

The Illustrated Press

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Frontier Gentleman

By JACK FRENCH © 2008

As the sunset of the Golden Age of Radio approached in the late 1950's, four adult western series had reached the highest peak of broadcast drama. This quartette, *Gunsmoke*, *Fort Laramie*, *Have Gun, Will Travel* and *Frontier Gentleman*, embodied some of the best writing, acting, and directing ever enjoyed by radio audiences. All were on CBS and one stellar actor, John Dehner, had the starring role in the latter two and had been auditioned for the lead in the other two.

For the leading role of Captain Lee Quince in the *Fort Laramie* series, Dehner was narrowly edged out by Raymond Burr. An actor born in Canada, Burr's bit parts in the movies up to that time had given little indication of the fame he would later achieve as television's *Perry Mason*. However at least a half dozen men were seriously considered for the role of Matt Dillon in *Gunsmoke* before CBS, ultimately chose William Conrad, somewhat reluctantly because of his very recognizable voice.

The only actor who was offered the role of the marshall of Dodge City but then turned it down, was John Dehner, who did not want to be typecast as strictly a "western actor." Despite his refusal, *Gunsmoke's* producer/director Norman Macdonnell admired Dehner's talent so much he hired him more times on that series than any other supporting actor. During the entire run (1952 to 1961) Dehner's voice was heard in 234 different episodes.

Dehner did not take a traditional career path in obtaining the lead in both *Frontier Gentleman* and *Have Gun, Will Travel*. Born John Dehner Forkum on Staten Island, NY on November 23, 1915, he held a variety of jobs as a young man, including professional pianist, radio journalist, and free lance publicist. By 1940 he had found a job on the west coast as an assistant animator for Walt Disney Studios, probably with the help

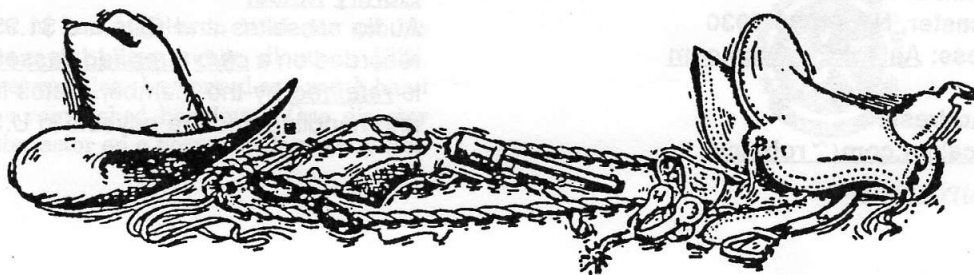
of his father who was a background artist on *Fantasia* and other animated films. This employment inadvertently led to Dehner's movie career; while working for Disney he got an uncredited role, playing a story board artist, in the 1941 film *The Reluctant Dragon*.

After that, the tall handsome actor was cast in a series of eleven more motion pictures (all uncredited) during World War II, frequently playing a radio announcer or a military man. Like many actors on the way up, he had his share of roles in "B" pictures; he played Derek, a mad scientist in Allied Artists' 1954 film, *The Bowery Boys Meet the Monsters*. As his reputation grew and more directors respected his talent, he went on to larger roles in bigger movies. His lifetime resume included over 270 films and appearances in over sixty television series, making him one of Hollywood's most durable personalities.

His radio work began in 1942 when he showed his "character voice" playing the scary lead/narrator in *The Hermit's Cave*, an horror anthology. Thereafter he earned his way into the supporting casts of many series, including *The Count of Monte Christo*, *Escape*, *Smilin' Ed's Buster Brown Gang*, *Adventures of Philip Marlowe* and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*. Although he had ten successful years of radio work, he had only been chosen for the lead in two series prior to *Frontier Gentleman*. In 1950-51, he was the last of three actors to have the leading role of Scotland Yard Inspector Peter Black in *Pursuit* on CBS. That same season he played the co-lead, Elmer Truitt, in the NBC situation comedy, *The Truitts*.

The majority of Dehner's acting career was in radio, the movies, and on television. His stage appearances were rare. At the age of 23 he was in the cast of *The Bridal Crown* on Broadway in which he was billed under the name of Dehner Forkum. It must have been an unpleasant memory for him since it was a rare flop by the eminent playwright August Strindberg and it closed after only one performance in February 1938. But whether on television, radio, or the movies,

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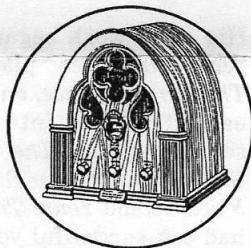
Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing newsletter issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM during the months of September through June at St. Aloysius School Hall, Cleveland Drive and Century Road, Cheektowaga, NY. There is **no** meeting during the month of July, and an informal meeting is held in the month of August.

Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

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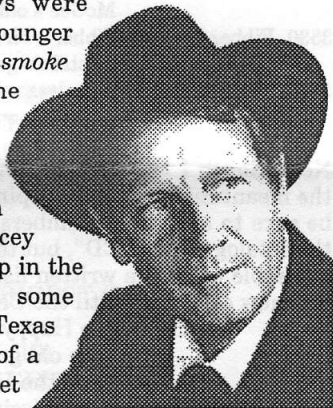
Audio cassettes and CDs are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette or CD** which is **retained** by the member. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.

