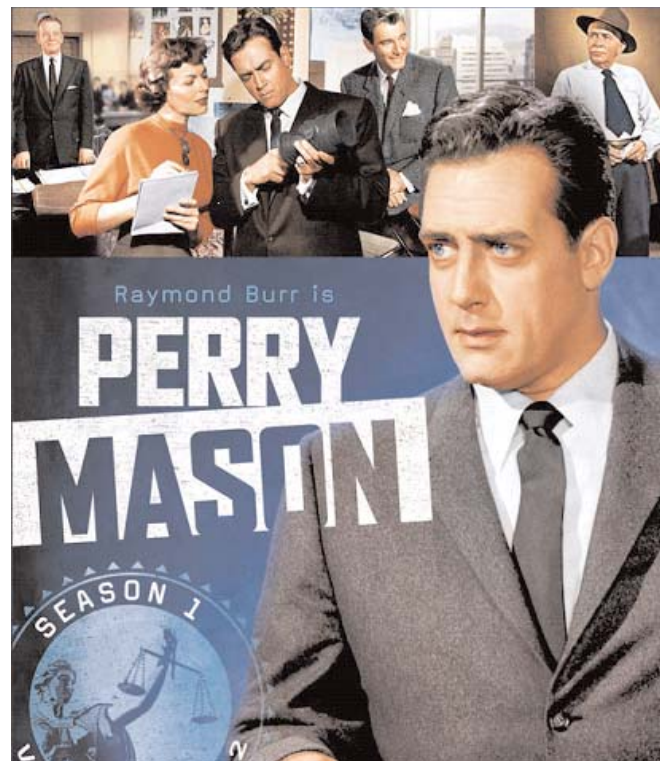
John Meston established the style for the series from the beginning -- this would be no routine "Cowboy and Indian" show, exaggerating the perils of frontier life while steeping its characters in melodrama. *Fort Laramie* was set in a very specific time and place -- the late 1860's, at the edge of Wyoming Territory. Meston and his fellow scriptwriters took careful

notice of historical facts and worked to make their episodes as accurate to the reality of the times as possible. It was an approach that characterized CBS's entire line of 1950's westerns, but *Fort Laramie*, based as it was on a specific real-life location, maintained the most rigorous commitment to an honest portrayal of frontier life. Such outstanding scriptwriters as John Dunkel, Les Crutchfield, and Kathleen Hite — all of them long-time Macdonnell-Meston collaborators — carried forward the themes of the series with careful attention to detail and a strong emphasis on realistic characterizations. Plots focused on both the tensions and the drudgery of frontier military life, as well as on the parade of civilians passing through the fort: naive settlers, proud Indians, scheming outlaws, the flotsam and jetsam of pioneer America carried westward by the country's momentous growth. Quince and his men stood as protectors, as doorkeepers, and as mediators as the situation demanded. Sometimes they succeeded in their efforts, and sometimes they fell short— but, the stories of how they did it were always well and carefully told.

