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RETURN WITH US NOW ... is the official publication of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc., a non profit organization. Cost of membership is \$20.00 for the first year with \$15.00 for annual renewal. Each member has full use of the Club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below.

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FFFFFFF A TITITI **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS:**

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME AND INVITED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE AT THE BOARD MEETINGS WE INVITE YOUR SUGGESTIONS.



THE JULY MEETING WILL BE COMBINED WITH THE CLUB'S ANNUAL PICNIC, TO BE HELD SATURDAY JULY 20TH. THE PICNIC WILL BE AT 900 WEST QUINCY AVE. ENGLEWOOD.

THE AUGUST MEETING WILL BE AUGUST 15TH AND OUR SPEAKER WILL BE VERN THIMYAN, VERN WAS THE CHIEF ENGINEER AT KLZ AND KGMC CHANNEL 7.

IF FORT LARAMIE IS NOT NEAR LARAMIE WYOMING WHERE COULD IT BE.

THERE WILL BE NO SHIPMENTS MADE FROM THE REEL TO REEL LIBRARY FROM JULY 25TH TO AUGUST 25TH.

WE ARE HEARING FROM OUR LIBRARIANS THAT SOME MEMBERS ARE KEEPING TAPES OR CASSETTES PAST THE DATE THEY SHOULD BE RETURNED. PLEASE BE ADVISED THERE IS A FINE OF \$1.00 PER WEEK FOR EACH REEL NOT RECEIVED ON TIME. THERE ALSO IS A PROVISION TO REFUSE TO ALLOW A MEMBERS LIBRARY PRIVILEGES TO BE SUSPENDED. WE ARE ASKING YOUR CO-OPERATION WITH RETURNS ON TIME.



Redio Historial Association of Cour

FROM THE KING'S ROOST

By Dick and Maletha King

The June Convention went well. We had a world of outstanding talent to entertain us. We are very grateful to have had so many outstanding radio personalities including Jeanne Bates, Sam Edwards, Harry Elders, Ray Erlenborn, Shirley Mitchell, John Rayburn, Merwin Smith, Ezra Stone and Les Tremayne all here to make the day one that we will remember for many years. Tyler McVey was unable to attend at the last minute but like the tradition of show business, others filled in

and all went well.

John and Larry Gassman presented another look into the Jack Benny era with more samples of the humor that was the Benny trademark. Both Gassmans helped out by moderating some of the panels. It is very nice to have the kind of help they offer to make another club's convention work smoothly.

All members that were not able to attend the demonstration by Second Sound on cleaning and maintaining tape recorders should be sure to check out the tape as soon as it gets into the library. The technician was not used to working with a microphone, but the information offered is very valuable.

John Rayburn soloed the panel on advertisers and did an outstanding job presenting both his and Fred Arthur's material. Commercials are basic to the industry, but the art of presenting commercials that people remember is what really makes the sponsors willing to pay for the talent.

The evening program started with a <u>First Nighter</u> play. Les Tremayne again showed why he was the star of that show as well as many others of that time. The talents of the performers of that era really come to surface as they do one role and then an entirely different role in another show. Our own John Licht was the director and both John and wife Pricilla helped in roles in the recreations.

Ezra Stone stepped into his old role of Henry Aldrich with Sam Edwards playing a very realistic Homer. Sam made a slip reflecting back to his years as Dexter in <u>Meet Corliss Archer</u> by addressing Mrs. Archer, instead of Mrs. Aldrich. Ezra Stone was quick to pick up on the slip and gave us all a laugh as be ad-libbed a bit. Shirley Mitchell and Jeanne Bates doubled as they often had to do in real life. We were all snapped to attention when Jeanne Bate belted out "Henry, Henry Aldrich!" in a voice that would make Ethel Merman sound meek.

Our bridges and introduction music was supplied by pianist Ingrid Thompson who was able to write the music for the bridges on sight as she heard and read the plays. We truly admire people with so much talent. One intermission was filled by Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell, Shirley Mitchell's niece, who played guitar and sang a song she had written about the blood and trauma of the emergency room where she works and sees all sides of life.

Sam Edwards and Shirley Mitchell were great Bickersons in a show written by Clint Conerford, who was also here for the convention.