Joel McCrea and the "Tales of the Texas Rangers"

By TOM CHERRE

By now I'm sure all of you faithful readers realize that I'm a big western fan. One actor and radio series I've never touched on will finally get some deserved recognition. That actor is Joel McCrea and the series is *Tales of the Texas Rangers*. I still hate the Dallas Cowboys with a special passion, but I like the Texas Rangers and Joel McCrea.

Back in the early '50s Gene, Roy, and Hoppy were still very popular with their movies, radio and TV shows. *The Lone Ranger* was still going strong after over 15 years. All these cowboys were geared to appeal to the younger set. Matt Dillon and *Gunsmoke* had not yet made the scene, so there was no real adult western show on the air. Producer-Director Stacey Keach (father of actor Stacey Keach Jr.) journeyed deep in the heart of Texas to do some research on the famed Texas Rangers in anticipation of a new radio show. He met one of the most famous



Texas Rangers of all, Captain Manuel "Lone Wolf" Gonzauillas. After interviewing him and asking a multitude of questions, Keach enlisted the services of Gonzauillas as his technical advisor for a show that was not even created yet. They traveled over the whole state watching the Rangers in action, gathering valuable facts and information that would help him in his new show.

Keach was on the search for an established credited western actor somewhat like Randolph Scott or Gary Cooper to play the lead role of Jace Pearson. His co-star would be named Clay Morgan. Can anyone tell me what other names would sound more like western cowpokes? Joel McCrea who had been a Hollywood star for nearly 20 years was chosen.

McCrea was born in Los Angeles in 1905. He got his start in acting as a stunt man in the silents in 1928. During his summer vacations he worked as a ranch hand and became an accomplished horseman. One director said the only better actor on a horse was legendary Ben

Johnson. McCrea was tall, 6 ft 3 inches and ruggedly good looking. In his earlier non-western films he played opposite Barbara Stanwyck, Bette Davis, Lorraine Day and others. In 1937 he had his first starring role in a western entitled "Wells Fargo." In 1939 under Cecil B. DeMille he starred in "Union Pacific." By 1946 he was strictly doing oaters.

Tales of the Texas Rangers debuted on NBC July 8th 1950. The show, although more of an adult show, was sponsored by Wheaties. The stories took place in modern times. They were all documented by real case files of the Texas Rangers. You might have Jace Pearson start out the show in his police cruiser, but usually you'd find him on the saddle of his mount Charcoal. The name was taken from Captain Gonzauillas' own horse. The series was much like the *Dragnet* show where the cases were true. The crimes involved murder, armed robbery, kidnapping and other serious offenses unlike the kids' shows. Announcer Hal Gibney, also of *Dragnet* fame introduced the show by saying . . . Texas! More than 260,000 square miles, and 50 men who make up the most famous and oldest law enforcement body in North America.

McCrea was great as Pearson. He had that soft but reassuring voice that let you know he was confident in everything he did. The show also had a great theme song written by Shorty Long. It sort of got you in the Texas spirit. I thought this was a good show. It only lasted two years, and ended September 14, 1952. It was later put on TV without McCrea. As in the *Mounties*, the Texas Rangers always got their man too. At the end of the show they announced the sentence for the perpetrators crime. This was usually a spell of imprisonment at Huntsville Penitentiary or worse a seat in the electric chair. Joel McCrea retired in the late 1950s but came out of retirement to co-star with his buddy Randolph Scott in "Ride the High Country" in 1962. For the most part he stayed retired and became a gentleman rancher. He was married for 57 years to the same wife actress Frances Dee. I liked Joel McCrea just as much as I liked Randolph Scott. He was a humble and under-rated actor. He was quoted as saying "I have no regrets, except perhaps one; I should have tried harder to be an actor." I have to disagree with that statement. Along with Roy, Gene and Randolph I can still see them riding the plains. We lost Joel McCrea on October 20, 1990. He was a good ranger.





Librarian's Notes

By FRANK BORK

For quite some time now I have asked for help from our club members in replacing some of the missing cassettes in the Cassette Library. The response has been fairly good up until last month. Then in January it took a giant leap when Tom Monroe donated 100 Cassettes to the Club. All top notch cassettes. Most are replacements for the Club's missing cassettes and some will be new to the Library. I have placed 25 cassettes in the Library and will place the rest as soon as possible I will list 25 cassettes each month until all are completely listed, for each member's own records. THANK YOU TOM FOR YOUR GENEROSITY. At the February meeting all the club members shouted "Thank You Tom." We know you could not hear us but we wanted you to know our feeling was there. Thanks again Tom. Listed below are 25 of Tom's replacement Cassettes.