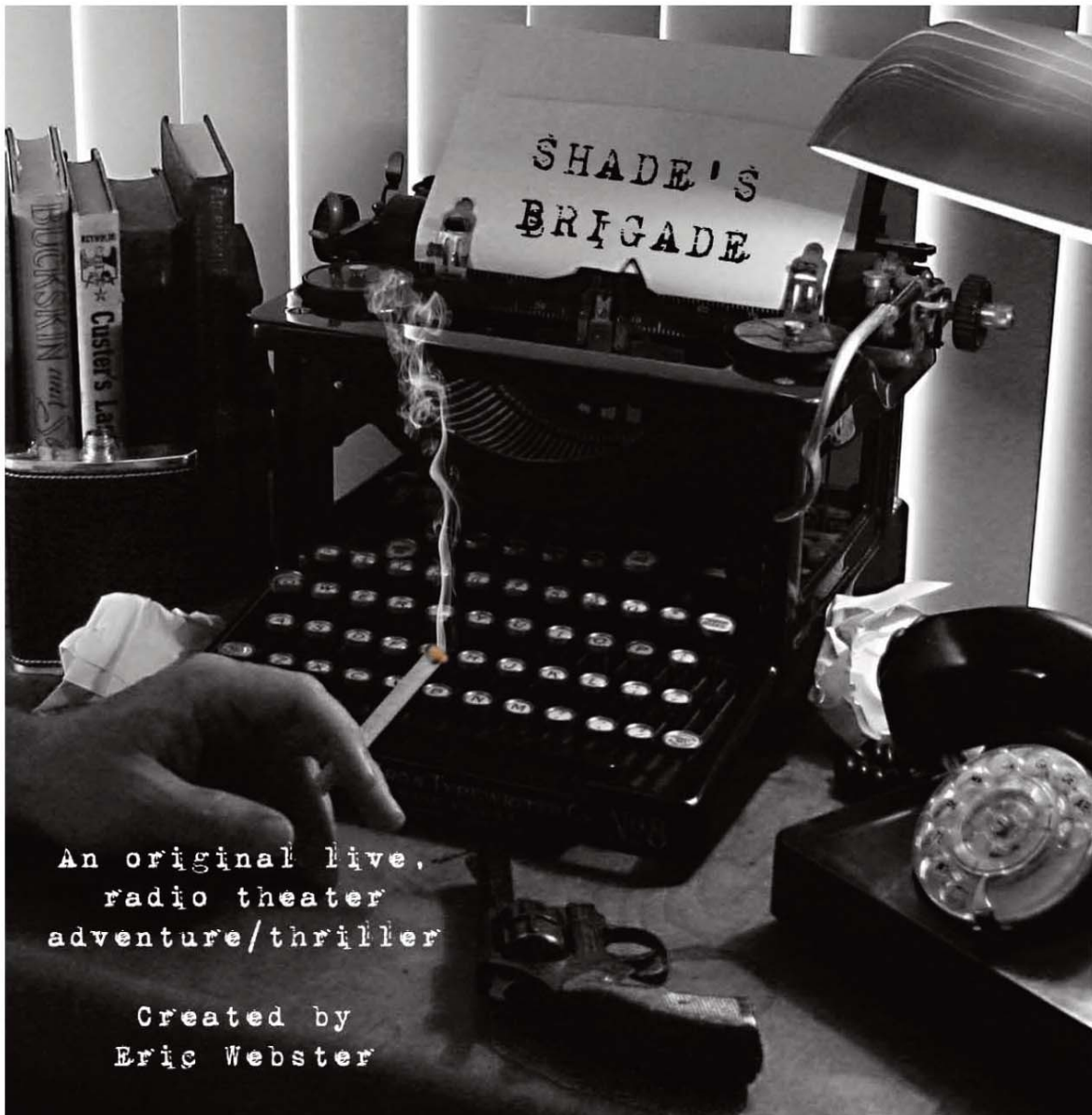
Maintaining the family ties to *Gunsmoke* were the program's supporting cast and technical crew, many of who crossed over to the senior program. The sound effects — or "sound patterns," in CBS patois—were particularly fine, with technicians Ray Kemper and Bill James creating a rich frontier soundscape that underscored the mama without ever, as is often the case in modern "audio theatre" productions, overwhelming it. Kemper and James, working closely with Macdonnell and the writing staff, understood the importance of realistic background sound — but they also, just as importantly, understood the importance of silent stillness.

With such an impressive pedigree, one would have expected a longer run for *Fort Laramie*. But Raymond Burr's career took him in another direc-

tion—in the summer of 1956, as the series was wrapping up its first season, the actor was author Erie Stanley Gardner's top choice to bring crusading defense attorney *Perry Mason* to television. Although CBS insisted it remained committed to radio drama, any actor offered a plum television role couldn't help but make the jump — and for Burr, it was a decision that would define the rest of his life. He would play Mason for nearly a decade on TV, and would reprise the role again in a long series of TV movies in the 1980s and 1990s. It remains the role for which he will always be known — while his outstanding performance as Captain Lee Quince receded into obscurity. *Fort Laramie* was dropped from the CBS schedule at the end of its first season, and Macdonnell and Meston remained focused on their *Gunsmoke* franchise. But *Fort Laramie* didn't disappear entirely — it enjoyed decades' worth of reruns courtesy of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service, and remains today a worth sampling of the adult western done at its best.



