

The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

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TONIGHT AT A NEW TIME ON A NEW STATION

PALMOLIVE PRESENTS

♦♦Love Me Forever♦♦

Featuring

FRANCIA WHITE JAN PEERCE and PALMOLIVE
CHORUS OF 20 VOICES



Sparkling melody -- exquisite love scenes - glorious duets, quartets, solos and choruses ... it has them all! Don't miss this wonderful performance tonight. The tender love story of Margaret Howard, a penniless young singer boosted to operatic fame by the self sacrifice of Stephano Corelli, an Italian night club owner. Listen for your favorite passages from "La Boheme," "Il Baccio" and "Rigoletto" sung by golden voiced Francia White and Jan Peerce, famous radio and concert tenor. One full hour of thrilling music and drama. Tune in!

WSYR 9:00 P.M.

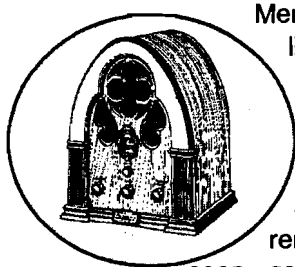
[1935]

Thrilling new PALMOLIVE CONTEST! Every week \$1000 in cash and 1000 other prizes! A contest so simple, so easy, and much fun to do! Don't fail to listen in for complete details tonight.

PALMOLIVE SOAP made with olive oil to keep your skin lovely

Membership Information

New member processing, \$5.00 plus club membership of \$15.00 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31.



Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing, and a monthly newsletter.

Memberships are as follows: If you join Jan-Mar, \$15.00; Apr-Jun, \$12.00; Jul-Sep, \$8.00; Oct-Dec, \$5.00. 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 7:30 P.M. during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 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

Old Time Radio Club
P.O. Box 426
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086

Back issues of *The Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 postpaid. Publications out of print may be borrowed from our Reference Library.

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Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters, etc. to:
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The Mounties in OTR History

by Jack French

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[Author's Note: An abridged version of the following material was presented orally at the **Friends of Old Time Radio Convention** in Newark, NJ in October 1993. This is the first time it has appeared in print or in this extensive form.]

Part One of Two Parts

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have been enforcing the law in Canada since the mid 1870's, but they did not enter our popular culture until the 1920's. The Force, first organized in 1873 with close to 300 men, provided law enforcement only in the present-day provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Over the next thirty years, its jurisdiction expanded to include the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Today, the RCMP is responsible for federal law enforcement in all the provinces and territories and also serves as the provincial and territorial police throughout Canada, except in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec

The name of the Force has changed twice since its inception: from 1873 to June 1904, the Force was known as the North-West Mounted Police; from June 1904 until 1920, the Royal North-west Mounted Police; and since 1920 as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Currently, the RCMP has approximately 16,000 regular members, 300 special constables, 2200 civilian members and 3800 public servants.

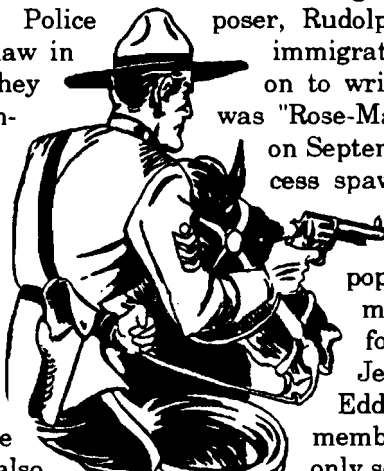
The first motion picture featuring a Mounties hero was a 1910 Edison silent film called "The Raiders of the Plains." From the 1920's to 1950 Hollywood produced over 100 films and serials with RCMP officers in the leads; most of them

lacked authenticity but few in the audience noticed or cared. Several of those films were based upon the novels or screenplays of James Oliver Curwood (1878-1927), a flamboyant and somewhat less-than-accurate observer of Canada and its lawmen.

Another man who was equally influential in embellishing Mountie folklore was a Czech composer, Rudolph Friml. Born in 1879, Friml immigrated to the U.S. in 1906 and went on to write 30 operettas. His biggest hit was "Rose-Marie" which opened on Broadway on September 2, 1924 and its immense success spawned a host of traveling companies throughout the U.S. and Canada. "Rose-Marie" was so popular it was first filmed as a silent movie (in 1928 with Joan Crawford). But the 1936 film with Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy is the one that thousands remember and "Indian Love Call" is the only song from it that has stayed in our collective memory.

Unfortunately many people in the U.S., and some in Canada, obtained much of their knowledge of the Mounties from these implausible novels and inaccurate portrayals on stage and screen. From the writings of Curwood, the innumerable revivals of "Rose-Marie," the pulp magazines, movies and television shows, the Mountie Myth emerged.

