

The Old Time Radio Club

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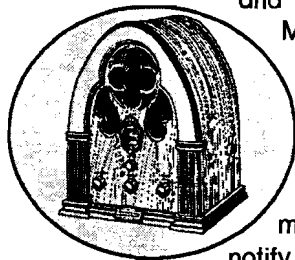
March 1995



Fred Allen

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:
The Illustrated Press
c/o Peter Bellanca, editor
1620 Ferry Road
Grand Island NY 14072

Club Officers and Librarians

President

Jerry Collins (716) 683-6199
56 Christen Ct.
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086

Vice President & Canadian Branch

Richard Simpson
960 16 Road R.R. 3
Fenwick, Ontario
Canada, L0S 1C0

Treasurer, Back Issues, Video & Records

Dominic Parisi (716) 884-2004
38 Ardmore Pl.
Buffalo N.Y. 14213

Editor of IP, Renewals, Change of Address

Peter Bellanca (716) 773-2485
1620 Ferry Road
Grand Island, N.Y. 14072

Membership Inquires, and OTR Network Related Items

Richard Olday (716) 684-1604
100 Harvey Dr.
Lancaster, N.Y. 14086

Tape Libraries

Cassettes

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They Rode the Airwaves: Cowboys on Radio, Part 4

by Dom Parisi

continued from the February IP

Have Gun, Will Travel was a strange radio program! It was one of the few radio programs that started out on television. The program began in the mid-1950's as a Richard Boone TV series. A few years later it switched over to radio. It ran on CBS and starred John Dehner as Paladin.

Paladin was a soldier of fortune with an even temper and a fast six shooter. He did the dirty jobs others would not do, usually for a big fee.

The program premiered on November 23, 1958 on CBS and continued until November 27, 1960. The scripts followed the TV format. Paladin's opening dialogue was often a threat, and he didn't mince words; "If the girl who's being held prisoner has been harmed in any way, I'll flip a coin to see which one I gun down first," He said opening one program.

Paladin was a loner. Heyboy, the Chinese worker who was employed at the Carlton Hotel where Paladin made his home, always called Paladin "Meestah. Paladin." His relationship with Heyboy was cordial but cool, it was always business like.

Ben Wright played Heyboy and Virginia Gregg Played his girlfriend Miss Wong. *Have Gun, Will Travel* was created by Herb Meadow and Sam Rolfe. It was announced by Hugh Douglas and directed, at times, by Norman Macdonnell.

The series ended with Paladin heading EAST to Boston to collect a \$100,000.00 inheritance. It was an uncommon ending for a western to have the hero ride into the sunrise, but after all, this was an unusual series.

The Six Shooter and Jimmy Stewart rode into radio on September 20, 1953 on NBC. Stewart and the character he played, Britt Ponset, the six shooter were made for each other.

The opening told it all; "The man in the saddle is angular and long legged, his skin is sundryed brown. The gun in his holster is gray steel and rainbow mother of pearl. People call them both the six shooter." Ponset was easy going, but a gunfighter when he had to be.

The *Six Shooter* leaned a lot to comedy. Ponset even took the time to play Hamlet with an amateur road show. He ran for mayor and sheriff of the same town at the same time! He even became involved in a western version of Cinderella, complete with wicked stepmother, the ugly step-sisters, and a "shoe" that didn't fit!

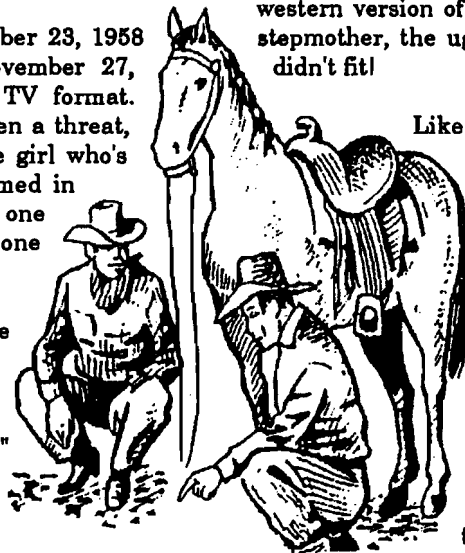
Like *Have Gun, Will Travel*, we have a cowboy riding away in a series that unfortunately came along too late. It lasted only one season as a transcribed program, sustained by NBC. Jack Johnstone was the director.