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UNITED STATES EARLY RADIO HISTORY

A Wireless Message



PART 1 **BIG BUSINESS AND RADIO** (1915-1922)

by Thomas H. White



Once the radio industry finally became profitable, major corporations -- including the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, General Electric, and Westinghouse -- moved into the field. Meanwhile, in 1919, due to pressure from the U.S. government, American Marconi's assets were sold to General Electric, which used them to form the Radio Corporation of America. According to Owen D. Young, the General Electric Company executive who coordinated G.E.'s purchase of American Marconi, and its transformation into the Radio Corporation of America: "Fifteen years is the average period of probation, and during that time the inventor, the promoter and the investor, who see a great future, generally lose their shirts... This is why the wise capitalist keeps out of exploiting new inventions and comes in only when the public is ready for mass demand". When, after years of losing money, radio finally started to become profitable

in the late teens, then grew explosively with the broadcasting boom in the early twenties, the "wise capitalists" at major industrial corporations like G.E. began to enter and dominate the industry, in particular by buying up most of the major patents. In contrast, after nearly two decades of pioneering work and struggling companies, in 1921 Lee DeForest abruptly sold most of his radio interests and moved on to other fields. DeForest later explained that he felt the time had come when "the building up of this technique and institution might better be left in the hands of those with greater capital, influence and personnel to carry on" and further noted that broadcasting "grew amazingly, once the large organizations with ample capital took hold of it".

U.S. NAVY -- MARCONI -- GENERAL ELECTRIC -- RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA

During World War One, the radio industry was placed under the temporary control of the U.S. government, and (most) government officials planned to return the companies and stations



to private ownership after the end of the conflict. However, as reviewed in the *Attempts to Establish a United States Government Radio Monopoly* chapter of Linwood S. Howeth's 1963 *History of Communications-Electronics in the United States Navy*, during the war the Navy Department plotted to circumvent this, and tried to convert the radio industry into a permanent government monopoly. To this end, the Navy quietly purchased the Federal Telegraph Company stations plus a majority of the Marconi stations located in the United States, meaning that the government now owned most of the U.S. commercial stations. The Navy belatedly reported its actions to the United States Congress, which was not amused. Congress challenged the Navy's purchases, and directed the Department to return the stations to their original owners.

The return of American Marconi's stations restored that company's domination of U.S. radio, which it had held since its 1912 takeover of United Wireless. However, in spite of its name American Marconi's ownership and management was largely British, and, because of national security considerations, the U.S. government—especially the Navy Department—wanted to avoid foreign control of U.S. international communications. Led by the Navy's S. C. Hooper and its Director of Naval Communications, W. G. H. Bullard, in mid-1919 the U.S. government applied extensive pressure on American Marconi to sell its operations to a U.S. firm — at the same time

General Electric was convinced to purchase the former American Marconi holdings. (The government selected G.E. because it was a major electrical firm, and it also manufactured the Alexanderson alternator-transmitters which seemed poised to dominate international radio communications. Development of these transmitters dated back to the high-speed alternators G.E. had built for Reginald Fessenden beginning in 1906.) Details about the events surrounding the formation this new company, patriotically named the Radio Corporation of America, appear in *The Navy and the Radio Corporation of America* chapter of Linwood S. Howeth's 1963 *History of Communications-Electronics in the United States Navy*.

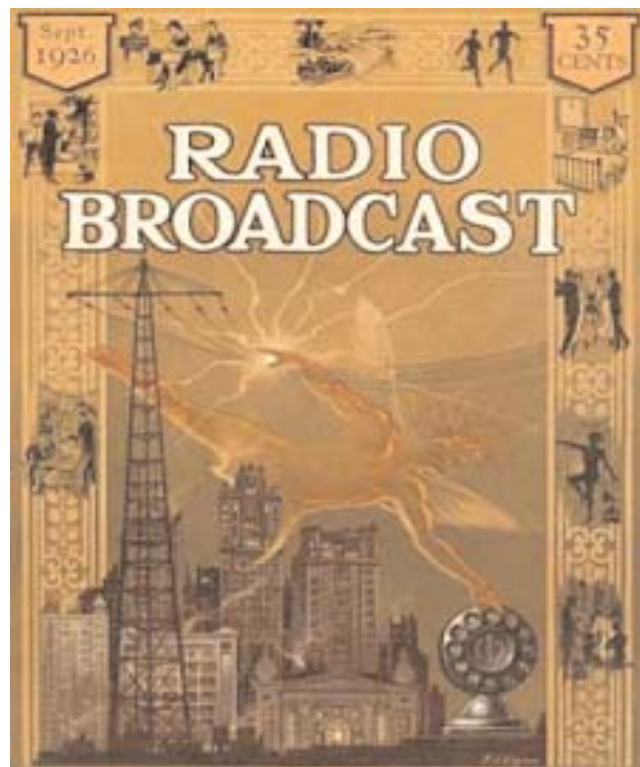
As the successor to American Marconi, the Radio Corporation of America inherited the position of the dominant U.S. radio firm, and advertisements for the new General Electric subsidiary, such as the one which ran in the July, 1920 issue of *The Consolidated Radio*