He is always in a scarlet tunic, although the red coat was replaced in 1930 by brown serge as the day-to-day working uniform, with the crimson jacket being reserved for ceremonial occasions. He is usually astride a horse, although Mounties began using automobiles in World War I and the last horses used by the Force were replaced by cars in the late 1930's. The mythical



Mountie utilizes a birchbark canoe for water transportation, but the real Mounties abandoned them in the 1920's when boat motors became common. The motto of the RCMP is purported to be "A Mountie Always Gets His Man," but that is a bogus slogan first created by a U.S. newspaper in 1877. The actual RCMP motto is "Maintiens le Droit;" when first adopted, it was in French and remains so today. The English translation would be "Uphold the Right" or "Maintain the Right."

So we shouldn't expect our RCMP heroes on the radio, either on U.S. networks or the CBC, to stray very far from our cherished misconceptions, and, of course, they did not. Nor did any of the "Mountie" radio series have any official sanction, or assistance of any kind, from the RCMP --- despite what some of them implied in their opening or program closings.

With Canada's Mounted

The very first radio series featuring RCMP personnel as the lead-heroes was broadcast on the Blue Network for most of the 1931-32 season. It was entitled "With Canada's Mounted" and each episode occupied 30 minutes on Monday evenings. I can find no additional data, or any transcriptions, for this show. It's a safe bet that it was written for an adult audience, since it began at 10:30 P.M., long after most kiddies were asleep.

Blair of the Mounties

There were three more RCMP-oriented radio shows in the early to mid-30s, but the exact dates are uncertain. One was "Blair of the Mounties," a syndicated show of which episodes 1-28 have survived, and this may be the complete run. Of the thirteen Mountie series I've researched, only "Challenge of the Yukon," with 150 episodes now available, supersedes "Blair" in this category of total shows available. Despite the relatively large number of programs available, the "Blair" series remains somewhat of an enigma. The cast and crew are unknown; it's not even been determined whether the show is U.S. or Canadian in origin.

In Episode #6 ("Murder at Hackett's Landing") Sgt. Blair and Constable Marshall solve the crime quickly, but the killer escapes to the U.S. He returns, three years later, at the end of this episode, and by then Blair has been promoted to Inspector and Marshall to Sgt., titles they retain for the rest of

the series. As in Episode #6, most of the stories take only 15 minutes, including those entitled: "Train Wreck," "Naked Truth," and "Lt. Ralston." Several other cases, i.e. "Clover Creek" and "Kitty Lac Lagoon," require two parts or 30 minutes in total.

Blair is not restricted to Canada, as other Mounties would be; in a few episodes we find him solving cases in Great Britain. Overall, the whole series is amateurishly written while the actor playing Blair comes across a trifle stuffy. Sound effects are minimal and Blair spends a lot of time in his office telling Marshall what has already transpired.

This 15 minute show was produced in the U.S., probably on the West Coast since the leads were Francis X. Bushman and Monte Blue, two actors more at home on the silver screen. Dates for the series are uncertain, other than the mid-30s. Two transcriptions have survived; I've listened to only one, the initial episode. To open the show, the announcer salutes the "Royal Canadian Northwest Mounted Police" (while the Force had several titles, that's not one of them). We next are treated to a large, male chorus singing "We are the Mounties." As we get into the adventure, we find that unlike the rapid advancement of Blair, McLean is headed the other way; he gets busted from Sgt. to Corporal in the first two minutes. Later he finds a woman whose lost brother is wanted by the Mounties, a plot device lifted, intact, from the musical "Rose-Marie." Each episode only runs a quarter of an hour, but it seems much longer because of the snail-paced plot and stilted acting.

Red Trails

The fourth OTR show from the mid-30s highlighting the RCMP also had a Hollywood star in the lead, Victor McLaglen, who portrayed Constable Eric Lewis. (McLaglen, who was born in England in 1886, actually lived in Canada for several years before coming to Hollywood.) "Red Trails" was broadcast on the Blue Network from February 27, 1935 to July 6, 1935 and it was sponsored by the American Tobacco Company. Because of who paid the advertising bills and the late broadcast hour (8:30 or 9:00 P.M.) we may safely assume this series was intended for an older audience, not the kids. If any transcriptions have survived, I haven't found any yet.

Renfrew of the Mounted

The first "Mountie" OTR show with any staying

power was "Renfrew of the Mounted" which began in March 1936 and lasted until October, 1940. It started on CBS, under the sponsorship of Wonder Bread, and finished as a sustainer on the Blue Network. We could estimate that about 160 shows were aired (including both 15 and 30 minute versions) but less than ten have survived to the present day.

