

Old Time Radio **DIGEST**

The second issue March-April \$2.50



**Dating Radio Programs
from internal evidence**

Old Time Radio DIGEST

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Editor's note

This is the second issue of Old Time Radio Digest. As pleased as we were with the first issue, we believe that this second issue will be much better.

Issue number one was, unfortunately, a treasure-trove of typographical errors. I did not have a chance to proof-read the text for number one. That situation has been rectified for this issue. Hopefully, all the spelling and punctuational errors have been corrected. One or two grammatical errors have been let stand; it does not seem fair for me to actually re-write what our authors say. We classic radio people *do* seem to have an inventive grammar.

After all, one of the most famous of all radio introductions contains a massive grammatical error. The opening of the *Shadow* informs us that "Cranston's friend and companion, the lovely Margot Lane, is the *only* person who knows to whom the voice of the invisible *Shadow* belongs." If this is indeed the case, poor Lamont Cranston does not know that he is the *Shadow*! How can he, if Margo Lane is the *only* person who knows?

We hope that you enjoy this second issue of Old Time Radio Digest. To paraphrase the immortal Daniel Webster, speaking of Dartmouth College, "this is only a little magazine, but there are those of us who love her." May we count you among that number?

—George Wagner

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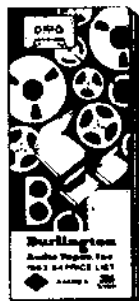
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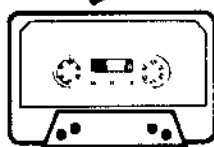
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The Life & Times of Charlie McCarthy & his Friends

by: Gary A. Yoggy

I can't remember how old I was when I found out that Charlie McCarthy wasn't a real little boy. I doubt I really believed he wasn't a kid until I saw a photograph of Edgar Bergen with Charlie sitting on his lap in one of those radio-TV magazines. No matter—Charlie remained as real a person to me as all those other wonderful radio folks. I had met in the theater of my imagination during my youth.

Charlie McCarthy was, of course, the creation of ventriloquist Edgar Bergen. The son of immigrant Swedish parents, Bergen was born in Westside Chicago where his parents operated a dairy business on February 16, 1903. When Edgar was in the fourth grade, the family moved to Decatur, Michigan.

As early as the seventh grade, Bergen began to show an interest in show business. He amused his classmates with imitations of birds and people. Bergen once explained that one evening he was sitting at the kitchen table doing a distant voice when his mother went to the door to see who was outside. It was then Edgar decided he "had something" worth developing. He sent away for a 25¢ book on magic and ventriloquism and practiced every spare moment.

By the time that Edgar's father died and the family moved back to Chicago, show business was definitely in his blood. Even though his history teacher warned Bergen that he would not graduate from high school if his grades didn't improve, he still spent his time writing jokes and sketching pictures of what his first dummy should look like.

His final sketch resembled that of a ruffian named Charlie, who sold

newspapers in front of the high school. Bergen gave the drawing to a local carpenter, Theodore Mack, who carved the dummy from a block of pine for about \$27.00. He named his wooden urchin after the newsboy and the sculptor added a Celtic suffix to his name—and Charlie McCarthy was born.

About three weeks after his teacher's warning of impending scholastic failure, Edgar appeared with Charlie in a student recital before the high school student body and faculty. Since he thought that he wasn't going to graduate anyway, he used Charlie to heckle the faculty including Miss Angel, his history teacher. The students loved it! The next day Miss Angel asked Edgar to remain after class and told him: "I didn't know you were a genius. You must give this great joy to the world . . . it needs laughter." Then she told him what to study and what questions would likely be asked on the final examination. Edgar graduated and was booked on the Chautauqua circuit for that summer.

Charlie McCarthy became perhaps the most unusual and valuable block of wood in the world. He appeared before the Royalty of England and Sweden and before two Presidents in the White House. He was quoted three times in the Congressional Record, received an honorary degree from Northwestern University (which Bergen attended briefly while working part time as a ventriloquist and magician), and a special golden Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1937.

There has been some confusion as to just how many Charlies Bergen actually



had. During the height of his radio days, a report was spread that Bergen was "scaling Charlie up in size" by switching from time to time to a new and larger Charlie. Many fans were strongly opposed to this or any other change in their beloved Charlie, if indeed this were happening.

