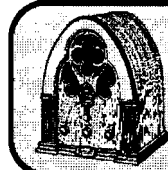


*The Old Time Radio Club*

Established 1975

# THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 227



Our 20th Anniversary  
1975-1995

August 1995

## INVASION NEWS IS 10 SECONDS AWAY!

Nine years ago The Associated Press first put into operation the trans-Atlantic facility which will enable it to flash news of the invasion direct from London to hundreds of AP newspapers and radio stations in the United States in less than ten seconds!

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[June 6, 1944]

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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 off print may be borrowed from our Reference Library.

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

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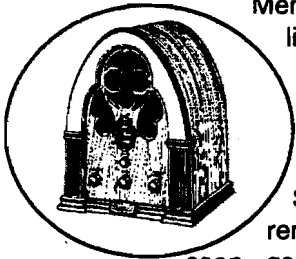
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## Daytime Heroine: A Story Twice Told, part 2

by Jim Cox

Florence Freeman was supported as Ellen Brown by Ned Wever (Dr. Loring), Clayton 'Bub' Collyer (Dr. Peter Turner, an early suitor who lost out to Anthony), Marilyn Erskine and Tommy Donnelly (Ellen's children, Janey and Mark), Agnes Young (Ellen's confidante Maria Hawkins) and Joan Tompkins (Norine Temple, wife of her lawyer). Other frequent actors and actresses in the *Brown* cast included Ethel Remy, House Jameson, Bennett Kilpack, Frank Lovejoy, Charita Bauer, Alan Bunce and Dick Van Patten. Perhaps sensing what was about to happen, Freeman departed from the series a short time before its cancellation by NBC. (Wendy Drew played the part during its final months.) But Freeman's warm, empathetic delivery for nearly two decades would have profound impact on her listeners and leave lingering memories which endeared her to millions. Here was a virtuous woman who portrayed righteousness, tenderness and concern for those around her. While Brown was essentially a love story, Ellen's influence in the lives of other characters bore daily witness to her compassion for all mankind.

To wit, on one broadcast, Ellen and Anthony discussed a senseless murder that Anthony had just witnessed. The dialogue went like this:

ELLEN (speaking of the victim's daughter): She had some justification for blaming me for Horace's death.

ANTHONY: Oh rubbish, dear.

ELLEN: At 19, your father is shot down by a madwoman -- do you think you have much time for reasonable thought? I don't . . . Poor Anthony! . . . (speaking of the killer, with sincerity) Heaven help that poor mad creature! . . . Oh Anthony, who cannot believe that we work out our punishments right here on earth when they look at Leta Haddon (the killer) . . . when they see her . . . when they hear her crazy cries?

ANTHONY: You have something there, dear.

Ellen: I know . . . I know I have. Anthony, you'll have to be very sure that she gets the best psychiatric attention . . . you, you owe that.

ANTHONY: To whom do I owe it?

ELLEN: To the faith that Horace Steele (the dead man) had in your honor, Anthony. We . . . we owe it . . . to . . . to the fact that we were his friends . . . and

he counted on us for help. Now . . . now we have to look after Leta and Jacqueline. Leta . . . because she may turn on Horace's daughter; Jacqueline . . . well, Jacqueline's had enough!

ANTHONY: You're a girl in a million, darling!

And she was. Tenderly, softly-spoken, Ellen delivered daily messages to Americans which said "it's all right to put other's feelings, needs ahead of your own." In that short piece of dialogue, typical of the Ellen who stalled her marriage plans for eighteen years, she expressed concern for the victim's kin, for the man who witnessed the murder, for the murderer and for the memory of the victim, to whom she believed she and Anthony owed a debt. Not a word about her own good deeds; Ellen Brown was goodness through and through, never slipping out of character.

Nine years after *Brown* debuted and had established a loyal following there was concern at CBS for the impending loss of an extremely popular long-standing noontime favorite with women, *Kate Smith Chats*. After several years of presenting the well known singer in a fifteen minute program of music, news headlines and women's features, the show was about to shift to Mutual at that hour. CBS executives scrambled to find an attractive replacement that would hold the audience.

