

#169

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Radio's Golden Days

THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB

EST. 1975



THE OLD TIME RADIO CLUB
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New member processing-\$2.50 plus club donations of \$17.50 per year from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31 Members receive a tape listing, library list, monthly newsletter, the Illustrated Press, the yearly Memories publication and various special items. Additional family members living in the same household as a regular member may join the club for a \$5.00 donation per year. These members have all the privileges of regular members but do not receive the publications. A junior membership is available to persons 15 years of age or younger who do not live with a regular member. This membership is a \$13.00 donation per year and includes all the benefits of regular membership. Regular membership donations are as follows; If you join in Jan.-Mar. \$17.50--Apr. - June \$14.00--July-Sept. \$10.00 Oct.-Dec. \$7.00. All renewals are due by Jan. 2. Your renewal should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you change your address.

OVERSEAS MEMBERSHIPS are now available. Annual donations are \$29.75. Publications will be airmailed.

The Old Time Radio Club meets the first Monday of every month.

from Aug.- June at 393 George Urban Blvd., Cheektowaga, N.Y. Anyone interested in the "Golden Age of Radio" is welcome. Meetings start at 7.30 P.M.

Club Address

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Cassettes

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Amherst, N.Y. 14226
(716) 837-7747

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Bill Weber
226 Harding Rd.
Williamsville, N.Y. 14221
(716) 634-7021

Reel to Reel 601 & up
Tom Harris
9565 Wehrle Dr.
Clarence, N.Y. 14031
(716) 759-8401

An I.P. Editorial

As you may have already noticed in the Sept. I.P., the article on burnout was somewhat washed out. This was printed out from a computer, and was much too light to get a good copy. IF you should do printouts, please run them through a copy machine (if you have access to one) and darken them, then we can make a better copy. My apologies for this inconvenience.

Lately we have noticed a decline in the amount of fresh material coming in for the I.P.. This is a sign of two things; it's summer yet and it's too darn hot to write, or I'll put my faith in the editor and he'll come through.

The answer to the second part is true, he will come through by making the I.P. a comic book. You want pictures?, you'll get pictures and lot's of them.

We should'nt have to ask for any material, but Refer to Aug. I.P.

LETTERS

It sounds like you have a new "bean counter" at the old corral. He is looking at the beans and indicating that MEMORIES is not paying it's own way.

Before this type of mentality get's too far, please remind the board about what happens at the Newark convention each fall. OTRC members obtain sizable donations from dealers of material for the various lending libraries (reel & cassette) in return for free advertising in memories. I am quite sure that the material recieved in worth in advertising offered in "M" so that OTRC is coming out ahead. However, these "beans" do not show up in the Memories balance sheet and so we are possibly experiencing the reaction of someone who is not familiar with all of the interconnecting relationships between Memories and the lending libraries.

It would be a shame to cut off Memories and then have a more difficult time at the convention obtaining donations from dealers. I strongly suggest that this point be covered before the final decision is made concerning MEMORIES.

Tom Monroe
Lakewood, Ohio

The OTRC is EXTREMELY GRATEFUL for the donations we recieve at the conv., but the "FREE" ads do not pay the bill Memories creates, and, I might add, ads alone are'nt enough to pay for the cover. The treasury pays for "M", and a very large chunk of it too.

Ed.

THE BORN LOSER



EQUIPMENT COSTS

If you read my letter in the June issue of the Illustrated Press, you may remember my mentioning costs of equipment as one of my suggested topics. I just recently wrote about getting started in OTR, and the subject came up again. In fact, it always seems to come up with me. It's one of my pet peeves.

As I mentioned before, I started collecting radio shows with only one reel recorder. Through the years I've been able to replace and add to my equipment, but I certainly didn't start with all of it. I doubt if many people did. But to read the literature put out today about OTR, you begin to believe you must have several tape decks, a couple of equalizers, a computer and who knows what else before you can even copy a tape, or consider yourself a collector.

BULL! I have nothing against someone who has all the latest equipment and uses it to turn out copies better than the originals. But don't try to tell me that if I don't have all this stuff I don't have a genuine interest in OTR and you don't want me around.

I, like most people, was only able, through the years, to spend what was left over from the cost of raising a family, on my hobbies. So there was never a lot of money for OTR. I'm sure most of you have, or had, the same problem. So, when I read about someone who has ten reel tape decks, I envy him, but never expect to equal him. Even second hand, ten decks would ruin my budget for years!

I envy people starting out today. A decent cassette deck is very reasonable, and an outstanding one is not too expensive. In comparison, my first reel recorder, bought in 1950, cost over \$400. At that time, that would be almost two months income for most people. It took me two years to pay for it! Today, a good cassette deck is under

\$200., depending on how much discount you get. That is less than the average weeks salary.

If you're on a budget, (aren't we all?) and just starting out, I'd recommend one of the dual cassette machines. Just buy the best one you can afford. You are now ready to copy any cassette. I'm assuming you already have a stereo of some sort, so you can buy a cassette deck to plug into your system. If you don't have a sound system of any sort, you really have a problem. There are both mono and stereo cassette recorder players that are self contained, but they make poor recordings, and because of the small speakers, they also have poor sound.

OTR was certainly not Hi-Fi, so if you can't afford a complete system, you can use one of the self-contained players for listening, and even copying tapes, but I wouldn't recommend them for copying tapes to trade. Just do the best you can until you can pick up an inexpensive amplifier, speakers and a cassette deck.

Since OTR was all mono and broadcast over AM radiowhere much of the sound was lost, I never saw the need for the expensive chromium tapes. Just use a good normal bias tape. Stay away from the off brand, cheap tapes you often see for sale. Spend a few cents more and buy a known brand. After you try a few, you may find one you prefer.