- 386 Philip Marlowe - The Red Wind
The Persian Slipper
- 546 Key - Alexis
The Cellar
- 571 The Lone Ranger - Iron Box 12/12/41
Remember the Alamo 12/22/41
- 596 Inner Sanctum - Murder faces East 12/13/45
Fearful Voyage 1/3/49
- 597 Inner Sanctum - Color Blind Formulas 12/6/44
The Judas Clock 4/17/45
- 636 Molle Mystery Theater - Make no mistake
Close shave
- 783 Crime Classics - Good Ship Jane 2/24/54
Johnathan Jewitt 6/2/54
- 829 Stan Freeberg - Tuned Sheep
Abominable Snowman interview
- 859 Candy Matson - Symphony of Death 6/25/50
Sleep no more - Waxwork - The man and the snake
- 993 Gunsmoke - The Constable
The Indian horse
- 1038 Theater 10:30 - City Of Solomon
Ico of Elijah
- 1153 Johnny Dollar - The Twin trouble Matter
The cask of death
- 1191 Sky King - Message in Code 12/4/47
Mark of Diablo 4/17/51
- 1274 The Whistler - With my own eyes 7/30/50
X Minus One - The Vital factor 11/30/55
- 1380 Nero Wolfe - The hasty Will
The disappearing Diamonds

- 1482 Escape - Journey into Fear 11/19/50
Funeral fires 11/26/50
- 1530 Top Secret - The Church without a Cross with Iona
Massey title unknown
- 1559 The Chase - Murderer's row
Bank robbery & kidnapping
- 2052 Philip Marlowe - Face to forget
Golden Cobra
- 2084 Big Town - The trap 9/28/48
The Fatal chain 11/9/48
- 2186 Johnny Dollar - Ring of death Matter 3/11/61
The Informer Matter 3/17/61
- 2342 Boston Blackie - The Brandon Jewels
The Congdon Ransom
- 3903 Family Theater - The other Glory
The windbag
- 3266 Academy Theater - The Informer
also on tape 3353 Arise My Love
- 3379 Phil Harris - The Lawn Party
Buying a boat
- 3529 Fibber McGee - Gildersleeve Girdle Quiz Show
McGee's old suit
- 3530 Fibber McGee - Fibber's birthday
Egyptain's good luck ring
- 3544 Phil Harris - Ukelele lessons
On T.V. Show

Next Month I will add 25 more cassettes to the list. In the meantime if you are keeping your catalog up to date, be sure to add these numbers to your list. I know that the catalog is on a "CD", but to be up-to-date it would be advisable to keep a written list of cassette replacements and new cassettes until the Club's Catalog is up-dated.

Till next time Happy Radio Listening

The old grauch,
Frank the Librarian

P.S. Listed below are 10 missing cassettes for this month.

- March '09
- 1376 Counterspy - Black mailed Hijacker
German spies
- 1405 Challenge of the Yukon - Thieves Congress
Tom Barry's return
- 1415 Broadway is My Beat - Jewel of Ghengis Khan
John Dodson murder Case
- 1426 Golden Days of Radio - W.C. Fields excerpts
- 1441 CBS Radio Mystery Theater - The Queen of Darkness
A Case of Negligence
- 1455 Fibber McGee - McGee writes a movie on inventing the
typewriter
McGee goes Canoeing
- 1477 Amos n Andy - Kingfish tries to evict Leroy
Andy's mail order Bride
- 1547 Johnny Dollar - The Temple torch Matter
The can't be so Matter
- 1548 Johnny Dollar - The Kalicies Matter
- 1549 Johnny Dollar - The Back to Back Matter
The 4th Deadly Debt Matter
"That's All Folks"

**New Additions to the
CD/MP3 Library**

- 175 - ADDRESS UNKNOWN (4)
- 152 - ADV. OF DANNY MARSDON (12)
- 155 - BLONDIE (35)
- 146 - BULLDOG DRUMMOND (6)
- 146 - CRIME CLUB (26)
- 149 - CRIME DOES NOT PAY (57)
- 153 - DOUGLAS OF THE WORLD (153)
- 164 - DR. JEKTL & MR. HYDE (52)
- 147 - ENCORE THEATER (29)
- 151 - FIVE MINUTE MYSTERIES (47)
- 174 - GREEN VALLEY LINE (26)
- 168 - GUNSMOKE (26)
- 169 - GUNSMOKE (26)
- 170 - GUNSMOKE (26)
- 171 - GUNSMOKE (26)
- 172 - GUNSMOKE (26)
- 165 - HEAR IT NOW (14)
- 166 - HEAR IT NOW (11)
- 156 - HALL OF IVY (84)
- 150 - HOST PLANET EARTH (6)
- 176 - MURDER BY EXPERTS (12)
- 167 - MYSTERY TIME (12)
- 146 - NERO WOLFE (30)
- 160 - NERO WOLFE (23)
- 161 - NIGHTWATCH (26)
- 162 - NIGHTWATCH (20)
- 177 - RADIO READER'S DIGEST (71)
- 148 - SAINT, THE (77)
- 154 - STORY OF US ALL (10)
- 173 - TOWN HALL TONIGHT (16)
- 157 - UNIT 99 (24)
- 158 - UNIT 99 (15)
- 163 - YOUR HIT PARADE (23)

Can You Help?

Member Jim Powers is searching for information regarding a B.B.C. broadcast (1932 - 1936) about Gilbert Keith Chesterton. It's in regards to a series of radio talks on the B.B.C. Network. Do any recordings exist? What kind of research should Jim take? How does one contact the B.B.C. for information? Any help from our members would be appreciated by Jim.