A vehicle that would retain those news headlines gained a consensus. Then to capitalize on the continuity of two popular soap operas before and after the time period (*Rosemary* at 11:45 A.M. and *Aunt Jenny's Real Life Stories* at 12:15 P.M.), the idea of combining the news with a serial was born. Thus, *Wendy Warren and the News* debuted on CBS at 12 o'clock, June 23, 1947.

On *Wendy*, widely recognized CBS newscaster Douglas Edwards (who would also have a nightly newscast on CBS-TV), read news headlines for about three minutes. Then lady "newscaster" Wendy (in the story line) read a one-minute feature for women. Following a commercial for Maxwell House Coffee delivered by announcer Bill Flood (whose real name was Hugh James and who also announced for *The Right to Happiness*, *Big Town* and *Voice of Firestone* during those years), Wendy would exclaim,

"Broadcast's over!" Then she'd be off to her imaginary world of radio serial land.

In it, Wendy -- also a widow -- would live out her daily existence as a reporter for *The Manhattan Gazette*. At the same time she would interact with her father, her aunt, newspaper staffers, assorted suitors and a host of conspirators who seemed to bode evil for all that is good and right about the American way of life. Together with a character named Anton, a lifelong crusader for freedom, Wendy would delve into the evils of sinister forces which would destroy those freedoms that have made our nation great.

It was a constant case of wits, and from a listener's perspective, not so much whether Wendy could marry one of her suitors and live happily ever after, but rather: Could she and Anton make a difference in exposing elements of underworld intrigue that sought to bring Americans to their knees? It was a cold war she fought, and it may have kept as many men attentive in her audience after the news as it did the women.

Supporting Freeman in her role as Wendy were Rod Hendrickson as her father, Sam Warren; Tess Sheehan as Aunt Dorrie; and suitors Gil Kendal (Les Tremayne) and Mark Douglas (Lamont Johnson). The program achieved sidelight notoriety when its original composition theme, "My Home Town," played on the organ, received so many requests from listeners that it was published. In addition, a column purported to be by Wendy called "Woman's World" became a popular feature in a monthly magazine, *True Experiences*.

For all her success, however, Ms. Freeman encountered at least one scare during Warren's eleven years on the air (it was cancelled in 1958). For three weeks a uniformed policeman was posted at CBS to protect her from a listener who had "identified" in some mysterious way with her, believing Wendy was "out to get her." She wrote threatening letters: "I'm on you, you bitch. If you mention my name in your filthy column . . ." At last, she took to lying in wait for Freeman outside the studio. When she stalked her from CBS to NBC one day, Freeman appealed to Benton & Bowles, Warren's producer, and the creative head called the cops.

On Warren and Brown together, Florence Freeman would rack up at least twenty-eight years as a radio heroine. In so doing, she singularly stands today as the only unchallenged star to have earned such a record of longevity on dual series at the same time.

## 1995 Cincinnati Old Time Radio Convention

by Dick Olday

On Friday and Saturday April 21-22, 1995, the ninth annual convention was held at the Marriott Inn in Sharonville, Ohio. My wife and I arrived late Thursday afternoon. Due to a seven hour drive, we decided to go to dinner and return to the hotel to watch Forest Gump on the pay channel. Friday morning dawned sunny and warm so Arlene and I decided to go to the Cincinnati Zoo since the convention wasn't scheduled to begin until 3:00 P.M. We returned to the hotel about 2:15 and promptly registered for the convention.

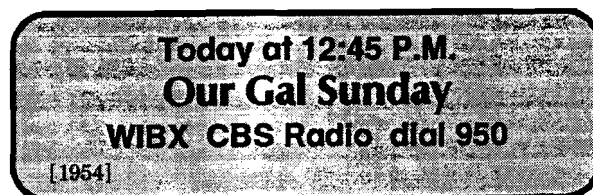
At this time, the dealer room was open and I spent the next two hours roaming from table to table checking out the various "goodies" for sale. At 7:30 P.M., a re-creation of Norman Corwin's *My Client Curley* was presented starring Herb Ellis with Barney Beck doing sound effects. The show was well received by the large audience including Arlene and myself.

At 9:00 A.M. Saturday, I returned to the Dealer's room to purchase cassettes and video tapes. A visit with Herb Ellis was presented at 10:00 A.M. Herb reminisced about his good friend Jack Webb. Following this very entertaining hour which passed all too quickly, Barney Beck treated us all to a sound effects demonstration.