As your budget permits, you may like to expand to a second cassette deck, a sound equalizer and other components. If your collection grows large enough, you may even consider a computer to enter it all on a data base. Just remember, none of this is necessary, it just adds more demensions to the pleasure of your hobby. Just be glad you're starting out today with cassettes, and you don't have us old timers problem of trying to find reel decks at a decent price. So we can play all the reels we collected through the

Equipment Costs (cont'd)

years.

To sum up, as long as you have a decent sound system, and a decent cassette deck, you are ready for OTR. All the other things are nice, but they aren't necessary to enjoy the shows. After all, that's the object, isn't it?

Jack Palmer

THE END OF THE OPEN REEL RECORDER

So What? No need to contemplate suicide, or worse yet- switch to TV. I've got a solution; the long play cassette recorder. You will see this advertised in each issue of Radio Electronics magazine for about \$120. Using the proper cassette, you can get 6 hours of play on it, which is timed nicely with one full open reel. However all is not so simple (is it ever?) You must match the output cord from reel recorder to input of the cassette recorder (c.r.) Here is where you may need a technician's help, but experimenting can do wonders.

A regular cassette recorder can be made into an LP recorder by inserting a smaller drive (or larger driven) pulley. Also this can be done with a voltage divider (also called a volume control). Here again that serviceman is invaluable. The V.D. of course connects in series with the motor of the C.R., which can vary the speed as much as you want.

I have 2 L.P. cassette recorders- 1. a Panasonic and 2-a Marantz (superscope) which is the better and much smaller. It'll fit in an overcoat pocket and it also plays longer per cassette. I can't locate the dealer who sold me this through the mail years ago. He may be gone by now.

Another optimistic outlook! The erasable C.D. is coming out, in fact I think it was supposed to be out this year, but I find nothing comes out as predicted (air bags, electric car,

fusion power, and I've been waiting 15 years for this one--the flat screen TV). Don't hold your breath.

Another experiment you can do with reel and cassette recorders is change pulleys on both machines, switch drive belts on both so now both machines will play and record at high speed. When the dubbing is over, convert the machines back to the original belts and pulleys for regular speeds.

Good Luck

P.S. Another plus. Look how much space you save with L.P. cassettes. These are beautiful on long trips.

Jack Mandik

Audio Novels-what's it all about

Part 1-----Comments

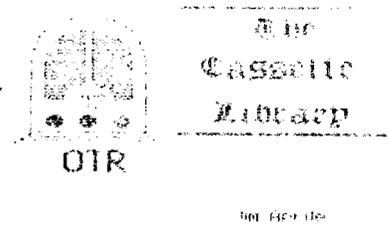
I agree with the I.P. article about Audio novels of August 1990, except the statement "OLD TIME RADIO IS DEAD!" The 1930's, 40's, and 50's were the good old days of radio, but as the song goes "Those are the good old days". From the beginning radio was only a transition to TV. What made radio so good was that the writers and performers had to create a vision in the listener's mind. Once Television came along some of the performers were able to adapt, such as Jack Benny. Most of the rest could not compete in this new medium.

Radio never did die. Today it has to stand on it's own with targeted audiences in music, talk shows, and public information shows. However, drama, comedy and game shows still are being produced and broadcast. The BBC (British Broadcasting Company) every Saturday night, still broadcasts it's "Play of the Week" on it's shortwave world service (6175 Khz) The BBC solicits unpublished plays from it's listeners. CBC (740 Khz) in Toronto, every weekday at noon carries a short contemporary drama. CJRT (91.1 Mhz FM), also in Toronto, every weekday at 10 AM broadcasts

Comments-cont'd

BBC panel games such as "My Word, My Music , One Minute and a comedy", "Yes Minister". We don't have to wait till the weekend to hear an old time radio show on WEBR (970 Khz) in Buffalo. When we look over 40 years of radio shows, we have not recorded very much, and most of it is not of great audio quality. Let's make these the "good old days", by firing up our new high tech recording machines and capturing these gems of the ether.

Martin Braun



Just thought I should list those numbers that are no longer in our library. Here they are...

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I'm looking for any stories on the subject of the Christmas season for the December issue. If you have any of these hidden away, please consider sending them to me for inclusion in the Christmas issue. The Editor thanks you.

Wireless Wanderings



JIM SNYDER

The Mobil Travel Guide to Chicago lists "Chicago's Top Ten Museums." The Museum of Broadcast Communications is one of these. The Guide then goes on and describes twenty museums, including the other nine in the "top ten", but says not another word of the Broadcast Communications Museum; in fact, the address is never given. Last November the Michigan AAA magazine mentioned the gift shop in the Broadcast Museum as being an "excellent" place to shop for unusual Christmas gifts, but the AAA travel books never mention the museum. Anyway, I visited it (at 800 South Wells, by the way) in June. Entrance fee was \$3.00 and I found a number of interesting things inside this very modern building. Just inside were Edgar Bergen's three dummies: Mortimer, Effie and Charlie McCarthy. I was told that Charlie's dummy was the original. Next were three computer terminals on which you could type in a specific program, a type of program (such as comedy), or a topic. I typed in "Jack Benny". There was only one program listed. You could write down the call number, take that to a counter, and check out the appropriate tape (TV or radio) and take it to a listening station. Next was an auditorium with a video presentation. On this particular day it was a salute to CNN's first ten years. Next

was a mini theater showing "100 funny" TV commercials. Another mini-theater was showing the Nixon/Kennedy TV debate from 1960, which was telecast from Chicago. Fibber McGee and Molly were honored with a special display that included bound scripts from 1931 to 1955 and a replica of McGee's closet which you were invited to open. The little kids were having a ball with that. They had a working TV broadcasting studio where you were invited to read the news from a teleprompter and which was complete with film inserts of the items you were reading about. You could then watch and/or purchase the tape of your performance. There was a broadcast booth from which Chuck Schaden broadcasts his "Those Were the Days" old time radio show, each Saturday afternoon over WNIB-WNIZ FM. In addition to these attractions, I found many vintage radio and TV sets on display as well as other display cases of old radio related materials.