Just two days before his death, Bergen told Charles Supin, entertainment editor for KLAS-TV in Los Vegas, that there were three Charlie McCarthys: the original, which he still had; a fiberglass one that he was currently using, and a stand-in. Bergen explained: "When we do dangerous scenes in pictures, like sliding down a bannister, we use Charlie No. 3. When I went to Vietnam and did shows over there I took No. 3. . . but I took the No. 1 Bergen." In keeping with Edgar's wishes, the original Charlie now resides in the Smithsonian Institution as a symbol of half a century of American comedy.

Charlie received as much publicity as any other genuine star of the entertainment world. Bergen drew up a will creating a \$10,000 Charlie McCarthy Fund, to be used by the Actors' Fund of America to put on ventriloquist entertainment for deprived and handicapped children. Charlie was once kidnapped from Bergen's hotel room at the Waldorf-Astoria. An amusement editor of a New York newspaper had staged the kidnapping as a stunt. The local police and the F.B.I. were alerted, but the next day the journalist returned the famous dummy. The ventriloquist took the hoax as a good gag and decided not to prosecute.

Charlie's personality actually had two phases. In the early years he was a happy little newsboy, dressed in sweater and cap. During that time he spoke in the slangy, careless words of a boy who had to make his own way in the world. Later he "dressed up" taking on a smoother polish in both his

clothes and manner of speech as his audiences became "classier". The eventual result was the now famous trademark full evening dress costume, complete with top hat and monocle. But he remained fundamentally the same impish Charlie that he was when he first appeared in sweater and cap.

Charlie's clothes and body frame had to be replaced frequently, and his face repainted. He had a wardrobe worth \$1000, including a cowboy suit and a Sherlock Holmes outfit. He wore a size 4 suit, 2AAA shoes, and a 33 1/8 hat. Bergen carried his dummy in a specially designed piece of luggage.

When Bergen first went into vaudeville, he played theaters across the United States and Canada. In 1927 he played the China Theater in Stockholm, Sweden, doing his entire act in Swedish. In 1928 he played the Holbern Empire in London. Around 1930 he made his first vitaphone short for Warner Bros and ended up doing 12 one-reelers. The earliest known review of Edgar Bergen's act appeared in Variety on June 30, 1926: "Edgar Bergen, ventriloquist, is the latest of the cult to figure a production built up for his voice throwing demonstration. In fact Bergen may be credited with having out-distanced many in weaving a comedy of logical plot and plenty of entertainment in this two scene episode which he has labelled "The Operation". . . . Neatly set and well manipulated it clicked heavy here in the tray. Set for either vaudeville or certain picture houses."

During these early years Bergen was using Charlie for his entire act including encores. At the same time he observed other acts on the same bill were using a different act for their encore. Bergen decided that he, too, needed a change of pace act for his encores. Thus was born the idea for a slow-thinking, yet lovable character as a contrast to Charlie's sharp,

brash wit. As a result, Mortimer Snerd joined the team about 10-12 years after Charlie—a dull farm boy with features denoting weakness in character, such as low brow, receding forehead and weak chin.

Bergen's entrance into radio was by pure chance. Edgar was invited to a party given by Elsa Maxwell for Noel Coward in New York. Maxwell asked Bergen to heckle the guest of honor. He did and the guests loved it so much that Maxwell got Edgar booked with her for a guest spot on the Rudy Vallee show the following week. Bergen had tried unsuccessfully for almost a year to get on radio, but no one would listen to him. His appearance with Elsa Maxwell was in December, 1936. He and Charlie were such a hit that they were asked to return for a second and then a third week. Bergen said yes although he worried about getting sufficient material. But Edgar pulled it off and it was the beginning of twenty successful years on radio.

Here's what the San Francisco Chronicle said on January 7, 1937 after

Bergen's first three appearances on the Rudy Vallee show: "Rudy Vallee, the soft-spoken gentleman who has started more than one entertainer toward radio's heights seems to have another sensation currently under his wing. The potential star this time is a ventriloquist named Edgar Bergen, and he stages a two-way conversation with himself that achieves a new high in radio comedy. He appears on Vallee's variety show today for the fourth successive week. And if the gratifying audience reaction continues, there's little doubt he'll become a regular radio feature. With a mechanical 'dummy' on his knee, a la vaudeville, Bergen talks to himself in voices so distinctly different and so deftly handled that at first the listener refuses to believe it isn't all a gag. Along with the asset of two voices in one, Bergen displays wit of a subtle quality not usually offered on the networks these days. You'll like him."