After lunch, a thrilling *Dragnet* show was presented complete with actual gun shots by sound specialist Barney Beck. Herb Ellis portrayed Sgt. Friday. After the 3:00 P.M. raffle, the Dealer's room was closed.

Dinner was served in the hotel at 6:00 P.M. Ed Clute entertained at the piano following dinner. At 7:30 the *Philip Morris Playhouse* presentation *The Apology* was recreated again starring Herb Ellis. This show concluded the convention.

Arlene and I thoroughly enjoyed the convention and the opportunity to visit with many good friends made through the OTR Hobby. If you have never been to the convention, make arrangements to attend the tenth annual convention in 1996. You won't be sorry.



## RADIO MEMORIES

by Francis Edward Bork

It's hard to believe that World War II has been over for 50 years. Now-days there are specials on TV all about the great war, but back during the war we had radio, the magic box found in every home. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, here on the home front it seemed nothing had changed. Then one evening on their regular radio program Fibber McGee and Molly told us to take our useless rubber tires and garden hoses, anything made of rubber to our local gas station for salvage. President Roosevelt had said in one of his radio fireside chats that we were at war, and rubber from southeast Asia was lost to us because of the Japanese conquests in that area. Molly said we would be paid a penny a pound for all the rubber products we could find. A penny, not much by today's standards, but back then pennies really added up. Nine of them would buy a loaf of Wonder Bread as compared to the 99¢ cost today. Today everybody's making a big deal out of the recycling effort, which is a very good thing, no doubt about it. Back in the early 1940's as a new Boy Scout Scout Patrol, *The Cobra*, went all around our neighborhood collecting old newspapers, tin cans, old pots and pans, rags and of course the old tires and rubber products. Everything and anything that might help in America's war effort. How well I remember my Patrol getting together to remove the labels from tin cans and cut each can end off, put the ends inside and flatten them. Most of the items we collected were taken to the police station next door from our Scout Troop meeting place, the Little Bethlehem Church. The police stored all the scrap in the big


gargages they had in back of the station.

Most of the scouts in my Troop belonged to the Buffalo Police Patrol. We would meet on Wednesday evening from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. with several police officers. One of the things they did was to put serial numbers on our bicycles. After we pledged allegiance to the flag we would play softball with them. When the weather got cooler we would play dodgeball in their gym on the forth floor of their building. There would be three or four officers at all times to play with us, whoever had the night. Once two of the officers got permission to take three of us from my Patrol with them in the squad car for an hour. Boy was that swell. I even got permission to talk on the radio in the car. Al, my favorite officer told me to report in to the radio dispatcher, "all normal on patrol 6" or something to that effect. Now that was really a big deal for me, to talk on a real police radio. I couldn't wait to get home and tell my parents about it, and the next day at school to tell my school chums.

Back on radio an aging Captain Midnight became young once more fighting both the Nazis and the Japs. Gosh, he started out on a secret mission way back in World War I fighting for justice and the American Way and now here we are in another war and Captain Midnight is back on the job again. *Don Winslow of the Navy* was doing his part during the war by sinking German submarines in the Atlantic Ocean assuring that vital supplies and much needed war materials got safely to England. Terry and the Pirates went to war also with Terry and his pals going to Tokyo, Japan disguised as Nazi officers to obtain secret plans from the Japs. Now that was really a neat trick, *Mission Impossible*. Just about every radio show went to war in some way. Our radio favorites like *The Great Gildersleeve*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Red Skelton*, *Jack Benny*, well you just name your favorite radio program and I'll bet that they went to war in some way. They all encouraged us to buy U.S. War Bonds and "remember youngsters you can help Uncle Sam fight and win this terrible war by saving your pennies and use them to purchase War Stamps. With each dime you save you can buy a War Stamp at your school or ask dad to buy it for you at his place of work or your mom can get them at your local bank."

Sometime after the war began, I'm not really sure when, rationing came along. Almost everything at this time was on the ration list, you name it, it was rationed. Here in America it wasn't really that bad, not at all like the food shortages they had in England

**BUCK ROGERS**  
tonight at 7:15 over  
**WGR**  
550 on your dial



Tune in Buck Rogers in the twenty-fifth century! The same thrilling character that thousands already know. Wild adventure. Imagination. Thrills. The world 500 years from now! Sponsored by Kellogg of Battle Creek.