A week later I visited the "Lum and Abner Museum and Jot 'Em Down Store" in Pine Ridge, Arkansas, located on highway 86 between Mena and Mt. Ida, Arkansas. This is located in the store originally owned by the real Dick Huddleston, who is mentioned repeatedly in the radio series. The "Jot 'Em Down Store" portion is loaded with the usual souvenir sort of stuff, but it also has some interesting Lum and Abner literature, as well as a large selection of Lum and Abner radio broadcasts on cassette. The museum section, which has a fifty-cent admission fee, contains a lot of old memorabilia not related to the show, as well as pictures, scripts, and other assorted items that were. As it happens, I was there just three days before the National Lum and Abner Society (of which I also happen to be a member) held its annual meeting in nearby Mena. Unfortunately I couldn't stay over for it. I do love the Lum and Abner series and so did enjoy this short

visit. You might also, if you find yourself in west-central Arkansas at some future date.

I might also mention that Dodge City, Kansas continues to "cash in" on its Gun-smoke radio/TV notoriety. The old Front Street section of buildings, now renamed the Boot Hill Museum continues to draw in tourists for its interesting displays. They also feature a gunfight on the street at 7:30 P. M. followed by a variety show in the Long Branch Saloon that features "Miss Kitty". A fun way to spend an evening, if you can arrange an overnight stop there.

Jim Snyder



THE WESTERN ON RADIO: A STUDY OF A GENRE

J. Fred MacDonald, in his Don't Touch That Dial!, called the western "the most underdeveloped popular genre in radio."¹ He noted that although western novels, magazines, and films were popular for years, and despite the fact that the genre "was a purely American product," it "failed to flourish in radio".

Regardless of its failure to flourish, the western was one of the genres that helped to make up the program schedules of old-time radio. This paper will study the western genre from a programming standpoint. It will look at trends that can be detected through the years when westerns were broadcast as one component of radio programming.

Unfortunately, some information about bygone radio programs is difficult to obtain. However, research in three directories of old-time radio--The Big Broadcast, Radio's Golden Years, and Tune in Yesterday -- has provided enough information for some patterns to be discerned. The statistics that follow are based on the information found in those books, unless otherwise noted.

Numbers Through the Years

Using the number of different westerns broadcast each year as an indicator of that genre's popularity, the life cycle of the western on radio can be divided into four fairly distinct periods.

1930-1932

The beginning of the 1930's marked the beginning of the western on network radio. "Death Valley Days" was apparently the first such program. It started on NBC Blue September 30, 1920. It was an anthology; thus it lacked the continuing characters that were to be typical of most later western series. It did, however, provide a starting point.

Another western that started in 1930 on NBC Blue was "Rin Tin Tin". It also differed from most westerns in that the main character was a dog, rather than a human. In 1932, CBS carried its first western, "Bobby Benson's Adventures". This program eventually became known as "Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders". Its central character was a 12-year old boy.

None of these formats was characteristic of what was to come, but an anthology, a dog, and a boy helped to set the stage for the development of more familiar types of westerns.

1933-1944

Westerns began, in 1933, a 12-year period of relative stability in terms of the number broadcast on network radio. During those years, the number of westerns offered ranged from four to six, with an average of five per year.

Perhaps the one program with the greatest impact from this era was "The Lone Ranger". When it premiered on January 30, 1933, it began the concept of the stalwart hero, accompanied by his faithful companion, riding forth to right wrongs and relieve the oppressed. Furthermore, the sharing of that program by several stations led to the formation of

the Mutual Broadcasting System. The show went on to last for 22 years.

After Mutual lost "The Lone Ranger" to the Blue network in 1942, it began carrying "Red Ryder", adapted for radio from a popular comic strip. Although it didn't have the staying power of its predecessor, "Red Ryder" did "hold his own through the 1940's."

Programs based on the exploits of three popular movie cowboys--Tom Mix, Gene Autry and Roy Rogers--also started during this period. The Mix show used his character, but other actors played the starring role. Mix himself "was not interested in working for the low rates paid actors in a daily radio program".

However, Rogers and Autry did appear on their own programs in much the same roles that had made them popular as western film stars. Both were known as singing cowboys, and their shows differed from most other westerns in that they featured music along with action.

All three of the movie stars' shows enjoyed longevity. "The Tom Mix Ralston Straightshooters" ran from 1933 to 1942 and then resumed in 1944 and ran until 1950, on first the Blue network and then on Mutual. "Gene Autry's Melody Ranch" ran from 1940 to 1956, entirely on CBS, and "The Roy Rogers Show" was aired from 1944 through 1955. It was on NBC some years and on Mutual other years.

One other western film star had less success on radio. Buck Jones' Hoofbeats" series began in 1937 and ran for only 39 episodes. It had the disadvantage of being syndicated; thus it lacked network support.

One series changed noticeably in 1944. "Death Valley Days" became "Death Valley Sheriff." Whereas the old program had been an anthology, the new version had continuing characters as it centered around the activities of the sheriff of Canyon County, California.