Call Book, informed customers that RCA was "an all-American concern" holding "the premier position in the radio field". Shortly after its creation, RCA began to build a showcase international facility, Radio Central, at Rocky Point, Long Island. The site's original plans outlined a huge enterprise, the core of which was to be ten Alexanderson alternator-transmitters, surrounded by twelve huge antennas arrayed in spokes each approximately 1.5 mile (2+ kilometers) long. In 1922, with two of the antenna spokes built and two alternator-transmitters entering service, Charles William Taussig reviewed the fledgling Radio Central operations in *The World's Greatest Radio Station* chapter of *The Book of Radio*. Taussig enthusiastically reported that Radio Central incorporated "all of the wonders of radio which have transpired in the last twenty-five years". However, only about 20% of the planned alternator facilities were ever built, because within just a couple of years the long-wave alternator-transmitters became obsolete, due to the development of far more efficient shortwave transmissions.

Although RCA was initially envisioned as an international communications company, it also quickly moved into the developing broadcasting field. RCA

made its broadcast debut on July 2, 1921 with a heavyweight boxing championship, as Jack Dempsey defeated Georges Carpentier. The bout took place in Hoboken, New Jersey, and was broadcast by a temporary longwave station, WJY, with a transcript of the fight commentary telegraphed to KDKA in Pittsburgh, for rebroadcast by that station. Because of the lack of radio receivers, a majority of the listeners were in halls, where volunteer amateurs set up radio receivers,



charging admission for the sponsoring charities. RCA did much of the technical work, and covered the broadcast in its magazine, *Wireless Age*, announcing the event in *July 2nd Fight Described by Radiophone*, which appeared in the July, 1921 issue, and reviewing it in detail in *Voice-Broadcasting the Stirring Progress of the "Battle of the Century"*, which appeared the next month. (A color scan, provided by Ross Allen, shows the WJY Participation Certificate which was issued to C. R. Vincent, Jr. for his help with the broadcast.) The original idea for the fight broadcast, and much of the coordination of the participants, came from Julius Hopp, manager of concerts at Madison Square Garden in New York City. But since then, to an almost grotesque degree, history has been rewritten multiple times, as the roles of some participants, especially RCA's David Sarnoff, have been greatly exaggerated, at the expense of those who actually deserve the credit. I've put together a review, "*Battle of the Century*": *The WJY Story*, which

covers the activities surrounding the broadcast, plus a review of how in later retellings some of the original events have been distorted almost beyond recognition. The broadcasting boom of 1922 expanded RCA sales into a national consumer market, with a resulting increase in advertising. Readers of the *The Country Gentleman* were informed that "We want the farmers to know something about radio and the Radio Corporation", according to an ad in the December 9, 1922 issue, which noted that RCA's goal was firmly to establish America's leadership in Radio.

WESTINGHOUSE

The Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, based in East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, also became one of the expanding radio industry's most prominent leaders.



Westinghouse was a major, and well-respected, manufacturer of electrical appliances for the home, and would become the first company to broadly market radio receivers to the general public. Although the company had been involved in radio research to a limited degree during World War One, after the war Westinghouse began to greatly extend its operations, including the purchase of the International Radio Telegraph Company -- the struggling successor to Fessenden's National Electric Signaling Company (NESCO). In 1912, following a losing initial decision in a lawsuit initiated by Reginald Fessenden, NESCO had gone into receivership, reported in *Marconi Competitor Bankrupt* from the August 6, 1912 *Wall Street Journal*. During World War One, NESCO exited bankruptcy and was renamed International Radio Telegraph--its subsequent purchase was reported in *Westinghouse Company Enters Wireless Field* from the October 16, 1920

Electrical Review. This article noted that "special attention would be paid to the development of new uses" of radio, and the very next month, inspired by Frank Conrad's broadcasts over 8XK, Westinghouse inaugurated a public broadcasting service, designed to promote the sale of radio receivers. The formal start on November 2, 1920 featured election returns, broadcast from the company's new East Pittsburgh station. This election night broadcast actually was little noticed at the time, although it did merit a short writeup, *Send Election Returns By Wireless Telephone*, in the November 6, 1920 *Electrical Review*.