Thanks,
Dom Parisi

yesterdayusa.com

Club members Dick Olday, Frank Boncore and Bob McDivitt continue to record shows for this Internet radio service. You can listen in on the fun by logging on at the above address and checking the schedule.

Frontier Gentleman

Continued from Page 1

Dehner's cocked-eyebrow aloofness generally eliminated any romantic involvement in the story. He once bragged that in all his acting career, he had never wooed or kissed the female lead.

Although Dehner played the leading role of J. B. Kendall in *Frontier Gentleman*, in addition to Paladin in *Have Gun, Will Travel*, he did not have to do these series simultaneously. The *Frontier Gentleman* series ended in mid-November 1958 and exactly one week later, *Have Gun, Will Travel* commenced on radio. The television version, starring Richard Boone, was so popular that CBS had to bring out a radio version, possibly for Paladin fans in the outlying regions with poor TV reception. This show was one of only eight television programs that spawned a radio version; the other seven were *My Little Margie*, *Wild Bill Hickok*, *Tales of Tomorrow*, *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Tom Corbett*, *What's My Line?*, and *Howdy Doody*. There is evidence to indicate that Dehner was the first choice to play Paladin by the producers of television's *Have Gun, Will Travel* but Warner Brothers had him under contract and refused to release him for the role so Boone got the nod.

The creative genius responsible for the birth and sustained high quality of *Frontier Gentleman* was producer/director/writer Antony "Tony" Ellis. A native of Great Britain born in 1920, Ellis came to the United States and found employment in broadcasting. Around 1945 he married a radio actress, Georgia Hawkins. As Georgia Ellis she portrayed "Miss Kitty" on *Gunsmoke* in the 1950s, but by that time they were divorced. At first he was primarily a writer (on *Pursuit*, *Escape*, *On Stage*, etc.) but infrequently he also won roles at the microphone (*CBS Radio Workshop*, *Voyage of the Scarlet Queen*, and *Crime Classics*.) He learned his craft well and accordingly moved up the ladder to producing and directing; in 1954 he replaced Norman Macdonnell as the producer/director of the acclaimed *Suspense* series.

In creating *Frontier Gentleman*, Ellis deliberately fashioned a leading character totally different from the other CBS western heroes. Matt Dillon, Paladin, and Lee Quince were essentially crime fighters on horseback, advancing the cause of justice; they were as adroit with their guns as they were with their fists. They were figures of authority while Kendall, although sometimes a participant in the action, was essentially an observer. Possibly J. B. Kendall was a veiled persona of Ellis, a gentleman writer born in England, chronicling the American west.

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Ellis grounded his main character accurately in historical fact. The untamed American west fascinated Europeans and they were enthralled by the culture of the Native American Indians, the broad scope of our prairies, deserts, and mountains, as well as the colorful cowboys, miners, and gun fighters. The cultured Europeans who toured our western regions, recording the region's customs, attire, business opportunities, and natural grandeur, were a varied lot. There were journalists (Henry Sienkiewicz, George Sala, etc.), illustrators including Valentine Bromley, and even novelists (Heinrich Mollhausen, Henry Herman, etc.) Obviously J. B. Kendall would have felt very comfortable in their midst.

Dehner's radio work was familiar to Ellis when he auditioned him for the lead in *Frontier Gentleman*. The two had many opportunities to work together since Ellis wrote the scripts for many of the series in which Dehner was in the supporting cast. These mutual endeavors included: *Romance, Pursuit, On Stage*, and of course, *Gunsmoke*. In addition, they both acted in episodes of *Crime Classics, Suspense*, and *The Voyage of the Scarlet Queen*.

Frontier Gentleman debuted on February 2, 1958 and the CBS press release described it as:

"Based on life in Western America during the 1870's, as seen through the eyes of a British Army veteran, the program will debut over CBS KNX. Antony Ellis, who created the show, will also write, produce, and direct the series, which tells of the adventures of J.B. Kendall. He is a quiet-spoken freelance correspondent for a London newspaper, after long service with the British Army in India. Kendall will bring radio listeners weekly stories dramatizing the never ending Indian wars, the battles between roving desperados and early settlers, and tales of everyday life along the western frontier."

Ellis had a pool of talented veterans to support Dehner, including Jack Kruschen, Virginia Gregg, Barney Phillips, Lawrence Dobkin, Jeanette Nolan, Jack Moyle, Harry Bartell, and Vic Perrin. The latter three were also the principals backing up Raymond Burr in *FORT LARAMIE*, playing respectively, Major Daggett, Lt. Seiberts, and Sgt. Gorce. All eight of them were also heard on *GUNSMOKE* and many other network shows. While there was continuity in the supporting players, the announcer kept changing; *FRONTIER GENTLEMAN* had four different announcers in its nine months duration: Johnny Jacobs, Dan Cubberly, John Wald, and Bud Sewell.