1945-1955

Westerns hit their popular peak--as measured by the number of them on network radio--between the mid-1940s and the mid-1950s. The eight broadcast in 1945 were the least of any year during that period. Each of the other years had at least 10, with the peak being 14 in 1950.

Some of the older programs continued to be popular, while new ones were added to network schedules. Many new programs (such as "Tennessee Jed", "Straight Arrow" and "Hawk Larabee") lasted just two seasons each; others (such as "Cimarron Tavern" and "The Zane Grey Show") lasted just one season each.

Movies continued to influence western radio programming in this period. William Boyd brought his "Hopalong Cassidy" character (already popular in films and on television) to radio in January of 1950, and the show lasted for several years.

Several other movie stars were featured in radio westerns in the early 1950s, but they did not enjoy the success of Autry, Cassidy and Rogers, who had their own, established characters. "The Six Shooter" starred James Stewart and lasted one season; "Tales of the Texas Rangers" starred Joel McCrea and lasted two seasons. Both were sustained by NBC.

Jeff Chandler also took time out from films to do "Frontier Town" on radio in 1952. It was syndicated, however, and "never received the distribution and popularity in merited".

Two series that began during this period are worthy of note both because they lasted for several years and because they involved variations on the basic old west theme.

"Sergeant Preston of the Yukon" (originally "Challenge of the Yukon") came from the same production crew that put together "The Lone Ranger". Even some of the scripts were modified versions of scripts that had been used on that series. Although it was set in

Canada, the series was a western in style, like "Renfrew of the Mounted", which preceded it, and "The Silver Eagle", which followed it. "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon" endured longer than either of those, as it ran from 1947 to 1955.

The other variation on the basic western was "Sky King". It was apparently the only radio western to use an airplane as a basic means of transportation. The series was popular enough to last from 1946 to 1954.

Another program begun during this period needs to be singled out. "Gunsmoke" has been called "the first realistic western program (that) was successfully developed for adult listeners". It premiered on CBS April 26, 1952.

Trying to devise an exact distinction between adult westerns and juvenile westerns is difficult. Some programs contained elements of both types. One differentiation might be that the former put more emphasis on drama, whereas the latter put more emphasis on action.

MacDonald wrote about the two as follows:

(In) the realistic, adult formulation radio presented the most sophisticated western dramas in its history. In these new westerns the blending of mature plot, fuller human characteristics, and intelligent theme--all enacted according to serious dramatic standards--produced several significant series. Traditionally, the radio western had been produced for juvenile listeners. In its atmosphere of secret identities, action-packed chases, and stalwart heroics, the western suffered for too long from a case of arrested adolescence.

It was unfortunate for radio, however, that just as this new style of program was developing, the medium was losing its listeners to television.

1956-1961

The latter half of the 1950s brought

a sudden drop in the number of westerns on radio. From 1956 until the last western went off the air in 1961, the number of such programs broadcast each year ranged from one to four.

Virtually all westerns introduced during this time were adult-oriented. They included "Fort Laramie", "Frontier Gentlemen", "Luke Slaughter of Tombstone" and "Have Gun, Will Travel". "Fort Laramie" began in 1956; the others all started in 1958. All were on CBS. Of that group, "Have Gun, Will Travel" lasted the longest, as it ran until 1960. It was also something of an oddity in that, while many radio programs, like "Gunsmoke" were moving to television, it was a radio version of a program that began on television.

Unfortunately for network radio, development of westerns for adults came too late to stem the flow of the audience to television. By the time the 1960s arrived, most people who had listened to westerns on radio were watching their counterparts on television.

"Gunsmoke" was apparently the last original western produced for radio. With its final broadcast on June 18, 1961, came the end of the three-decade-long era of the radio western.

Western Programming by Networks

Little variation seems to have existed among networks during the period 1930-1936, as far as westerns are concerned. In each season, each network had one or two westerns, except in 1936, when CBS had three.

From 1937 through 1939, CBS had no westerns, as was the case with NBC Red. NBC Blue had three each year, while Mutual had one. In 1940, CBS re-entered the picture with one western, and it continued to broadcast at least one per season through 1961. The Blue network and Mutual each had at least one western each year through 1942.

During 1943-1945, NBC dropped out as a source of westerns. In the first

two years of that period, CBS and Mutual were the only suppliers of that type of program.

In 1946, Mutual and ABC became the major suppliers of westerns. This trend continued through 1949, as the two networks shared western leadership in two of those years, and ABC led in the other two years. Its increase in western coverage came as it began to establish its own identity after having been one of NBC's networks before that operation was sold.

The next six years, 1950-1955, saw Mutual emerge as the leader in western programming. It broadcast at least five westerns each of those years, with a peak of 10 in 1950. No other network at any time came close to carrying the number of westerns that Mutual had during those years.

Finally, CBS took over domination of western programming from 1956 through 1961. NBC had bowed out of the western market in 1954, and ABC carried its last western in 1955. The final western for Mutual was broadcast in 1956. Thereafter, CBS had the market to itself until it, too, carried its last western in 1961.

Durations of Individual Series

Fewer than one-third of the western programs on radio lasted more than five years. Among the five longest-running series were three based on the exploits of popular western movie cowboys Gene Autry, Tom Mix, and Roy Rogers. Their shows lasted 17 years, 18 years and 12 years, respectively. "Gene Autry's Melody Ranch" may have been unique among radio westerns in that it stayed on one network, CBS, and kept the same sponsor, Wrigley's Gum, for all of the time that it was on the air.

The longest-running western of all on radio was "The Lone Ranger", which lasted from November 27, 1922, to May 27, 1955. It began on Mutual; in 1942, it shifted to the Blue network (later ABC), where it finished its run.