Two members came forth at the convention to pitch in and do jobs that they saw were needed. Fred Hinz, our librarian for Logs and Scrips, pitched in and spent the better part of the day at the registration desk. Fred also helps our players group with the sound effects. Susan Kannapel, a first year member, was our hostess at the Friday night reception and then saw a need of help at the registration desk, so pitched in there. These are the people that a group can kind of count on to carry on and grow.

The 1991 RHAC Convention was good entertainment for all who attended, and we can only express our condolences to those who missed it.

One note that we picked up from the Radio Collectors of America newsletter in the Boston area was advising that sometimes one can salvage shows from a squeaky tape by dubbing it backwards onto another tape. Another member finds that the use of talcum powder on the tape for a one shot run is helpful, but you would have to be careful not to do it with a good tape deck, since talcum is an abrasive. We have also heard of holding a soapy sponge on the tape as it is fed into the heads has helped save shows for some. We have also found that tape that squeaks on one deck may not squeak on another. These are just some hints that might make it possible to save a reel with favorites on it. Above all, if tape is starting to squeal, replace it as soon as possible. If it plays all right on a spare deck, maybe a Sony, don't feel satisfied that it will be all right. Tape is cheap; the show are priceless.

Saturday, July 20th, we will have our summer picnic at the King's home at 900 West Quincy Ave in Englewood, We ask that everyone bring a favorite dish to share with others, and tables if you have them. The club will furnish soft drinks, plates & tableware. We will again have smoked turkey and corn-on-the-cob, fresh from the barbecue. Plan to come about 4:00 PM and enjoy the shade in the yard.

Do you have any thoughts about how you would like YOUR club to grow? We are coming up on the selection of officers for the next year. If you would be interested in helping out, please let one of the club officers listed on page two know about it. Glenn Ritter is usually available by phone, and might be the easiest to contact. We are not asking that you take on a major job, but only that you offer to share your expertise for the betterment of the club. If you are not interested in being an officer, maybe you could come to board meetings and help in planning your club's future. Next board meeting will be September 5th at John Adams home, 2811 So Valentia St. Ph 755-9185.

Our August meeting will be held the 15th at the Church Of The Master and our guest speaker will be a man that many in the industry have referred to as a genius. Vern Thimyan was a man that could see a problem and design a solution to make all who worked with him have an easier job. Vern, or "Tim", as he is called, is retired now and planning to do some traveling and have some fun.

Special note: Reels #978 and 979, will be available from the libraries by July 15th. These reels cover the 1991 convention.

RHAC MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO REMEMBER THE ASSOCIATION

Radio Historical Association of Colorado is a non-profit organization composed of persons having an interest in the preservation and enjoyment of old-time radio, that is, radio as it existed in its often called "golden age." Our organization is one of the largest and most active of its kind.

Members are encouraged to help RHAC continue that part of its mission devoted to "preservation:" of old-time radio. While we can all be very proud of our libraries which continue to grow, many members have in their own libraries material not in the Association's Libraries (regular or donors).

Your donation of material to RHAC during your lifetime, or through your Will, will allow RHAC continued growth and the ability to maintain its place among the leaders of such organizations. Your donation is a tribute to those wonderful people who were a part of radio's golden age. Your donation honors "radio"!

A donation to RHAC is tax deductible. Your donation, be it one reel (cassette) or many, one script, one log, one disk, or any memorabilia, is sought. Help RHAC. Contact Dick King, President, (303) 761-4139 or Bill McCracken, (303) 986-9863.

Irene Miller

Copied with permission from the Rocky Mountain News, June 2, 1991. Story by Norman Provizer.

As Irene Wolfe sits in her suburban Denver living room, the music of the Glenn Miller Orchestra quietly fills the air. With graceful good humor, the last of the four children born to Lewis and Mattie Lou Miller says, "You have to be in the Miller mood to talk with me."

There are, of course, millions of Glenn Miller fans across the globe who remain "in the mood." Yet Irene falls in a special category. She is, after all, connected to the famous trombonist/bandleader through music and by blood.