The Zane Grey Show opened on Mutual on September 11, 1947. It lasted only one season. Vic Perrin and later Don MacLaughlin played Tex Thorne, the even tempered Pony Express rider in

ales of "the old wild west - a rugged frontier where men lived by the strong law of personal justice." The *Zane Grey Show* was directed by Paul Franklin. I have never heard this program, have you!

Grapevine Rancho, (Were really digging them up, aren't we?) *Grapevine Rancho*, in 1943, was a version of the *Ransom Sherman Show*, with Sherman acting as host of a half hour variety act built around an Old West format. It ran on CBS on Thursday nights for Roma Wines.

Sherman played the owner of the Grapevine Rancho, where the comedy and song took place. Guest stars appeared and were backed by Lud Gluskin's orchestra. Leo Carillo played Pedro, the Mexican hired hand; Lionel Stander was Hoolihan the Irish



ranch foreman; and Ann O'Neill was Cythia Veryberry, a paying guest at the ranch. Carlos Ramirez sang the songs. Fred Shields did the Roma Wine commercials.

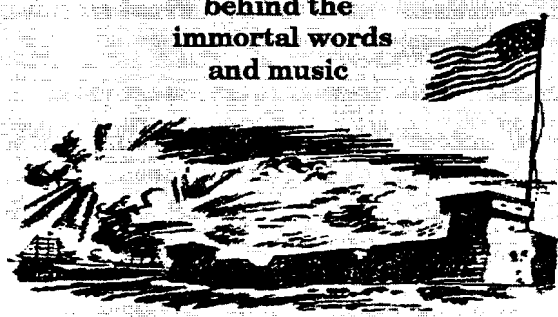
Hoofbeats, syndicated in 1937, was a juvenile western. It was the on the air radio adventures of movie star cowboy/hero Buck Jones. Sponsored by Grape Nuts Flakes, it featured Jones in a rip roaring western riding atop his horse Silver (right, another Silver). The serial ran for thirty-nine episodes and remains today a classic of juvenile radio.

Hoofbeats was narrated by a western hand known only as the "Old Wrangler." He always reminded the "Little Pards" to be sure and eat Grape Nuts Flakes, and save those boxtops for some mighty fine prizes!

----to be continued----

8:30 PM Tonight
WHEC
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Hallmark
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 as
Francis Scott Key
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 behind the
 immortal words
 and music



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◆ ◆ ◆ Tuning In ◆ ◆ ◆

by Tom Heathwood

For many years, collectors have pursued the tedious job of putting together "logs" for old time radio shows. Unfortunately, many of the logs have been plagued with problems such as incomplete/incorrect information, gaps in the chronology, etc.

Logs can be created in many ways to include different facts such as: date; original network program number; collector's program number; network; syndication date; star(s); guest(s); program length; sponsor; commercials intact; first story; first song; first report; first sketch; sound condition; completeness; etc.

Some collectors like a reference to the "generation" of the program material in their collection. Obviously, the most desirable collectable condition is "master" or "reference master." These are actual master discs or tapes made at the time of broadcast at the network studio. Close to this would be a "line check" which is a recording off the network line, made by network affiliate stations. "Air checks" are recording made off the air, and can vary considerably, depending on reception.

Speaking of quality, one measure of desirability is how close to the original recording a copy is. Collectors normally have re-recordings of the original discs or tapes, and, depending upon how many "generations" of copying between the master and their copy. A number can be assigned to indicate what generation copy they have. For example, a copy (or dub) of the actual master disc or tape is called a "1st generation" copy. A copy of that 1st generation copy is called a "2nd generation" copy, and so on. Some collectors want only "low generation" copies of shows, except where nothing else is available but a high generation tape. Usually "low generation" means 1st through 3rd (and perhaps 4th) generation copies. Copies from commercial discs/tapes whose origin is a "master" would be considered "2nd generation."