"Death Valley Days", the first radio western, was also one of the longest in

endurance. From its beginning in 1930, it ran until, in 1944, it was replaced by a new program set in Death Valley, but with a different format.

Seven westerns were on the air 6 to 10 years. They were "Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders", "Gunsmoke", "Red Ryder", "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon", "Death Valley Sheriff", "Sky King", and "Wild Bill Hickok".

These longevity listings illustrate the dominance of the juvenile-oriented western over the adult western. "Gunsmoke" was the only adult western to enjoy a life span of 6 years or more. All of the other long-running westerns were aimed at children, although they probably had a number of adult listeners as well.

Conclusion

Although the western never approached the popularity on radio of genres such as comedies and musical programs, it did have a following, as is indicated by the three-decade span over which westerns were broadcast.

The changing emphasis by networks over the years is interesting, particularly in the early 1950s when Mutual carried so many more westerns than its competitors. It is possible that Mutual officials felt that their network had difficulty competing with the other three in other areas. Therefore, they used westerns for some counter-programming.

One topic that might be worthy of study in the future is the effect that radio, movie, and television westerns had on the public's perception of the history of the western United States. Two generations of Americans formed their images of the old West from what they saw and heard from those media. Studying how these mostly fictional stories affected people's attitudes toward the old West might tell something about the effects of mass media on people.

Eddie Blick

THE DEALERS CORNER

by
FRANK C. BONCORE

Hi Tech has finally come to OTR thanks

to Gary & LaDonna Kramer of **GREAT AMERICAN RADIO, BOX 428, MT MORRIS, MICHIGAN, 48458**. You can now call (313) 686-1878 to **FA**X your orders. That's not all. By popular demand, a new **GREAT AMERICAN OLD TIME RADIO CASSETTE CATALOG** featuring over **3000** different cassette listings. In consideration of elderly people like Frank Bork, our elderly librarian emeritus, the new catalog is printed on 100 large 8½ x 11 pages in large easy to read type. An alphabetical program index is also included. Cassettes are available for as low as \$3.50 each in lots of ten. The catalog is also punched out to fit a 3 ring binder not included. The cost of the new catalog is **\$5.00**. Visa or Master Card orders may also be called in at (313) 686-5973 anytime from 9a.m. to 10 p.m. (Eastern Time) **seven days a week (NO COLLECT CALLS)**.

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- 2134, 2135, 2136, all HOST PLANET EARTH (BBC) parts 1-6
- 2152, 2153, BUCK ROGERS OF THE 21st CENTURY
- 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE
- 2186 MR & MRS NORTH
- 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, ALL FRED ALLEN
- 2239, 2240, 2241, SUPERMAN, THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. ROEBLING & THE VOICE MACHINE

Say, **Mr. Dillon**, did you know that **GREAT AMERICAN RADIO** has **95**, count em, **95 cassettes** of **GUNSMOKE** dated from 04-26-53 to 03-25-56? All are included in this months special. 1978 **AN ORSEN WELLES INTERVIEW BY DICK CAVETT**

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A BOOK REVIEW

by
FRANK C. BONCORE

ORSON WELLES
A BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHY

by
BRET WOOD
HARDCOVER
GREENWOOD PRESS 1990

The central concern of this book is the career of Orson Welles, **RADIO, Theatre, and film** and as author of seven books as well as his other Articles, Essays, and Columns.

The book also includes a Discography (list of records made by Orson Welles) as well as a listing of Books and Monographs on Welles, Articles on Welles, A Welles Cronology, a Biographical Sketch of Welles, and some photographs of Welles throughout his career.

If you're an Orson Welles fan, you owe it to yourself to obtain a copy of this well written book. This is worthy to be placed on your shelf next to TUNE IN YESTERDAY and GUNSMOKE.

Quoting the author, "While a few minor works which may have been overlooked, this book represents the first comprehensive guide to Welles' career, more than 1000 entries, catalogued in such detail as space will allow."

Getting back to **Radio**, did you know that Orson Welles has 384 different radio appearances from Hamlet in the fall of 1936 up to and including The Black Museum's "The Walking Stick"? Did you know that Orson Welles did "The Hitchhiker three different times (Lady Esther 11-17-41, Suspence 09-02-42, Mercury Summer Theater 06-21-46)? Did you know that Orson Welles substituted for Jack Benny on the Jack Benny Program (03-14-43, 03-21-43, 03-28-43, 04-04-43, 04-11-43)? Read the book and you'll find out a lot more interesting facts on his brilliant career and why he was called "Master of the Medium."

Orson Welles appeared in 78 films as an actor. Orson Welles narrated 23 films. Orson Welles wrote or edited 46 books. Exclusive of commercial releases of his radio broadcasts, Orson Welles was involved with 16 records. Twenty eight Books or Monographs were written about Welles. Five hundred twenty one articles were written about Welles and published.

Perhaps a better title for this would be "Everything That You Wanted to Know About Orson Welles"

Just one word comes up this book **GREAT !!!!**

P.S. Once again, Thanks a million, Doug, Hide the phone bill from your wife and I'll see you at the Convention.

FCB.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE CLUTTER GETS TO BE TOO MUCH.

ALL OTR collectors over-do it when it comes to our hobby. The shows we collect are only a tiny part of the overall picture. It's those related items that seem to add up and turn into a huge mass that, to you, is a treasure but to anyone else is pure clutter.

You cannot collect OTR shows without recording/playback/dubbing equipment taking up a good portion of your available space and, no matter how well you've planned how you want it to look, it somehow never turns out that way.