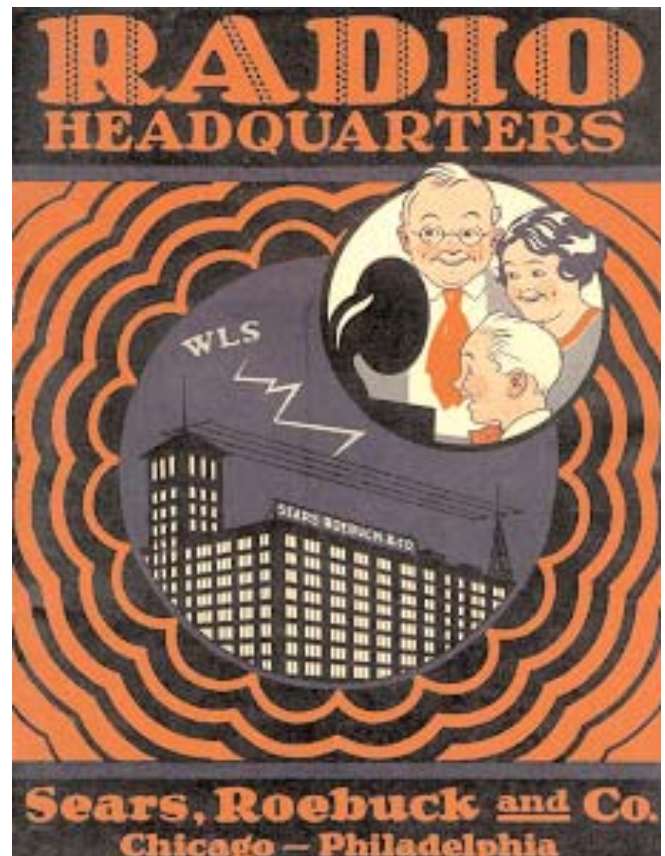
For the first few days the East Pittsburgh broadcasts went out under the Special Amateur callsign of 8ZZ, after which it switched to KDKA. The new station began daily broadcasts of varied offerings which proved increasingly popular, and in the June 4, 1921 *Scientific American*, company engineer Leo H. Rosenberg reviewed broadcasting's accomplishments and bright future in *A New Era In Wireless*, with the prediction that "in a few years we will wonder that we were ever able to exist without enjoying its many benefits". After KDKA had been in operation for close to a year, Westinghouse set up three additional broadcasting stations, WJZ, Newark, New Jer-



sey, WBZ, Springfield, Massachusetts, and KYW Chicago, Illinois, predicting that "this service will prove of expanding value and distinctive interest to mankind" in *Westinghouse to Cover Country With Radio Entertainment*, from the December 10, 1921 *Electrical Review*. A more extensive history of Westinghouse's broadcasting efforts though mid-1922, *Development of Radiophone Broadcasting* by L. R. Krumm, appeared in the July/August, 1922 *Radio Age*. The Westinghouse stations quickly became some of the most popular in the country. No review of early radio broadcasting was complete without a recap of their extensive pioneering work, for example, *How Radio-Phone Broadcasting Came About* from Austin C. Lescarbourea's 1922 book, *Radio For Everybody*. Meanwhile, Westinghouse soon found that competing against RCA in the international communications field was a difficult task, and less than a year after it bought the International Radio Telegraph Company it sold that firm for a block of RCA stock, reviewed in *Radio Corporation and International Merge* in the September 1, 1921 *Wall Street Journal*.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH CO

Lescarbourea also covered the significant contributions made by the American Telephone & Telegraph Company, noting, in *When a Rival Became a Partner*, that "it was only when the engineers of the wire telephone came to take an interest in wireless telephony that this art made real progress". On March 7, 1916, the National Geographic Society held a banquet in Washington, D.C. to commemorate the 40th anniversary of a telephone patent issued to Alexander Graham Bell. At this dinner AT&T, which had been originally formed in order to pro-



note the Bell patents, showed off two scientific marvels made possible by recent improvements in vacuum tube engineering: transcontinental telephone lines, plus high-quality audio radio transmissions. These advances, seen by one speaker as an antidote to the claim that they were living in "an age that is materialistic and without faith", were covered in detail in the *Voice Voyages by the National Geographic Society*, from the March, 1916 issue of *National Geographic* magazine. In the July 19, 1919 issue of *The Literary Digest*, an AT&T advertisement, *Pioneering Wireless Speech*, highlighted the company's groundbreaking advances in audio transmissions, including the 1915 transoceanic tests, and the 1919 Victory Liberty Loan Drive. In 1920, AT&T opened the first radiotelephone link used for telephone service, "bridging by wireless" the California mainland and Catalina Island, as recounted in *Radio Telephone Exchange for*