Renfrew was the creation of a British born writer, Laurie York Erskine, who spent virtually all of his adult life in the U.S. Despite what some might consider his unmasculine name, Erskine was a real warrior and served in the Armed Forces in both World Wars. Erskine (1894-1976) was a prolific author in his adopted country with hundreds of magazine articles plus at least twenty books. Much of his writing, including that of the "Renfrew Period" (1922-41), was intended for a youthful readership.

In 1925, Erskine and three other outdoorsmen buddies founded a school for boys, Solebury School in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Most of the start up money for this institution came from Erskine's pocket, including \$25,000 he'd just made from the sale of movie rights to one of his magazines serials. Solebury School is still active today and both the student body and faculty think very highly of their "Uncle Laurie" who died less than twenty years ago. Erskine, of course, had nothing to do with the "Renfrew" radio show, other than creating the fictional character and collecting the royalties. The scripts were written by others, including George Ludlum, and varied a great deal in the style and format over the years. The shows, varied in length (either 15 or 30 minutes), were sometimes complete in one episode and others were written in serial fashion. One or two were even done as a one-person monologue. In the half-hour show, Inspector Douglas Renfrew was the voice of House Jamieson, who would later become Henry Aldrich's father. Brad Barker, whose surname suggests his profession, did all the animal sounds, including the wolf cry that opened the program. Bert Parks was frequently the announcer.

---continued next month---

TODAY

Gunsmoke -- 12:30 PM
WHEC -Dial 1460 -CBS Radio
 [1955]

RENFREW TONIGHT!

★ World's First ★
 Radio Preview



Hear the high spot-thrills from

- "The Driverless Dog Sled"
- "The Great Slave Mystery"
- "Smuggler's Justice"
- "Piracy on the High Seas"
- "The Lost Wonder Valley of Gold"

WIBX

every Tues., Fri., Sat.,
6:45 P.M.

[1936]

DID YOU KNOW THAT by Dom Parisi

Beulah, radios most famous black maid, came to prominence in a January 25, 1944 episode of *Fibber McGee and Molly*. Marlin Hurt was offered his own show, and on July 2, 1945, *The Marlin Hurt and Beulah Show* arrived for Tums.

During a dress rehearsal for his first 1943 new season radio show, Lou Costello was called to the phone to learn that his year old son had fallen into the swimming pool and drowned. Lou rushed home. Mickey Rooney was called in to take over for Costello.

Jimmy Durante, Bob Hope, and Red Skelton all offered their help. Around 6:00 P.M., Costello called Abbott and said he was returning for the show. For the complete show Lou fought back tears and joked with Bud on the air. Right after Ken Niles read the sigh-off he broke down before the studio audience. Abbott then stepped forward and explained to the audience what had happened.

Casey, Crime Photographer first came to the air as Flashgun Casey on July 7, 1943. Then the name was change to Casey, Press Photographer, then Casey, Crime Photographer, and finally Crime Photographer.

Parker "51"

presents

"Information Please"

...with

CLIFTON FADIMAN
JOHN KIERAN
FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

and guest experts

OSCAR LEVANT and
CHARLES JACKSON



TONIGHT

[1946]

10:30 WIBX

Tune in tonight and every Wednesday night

I Got The Breaks

by Kay Kyser

from Radio Varieties, June 1940

Writing about yourself makes a fellow feel kind of funny. It's a little like talking to your best girl friend on the party line back home with all the neighbors listening in. Know what I mean?

First of all, I'm a very lucky fellow. People have been nice to me. They pack into theaters to see our band. They let me come into their parlors every Wednesday night with our radio program. They seem to like my movie, "That's Right, You're Wrong."

I don't mean lucky like the fellow who wins the turkey at the church bazaar. I work plenty hard. But so do a lot of other folks and nothing much happens to them. Their dreams stay dreams no matter how hard they struggle. As they say on Broadway, I got the breaks.

It's a long way from Rocky Mount, N. C. my old home town, to Broadway. There are no short cuts and they never run any excursion trains to success. I walked down Broadway the other night. The dusk was falling and suddenly the lights popped on. My name was up there over a movie theatre. My name was helping light up the most famous street in the world. I just stood there on the street corner and looked and couldn't get over it. I felt good and happy and awful proud. I'm a country fellow and I guess I'll always be one, but my name up in lights made me think how lucky I was and thankful I am to all the people who have been nice to me.

Back home in college I was a cheerleader. I never wanted to make the last touchdown. I just wanted to jump around and holler and make the folks in the stands laugh. Well, I still feel the same way. Only my audience is bigger. But every Wednesday when we broadcast, we try to forget the millions in their parlors and the big crowd sitting in the studio. We make believe we're back home and it's Saturday in the Fall and we're doing our stuff for a home crowd in a grandstand. It's worked out pretty good so far.

Most fellows have to prepare for their careers by sticking their noses into books and keeping them there. I got an A. B. degree, but I think I prepared for the future by clowning at the college socials and being a cheerleader. My play turned out to be my

work. Anyway, that's the way I look at it. I like to hear people laughing. Laughter is sweet music.

