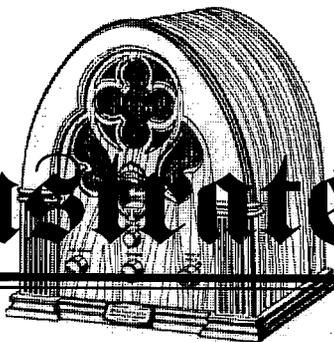


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press



Number 320

May 2004



J. Carrol Naish

The Illustrated Press

Membership information

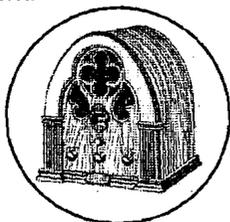
New member processing, \$5 plus club membership of \$17.50 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$17.50; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December,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

Club Mailing Address

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56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, NY 14086

E-Mail Address:

otrclub@localnet.com



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

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

The Illustrated Press is a monthly newsletter of the **Old Time Radio Club**, headquartered in Western New York State. Contents except where noted are copyright © 2004 by the OTRC.

**Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters,
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c/o Ken Krug, Editor (716) 684-5290
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Libraries

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Reference Library

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209 Cleveland Drive
Cheektowaga, NY 14215

Library Rates: Video cassettes are \$1.85 per month; audio cassettes are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette** which is **retained** by the member; records are \$.85 per month. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.



BOOK REVIEWS

Radio Live! Television Live!

*Those Golden Days When
Horses Were Coconuts*

by ROBERT L. MOTT

Reviewed by **JERRY COLLINS**

Many books and articles about "Old Time Radio" have been written by fans of radio, people like myself who have only had an indirect connection with the medium. Bob Mott, on the other hand, takes us behind the scenes to recreate the days when radio and television shows were performed live and he was a very important part of it.

Robert Mott was a World War II vet who used his GI Bill benefits to earn a degree in radio writing. He was subsequently hired by CBS in 1951 as a sound effects specialist. For more than three decades Mott would work as both a writer and sound effects man on both radio and television. He would then serve on some of radio and television's best programs. The book is replete with a multitude of humorous stories from Mott's career in broadcasting. This is also the story of cameramen and sound engineers as well as writers and sound effects men.

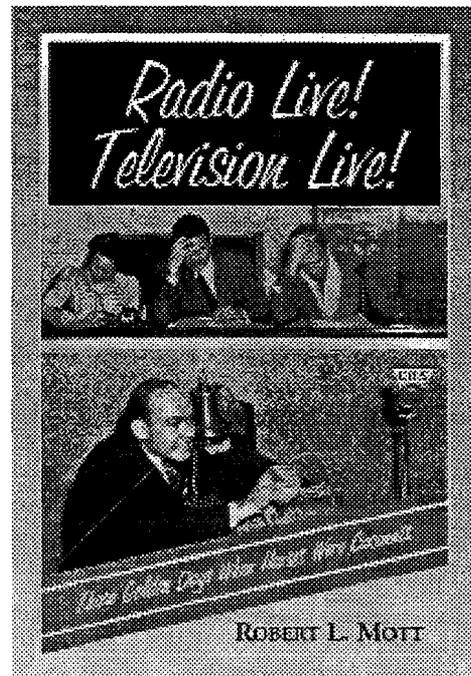
As one might expect Bob Mott worked for people with widely different personalities and work habits. He also worked under some very primitive conditions. The stages would be extremely hot because of the bright lights. Glasses were not permitted because of glare and reflections. If a woman's nipples were visible through her dress bandages were used to cover them. Leather heeled shoes for men and high-heeled shoes on women were not permitted unless they were taped.

The Captain Kangaroo Show was largely unrehearsed. Many of Bob Keeshan's actions were preceded by hand signals. Unfortunately an inexperienced boom operator did not react immediately to one of those hand signals and took the Captain's wig off during one episode.

The lack of good theater space created almost insurmountable problems for some of TV's live shows. The early episodes of *The Captain Kangaroo Show* were broadcast from a former German beer hall. The theater was so crowded that the sound effects equipment was practically on stage. In the next theater the sound effects room was located in the basement, adjacent to the subway and the ladies room. One could only imagine the problems that resulted.

An appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* could do wonders for your career. Unfortunately cheapness, lack of organization and some very bizarre statements by Ed Sullivan led to some embarrassing situations for his guests. Bob Mott as well as many other support personnel found it very difficult to write and do sound effects for Ed Sullivan.

Things were radically different on *The Gary Moore Show*. The show was extremely organized. In addition Gary Moore was very talented and extremely bright. When partnered with Jimmy Durante on radio and Durward Kirby perfect matches were made.



Things could be tense on *The Jackie Gleason Show*. A director mildly complained that Gleason had moved off his mark. Gleason replied that the camera had wheels and he was the star. "Just who in the hell do you think is going to move their ass?" In one episode of *The Honeymooners* Jackie Gleason skipped two pages of the script. As a co-star, sound engineer or sound effects man, what do you do now?

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When Bob Mott was hired to write pantomime for the Red Skelton Show, he was not aware of the fact that he would never be permitted to meet with nor talk to Skelton. If he did, more than likely he would be fired.

Both Ray Erlenborn and Barney Beck along with Bob Mott have been frequent guests at the Friends of Old Time Radio Convention in Newark, New Jersey. Their careers are discussed in Bob Mott's book.

There are many other fascinating stories and anecdotes that I have not included. If you want more read Radio Live! Television Live! By Bob Mott, published by McFarland and Company.

240 Pages, Softcover (7 x 10)

53 Photographs, Appendix, Bibliography, Index

Price \$35, Postpaid Price \$39

Published by McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers

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www.mcfarlandpub.com

PRIVATE EYELASHES

radio's lady detectives

by JACK FRENCH

Reviewed by JIM SNYDER

When most of us think of radio's detectives such names as Sherlock Holmes, Johnny Dollar, Sam Spade, Richard Diamond, Philip Marlowe, Boston Blackie, Nick Carter, and several other males come to mind. These were the so called "private eyes." In a clever play on that caption, this book by Jack French tells us about radio's female detectives, the "private eyelashes."

The book tells us the story of forty-four of these female sleuths. I strongly suspect that you have never heard of some of these ladies, or even of radio shows on which they appeared, but Jack tells us of the programs and the various characters in an interesting and fun narrative. He has divided his chronicle into nine chapters more or less categorizing how these ladies fit into the crime solving business. I think that it is worth while here to mention these nine chapters and what they tell us:

THE FIRST LADIES goes back into radio's earliest days and tells us of some of the pioneering shows and the women detectives that they featured.

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT tells us of the women who were themselves in charge of their detective agency or investigative service.

THE BETTER HALVES deals with the couples involved in detection where the wife was an equal partner with her husband.

PARTNERS IN CRIME discusses those unmarried couples that worked as a team Margot Lane and The Shadow would be an example of this.

A NOSE FOR NEWS . . . AND CLUES put the ladies in some news gathering medium where they would try to get the scoop on some crime for their editor.

ME AND MY GAL FRIDAY is about those women who assisted their bosses or boyfriends such as the way that Delia Street assisted Perry Mason.

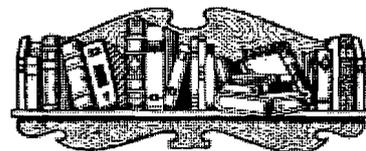
WELL, JUST FOR LAUGHS mentions four ladies who solved crimes with their very zany deductions

MORE THAN JUST A SECRETARY speaks of those who did more than just take dictation. These ladies were very involved in helping their boss solve the crime.

AND THE WINNER IS "Candy Matson, Yukon 2-8209." The author feels that this was "the best radio series featuring a lady detective," and so the final chapter of the book is devoted to this series.

This is Jack French's first book. He has long been known for his writing talents in the old time radio field. He has written articles for many of the various OTR publications for over 27 years. He is currently the editor of *Radio Recall*, the publication of the Metro Washington Old Time Radio Club, a position he has held for over eleven years. He is one of the most knowledgeable historians in the radio field but that knowledge is always backed up by very careful research. His writing is always "down to earth" and enjoyable, as well as informative.

This soft cover publication runs 230 pages and is profusely illustrated. The price is \$18.95 plus \$2 postage. It can be ordered from BearManor Media, PO Box 750, Boalsburg, PA 16827. It can be ordered online at www.bearmanormedia.com Or if you prefer, you can order with a credit card at (814) 466-7555.