Avalon Island, Calif. from the June 19, 1920 Telephony. (One deficiency in the initial setup was that persons who knew the operating frequencies could listen in on conversations, and, even worse, a few with radio transmitters even interjected their own comments, according to "Tuning In" on the Wireless from the October, 1920 Pacific Radio News.) On October 21, 1920 AT&T showed off its growing technical prowess with a "sea to shining sea" test, successfully demonstrating before an international audience the interconnection of two radiotelephone links with a cross-country landline, to provide voice communication between the S.S. Gloucester, located off the coast of New Jersey, with Catalina Island, as described in *From Ocean to Ocean by Telephone* from the January, 1921 Telephone Engineer. The company's successes made it a leader in radiotelephone transmission, and it used its expertise to quickly claim a major role in the developing radio broadcasting industry. In early 1922, AT&T began building in New York City a station with the unusual policy that its air-time would be leased out for others to use -- this was called "toll broadcasting" -- which was announced in *A. T. & T. Co. to Operate Radio Commercial Broadcasting Station* from the February 18, 1922 Telephony. This station, WEAJ (now WFAN), soon gained a reputation as the best engineered radio outlet in the country. AT&T's next innovation drew on its experience in interconnecting radio transmitters with long-distance wires, when it announced, in *Bell Experiments Looking to Nation-Wide Radio Service* from the April 15, 1922 Telephony, its plan to develop the first radio network

WJY's 1921 broadcast of the "Battle of the Heavyweights" was an apt metaphor for the future of much of the broadcasting industry. The next few years would see a battle for dominance by some of the largest companies in the United States, with the "main card" consisting of AT&T vs. RCA. ■



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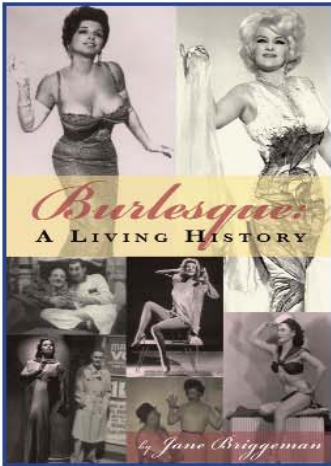
Everyone who is on the internet and has email needs to take a quick few seconds and click on this link: www.RicksPlace.info and sign up. It's absolutely free. Rick's Place, named after the upscale nightclub and gambling den in Casablanca (1942), is a newsgroup that started back in January, providing the latest news about conventions, comics, books, movies, old-time radio and anything in between. This has proven to be a valuable vehicle that delivers pertinent information and items of interest to the membership. The discussion group has, in past issues, discovered that the Asheville Western Film Festival was recently cancelled due to a disagreement with the convention management and the hotel, new DVD releases, and recent old-time radio findings. Over 2,000 people have subscribed already, according to Dave, the man in charge, and an average of two additional people subscribe every day. "What I would like to see is more discussions about old-time radio," he explained. So take a moment and subscribe at www.RicksPlace.info. If you do not like what you read, you can always unsubscribe.