Many carefully planned wall units, with everything in it's place and a place for everything, turn out to be a dream for the future... Meanwhile, "Let's just stack this pile of tapes over in the corner!" and, "I think I'll put the new tape deck over here for the time being!"

As your equipment grows (and it r-e-a-l-l-y does!) the problem grows and you start doubling-up units into any available space.

Naturally, at the same time, your collection continues to grow and you have to have room for it! Also, any self-respecting OTR collector HAS to have a supply of blank tape available. (Yes Virginia, this eats up even more space.)

Collectors are strange birds in that they will gather up any item that is even distantly related to the OTR hobby. Photographs, salt & pepper shakers, glasses, plates, cups, old broadcasting equipment, you name it. If it's got a picture of an old radio on it, or is even vaguely in the shape of an old radio... it's fair game and the OTR collector just HAS TO OWN IT!

Pretty soon the walls of your OTR room are starting to bulge and the floor is starting to sag a bit.

But wait! There's more!

Books and magazines!

There are a mountain of them and, once again, the OTR collector just HAS TO OWN every one he can get his hands on. These things can really eat up the space!

About this time your beloved spouse will be giving you some very nasty looks and mumbling under her breath about OTR collecting in general, and you in particular!!!

What with all the tapes, equipment, and assorted paraphernalia, all thoughts of the nice, neat area for your collection have gone out the window. Now it's a case of anything goes. All flat surfaces now have tapes on them! Any shelf space is taken up..with the exception of those fancy shelves that your wife keeps her knick-knacks on. (Hummm, they could hold a lot of tapes, couldn't they?)

Obviously the whole situation is rapidly approaching critical mass. Drastic steps have to be taken...but what?

Maybe you could store the overflow in the cellar but it's like a dungeon, and the attic gets hot enough to melt tapes. You could keep some in the garage but the overhead door is stuck open and has been for years!

Without your wife knowing about it you've been storing stacks of tapes under the bed but now it's getting lumpy and pretty soon she is gonna find out! Hoo-Boy, is there going to be trouble!!! Maybe if you leave town right now you can avoid being killed!

Fortunately there is a solution but I cannot tell you about it because I just ran out of space.

OH, THE HORROR OF IT ALL

by Bob Davis

If there was one thing that OTR could do very well it was doing stories that could make you check under your bed at night to see if there were any "things" dwelling there. You knew there weren't... but you checked anyway!

Horror stories go way back in history and never seem to go out of favor as popular entertainment.

OTR would, with spoken words and sound effects, provide the basic structure for the tale...and your imagination would fill in the rest, sometimes adding details and moods that sprang from the depths of your own experiences and personality.

Your imagination could often take a somewhat mediocre presentation and create mind images that would make your skin crawl.

For some OTR shows it was Halloween all year long. They became so adept at it that, even though a half-century has passed, the stories remain firmly etched in the memories of even those not deeply involved in OTR.

How many of you remember the Lights Out story about the "Chicken Heart" that grew, and grew, and grew? Or, how about the one called "The Dark" in which still-living people were turned inside-out? (Yuck!)

A show that presented horror in a more subtle style was Suspense.

Usually it was a story that started out innocently enough- but grew in intensity until you were hooked so strongly that there was no way you'd even think of tuning out.

Think back to when you first heard "The Hitch-Hiker", or "Three Skeleton

Key" (you know, the one about the RATS!!). This was scary stuff and probably caused many cases of greatly disturbed sleep.

Suspense (bless their heart) also did their versions of such horror classics as "Occurance at Owl Creek Bridge", "The Signalmann", "The Pit and The Pendulum", and the granddaddy of them all.. "Frankenstein". They did "Frankenstein" twice, one with Herbert Marshall and the other with Stacy Harris. Both are excellent.

Suspense's sister show Escape also did their share of creepy material. One that is pretty much unknown, but nevertheless a real grabber, is the stunning "Evening Primrose". Really good "stuff"!

Yet another Escape story not to miss is "Blood Bath". There's no subtle presentation here. It hits you with the force of a sledge hammer and doesn't let up until the end. You are faced with a continuous flow of nightmare giving situations.

Piranha Fish, six-foot-long Electric Eels, and a deadly Boa Constrictor.., plus the wonderfully frightening voice of Vincent Price! Perhaps the most chilling part of this story is when Price's narrative explains just how Vampire Bats (real ones!) go about their business of drinking blood!!!

Another horror classic of OTR was broadcast on both Escape and Suspense and is titled "Zero Hour". It concerns itself with the takeover of the world one summer's day by alien creatures..with the aid of Earth's small children;



(Horror-continued)

Various series have tried their hands at the horror genre and a few did memorable jobs. Everyone remembers the Orson Welles version of "The War of the Worlds" but neglect the fact that an outstanding presentation of "Dracula" was also done. A moody and chilling show if there ever was one.

OTR has used every creature, real or imagined, as fodder for stories aimed at scaring you. It's gone into outer space, the bottom of the seas, and the deepest caverns of the Earth to come up with just the right "thing" to accomplish this. They've raised the dead, had dealings with the devil, and created life where no life was before, all in an effort to make your nerves tingle.

BUT two of the best in OTR horror shows needed none of this.

The first needed only an invalid woman and a telephone. Naturally we are talking about "Sorry, Wrong Number" which, while not generally considered a horror story, actually is. It was on Suspense and starred Agnes Moorehead in an acting tour-de-force.

The same combination of Suspense and Moorehead also gave us "The Whole Town's Sleeping" which was a masterpiece of understated horror.

Inner Sanctum's "Corridor of Doom" is another you shouldn't miss. It's a superior story greatly enhanced by the acting of Boris Karloff and, although uncredited, Richard Widmark.