Eddie "Rochester" Anderson

By Tom Cherre

Edmund Lincoln Anderson was born in Oakland, California on September 18, 1905. His parents, Big Ed and Ella Mae were circus aerialists and vaudeville performers. When Eddie was only twelve years old he contracted a severe case of laryngitis after shouting all day selling newspapers on a San Francisco street corner. His voice eventually came back, but it remained scratchy and raspy for the rest of his life.

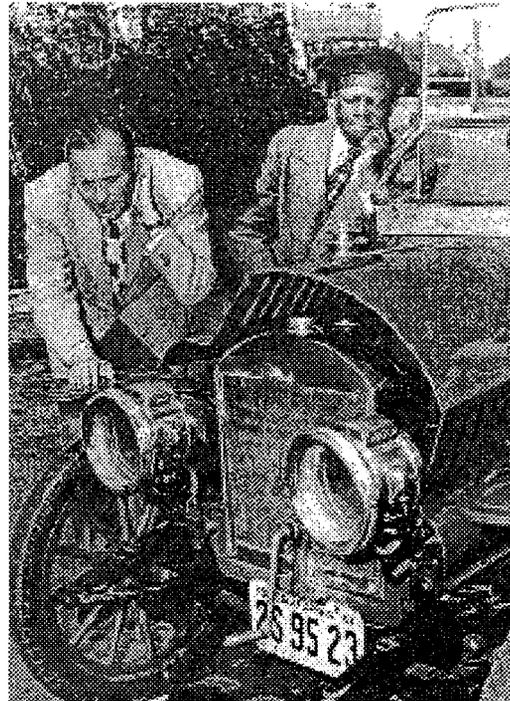
Eddie Anderson began working on the vaudeville circuit in a song and dance team with his brother Cornelius. He then joined the "Black Aces", a vocal group and toured with a musical group called the "California Collegians" which included a then unknown future actor, Fred MacMurray. Anderson also worked in nightclubs for a while before landing his first movie role in 1932's *What Price Hollywood*.

In the very early pre-Rochester episodes of *The Jack Benny Show* when Jack was moving from New York to Hollywood, the writers worked in the character of a Pullman porter. He was a traditional Black with yessuhs, and all the other stereotypes. On top of all this, Benny Rubin, from New York was used to play this character. In those days the shows were done live before a studio audience, and it was a bit difficult for people to laugh at a White portraying a Black. Jack Benny immediately set upon a search to find a good Black character actor. Five people auditioned for the role and Anderson was hired and chosen for a one shot deal as a porter on Easter Sunday 1937. He was paid \$75.00 for two or three minutes work, and he was great. Five weeks later he did another porter sketch, and he was sensational. They then decided to write him in as a permanent member of the cast, and he was converted to Jack's butler.

Benny gave him the name "Rochester" because he liked the sound and felt it had that classy English touch. Jack's neighbor, Benita Coleman, wife of Ronald, never could quite remember Rochester's name and forever afterwards referred to him as Manchester. Originally it was

Rochester Van Jones, but soon became just Rochester. Soon Rochester was drawing close to 2000 fan letters a week acting as Jack's butler, valet, cook, chauffeur, house cleaner, and just about everything else. Within two years Eddie Anderson was earning \$150,000 a year, and this was back in 1940.

The relationship between Benny and Rochester was much that of servant and master. However, there were few complaints from either Blacks or Whites, possibly because Rochester usually came out on top in all their confrontations. Occasionally jokes delivered by both Rochester and Benny were based on stereotypes. A few listeners were annoyed by Rochester addressing Benny as boss. Conversely some felt Rochester was too much in control. Even though Jack was the boss, Rochester was really calling the shots.



Anderson continued to make movies while appearing on the Benny Show. Some of his film credits include *Jezebel* with Bette Davis, *You Can't Take It With You* with Jimmy Stewart, and *Thanks for the Memory* with Bob Hope. He even made a couple with his boss Jack Benny and Bing Crosby. He also appeared as Uncle Peter in the Oscar winning classic *Gone With the Wind*.

Slowly Rochester's character got smaller and began to fade in the program. During a rehearsal in 1958 Anderson suffered a severe heart attack, which left him with permanent speech and hearing defects. By the 60s characters like Rochester were nearing an end. The por-

The Illustrated Press

trayal of White master and Black servant even in comedy was drawing more complaints than laughs. This stereotype could no longer be accepted.