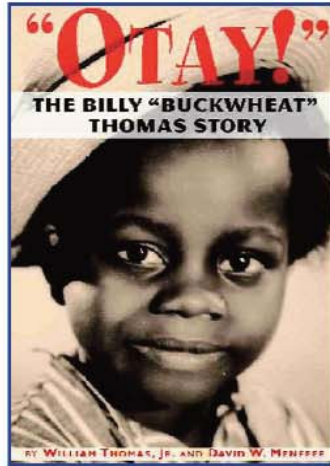
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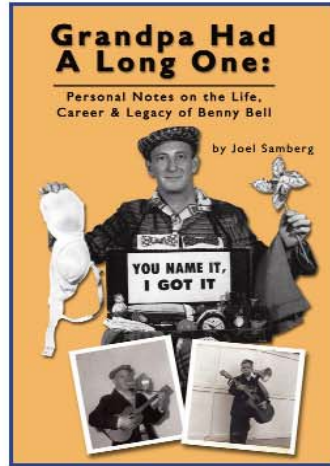
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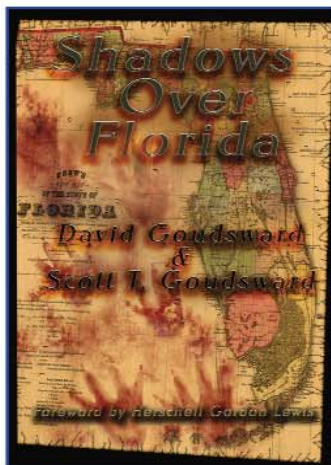
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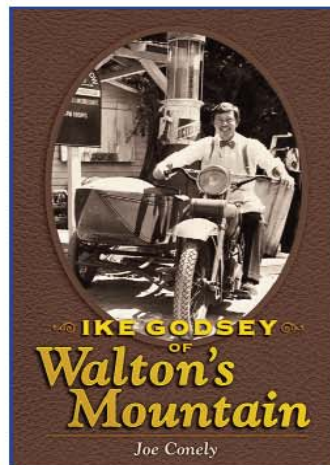
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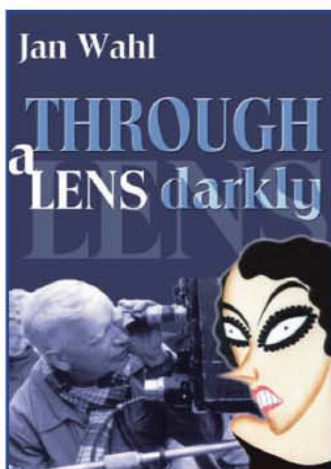
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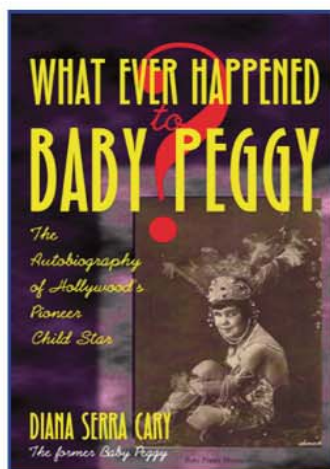
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OTRR ACQUIRES NEW EPISODES AND UPGRADED SOUND ENCODES FOR JULY AND AUGUST

This 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 May and June 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 For reel-to-reels, contact david0@centurytel.net & for transcription disks tony_senior@yahoo.com

Your Symphony Scrapbook

01-17-53 Edward Kleinhammer - trombone.mp3
 01-24-53 Samuel Siegel.mp3
 01-31-53 William Babcock - trumpet.mp3
 02-07-53 Robert Coleman - Viola.mp3
 02-09-50-Arnold-Jacobs - Tuba (second program of the series).mp3
 02-14-53 Lois Schaefer - Flute.mp3
 02-28-53 Morris Monitz - Violin.mp3
 03-07-53 Laurence Stocking - Oboe.mp3
 03-14-53 Guest Bert Whaley.mp3
 03-21-53 with Dudley Powers - Violin.mp3
 04-11-53 Eric Oldberg.mp3- French Horn.mp3
 05-30-53 John Weicher - violin.mp3
 06-27-53 with Eric Oldberg President of the Orchestral Association.mp3
 09-05-53 Burnett Atkinson - Piccollo.mp3
 09-12-53 Milton Preeves - Viola.mp3
 09-19-53 Ernest Legal Flute.mp3
 09-23-51 Adolph Hersuth - Trumpet.mp3
 09-26-53 Joseph Paycheck - trombone.mp3
 10-29-50 Vladimir Kalina - Double_bass.mp3
 11-01-52 Jerry Sabransky - violin.mp3
 11-08-52 Leonard Sharrow - Bassoon.mp3
 11-15-52 Leon Brenner violin.mp3
 11-22-52 Vincent Chickowitz - Trumpet.mp3

11-29-52 With Theodore Ratzer Violincello.mp3
 12-06-52 George Schick associate conductor.mp3
 12-13-52 Rocco Germano - Viola.mp3
 12-20-52 Arthur Goldstein French_Horn.mp3
 12-27-52 Charles Zika - Violin.mp3