Also from Inner Sanctum is the story of a window dresser who kills someone and "hides" the body in one of his window displays as a mannequin. The problem is that it's hot outside and getting getting hotter! The story is titled "The Lonely Sleep" and Karl Swensen stars.

An out and out, full blown, hard core horror presentation that you might never have even heard of is a show produced in Peoria, Illinois. It's from a series(?) called Radio One Drama and is titled "The Peoria Plague". Be warned - this is very strong horror, possibly the most violent and gut-wrenching in the history of radio. Take "The Night of the Living Dead" and mix it with "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" and you'll have a slight idea of what this one is like.

Although the show has no nasty language it abounds with extremely nasty situations that border, at times, on the limits of good taste.

Flat-out horror fans will love this particular show although it might be somewhat difficult to find because it wasn't a network program.

One of the most imaginative of all horror stories was broadcast on Escape when it did "How Love Came To Professor Guildea". In this one an invisible "thing" falls in love with a professor and, at one point, kisses him on the INSIDE OF HIS MOUTH!!! (Double Yuck!!!)

It would be impossible to list all the horror type shows available to OTR collectors but we will list a few that are highly recommended.

- SUSPENSE- The House in Cyprus Canyon.
- " - On a Country Road
- " - The Waxwork..w/H.Marshall
- " - The Dunwich Horror
- LIGHTS OUT- Revolt of the Worms
- ESCAPE- Poison
- QUIET PLEASE- The Thing on the Fourble Board

Maybe we've left out mentioning some of your favorites. If so, why don't you drop us a line here at the I.P. and list your favorite top 10 shows.

Like Arch Oboler sez...
"Turn out your lights"...
and enjoy!!!

A & C, THE CLASSIC ROUTINE

In 1938 Abbott and Costello made the leap from vaudeville to radio by becoming regulars on the Kate Smith Hour. This led to guest shots with Edger Bergen, and finally to their own long running show in 1942. One of the staples of their program was the slapstick routine, and of the many such routines that they developed was the classic "Who's on First?". Here then is the classic routine of the classic team/

Abbott: All right, Lou. I'm the manager of a brand-new baseball team.

Costello: Great. I would like to join your team.

Abbott: Oh, you would.

Costello: I would like to know some of the guy's names on the team so if I play with them, I'll know them ... or if I meet them on the street or at home I can say, "Hello" to them.

Abbott: Oh, sure. But you know baseball players have funny names ... peculiar names ... nowadays.

Costello: Like what?

Abbott: Well, like Dizzy Dean ... and Daffy Dean ...

Costello: Oh, yeah, a lot of funny names. I know all those guys.

Abbott: Well, let's see now. We have on our team; we have Who's on first ... What's on second ... I Don't Know's on third ...

Costello: That's what I want to find out, the guys' names.

Abbott: I'm telling you. Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third ...

Costello: You're going to be the manager of the baseball team?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: You know the guys' names?

Abbott: Well, I should.

Costello: Will you tell me the guys' names on the baseball team?

Abbott: I say Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know's on third ...

Costello: You ain't saying nothing to me yet. Go ahead, tell me.

Abbott: I'm telling you! Who's on first, What's on second and I Don't Know is on third.

Costello: You know the guys' names on the baseball team?

Abbott: Yeah.

Costello: Well, go ahead! Who's on first?

Abbott: Yeah.

Costello: I mean the guy's name.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy playing first.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy playing first base.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy at first base.

Abbott: Who is on first.

Costello: What are you asking me for?

I don't know. I'm asking you who's on first.

Abbott: That's his name.

Costello: Well, go ahead and tell me.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy on first.

Abbott: That's it. That's his name.

Costello: You know the guy on first base?

Abbott: Sure.

Costello: Well, tell me the guy's name on first base.

Abbott: Who.

Costello: The guy playing first base.

Abbott: Who is on first, Lou.

Costello: What are you asking me for?

Abbott: Now don't get excited. I'm saying Who ...

Costello: I'm asking a simple question. Who's on first?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: Go ahead and tell me.

Abbott: That's it.

Costello: That's who?

Abbott: Yes.

Costello: I'm asking you what's the guy's name on first base?

Abbott: Oh, no. What's on second.

Panic In Quito

In 1947, nine years after the world had laughed its head off at the hysterical Americans, two years after the defeat of the Axis countries, Radio Quito in Ecuador dramatized "The War of the Worlds" all over again, substituting Ecuadorian place names for Howard Koch's New Jersey and H. G. Wells's English countryside. Whatever the parallel social traumas in Ecuador may have been, the initial reaction was the same as in the United States. Multitudes poured out of the city in all directions, running and driving as far and as fast as they could.

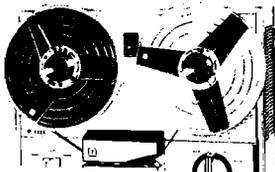
According to Emilio Yscuendo, chargé d'affaires at the Ecuadorian Embassy in Washington, "There was real panic throughout the city; everybody was terrified ... almost everybody who heard the broadcast believed the news to be true, and many claimed that no other information had been given previously. That was why they were so angry at the station." Once listeners discovered the program had been a dramatization, they were so angry at the radio station — the oldest in Ecuador — that they burned it to the ground. Two people are known to have died, one of them in the station building when it was set on fire. Since then, nobody anywhere has broadcast "The War of the Worlds" without strong warning labels.