Two recent logs produced with great care and accuracy were written by Randy Eidemiller and Chris Lambesis, who collaborated to write the definitive logs on *Dragnet* and *Suspense*. In January, Randy and Chris joined me on HERITAGE RADIO THEATRE (Yesterday-USA Satellite Network) to discuss their logs and the programs they document.

They have updated the older *Dragnet* log, and, after many years, completed the *Suspense* log, their latest effort.

The *Suspense* log is a big book (soft cover) with lots of information and corrections to previously circulated lists. In addition, it includes a great un-aired script from the old CBS files. It was un-aired, believe it or not, because it was too "scary" to broadcast! How times change, eh?

Randy and Chris have also included lots of fascinating tid-bits about the show, as well as a free wheeling dialogue between the two authors who present different viewpoints about this memorable mystery series that ran twenty years on CBS.

The late Ray Standish did much to further the information available to collectors and radio historians. Ray's logs are now available through Jay Hickerson (*HELLO AGAIN*). Jay himself has a large log which is an overview of most network programs, with dates/networks/days/times on the air, but without individual episode data.

One new source for accurate program data are hard cover books, especially from publishers like Scarecrow and McFarland covering recently, for example, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Gunsmoke*, and a new book about *Lux Radio Theatre*, which detailed chronological logs and program descriptions, as well as absorbing stories about the shows.

The first book documenting vintage radio I ever owned/read was Frank Buxton and Bill Owen's *Radio's Golden Age* (Easton Press, 1966). The "bible" of collectors for many years has been *Tune In Yesterday* by John Dunning (Prentice-Hall, 1976). Both Buxton & Owen and Dunning's books are soon to be out in new editions. A recent volume from Scarecrow Press by Jon Schwartz and Robert Reinerh (1993) contains over 800 pages of detailed information about almost every conceivable network radio show ever broadcast. No in-depth information, but a tremendous overview with the most important facts about all the shows.

I hope collectors/radio histories will continue to take time (and make a commitment) to document more vintage radio shows to make our wonderful hobby even more fun!

Tom Heathwood
Heritage Radio Theatre/Heritage Radio Classics
P.O. Box 16 Boston, MA 02167

RADIO MEMORIES

by Francis Edward Bork

Remember Sunday evening listening to Charlie McCarthy and of course Edgar Bergen? How easy it was to think of Charlie McCarthy as a real live little boy, still knowing that Bergen was his real voice. I remember the next day at school, the guys would try to imitate Bergen doing Charlie McCarthy. Oddie Masset (real name Adolph, but Oddie was tough enough that if he wanted you to call him Oddie, that's what you called him). Well Oddie would put his hand on Eddie Ludwig's neck and talk just like Charlie, while Eddie would move his mouth up and down. Oddie sounded just like Charlie McCarthy which made all the kids in the classroom scream with delight and yell at "Charlie and Edgar." That is until Sister Mary Louise came into the room, then you could hear a pin drop.

Edgar was not much older than the guys in my class when he started as a ventriloquist. Edgar was born in 1903 in Chicago, Illinois of Swedish parents. At an early age he found that he had a flare for making people laugh and more important, a flare as a ventriloquist. A master craftmans by the name of Theodore Mack carved the dummy for Bergen for thirty-five dollars. Bergen knew a news boy named Charlie and had Mack carve the face somewhat like Charlie the news boy for his dummy. Then Bergen named the dummy Charlie Mack, but sometime later he changed the dummy's name to Charlie McCarthy which he liked much better.