Good sound effects in radio drama make a program more interesting. Great sound effects advance the plot, heighten the action, emphasize the setting, underscore the mood, and increase the realism. *FRONTIER GENTLEMAN* had great sound effects; they were created by the KNX team of Tom Hanley and Bill James. When characters walked, not only were their boot steps and tinkling spurs heard, but also the creak of leather from their heavy gun belts. If two characters went to sit at a table, there was the sound of chair legs scraping on the floor as they were pulled away from the table and then pushed back again as they sat down. Hoof beats sounded differently depending on the terrain transversed: firm prairie soil, gravel trail, wooden bridge, or fording a stream.

Sometimes the skill of Hanley and James were so compelling, no dialogue was needed to explain what had taken place in the scene. In one gripping episode, a lynch mob in a frontier prairie town has a trembling man on horseback, hands tied, with a noose around his neck. The radio audience is hoping for a last minute rescue when suddenly one of the crowd yells and slaps the victim's horse. In rapid succession is heard: a clatter of hoof beats, silence for one beat, the ominous sound of twisting, creaking rope and then the faint clucking of unconcerned chickens nearby. The mind of the listener needed nothing more to visualize the dead body swinging above the now-silent crowd.

In some of his dialogue, Ellis used specific terms that, while they sounded incongruous to his listeners, were in fact historically accurate. Example: in one episode a minister is among the passengers in a stage coach which is stopped on the trail by robbers, one of whom refers to the clergyman as a "sky pilot." Although it sounds modern, this expression was part of western and hobo slang in the late 1800's. Of course in that era, a pilot was the navigator on a ship or flatboat, not an aviator, as it came to be synonymous with in the 1920's.

Ellis knew well the history of his adopted country. In another episode, Kendall travels to Dry Creek, WY to interview a woman who has just been appointed Justice of the Peace in that community. Listeners in 1958 may have scoffed at this event as being impossible for that era. However the emergence of women into positions of authority was not that uncommon on the frontier and Wyoming led the way. It officially became a territory in 1868 and one year later granted full voting rights to women. This was a first for the United States since no other state or territory had yet approved women's suffrage.

The music on this series was the responsibility of Wilbur Hatch, while the haunting trumpet theme was the work of Jerry Goldsmith. Since this was a sustained

BEING THERE: Collecting Radio Broadcast Admission Tickets

By RICK PAYNE (All Rights Reserved 2009)

During the golden age of radio, networks and sponsors invited the general public to attend live performances of many popular programs. For the performers, the presence of the studio audience provided encouragement, laughter and appreciation. For the audience, the experience was an unforgettable opportunity to see their favorite entertainers at work. Tickets from some broadcasts survive today . . . waiting for collectors like me.

A few issues ago we focused on tickets for programs featuring some of radio's most popular male vocalists. This time, we turn our attention to the fairer sex. "Dames on the dial", you might say (not to be confused with the "dames on the dole" resulting from our current financial market turmoil).

The ticket pictured above is from a special 1936 remote broadcast from Cleveland. The popular 1933-34 Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago inspired other regional events like the Texas Centennial in Dallas, the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco and Cleveland's Great Lakes Exposition. The trend peaked with the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. The Great Lakes Exposition's Radioland outdoor auditorium resembled the Hollywood Bowl and seated over 15,000 people. *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *Ed Wynn*, *Irene Rich*, *The Sinclair Minstrels*, *The Maxwell House Show Boat* and *The Cities Service Concert* were but a few of the national radio programs that visited the fair for national broadcasts.

GOOD ONLY ON Monday, Jan. 9, 1939 BEFORE 8:30 P. M.	ADMIT ONE
	PHIL SPITALNY AND HIS ALL GIRL General Electric HOUR OF CHARM BROADCAST PERFORMANCE AND CONCERT
	WITH DOROTHY THOMPSON
	Main Auditorium—Cleveland Public Hall
	<small>This ticket Entitles Holder to Admission and Seat before 8:30 P. M. Children under 12 years of age must be accompanied by adults.</small>

CITIES SERVICE CONCERT	Sponsored by The Cities Service Oil Co.
Sponsored by THE CITIES SERVICE OIL CO. FRIDAY, AUG. 7 - 7:00 to 8:00 P. M.	
SINGLE ADMISSION TO RADIOLAND GREAT LAKES EXPOSITION	Sponsored by Cities Service Concert
<small>This ticket entitles the holder to a reserved section seat in Radioland ONLY for the performance specified and is NOT good at any other time or any other performance. The hours stated above are the starting and sign-off time of the Program. Spectators must be seated 15 minutes before Program starting time. Entrance to RADIOLAND: East side of Exposition Plaza just within main gates. THIS TICKET DOES NOT INCLUDE ADMISSION TO EXPOSITION GROUNDS</small>	Friday, Aug. 7, 1936 7:00 to 8:00 p. m.

I'm not sure this is what the sufferagettes of the early twentieth century had in mind, but let's face it . . . the cause of women's liberation hit a new zenith with the launch of an all-girl orchestra. Russian-born Phil Spitalny had labored for years as the leader of several traditional all-male orchestras for cities, hotels and theaters. Inspiration struck in 1932 upon hearing an inspired female violinist: could a top-quality orchestra consisting only of women be assembled?

One of radio's first superstars was a young soprano named Jessica Dragonette. She rose from obscurity in the mid 1920s; her singing voice was apparently not strong enough to withstand the rigors of singing every night on tour. The relative intimacy and technology of radio gave her the perfect outlet for her vocal limitations.