It makes me laugh a little inside when I'm introduced as the professor of the College of Musical Knowledge. You see I come from a teaching family. For a hundred years I've had kinsmen who have been on the faculty at the University of North Carolina. My first cousin was the dean of the Graduate School at U. N. C. My brother, who is now an attorney, taught chemistry. My mother was the first lady druggist in North Carolina. My father was a druggist, too. Professoring and music run in the family, because my oldest sister, Virginia, has conducted a grand opera class for years back home.

Say, I'm glad I didn't have the opera urge, because I'd probably be wearing a beard as big as a weeping willow tree and staggering around that Met stage with a big spear in my hand and fat ladies dying all over the place, while a tenor sings in a language no one understands. I'm a clarinet man, but I'm a lucky (that word keeps coming into my typewriter all the time) fellow I don't play it better than I do. If I did, I'd probably be sitting four rows back in some other fellows band. Realizing I wasn't going to set any creeks on fire with my clarinetting, I started to figuring and things worked out pretty fine, because the band I started in a drowsy college town found itself in Chicago's roaring Loop.

That was in 1934, when we were booked into the Blackhawk restaurant. We were scared to death and figured we were going to flop. You see, we followed Hal Kemp who was terrific and still is. He's my buddy and a fellow who has been one of my ideals since I started playing music.

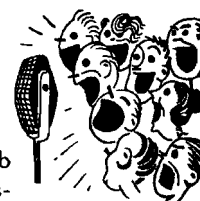
Well, the Chicago folks liked us and started a-coming. Our singing titles helped put us over as much as anything. We had introduced the idea at the Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica, California, the summer before, but didn't fully develop the idea until we opened at the Blackhawk. Those singing titles save a lot of time and you don't have to make a lot of useless announcements. Anyway, we always figured people were entitled to know the name of the song they were listening to.

But the Kollege of Musical Knowledge put me over. It was a break that the people who ran the Blackhawk were brave enough to let us pioneer with a new type of entertainment, and then we were

signed for the Lucky Strike program. Then the big crowds in the theatres and movies, and well, I can't read the palm and the crystal, so I'm just hoping it will be all right from now on.

I've got the nicest gang of fellows any one ever worked with in my band. Six of them started with me back down the years in Rocky Mount and they're still with me and I hope they always will be. So you think I'm lucky? That's right, you're right.

Member's Mike



As a former editor of the *Illustrated Press*, I want to express my pleasure at the splendid job Pete is doing with the club newsletter. The computer layouts and ad enhancements have made our newsletter one of the best around. I didn't even have a computer when we (Arlene and me) were doing the IP and we couldn't match the present quality. Keep up the good work, Pete!

Also, I wanted to mention our tape librarians, Don Friedrich and Ed Wanat Sr. for the superb job they are doing. I can't remember the last time we had two such qualified gentlemen in charge of our tape libraries. If you have had a bad experience in the past, give our new librarians a try, you won't be sorry!

Our regular columnists, Frank Bork, (I love those recollections of his childhood) and Dominic Parisi, have made our newsletter fascinating reading each and every month. If you enjoy our club as much as I do, spread the word and help our club grow and try your hand at writing an article based on your remembrances of Old Time Radio (Pete will even lend a hand with the grammar if needed).

Remember in 1995, our club will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a special edition of the *Illustrated Press*. I'll be here. Will you?

Dick Olday

TONIGHT at 7:30
Bob Crosby's Club 15 with
The Andrews Sisters and Jo Stafford
WIBX Dial 950 CBS Radio [1950]

W B E N

(1947)

This Is the Night "People Are Funny"



PAUL LAVALLE
leads Highways
Orchestra and
Chorus in Wagon
Wheels and
Oregon Trail—
at 8 P. M.



SMILIN' ED
McConnell and his
gang bring a half-
hour of fun and
music for youth—
Saturday at
12:30 P. M.

6:30 Perfect for Dinnertime —

David Street Song Shop! Lucille
Norman Sings "I'll See You Again!"

7:00 PERRY COMO SINGS

9:00 "People ARE Funny!" And
Art Linkletter Returns From Vacation
to Prove They're Funnier Than Ever

9:30 WALTZ TIME — Bob
Hannon Sings "Deep Valley"

10:30 Babe Didrikson Tells Sports
Secrets to Bill Stern

SATURDAY DAYTIME IS TOPS:

10:30 A New Carl "Archie An-
drews" and Family Celebrate

11:00 "Meet the Meeks" in Breezy
Family-Comedy Drama

11:30 What Are Teen-agers Doing
in Small Towns? Listen to "Home
Is What You Make It" Program

Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086

FIRST CLASS MAIL