Eddie Anderson's last appearance was in 1963 as a cab driver in *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, World*. Anderson's role as Jack's cantankerous butler could never be duplicated. Anderson was loved by just about all who knew him. His voice was one of the most recognizable in all of the entertainment world. When Anderson was asked to sign an autograph, he usually just signed Rochester. He was honored by the Black Film Makers Hall of Fame in 1975. He was once heard to say he wouldn't trade his raspy voice away for a million dollars. Eddie Anderson "Rochester" was 71 when he passed away on February 28th 1977 in Los Angeles.

Mr. District Attorney

"Champion of the people! Guardian of our fundamental rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness!"

June, 1943

Mr. District Attorney is now four years old, and in its time it has received the applause of J. Edgar Hoover and most of the district attorneys throughout the country. A quick glance behind the mike at the people who make up this show might turn up something interesting.

Jay Jostyn, the star, is as smooth and suave a prosecutor as ever sent a man to the hot seat. Tall, polished, handsome enough to make any feminine heart skip a beat, he plays a part as though born in the character. This is easy enough if you don't do many of them, but around the studios they sometimes tell you about the time Jostyn appeared as 48 different characters in 38 script shows all in one week.

Born in Milwaukee, Jostyn went to Marquette University, then entered the dramatic school at Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. When he joined a stock company at nineteen, the director told him: "You got out of dramatic school just in time. Try to forget what you've learned." He did, replacing it with actual road experience throughout the far West and Canada. A radio executive in Los Angeles who had his eyes tightly closed and his ears wide open caught one of his shows, and that's how he happened to get started in radio. Many engagements followed in Los Angeles, Chicago,



Jay Jostyn, the D.A. who terrorizes the criminal heart.

Cincinnati, and then New York. Many shows, *Mary Sothorn*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Renfru of the Mounted*, *Home Sweet Home*, *Second Husband*, plenty of others, wherever they needed a fine actor.

It's hard for a man with light brown hair and clear blue eyes to look like a villain, but he doesn't get many of those roles these days. Cultured and quiet, a lover of Shakespeare and good music, he is fond of people with a similar background. He has other likes, including roast lamb, turquoises, the theatre, and a relaxed hour at the Lambs Club of New York, where he is a member.

Len Doyle, who does the D.A.'s man Friday, started his acting career twenty years ago in a glass factory, where he worked to earn money for a bicycle. He needed the bike to get to the theatre in a nearby town. He was born in Toledo, Ohio, but his parents moved to Port Jervis, N. Y., when Len was very young, and he still considers the latter his home town. The people in Port Jervis have never disputed it. He gets his detective accuracy by hanging around police stations, listening to the cops talk and getting a preview of the lineup. He's married to the former Agnita Lahey, and their two children are Jerry and Lee. He likes boating, hunting and fishing, and has offered his 42-foot motor launch, and his services, to the Navy. He hopes they'll let him do patrol duty. Eugene O'Neill and Jack London do duty with him as favorite authors, the other one being Jerry Devine, who scripts *Mr. District Attorney*.

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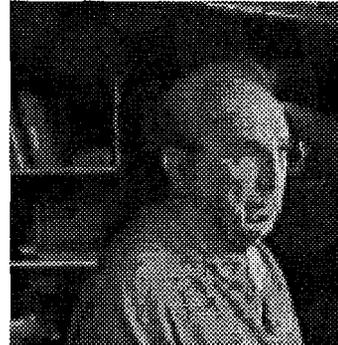
Vicki Vola, Len Doyle and Jay Jostyn in a moment of concentration that certainly bodes no good for malefactors.

Vicki Vola, the D.A.'s girl Friday, (that makes two Fridays in one week), is young and pretty and rejoices in the real name of Victoria. French father, Italian mother, which gives her a fluency in both those languages, in addition to three others. She likes dancing, swimming and tennis, and attends many concerts. As for what she looks like, you can tell from the picture. The eyes and hair are brown, and the disposition is marvelous.

A very interesting trio, bent on legal vengeance. Crime marches on! Jostyn, Doyle and Vola cause it to limp a bit.