Spitalny set out on an exhaustive nationwide search for feminine musical talent. The challenge was far more difficult than he imagined because of his strict criteria: excellent musicianship and morality packaged in a frame of no more than 122 pounds with a face that was easy on the eyes (these days, men with similar standards just stalk their prey on the internet). Spitalny was keenly aware that such a gathering of females would be the target of traditional musicians ready to discredit their efforts. A strict code of behavior was rigorously enforced, encompassing exercise, beauty care and careful screening of social activities.

After a variety of programs and formats, Dragonette hit the peak of her popularity when she joined the cast of *The Cities Service Concert* NBC program in 1930. Each week, she performed several pieces during the one-hour broadcast, including duets with future *Jack Benny Program* tenor Frank Parker. The show featured a variety of music ranging from popular tunes to operatic selections. Jessica's vocal versatility was her strength, and the young singer's looks put her on the cover of many radio and celebrity magazines. Unfortunately, a series of disputes with program management created behind-the-scenes turbulence and she left the program in 1937 to move to CBS.

After appearing in a short 1934 film as "Phil Spitalny and his Musical Queens", the renamed "All-Girl Orchestra" started appearing regularly on CBS. In November 1936, they moved to NBC and would headline *General Electric's Hour of Charm* for the next ten years. The star of the show was violinist and concertmistress Evelyn Klein. Billed as "Evelyn and her Magic Violin", she was Spitalny's right-hand . . . er, woman . . . recruiting talent and enforcing the band's principles of behav

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ior. Predictably, Phil broke his own rules by marrying Evelyn in 1945.

The program usually originated from New York's Radio City Studios. In 1939, the group traveled to Cleveland for a remote broadcast; the admission ticket is pictured above. They shared the stage with Dorothy Thompson, a popular newspaper and radio commentator. Thompson, a former sufferagette and the wife of writer Sinclair Lewis, was outspoken on the dangers of Hitler and the Nazi movement as early as 1931; she was in fact the first American correspondent to be expelled by the Nazi Government.

We've reviewed Kate Smith's unparalleled popularity in previous columns; "beloved" is the word that best describes her relationship with America. It therefore makes sense that tickets to her broadcasts were among the most coveted by the public. Getting them was an adventure in itself. If you wanted tickets to a *Kate Smith Hour* broadcast, you had to either: (a) know someone on the inside who could pull some strings for you, or (b) write to her sponsor General Foods (makers of Grape-Nuts and Grape-Nuts Flakes)

Your request would be one of thousands received each week. Kate's program originated from CBS Radio Theatre No. 2 on West 45th Street, and the theatre only seated 805 people. Your odds of success were slim. In most cases, your hopes were crushed when you received a card like the one shown above. At least Kate was nice about it, sensitively urging you to drown your disappointment in a bowl of cereal.

But if the gods smiled on you, you would receive a card in the mail like the one shown below, with your precious tickets neatly tucked into a slot for safekeeping. And there as always was your friend Kate, sensitively urging you to celebrate your good fortune with a bowl of cereal.

Saying "no" to a loyal listener was always tricky business. It's nice to remember that in that simpler time good manners demanded that you acknowledge receipt of a letter. In fact, during the depression the purchase of a stamp to make a ticket request was nothing to be dismissed. Most programs sent out replies to all requests; I have examples from about seventy different programs in my collection. *The Kate Smith Hour* did a really exceptional job of letting their listeners down easy.



HELLO, FOLKS!

Enclosed are the tickets you requested for the Kate Smith hour. Please note the time carefully and be in your seats not later than fifteen minutes before the broadcast. We hope you'll enjoy the show.

GENERAL FOODS, 250 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.
Makers of Grape-Nuts and Grape-Nuts Flakes

WE SINCERELY APPRECIATE your interest in our Chase and Sanborn radio program and only wish that it were possible to give you the tickets you have requested.

This program is broadcast from a very small studio in Hollywood, California, with a limited seating capacity. We cannot begin to take care of the requests which we receive, or even make a promise for the future, as half of our tickets are reserved for the members of the Armed Forces. We are glad to know that you have enjoyed the broadcasts which we have sponsored for your entertainment, and we hope that they will continue to bring you many hours of pleasure.

STANDARD BRANDS, INC.
• GRACIE FIELDS

The people at Standard Brands (makers of Chase and Sanborn Coffee) provided a more detailed apology for fans hoping to get tickets in the summer of 1944 when Gracie Fields headlined their program.

<i>The Blue Network</i>		BLUE NETWORK COMPANY • INC.	
M		★ RADIO CITY STUDIOS ★	
RCA BUILDING • 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA • NEW YORK • ENTRANCE ON 49th or 50th STREETS, BETWEEN 5th and 6th AVENUES • NEW YORK		M	
FRI. 30 OCT. '42 9:35 PM	PALL MALL FAMOUS CIGARETTES present GRACIE FIELDS		FLOOR 6
VOID IF SOLD		1942	SEE REVERSE SIDE

And that's a great segue to mention the very popular English music hall singer and comedienne Gracie Fields. She was a working class hero to her countrymen and

The Illustrated Press

was enormously popular through the twenties and thirties. While recovering from cancer in 1939, she received over 250,000 letters from her fans. Her domestic popularity took a hit in 1940, however, when she married an Italian film director and forfeited her British citizenship. With England embroiled in a war with Germany and Italy, an Italian citizen would have been interned in Great Britain so Gracie moved to America. Despite her continuing financial and spiritual support, her popularity among her countrymen didn't return until after the war ended.