After thirteen weeks on Vallee's show, Bergen got his own show which originated from California. The show was a big hit from the very beginning. It started



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out as No. 1 and remained No. 1 consistently for six years and after that was never lower than fifth. After twenty years it was again No. 1 (on CBS). Bergen at one point earned a Hooper rating of 49 which had only been exceeded by a Presidential speech by FDR. Here's what reviewers had to say after his first show: "Standard in vaudeville and now doing his stuff in night clubs, Edgar Bergen makes the jump into radio with nonchalant ease. . . He talks to himself and the replies make for amusing entertainment. His dummy bears the name of Charlie McCarthy and is a saucy little fellow. Humor is situational and character-bred rather than gaggy. Style and delivery are natural and ingratiating. Bergen and the dummy discuss various matters in joshing idiom with vocal mannerisms thrown in. It represents the culmination of years of theatre-trained work. An artiste—in the old and best meaning."

Although Bergen attempted to use professional writers to create the unending supply of new comedy material needed for each week's show, he soon found that his best material was that which he wrote himself. The show also featured an outstanding supporting cast. Don Ameche served as the program's Master of Ceremonies in its early years. A fine actor, Ameche also sparred with Charlie and played roles in the sketches. Ray Noble, the Englishman who led the orchestra, also doubled as a foil for Charlie's wisecracks. Numerous vocalists appeared on a regular basis over the years including Nelson Eddy, Anita Ellis, and Anita Gordon. Several comic characters were featured on the program, the most popular of which were Vera Vague (Barbara Jo Allen), Professor Edwin Carp (Richard Haydn) and Ersel Twing (Pat Patrick) who spoke in a sing-song voice. Guest stars from the movie industry also appeared, including Dorothy Lamour, W.C. Fields (on a semi-regular basis in

the late thirties and early forties), Mae West (in her famous appearance as "Eve" which got her permanently banned from radio) and Marilyn Monroe (in her only appearance on radio).

In 1944 Bergen added a third character to his entourage providing a feminine counterpart for Charlie and Mortimer in the person of bachelor girl Effie Klinker, named after one of the program's writers, Zeno Klinker. Owl-faced Effie wore a flowerpot bonnet, pince-nez glasses, a long black skirt, and red, white and blue striped stockings. A busy-body with a long pointed nose because she was a nosey person, Effie kept Bergen informed about the town gossip and described her futile attempts to snare a husband.

Although Bergen was never a big star in motion pictures, he did appear in thirteen films between 1938 ("Letter of Introduction") and 1979 ("The Muppet Movie"— a cameo appearance released after his death.) Charlie appeared in all but two, the best being "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man" with W.C. Fields: "Look Who's Laughing" and "Here We Go Again" (both with Fibber McGee and Molly) and "Charlie McCarthy, Detective."

Bergen never made a big splash in television although he did star in the quiz/audience participation show "Do You Trust Your Wife?" in 1956 and 57. The show derived its title from the fact that Bergen asked each married team of contestants to answer questions on a given topic, the husband had to decide whether he or his wife would try to answer. Featured on the series along with Bergen were all three of his "dummies", Charlie, Mortimer and Effie.

The measure of Bergen's success and popularity is evident in the fact that he became the standard against which present day ventriloquists are often compared. Even in his final years he was in constant demand for guest appearances

on TV variety shows, concerts-in-the round and both radio and TV commercials.

According to Clinton Detweiler: "Invariably, when people discuss the ventriloquist skills of Bergen, someone will mention his lip movement when he talked for his "dummies." Even Bergen freely admitted that he often had less than perfect lip control. Many have suggested this was because he reached stardom during the days of radio when he could not be seen by his audience. Thus, they are suggesting, lip control was not needed. They seem to forget that it was his superb skills before his radio days that got him into radio in the first place. And few, if any ventriloquists, have ever matched his skill of manipulating the vent figures with realistic life-like movements — another skill which would not have been necessary for a radio broadcast. His vent figures were very simply constructed with none of the fancy animations and mechanics commonly available on modern figures. Yet his presentations were always the master examples of superb showmanship. And Bergen had above average lip control when he wanted

it. His lip control was noticeably sharper when he knew there were other ventriloquists in his audience. But the more important skills such as comedy, timing, delivery, and audience rapport were so outstanding in his acts that fans gladly and graciously overlooked the few weaknesses or mistakes."

In 1945, Bergen married Frances Westerman, a John Powers model from Birmingham, Alabama. The Bergens subsequently had two children, a daughter Candice Patricia (a star in her own right) and a son Kris Edgar. Edgar's hobbies included photography (he was a member of the American Society of Cinematographers); flying (he was a veteran pilot of over 25 years experience who often piloted his own plane to engagements in various parts of the country); magic and bee-keeping. He also owned an alfalfa ranch in California. His Bergen Scholarship at the Northwestern University School of Speech has helped such students as Cloris Leachman, Charlton Heston, and Patricia Neal. And the Bergen Foundation for Student Nurses, started in 1951, has assisted over 500 girls in becoming registered nurses.