Now back in high school I had a machine shop teacher named, you guessed it, Charlie McCarthy. Good old Seneca Vocational High School, how well I remember that day, boy did I get myself into trouble. Those were the days of the Big Bands which would play at the large theaters in downtown Buffalo. After school one Friday a bunch of us guys decided to go see one of the bands playing at the Shea's Buffalo. We had to go right from school to get in under the lower afternoon rate, I think it was thirty-five cents until six P.M. then it went to fifty cents. Well there we were having a great time when who gets on the bus, yep, Mr. Charlie McCarthy himself. The guys were singing the bus theme song, "we won't get home until morning while riding the I.R.C." Then I get the bright idea to bug Mr. McCarthy by whistling and calling here Mack, nice doggie. That was a killer until Monday at lunch when Mr. McCarthy comes around and asks us guys, "how's the soup boys?" Oh

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just great Mack-boy I said, woops, I mean Mr. McCarty I corrected myself, too late, I'm dead. Report to me after your last class today he tells me, and don't forget. Oh boy, what a rotten day this is gonna be.

I think Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy had an effect on everybody during those great radio days. Made of solid basswood, strings, pins and springs, that was the million dollar idea of Edgar Bergen, Charlie Mack, and finally Charlie McCarthy, a name I don't think will ever be forgotten by radio fans the world over.

Working after school as an usher at the Victoria Theater in Chicago Bergen got a lot of Saturday afternoon matinees to entertain the youthful audience and to perfect his showmanship techniques. After high school Bergen attended North Western University where he also entertained at almost all campus functions.

After college Bergen found work in almost every state in our great country, his act being almost one of a kind in show business at that time. In London, England he opened at the Grosener House and became a huge success. From London he traveled to Sweden where he played before the Crown Prince, doing his act entirely in Swedish.

When Bergen returned to the United States, vaudeville was dead, but that did not stop Bergen, he just adopted his act for night club audiences. He played the Casanova Club in Hollywood, the Rainbow Room in New York City, the Chez Paree in Chicago and many, many more those first years. One night while doing his act at a party given by Elsa Maxwell, Rudy Vallee a guest at the party enjoyed Bergen's act so much that he hired him to appear several times on his radio program. Then in 1937 Vallee hired him to appear weekly on his program. Later that year Bergen got his own radio show sponsored by Chase and Sandborn Coffee. Don Ameche was the emcee with Dorothy Lamour as the show's featured singer, joined later by W.C. Fields, who always had a feud going with Charlie McCarthy.

Between the years 1933 and 1935, Bergen along with Charlie McCarthy made twelve shorts for the old Vitaphone Movie Company. By 1938 Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy were well known by the radio public across the country and were full fledged stars and also appeared that year in the *Goldwin Follies* with Zorine, Bobby Clark and the Ritz Brothers. In 1938 we saw *Charlie McCarthy Detective* on the

silver screen, followed by *You Can't Cheat An Honest Man* with W.C. Fields. In 1941 Bergen and McCarthy appeared with Fibber McGee and Molly in *Look Who's Laughing*.

Mortimer Snerd, the country bumpkin, joined the act in 1939, followed a year later by Effie the hip old maid. Bergen was "the man about town" escorting various young female stars to many Hollywood functions, but he lived a quiet life in private with his mother until her death in 1945, the year he married Frances Westerman, a former Powers model and actress. Candice their daughter was born a year later in 1946 and their son, Kris Edgar was born in 1961.

All during World War II, Bergen traveled across the country entertaining the troops at both large and small military camps and dozens of military hospitals for the sick and wounded GI's in all branches of services. After the war he was restricted to playing night clubs, his act still being popular with the ex-GI's. He also appeared in movies such as *I Remember Mama* and on several TV shows, all without his little friends. His last movie was *Don't Make Waves* with Tony Curtis and Claudine Cardinali, also without Charlie and the puppet gang.

At the start of the year 1956, Bergen once again hosted a day time quiz show bringing Charlie McCarthy and the rest of the gang under the spotlight. The show, *Do You Trust Your Wife?* ran for a few years, but not being very popular was cancelled. His beautiful daughter Candice has become a star in her own right. In 1967 she and Bergen made their legitimate stage debut at the Westbury Music Fair on Long Island, New York in *Sabrina Fair*, playing father and daughter. More recently on TV Candice starred in *Murphy Brown* and is currently doing commercials for AT&T.