The D.A.'s girl Friday in a blissful and untroubled moment.



Long Time Member Ray Olivieri Passes Away

Ray Olivieri a long time local member of The Old Time Radio Club expired on April 10th. Along with collecting OTR on tape he was an avid comic book collector. We extend our condolences to his family and know that he will be sorely missed at our local meetings.



RADIOLDIES

by DAN MARAFINO

This time out I'm not going to deal with a particular artist or program, rather I'll ask how far can this hobby go? In the beginning there was vinyl, the sixteen inch size record we used to pull out of the dumpster when the radio station was done with them. Just jump in and pull out whatever you can, no charge. Now those with foresight took the opportunity to record these records on to tape. In this case the tape was on a reel to reel machine. Granted, the early machines left a lot to be desired but the recordings were adequate for the time. The quality of tape at the time was O.K., it would get better as time passed as would the machine.

Enter a new machine. The cassette recorder. In most cases smaller than a reel machine and with new (and improved) components. Better heads for recording and playback, better sound and a cassette you could put in your pocket and play in your car. Now you had a choice as to your personal preferences, you could listen to the radio or listen to YOUR radio.

But wait, here comes another challenger. The CD or compact disc took about the same amount of space as

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a cassette but had supposedly better sound. I doubt this claim, but that's just me. In turn the CD gave birth to the latest and greatest, as far as the amount of OTR shows they can hold, the MP3 disc. I'm only talking about radio shows here, CDs hold two half hour shows, maybe four fifteen minute shows, MP3s go from one to one hundred and fifty, depending on the length of the shows. This is a lot of entertainment, definately more bang for your buck.

So, what's next? Wire? transistor size units? Micro chips with thousands of shows on them? Don't laugh, it is technologically within the realm of possibility. The only thing I can say is let's all hang around and see for ourselves what we have to buy.

Maybe 8 track will make a comeback.

The Cassette Library

Old librarians never die . . . they just become p.o.m.'s (plain ordinary members). So it's back to just being one of the guys again and not have a care in the world. Yeah, right. I'll still be as active as ever but it will be buying and trading for the MP3s. One never stops "collecting" in this hobby.

Continuing on with the tape library, after a couple or so years of doing it, I have to say it's been a real pleasure even if I didn't get overwhelmed with orders, I still enjoyed doing it. Unfortunately space limitations dictated what I could and could not handle, and the amount of boxes of tapes, around 33, was to much to handle.

So now I get to pass the library on to fellow member Frank Bork, who jumped at the chance to do it. Frank will, I'm sure, give his usual 100% effort. One final word before I pass the torch; if there is anything anyone is looking for and can't find in the library, ask us, the members. Our personal collections are quite large and we may be able to help you. Remember you can always put your requests in the *I.P.* Don't forget snail mail and E-mail. Hey, you never know.

Dan Marafino
Ex-librarian

NEW RADIO TIME "WE, THE PEOPLE"

TONIGHT AND EVERY THURSDAY
9:30 ON STATION WHAM



"We, The People"—TV continues
every Friday at 8:00—Channel 6

Dan Seymour, M. C.—Gulf Bradley Oak.



Brace Beemer, shown in a typical "Lone Ranger setting."

"Hi Yo Silver"

THE LONE RANGER INCREASES IN POPULARITY
WITH EVERY PASSING YEAR

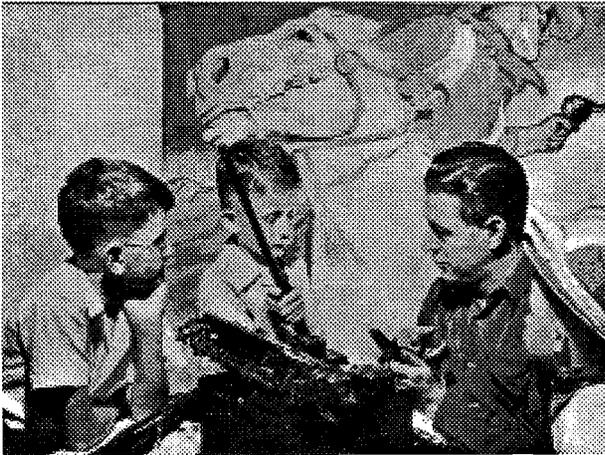
June 1943

The Lone Ranger first rode into the hearts of the children, and many of the adults, of America in January, 1933. George Washington Trendle, the program's owner, has netted more than a million dollars out of him. Not to mention the good-sized fortune and the ever-growing income that has fallen to the lot of the show's sripter, Fran Striker.