Irene, born in 1916, is the only living member of the clan. Brothers Deane, Herb and Glenn (who greatly resemble one another in the pictures hanging on her dining room wall) are gone. The memories, however, linger.

When the Miller brothers would improvise with their respective horns in their parents' Fort Morgan home, there were those who thought the boys never would amount to anything - waste of time, they would suggest. The pessimism was unfounded, however, Deane went on to a career in dentistry; Herb to one in music education and Glenn to a place in the hearts of music-lovers everywhere.

Alton Glenn Miller was born in Clarinda, Iowa, March 1, 1904, the middle brother. For more than a decade, Clarinda residents have gathered in birthday tribute to Miller. Unpredictable March weather dictated moving the event to early June and Irene and her husband of more than 50 years, Welby, are making the trip this year.

When Glenn was 5, the Millers left Iowa for Nebraska, where Irene was born. Then the family moved briefly to Missouri before settling in Fort Morgan. Glenn went to high school there and played football well enough that he briefly considered becoming a coach. He was the tallest player on the 1921 Fort Morgan team, playing left end. Miller caught more passes that year than any Colorado prep and was voted the best left end in the state by the Colorado Sports Association.

After graduating in 1921, Miller followed his musical star, working as a trombonist. During the 1922-923 academic year, he enrolled at the University of Colorado in Boulder, completing three academic quarters at the university. He performed well in English and math but failed first-year harmony.

As Irene points out, Miller's performance was limited not by intelligence, but by interest. He was too busy playing to focus on classwork. today, the university has a Glenn Miller Ballroom and an archival collection of Miller memorabilia, including two of his four trombones. Success, after all, is defined in many ways.

There is little question that Miller was driven to succeed. In a letter to jazz writer George Simon for Simon's biography about the bandleader, Irene says she and Glenn were, "very much alike. We both form quick judgments, are stubborn, and have terribly high standards of perfection, besides being, I'm sure, a little hard to live with."

Irene says that her brother not only wanted to succeed in music, but wanted that success to be financial as well.

"If you lived in a sod house in Nebraska," Irene says, "you get some genes that tell you you don't want to live like that again. We were all like that, filled with a drive toward success and perfection."

Because Irene was born 12 years after Glenn, she doesn't recall many anecdotes about like around the house with her celebrated brother. She says, simply, "The time we spent together was precious." Family was the focus and her memories are of the associations within the family group.

Welby B. Wolfe, a friend of her brother Herb, used to hang around the Miller household and knew Irene when she was just a school girl. The couple was married in 1935, when Wolfe was a junior at Colorado State College of Education in Greeley, now the University of Northern Colorado.

The Wolfes lived in Greeley after Welby obtained his degree in 1937, then moved to Denver where Wolfe taught in the public school system for nine years. The couple returned to Greeley in the mid-'40s and Welby taught art and theater arts at the college, becoming head of the theater arts department. He retired in 1973. The Wolfes also spent time in Estes Park before returning to Denver in 1984.

Irene supplemented her years as a homemaker by doing a variety of small jobs and the couple raised two sons: Welby Lawrence, 51 an advertising creative director in North Hollywood, Calif.; and Glenn Miller Wolfe, 46, a video sound producer who lives in Austin, Tex.

She says she was a strict mother.

"What you were told to do, you did."

Ironically, Irene rarely heard the Glenn Miller Orchestra during its incredible rise to fame toward the end of the '30s.

"Glenn would call and tell us when the band would be on the radio, but we never were able to get a clear signal and there were not many records around. I was the last one in the family to hear him performing live," she says of a 1941 engagement in Lincoln, Neb.

As the story goes, she hadn't seen Glenn in some time and had written to him about a road visit. Irene received a telegram that read only, "Meet me in Lincoln." She remembers the occasion as a wonderful time, but the telegram was suggestive of Miller's cool, abrupt side. Yet this stern taskmaster was the same person who would keep jackets and ties on had for youths who needed the apparel to enter hotels where his band was appearing.

Irene left Lincoln uplifted, feeling "like the Queen of Sheeba," she says:

"I love his music, but more importantly I adored Glenn. He was my favorite guy."