Gary A. Yoggy Associate Professor of History Corning Community College



Edger Bergen and his pal Charlie McCarthy were true pioneers. Their list of many firsts include: The first major comedy radio program to originate network broadcasts from a military base. First radio program to hold No. 1 position on both Hooper and Crossley ratings for more than one consecutive year. First ventriloquist named Contributing Editor by the Encyclopedia Britannica. First major comedy program to be filmed for television in a motion picture studio with a live audience. First television show to be seen across the country in all principal cities on the same day. (Before network TV) The Coca-Cola show on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1950.

In late September 1978 Bergen announced his impending retirement and a couple of days later he died suddenly in his sleep of a heart attack. As it turned out, his final performance was to be on the night of September 29, 1978 at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, a place where he had never performed. Needless to say, his act was a smash hit.

With Edgar Bergen's passing not one, but four voices were stilled. But through the recording magic of radio, the echo of those voices will continue to be heard for generations. And in the words of Clinton Detweiler, "the memory of the genuine humble greatness of this man will continue to stand as an example for all of us forever."

based on a presentation made at the Friends of Old Radio Convention in Newark, N.J. Nov. 12, 1983.



Technical Talk and Radio Rumblings

by: Bob Burnham

For about the past year I've been hearing through the grapevine about Bob and Herb's new Radio Digest they were planning. I had a lot of mixed feelings about it, especially since I too missed the "old" Collector's Corner/NRT, especially the "old" CC/NRT in its once-a-month heyday. Joe, Bob and myself had a real team effort going in those days, but of course, it seemed like we all had a little more free time on our hands then, too. As Joe Webb has pointed out, we all just got a little too busy living our own lives, trying to make a living. . . Issues started coming out late, we went to a bi-monthly format, then quarterly and by then we'd lost most of you — the subscribers — who help us pay the bills. No matter whose fault it was for what happened to the "old" magazine, it did happen. In Joe's shoes I would have done the same thing, although it was a shame to make our production people in Cincinnati the losers in the end — but at least the financial loss was not theirs.

When Bob started handing out these beautifully printed "free" debut issues at the convention last November, I thought to myself "Well, they've done it. . .they really did it. . .only I'm not part of it. . .yet."

I'm writing several articles already for The Golden Years of Radio & TV, and will continue to do as it is CC/NRT's successor. I'm also writing a technical column for the Illustrated Press now. I guess I'm a frustrated "Stereo Review" type writer who ends up one way or another in all the radio publications. . .

I also am a little annoyed at the vast numbers of collectors who do a less than perfect job at recording radio shows for their fellow traders, and this is my way of spreading the word of how to do things the **right way**. I also like to editorialize on various matters relating to collecting programs, so I decided to combine both into one column. If you read my other columns you might find some information occasionally duplicated, but what you read here normally will come off the top of my head original, for whatever it's worth.

I congratulate Bob, Herb and George for putting this out. . . it takes a lot of time and money to do it and do it right. I think they can do it with your support. My support is in the form of articles. . . yours must be in the form of subscription orders.

Since the early days of the old CC/NRT, both Joe and I went through many personal changes. We both went through a variety of job changes, we were both married. Nothing ever stays the same. Some changes are good, some are bad. Collector's Corner was the combined effort of the old News & Reviews and Airwaves. CC turned out to be something good for OTR and it survived a long time. It brought Bob Burchett and eventually Herb Brandenburg and Dave Warren into the OTR publishing business. It gave Joe and I something to be very proud of. It was something we all created out of ideas. Now that CC/NRT as we know it, is gone, we have two new magazines for old time radio that are based on those original ideas. . . Two publications that emerged from one. . . sort of a reversal of history. I sincerely hope that OTR will support both and that both can co-exist for many years just like Airwaves and News and Reviews did almost ten years ago. And in the meantime, I'll be sittin' here at the ole IBM feedin' every last one of those issues.

The Technical Talk? Well we'll get into

that next issue, I promise. One of my pet peeves is collectors who don't know how to properly set their levels. . . that'll be just one of the topics we'll touch on. . . and remember too, you'll only read Technical Talk and Radio Rumbblings here in Radio Digest. Toodles. . .

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Radio Book Collecting

by Edward Carr

Finding those all important books at times is frustrating, and other times is like a Christmas bonanza.