When Trendle's rather small station needed the peping up a hard riding cowboy could inject, Fran Striker was asked to think one up.

The sripter, at that time, was turning out fifty thousand words a week. That adds up to six books the size of "Gone With The Wind" each year. Tireless Fran Striker took it on, and the masked hero has been riding six nights a week for ten years on material supplied by a writer with apparently boundless imagination and invention. The program caught on at once, and Striker moved himself and family to Detroit, where he also turns out such programs as *The Green Hornet* and *Ned Jordan, Federal Ace*. The one-man writing combine has three assistants, and guides the destinies of the Lone Ranger through a daily and Sunday cartoon appearing in a hundred and fifty newspapers. He has spare time, too, and has used it to turn out nine full length novels and a score of ten cent books. "Hi Yo Silver!" has become an American slogan, familiar even to those who

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Fran Striker, who scripts the Lone Ranger, deserts his typewriter to explain the details of an old six-shooter to his three sons.

haven't listened to the program. Reports from the fighting fronts indicate our tough Yanks use it often as a battle cry.



John Todd, has been playing Tonto for the past ten years.

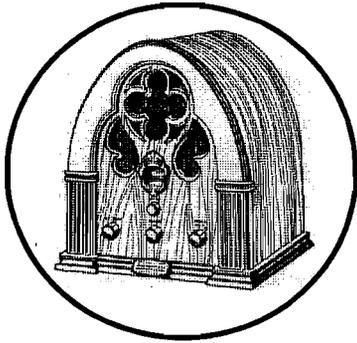
Brace Beemer, six feet three inches, is every inch the Lone Ranger that he plays. Never drinks, smokes, chews or uses a cuss word, either as the Lone Ranger or as Beemer. Never appears in public performance without his mask and lives as simple and unadorned a private life as any Robin Hood. Born in Mount Carmel, Illinois, volunteered for military service at the age of fourteen and got away with it. Saw action at Argonne and Luneville with the Rainbow Division. Twice wounded, stout-hearted Beemer won the military order of the Purple Heart. Married, he lives with his family, which includes three boys and a girl, on his farm near Rochester, Michigan. Raises saddle horses and thoroughbreds. The modern Robin Hood lives quietly on the rewards and emoluments that come to a popular crusader, and will probably ride the range profitably for a long time to come, for authentic figures indicate a listening public of over twenty million, a public whose interest never falters.

LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE CASSETTE LIBRARY

- 3361 Escape "The Man Who Stole The Bible" 8/30/51
Escape "Gringo" 10/12/52
- 3362 Black Museum "Service Card" 1952
Black Museum "The Letter" 1952
- 3363 Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar "The Skidmore Matter" 4/22/62
Yours Truly Johnny Dollar "The Grand Canyon Matter" 4/29/62
- 3364 Yours Truly Johnny Dollar "The Independent Diamond Traders Matter" 11/24/53
Yours Truly Johnny Dollar "The Terrified Tuan Matter" 3/9/54
- 3365 Father Knows Best "Watching The Dog" 9/11/52
Father Knows Best "Weekend Activity" 9/18/52
- 3366 Rocky Jordan "Red Stands For Blood" 3/13/49
Rocky Jordan "Twenty Fathoms Under" 2/20/49
- 3367 Fibber McGee & Molly "Motorcycle Cop, Judge & Fibber" 4/16/35
Fibber McGee & Molly "Hot Dogs & A Blowout" 4/30/35
- 3368 Bold Venture "One That Got Away"
Bold Venture "Revenge Is Sweet"
- 3369 Family Theater "The Fifty-first Dragon" 4/12/50
Family Theater "Mahoney's Lucky Day" 4/19/50
- 3370 Family Theater "The Kiss of Salomy Jane" 7/19/50
Family Theater "Julius Caesar" 7/26/50
- 3371 Family Theater "Jane Eyre" 10/25/50
Family Theater "Stolen Symphony" 11/1/50

The Old Time Radio Club

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and a smile in his
voice for you!

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