Years after Miller's 1944 disappearance in a plane over the English Channel, Irene and Welby were in New York. Walking into a butcher shop, she heard someone playing trumpet in the neighborhood. She inquired what was going on and the butcher replied that Harry James was playing.

"But you're still cutting meat," she recalls saying. "Well,' "the butcher replied, " 'if it were Glenn Miller, them that would be different — he was the greatest."

In reality, Miller was not a great trombonist nor did he lead a great jazz band. But his swing era impact was amazing. He remains, according to critic/composer Gunther Schuller, past president of New England Conservatory of Music, "one of the great legends of American popular cultural history."

Not just music, mind you, but cultural history.

Critics of Miller said that he wasn't a good improviser; that he didn't demonstrate the technique or skills of, say, even trombonist Tommy Dorsey.

What Miller did create was a distinctive sound, especially with his clarinet and saxophone voicings. That sound, again in Schuller's words, was "very special and able to penetrate our collective awareness in a way that few sounds have."

In the midst of his enormous popularity, Miller gave up his orchestra to join the military and form a military band that could play for his young followers, many now in uniform. Miller entered the military in 1942 and went to England in 1944.

The Army Air Force Band he formed during World War II carved out a special niche in music. The band's schedule was beyond belief: some 500 radio shows and 300 personal appearances during a single year.

Then, tragedy.

Dec. 15, 1944, Miller decided to catch a ride on a small C-64 aircraft from England to Paris in preparation for upcoming performances by the military band. The plane disappeared in rain and fog over the English Channel and was never found. At Christmas, Irene received a phone call notifying her that Miller was missing. "I never thought that he wouldn't return," she says.

She prefers not to dabble in the various theories about how Miller's plane disappeared, accepting the obvious explanation that the light craft was no match for channel weather.

Miller's widow, Helen, lived for another 20 years. In the mid-'50s, Jimmy Stewart and June Allyson provided a movie version of the couple in *The Glenn Miller Story*. The film still brings a tear to Irene's eye.

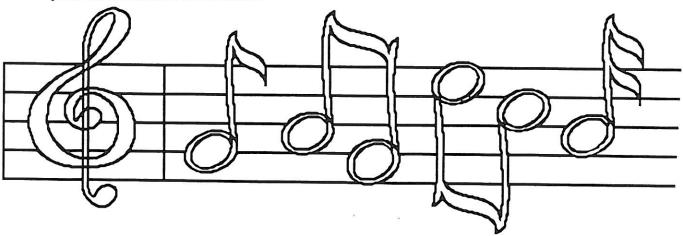
"Everyone thought the film was sickly sweet," she says. "But I thought it was beautiful and I had to see it several times before I could watch the end. It had factual errors, done often for dramatical reasons (like the shifting chronologies of various events), and it did play up the love and appreciation Helen and Glenn shared. They had one of the best marriages imaginable. I sometimes wonder why Helen waited for him. She was engaged to someone else."

Miller never saw his second adopted child, daughter Jonnie, and he had little time with his adopted son, Steve.

In the mid-'80s brother Herb put together a Miller-style band in England. Herb's son John continues to lead that group, called the Herb Miller Orchestra. The 8th Air Force Band (a 50-piece, self-proclaimed offshoot of Miller's large Army Air Force aggregation) is scheduled to disband this summer for budgetary reasons. England, where Glenn continues to be popular, also has the Milleresque Syd Lawrence Orchestra.

In his mournful study *The Swing Era*, Gunther Schuller writes, "Miller was like a painter who had decided to reduce his palette to a limited and precisely selected choice of colors."

The trombonist/leader, of course, often approached arranging from the mathematical perspective associated with Schillinger, especially in the area of harmony. Miller's brother-in-law, Welby, the author of a text about the technical side of theater, adds that Miller kept working on a theory of music in terms of its relationships to colors. Miller may never have nailed down that theory, but he did produce a string of musical pearls that has withstood the test of time.



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(Issued July, 1991)

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RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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REMEMBER

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RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO, INC. (A non-profit organization) POST OFFICE BOX 1908 ENGLEWOOD, CO. 80150

RHAC SUMMER PICNIC, will be Saturday, July 20th, Starting 4:00 pm at 900 West Quincy. See inside for details.