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 THE AMAZING NEW
 Man-from-Mars
RADIO HAT

COMPLETE 2-TUBE RADIO BUILT INTO A HAT

Here's the famous two-tube topper you've read about in LIFE, TIME, POPULAR SCIENCE, BUSINESS WEEK, and many other magazines and newspapers, coast-to-coast. Now, you too can own this wonderful "dream-come-true" radio hat. A perfect gift idea! Study these amazing features

- Covers entire broadcast band within 20 mile radius
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- Absolutely mobile...no extra aerial needed
- Volume and tone equal to many portables
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 Complete with
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Please send me RADIO HATS
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 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

600 Mile Radio only

Works without any batteries

300,000 people already use them

\$2.95

Write for full description and copies of letters giving lists of stations heard by users.

ORTHORNE RADIO SALES CO., Fifth Bldg., WICHITA, KANSAS

Family Problem



MOTHER: Ah-h-h... now we'll have Schubert's Unfinished Symphony!
DAD: Symphony, shucks! Let's hear the ball game.
NANCY: But, DAD! I've been waiting for the "Southern Swingsters."
JIMMIE: Hey, Mom! Hey, Pop! I wanta hear "Buck Broncho!"

LUM and ABNER
CHESTER LAUCK
 BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY CHESTER LAUCK & NORRIS GOFF

'CORDIN' TO TH' ALMANAC...
Frigidaire...
 6th network radio sponsor for Lum and Abner, 1948!

MR. EDWARDS, THERE'S A WONDERFUL NEW CHARLIE CHAN MOVIE SHOWING AT THE LYRIC TONIGHT!

GRANNIES, MISS EARLINE, I WISH I COULD COME TA MENA, BUT I CAIN'T... I'M ON A BIG MISSIN' PERSON CASE!

OH, THIS IS TOO, TOO THRILLING! I WISH I COULD SEE THAT!

YES MUM, I'M ON THIS CASE RIGHT NOW, ER MY NAME AIN'T DE-TECTIVE BULLDOG LUMMOND!

Y'SEE, CEDRIC WEEHUNT HAS GONE MISSIN' AN' I'M LOOKIN' FER CLUES!

TH' FIRST THING I'M GONNA DO IS FIND THAT BOY, IFFEN IT'S TH' LAST THING I EVER DO...

...ER... YEAH!
I THINK...

AW, MISS EARLINE, YOU'D BE PROUD O' ME! I'M JUS' LIKE EVER' DE-TECTIVE YOU EVER READ ABOUT, ONLY MORE BETTER!

FACTS IS... WHEN I SOLVE THIS CASE... YOU... ER... MIGHT JUS'... ER... BECOME THE FUTURE MIZ BULLDOG LUMMOND!

I HATE TA TELL YA THIS, BULLDOG...

...BUT YER TWO BLOCKS FROM THE REST O' TH' PHONE!

HAH?

TO BE CONTINUED... DONNIE PITCHFORD '11

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 For more info: www.lumandabnersociety.org + Facebook: "Lum and Abner Comic Strip Group"



Going strong for 30 years, the **Metropolitan Washington Old Time Radio Club** brings people together who have an interest in Old Time Radio (OTR). This is done through monthly meetings consisting of presentations about OTR stars and programs, and recreations of classic OTR shows, plus occasional performances of member-penned scripts produced in the OTR style.

Radio Recall is our illustrated twelve page journal published every other month, edited by Jack French, OTR historian and author. Articles by Jim Cox,



Martin Grams, Jr., Karl Schadow, Jim Widner and other OTR researchers. OTR book reviews, upcoming OTR events, and historical footnotes. Available in full-color PDF via email, B&W hardcopy via USPS, or distributed to members at meetings.



Gather 'Round the Radio (GRTR) has been a monthly e-Newsletter feature of the Club since 2005, containing book and

music reviews, bits of nostalgia, and essays by Club members. Recently the GRTR has morphed into The GRTR Studio Edition which is a fanciful use of the format of old-time radio variety shows, and the popular NPR talk-show "Fresh Air." GRTR brings lively information about entertainment and nostalgia.

Dues: \$20/year (discounts available)

Member Benefits

- Access to our Audio Library (CD and cassette)
- Book and DVD Library
- Radio Recall and GRTR delivered directly to you
- Monthly meetings in the Washington DC area

For more information please visit our web site at www.mwotrc.com or email: membership@mwotrc.com