[1932]

and the other countries in Europe at the end of World War II. America always had enough food to feed our country and half the world around us. Oh sure, we didn't have every type of food stuffs all the time but then no one went hungry. The key word at that time was don't be wasteful and don't be a hoarder. There is enough for everyone if we each only buy our fair share was the message written on the posters placed on our local rapid transit system. With rationing almost all purchases required that you have a ration stamp. On the list of rationed items was sugar, flour, meat, butter, eggs and some types of canned foods.

On one episode of Fibber McGee and Molly, Fibber found a place where he could buy some Black Market meat. Needless to say he brought home a large steak, put it in the icebox and told Molly he had a surprise for supper. What he didn't tell Molly was that he had paid about five times the OPA (Office of Price Administration) price and no ration stamps. As the shows regulars stopped by the McGee home as they did during the course of the show, Fibber trying to prove himself a big-shot offered to sell them all the meat they wanted. Mrs. Uppington refused Fibber's offer and he gets a lecture from Harlow Wilcox on what the rationing program is all about and how important it is for the economy of our country to only buy from honest business people, paying only the OPA prices for whatever you buy, or purchase a substitute item or just go without. "Oh McGee, you're pulling my leg. You never would patronize a black marketeer," ha, ha, Wilcox laughs. (To help combat the Black Market the OPA put a price ceiling on all consumer items for sale). When Doc Gamble stopped by for his weekly visit he told McGee that he should buy meat which the government inspected and only from reliable licensed butcher shops. At this point Molly pops in with a modern version of the Spanish-American war slogan "Remember the Toe-Main." Doc Gamble told the radio audience via McGee about several of the patients now in the hospital because of bad meat they had bought from questionable characters. This of course was no joke for many people here in America did get sick from bad food stuffs and several did die.

This episode of the Fibber McGee and Molly Show was aimed at the radio audience as a warning, don't buy from shady characters, especially meat. Radio did have its impact on us in our daily lives. When I think back to those war time days I think we listened more to our favorite radio characters than we did to the U.S. Government warnings. At least as a kid growing up during WWII I can still remember going grocery shopping with my mother and holding her

purse with the food money in it while she counted out the ration stamps and decided just what she could buy this week. She planned each meal carefully according to the ration stamps we had, especially her supper meat purchase. I remembered what Doc Gamble told Fibber. "Mom, make sure the meat has been government inspected," I told her.

Radio did make an impression on kids back then. Ah radio, I really can't say that I miss it because with my collection of old time radio shows, which I listen to almost every day, radio is alive and doing well at my house.

Well that's it for now, till next time,  
Happy Radio Memories

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## *Member's Mike*

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Dear Editor:

I have thoroughly enjoyed the continuing series by Dom Parisi on "Cowboys On Radio" in your fine publication. His seven installments on this fascinating part of OTR history have been well-researched and well-written. As a fellow editor, I envy you having such a productive writer to create these informative and entertaining articles.



The seventh installment of this series, however, contains a few errors of fact, which spring from some cherished, but inaccurate, bits of OTR folklore.

STRAIGHT ARROW (Steve Adams) was not a young white man who had been raised by the Comanche; it's exactly the opposite. He was a Comanche orphan raised by white ranchers. Sheldon Stark, the writer of this series, made this clear in both the radio version and the Injun-Uity cards in the Nabisco packages. "Pow-Wow," the publication of the STRAIGHT ARROW fan club, has been trying for years to clear up this popular misconception.

The portion on TOM MIX contains several errors, some of them promulgated by the original Tom Mix through his Hollywood press agents. He did not serve under Teddy Roosevelt, was not in the Rough Riders, and never joined the Texas Rangers. Paul Mix, Tom's nephew and biographer, has established in his authoritative book that Tom enlisted in the U.S. Army, never left the U.S. and never saw any action, and then (oh, blushes!) deserted.