THE REEL LIFE

by Tom Harris

#815 MIX

WHISTLER
Desert Reckoning
Sellout
Stolen Murder
ELLERY QUEEN
Three Frogs
WHISTLER
Dark Patterns
Double Exposure
BABY SNOOKS
Circus
FRED ALLEN -5-12-46
SINCLAIR HEADLINER- 7-26-45
SUPERMAN 3-20-45
3-21-45
3-27-45



WHISTLER

Sea Escape
#916 ALDRICH FAMILY
Homer Not Invited to Dinner
Henry's Girlfriend Jealous of
Homer
New Year's Eve Ball
Henry's Tuxedo
New Hat
Henry's Theatre Date
Homer Engaged
Henry Falls for Helan Forbes
Henry Loses His Wetch
Henry Spends Day with Dad
Lost Phono
Babysittin

#817 EDDIE CANTOR SHOW

- -44 w/Joan Davis
10-4-44 w/Gloria DeHaven
10-11-44 w/Martha Ray
10-18-44 w/Esther Williams
10-25-44 w/Harry's New Baby
11-8-44 Elections
11-25-44 New Apartment
11-22-44 w/Alan Ladd
11-29-44 w/Joe Kelly
12-6-44 Harry Quits
12-13-44 Eddie Finds Harry

#817-con't

12-20-44 Christmas Show
#818 CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ
Parts 1-8
819 CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ
Parts 9-15
#820 MIX
CFRB-Toronto-30th Anniversary
CBC WEDNESDAY NIFGT
7-31-63 A feeling of Power
GREEN HORNET
Devil's Playground
CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LOWER
BASIN STREET 7-14-40
INNER SANCTUM
Musical score

Wailing Wall
AS TIME GOES BY w/Foster Hewitt
X MINUS ONE Mats is Heaven
BOSTON BLACKIE Fielding Diary
X MINUS ONE
Surface Tension
Sense of Wonder

#821 CHARLES BOYER

6-20-50
6-27-50
7-11-50
7-18-50
7-25-50
8-1-50
#822 MIX
CHARLES BOYER
8-8-50
8-15-50
?

10-26-50
CONFESSION
8-23-53
8-30-53

#823 MIX

ZERO HOUR
Wife of the Red-Haired Man
Desperate Witness
RUM RUNNERS
Thoreau Enthusist
Digby Chicks

AUDIO BOOKS..WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUTPART 3

Audio Books are available in most record and book stores but those aren't the only outlets for them. There are other ways to get them... Here are a few.

ORDER THEM BY PHONE...Most of the audio book companies have toll-free phone numbers which you can call to order their titles.

An up-to-date credit card is required if you wish to order in this manner. You may also request their current catalogs by calling this number. Most of them, unless huge in size, are free for the asking.

RENT THEM...Yes Virginia, rent them! Some audio books are so lengthy that they require the use of many cassettes and, frankly, are expensive for the average listener to buy. The companies know that the prices are high and sometimes out of reach so they make it possible to rent them (usually no less than 30 days at a time) for a much reduced price.

After the order is taken, the companies, most notably RECORDED BOOKS INC., BOOKS ON TAPE, and BOOKS IN MOTION, package the tapes and mail them to you. When you are done with them you just put them back in the box they came in, seal it, and drop it into a mail box.

The box will already have the postage on it along with the address. It's all very simple and could not be easier.

Renting tapes allows you to enjoy those stories that can, and do, run many, many hours in length. These multi-cassette are not usually available at the record or book stores which tend to keep their shelves stocked with titles that run 3 hours or less in length.

Another way to rent audio books

is from certain Video Rental Stores but this is brand new and you might have to search for one that can help you. It's worth a try.

BORROW THEM...Almost all public libraries are now carrying audio books for the public to borrow and listen to in their homes. They usually have both the shorter, abridged stories and the longer, multi-cassette, unabridged stories although this may vary from branch to branch.

This, of course, is the ideal way to get audio books because borrowing from a library is free. The drawback is that the audio books must be returned when you are done with them and cannot become part of your permanent collection. This also is true when renting them.

Some of the library branches (the bigger ones) will have hundreds of titles to pick from while the smaller branches may have only a few on hand.

Librarians I've talked with have said that audio books are the hottest thing they've got going right now and we can expect the number of available titles to increase dramatically.

Each library has it's own practice in lending tapes but the most common one is that if a particular story is 4 or less cassettes it's due back in 7 days. If the title consists of more than 4 tapes it's due back in 28 days.

Check with your library to see what their practice is, and how many cassettes you can take at one time. Normally it's 10.

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..The Back Page..

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TAPE LIBRARY RATES: All reels and video cassettes - \$1.25 per month; cassettes and records - \$.50 per month. Postage must be included with all orders and here are the rates: For the U.S.A. and APO, \$.60 for one reel, \$.35 for each cassette and record; \$.75 for each video tape

CANADIAN BRANCH: Rental rates are the same as above, but in Canadian funds. Postage: Reels 1 or 2 tape \$1.50; 3 or 4 tapes \$1.75. Cassettes: 1 or 2 tapes \$.65; for each additional tape and \$.25.

REFERENCE LIBRARY: A reference library exists for members. Members should have received a library list of materials with their membership. Only two items can be borrowed at one time, for a one month period. Please use the proper designations for materials to be borrowed. When ordering books include \$2.00 to cover rental, postage and packaging. Please include \$1.00 for other items. If you wish to contribute to the library, the OTRC will copy material and return the originals to you. See address on page 2. Please include \$25 refundable security deposit for each book borrowed.

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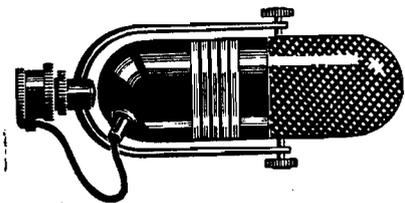


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