American audiences found her refreshing and inspiring. Her first radio sponsor was the American Tobacco Company, paying her \$2,500 a week to appear on the Blue Network for Pall Mall Cigarettes. This is one of my favorite radio tickets, just 2 1/2 weeks into the series. *The Gracie Fields Show* was on the air for only 25 minutes a week . . . but it was five minutes every weekday! That's right, her radio show was only five minutes long! Imagine the logistics of assembling a studio audience every day for five minutes at 9:55 PM! Her program followed another logistical nightmare, Coca-Cola's *Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands*. As far as I know, no recordings exist for the five-minute version of *The Gracie Fields Show*. Two months later, the program was expanded to 15 minutes and retitled *The Gracie Fields Victory Show*.

Music Society of Lower Basin Street, the weekly series devoted to perpetuating music's three B's: barrelhouse, boogie-woogie and blues. She also had a long professional association with comedian Eddie Cantor.

She hosted her own half-hour musical variety show for Birds-Eye Foods from 1943-46. If you were lucky enough to score tickets to the Hollywood-based program, your tickets arrived with the card depicted above. Note the explanation that part of the program was aired from New York.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM COLUMBIA SQUARE PLAYHOUSE 6121 SUNSET BLVD. · HOLLYWOOD		Thursday APRIL 13 1944 6:30-7 p.m. Doors Close at 6:25 p.m.	No 1382
STUDIO A CBS	THE DINAH SHORE PROGRAM Presented By  with WALLY BROWN · LAWRENCE TIBBETT		
CHILDREN UNDER TWELVE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED			

And here is the ticket you received with that 1943 mailer card. Joining Dinah as the guest star that week was Metropolitan Opera baritone Lawrence Tibbett, who would become the star of *Your Hit Parade* in January of the following year.

Dinah Shore's popularity soared even higher with the advent of television and she became forever identified with Chevrolet though the "See the USA in your Chevrolet" jingle she sang on her program each week. She became the Oprah of the 1970s for legions of fans who faithfully watched her daily television show and followed her romance with Burt Reynolds. She helped the women's professional golf tour gain favor and was an outspoken advocate for women's rights. And she sang pretty well, too.



WE very much appreciate your interest in our "DINAH SHORE" radio program, and have enclosed as many tickets as our allotment permits.

Part of the program, the "William & Mary" skit starring *Cornelia Otis Skinner* and *Roland Young*, emanates from our New York City studio.

However, the entire show can be heard from here in Hollywood. Kindly arrange to be in the studio twenty minutes before the show is scheduled to commence.

Welcome to the



Radio Program

7187-B—Printed in U.S.A.

The beautiful Dinah Shore was a sensation in the early 1940s, moving swiftly from Nashville's WSM to the national spotlight with Ben Bernie's Orchestra in 1939. She had her own series in 1940 and was unforgettable as the first diva on NBC's extraordinary *The Chamber*

NASH - KELVINATOR
present

THE ANDREWS SISTERS



GABBY HAYES
VIC SCHOEN AND ORCHESTRA
AND GUEST STARS
SIDNEY GREENSTREET
AND PETER LORRE

SUN., JAN. 21, 1:30 P. M.
5833 FERNWOOD AVE.
(WARNER BROS. STUDIO)
SEE MAP ON REVERSE SIDE

The Blue Network

Here's another of the Blue Network Jumbo Tickets used for a brief time in the 1944-45 transition from NBC to ABC. Patty, Maxine and Laverne Andrews are best remembered for their contributions to the war effort. They made countless appearances at military camps, often appearing in uniform and singing their signature tune "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy". They sold over 90 million records and achieved tremendous success when they joined Bing Crosby in a series of hit recordings. They remained popular performers for decades.

On radio, the Andrews Sisters had a tight relationship with the Nash-Kelvinator Corporation (the auto and refrigerator manufacturers had merged in 1937) and enjoyed steady sponsorship through the mid-1940s under a variety of program titles. Sometimes known as *The N.K. Eight-to-the-Bar Ranch* or *The N-K Musical Showroom*, *The Andrews Sisters Program* featured great music and great guests. This 1945 broadcast featured Warner Brothers stars Peter Lorre and Sidney Greenstreet (of *Maltese Falcon* and *Casablanca* fame) and the havoc caused when word gets out that they're going to "shoot" a movie out west.

No retrospective of great female singers would be complete without a nod to the great Lena Horne. She never had her own radio series but made unforgettable contributions to *The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street*, *Command Performance*, *Mail Call*, *The G.I. Journal* and, of course, *Jubilee*. She was also featured in a 1944 episode of *Suspense*.