The fact that he never made it as a straight actor had disappointed Bergen and made him somewhat resentful, that his dummies became more famous and recognizable than their creator. But as a millionaire, however he could well afford to nurse his grievances. Hollywood real estate investments had made him even more money than he could imagine, due to the fact that he owned an entire block on Sunset Boulevard, where he had a magic shop. Many times at the height of his career Bergen would wander into his magic shop, of course without Charlie McCarthy and minus his toupee, and not be recognized, which always bothered him. For like all entertainers, he liked the limelight. For myself, well

I know I would recognize Bergen anywhere. I thought Bergen was just great in the movie *I Remember Mama* and also in the *Waltons Christmas Story*, "The Homecoming" in which he played grandpa Walton. To this day I still enjoy Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy.

Wonder what happened to me after school when I had to report to "Mack-Boy," I mean Mr. McCarthy? Well after having my right ear pulled two sizes larger, (in those days you didn't run home and tell Mom or Dad, you'd get more) I was given my choice, go to the principal office and tell him what I did, OR I could sweep up the machine shop after school for two weeks (on my own time of course). This was in the early 1940's, so I guess you know what I chose to do.

Well that's it for now.
Till next time Happy Radio Memories.

Member's Mike

Thanks for sending the copies of the *Illustrated Press* with the two part history of Mouties in old-time radio by Jack French. He offered a lot of information I didn't come across when preparing *Lawmen in Scarlet*, my book which deals primarily with fiction works and motion pictures about Mouties.



Mr. French did a great job of identifying rare and long forgotten programs featuring the Canadian lawmen. Certainly there were several I didn't come across, even in doing research in the national library in Ottawa.

An audience accustomed to Westerns yearned for a change of pace, which was available just north of the border. Never mind that few fiction writers, movie scripters, or radio penmen, paid much attention to historical detail. Sled teams, villainous trappers and hearty Mouties had a following -- and still have, in such TV programs as *Bordertown* and *Due South*.

I enjoy your publication, and have sent in a membership, so that, being a longtime Hopalong Cassidy fan, I can read the rest of Dom Parisi's series on radio cowboys.

Bernard Drew
Great Barrington, MA

(the following letter was to Ed Wanat, our reel-to-reel librarian)

Please accept this small token of appreciation for your efforts as librarian for the Old Time Radio Club. You are doing an excellent job and I really appreciate it. I look forward to receiving the tapes and the short note you always include with them. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Grant Brees
East Millinocket, ME

Let me begin by wishing everyone a prosperous and happy New Year. Now to clear up one item of business. During the past year we ran out of catalogs for our reference library. Our supply has recently been replenished. If you recently joined our club and did not receive a catalog and would like a copy, please drop me a note.

The Old Time Radio Club is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. During the next three months I will attempt to share some of my memories of the club with you.

I have been a member for close to nineteen years. When I joined I was looking forward to my first meeting with great anticipation. At that time the club was holding its meetings at a St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. Little did I know that the March meeting had been cancelled because of Lenten Services at the church.

As a very anxious member I arrived early. Seeing nobody downstairs I decided to attend the Lenten Services for awhile. At the proper time I went downstairs for the meeting. I was really impressed when I saw a group of women busily preparing refreshments. Soon I heard people coming down the stairs and I figured that the meeting would soon begin. I soon discovered that the Radio Club meeting had been cancelled. The Lenten Services were over and a social would soon begin. Being a Catholic Radio Member I decided that it was time to go home and wait till next month.

Jerry Collins, president, OTRC

Don't forget the 9th annual OTR & Nostalgia Convention in Cincinnati. It will be held on April 21 & 22 at the Marriott Inn, 11320 Chester Road. For more information contact, Bob Burchett, 10280 Gunpower Road, Florence, KY 41042. Telephone (606) 282-0333.

1945



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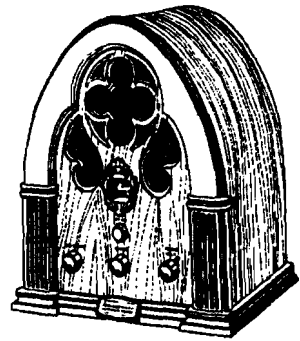
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