Regarding the TOM MIX radio show, Willard Waterman never played Sheriff Mike Shaw, although Hal Peary did prior to 1942 when Shaw was a minor character, not the secondary lead. The Old Wrangler (played by Percy Hemus until his death in 1942) was Tom's partner in battling Western crime. Shaw was elevated to the secondary lead and Leo Curley had the roll from 1944 until the show went off the air in 1950. The announcer, Don Gordon, did not replace the Old Wrangler; Gordon joined the cast in 1940, two years before the Old Wrangler had to disappear when Hemus died. (All of this is documented in the 1992 book, Radio Mystery and Adventure and Its Appearances in Film, Television and Other Media by Jim Harmon, a Tom Mix expert.)

Jack French  
Fairfax, VA

Dom Parisi replies:

Dear Jack,

Many thanks for the find words regarding my "Cowboys on Radio" series. I appreciate your comments.

In his book, Tune In Yesterday, (1976) John Dunning states that Steve Adams of the *Straight Arrow* show was a white man who had been raised among the Comanches. You know, now that I give this a little thought, an unusual gimmick would have our hero Steve portrayed as an Indian raised by white folks! That would have been a different approach, as you have noted. But I wonder, could a white family teach an Indian to shoot arrows with skill and to behave like a real Indian? In radio anything could happen! Sure, why not! The story goes on to say that "Adams the rancher disappeared, (when trouble lurked) and in his place appeared a mysterious stalwart Indian complete in warpaint and dress of a Comanche." Was he a white in disguise or a real Indian? I don't know. Somewhere along the way something got messed up! I could accept the story that Adam was indeed an Indian lad brought up by whites.

Regarding Tom Mix, both Tune In Yesterday and Jim Harmon's 1976 version of The Great Radio Heroes verified that Mix was a U.S. Marshall, a sheriff and that he fought with Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough riders. Jim even goes on to say that Tom's first wife Olive Stokes Mix provided him with this information.

Tune In Yesterday notes that Mix joined the Texas Rangers after serving as a Kansas lawman. Also

quoted from Dunning's book is the suggestion that Don Gordon replaced the Old Wrangler and that both Harold Peary and Willard Waterman played the part of Sheriff Mike Shaw in the late 1930's. Harmon reports that Harold Peary had the part, he doesn't mention Waterman. Another book, The Big Broadcast (1972) by Frank Buxton and Bill Owens, also states that both Peary and Waterman played the part.

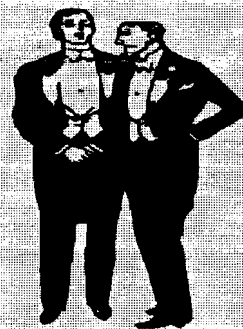
Apparently Harmon did additional research for his 1992 book, Radio Mystery and Adventure and Its Appearance in Film, Television and Other Media.

I guess it's a confusing situation. All we can rely on are publications in print and actual interviews.

Once again Jack, thank you for your keen observations of my article. I'm glad you pointed out some possible errors.

## DON'T GET A DIVORCE

Few women want to go out because they hate their homes. It's because they need a change. Those wives who are in the home all day find the walls boring at night and they crave a glimpse of the outside world, but on the other hand, husbands after a hard day at the office are tired and wish to stay at home



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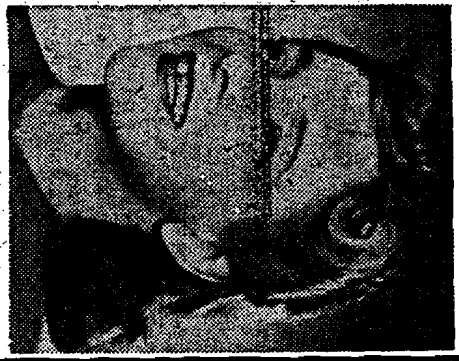
[1928]

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THEATER GUILD ON THE AIR

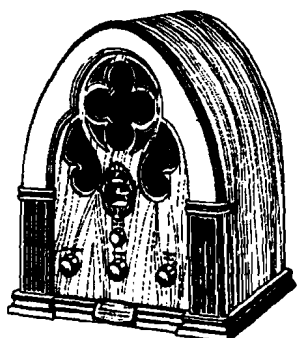


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Super giant jackpot  
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- 8:00 SAM SPADE**  
Dashiell Hammett's tough  
"private eye." Listen!
- 8:30 HELEN HAYES**  
(see above)
- 9:30 American Album**
- 10:00 EDDIE CANTOR**

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