This 1943 *Jubilee* ticket was for the 19th broadcast of the series, which presented over 500 programs before ending in 1953. On this particular broadcast,

Lena sang "Someday Sweetheart" and "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and Satchmo sang "Lazy River", "Shine" and "Coquette". While the program isn't in circulation, this information was easily obtained with a little internet surfing. There is a detailed program discography listing at

<http://home.swipnet.se/dooji/jubilee.htm>.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY RCA BUILDING RADIO CITY STUDIOS NEW YORK		
Repeat Broadcast		
MON. 6 AUG. 1945		FLOOR 6 Doors Close 11:55 PM
THE BELL SYSTEM presents THE TELEPHONE HOUR		
MARIAN ANDERSON		Guest Soloist
VOID IF SOLD		SEE REVERSE SIDE

We'll close this edition with a rare appearance by a woman best known for a cancelled concert. In 1939, Contralto Marian Anderson had planned to perform in Washington D.C.'s Constitution Hall but was banned by the Daughters of the American Revolution due to her race. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the group in protest and arranged to have her perform on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday. Her rendition of "My Country, Tis of Thee" on that day was one of the defining moments of the civil rights movement.

This ticket for her appearance on The Bell System's *Telephone Hour* also bears historical significance. August 6, 1945 was the day that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, accelerating the end of the war and sparing the world the terrible price of ground invasion by Allied troops.

NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC. HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS SUNSET AND VINE		
MON.-APR. 5 CHILDREN Under 6 Yrs. Not Admitted	The War Department Presents "JUBILEE" LENA HORNE ERNIE WHITMAN LOUIS ARMSTRONG & ORCHESTRA	STUDIO B 7:25 p.m.

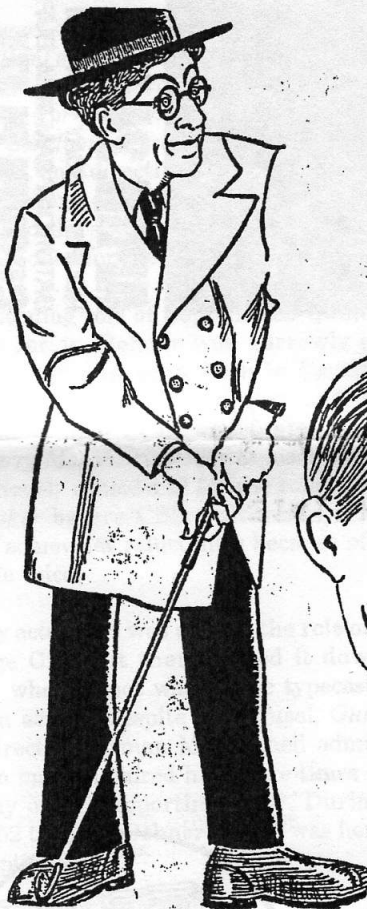
The Illustrated Press

Next time, we'll feature tickets for some of the most memorable radio shows that have fallen through the cracks of our previous articles. We'll look at tickets for Death Valley Days, Can You Top This? and others!

circa. 1932

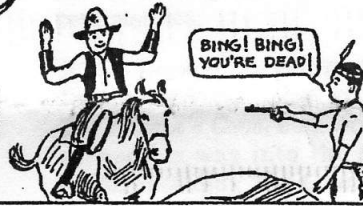
Radio Round-ups

Intimate Glimpses of the Radio Stars



GUY LOMBARDO

CONDUCTED HIS FIRST BAND AT THE AGE OF TWELVE IN LONDON, ONTARIO, HIS HOME TOWN.



BING CROSBY

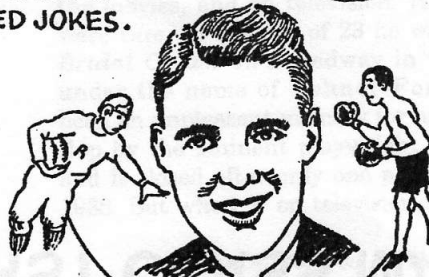
SHOUTED "BING, BING, BING!" SO OFTEN AT PLAY THAT IT BECAME HIS NICKNAME.

ED WYNN

"THE PERFECT FOOL" HAS A COMPILATION OF 80,000 PRINTED JOKES.



SYLVIA FROOS APPEALING BLUES SINGER, IS THE BABY OF NETWORK ADULT STARS AT 18.



OZZIE NELSON

MODEST ORCHESTRA LEADER, WAS THE CHAMPION SWIMMER AND BOXER AT "DEAR OLD RUTGERS" A FEW YEARS AGO.

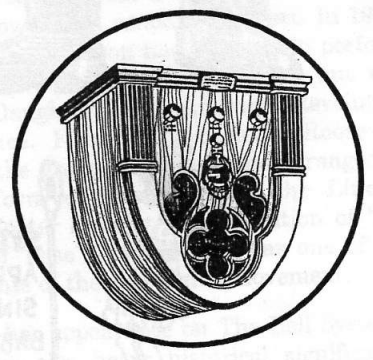


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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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**Esther
Geddes**
Talk of The Town

APRIL 24-25, 2009

HOURS: FRIDAY 9AM-9PM
SATURDAY 9AM-9PM BUFFET DINNER 6PM

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