I hadn't for quite awhile come across many books but, and it's funny in a way at the convention when I was asked to do a few articles and ended up doing this. I had been asking around after books, well I've received 5 new books to add to my collection, 3 hardbound and 2 softbound, the hardbound being, **As I Remember Them** by Eddie Cantor 1963, Duell, Sloan and Pearce affiliates of Meredith Press, **The Palace** by Marian Spitzer, Atheneum 1969 (there is a special reason I've included this book of which I'll relate at a later date), **The Great Radio Comedians** by Jim Harmon, 1970 Doubleday, (this is now a double and I would be willing to trade it).

The softbounds are **Al Jolson: You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet!** by Robert Oberfirst, A.S. Barnes & Company, Inc., text 1980, 1st paper edition 1982, and **The History of Little Orphan Annie** by Bruce Smith, 1982 Ballantine.

Many thanks to Gary Yoggy who gave me his list of books at the convention or I would have missed out on some good reading mainly Annie.

The History of Little Orphan Annie by Bruce Smith, 1982 Ballantine fully illustrated \$5.95.

I had to order this one as I passed it up before thinking it was on the movie Annie because the cover has the cartoon Annie and Aileen Quinn. Shows you, you should never judge a book by its cover.

The book itself deals with the conception of Annie in the cartoon strip by Harld Gray his ideas, ideals even if they

were slanted according to the author. Then upward through two movies 1932 and 1938 a radio version 1930's for all the radio fans this is a short chapter called **That Little Chatterbox**. (I was disappointed there wasn't more), a musical that opened on Broadway, April of 1977, to the newest film version "Annie" 1982.

Overall the book was enjoyable reading as I finished it in one night, so enjoyable it brought to my attention the hardbound edition of **Art, The Life and Hard Times of Little Orphan Annie** a collection of Gray's daily strips chosen at random from the years 1935 through 1945. I am now trying to obtain a copy. I hope someone can help me.

Again, as of this writing I have yet to get the right information on how to obtain the book on Radio Shows from the Library of Congress. I wrote to them but I have not received a reply. I know there are a few people who could help if they would get in touch. Let your fingers do the walking. Next time, Al Jolson you ain't heard nothing yet!

If you're still looking for places to find books, one of the best places I know of or should I say I've been told of is deep in Buffalo, New York called Chuck Seeley's Cellar.

I have for trade 5 books of Vincent Terrace's, **Radio's Golden Years**, even with all its mistakes it does have shows not found in others. First 5 to respond with offers as these are all I have. Looking for Radio Annuals also looking for Radio Broadcasting in Canada or is it Pictoral History of Radio in Canada?

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Dating Radio Programs from internal evidence

by George Wagner

If your radio collection is anything like mine, your catalogue probably has a number of shows listed like this: "THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE. Date unknown. 'Gildy Drops Dead, and Leroy Buries Him.'" I don't have a great many undated programs, however. In the majority of cases, I am able to date my programs to at least the year of the original broadcast. In many other cases I can give the season, the month, and sometimes even the precise date of broadcast. In most cases I have done this by simply listening to the show in question.

First, though, a word of warning. There is no way that accurate dating can be done on most syndicated shows. Such programs were usually made purposefully un-datable, so that they could be rebroadcast many times in different markets down the years, without ever becoming "dated." THE AIR ADVENTURES OF JIMMY ALLEN, originally broadcast during the early 1930s, was repeated on local stations in the early 1940s. An entire new generation of children listened to the show, not realizing that they were listening to episodes which had originally been broadcast a decade before. In a similar fashion, EASY ACES episodes from the 1930s were rebroadcast in the late 1940s. The FIREFIGHTERS program, originally syndicated in 1948*, had as its hero a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. When the series was rebroadcast in the early 1950s, a revised version of the first episode only was recorded, using the original cast. The only difference in this revised opening was that the hero was now a veteran of the Korean War of 1950-

1953. The syndicated horror anthology THE HALL OF FANTASY was broadcast in 1953, but on widely scattered dates. Some stations broadcast the program on Tuesday, some on Saturday, etc.

The majority of network programs, however, are fairly easy to date. If you already know the year, listen for references to temperature and weather conditions. Is Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve wearing a heavy overcoat and shoveling his way through snow drifts or is he sweltering through the hottest day of the summer? Is Gildersleeve going to a ball game? As late as the 1950s, football was pretty much limited to the fall, basketball to the spring, and baseball to the summer. References to hunting season usually indicate that you are listening to a fall show.

Listen especially for topical humor. Jokes about the N.R.A. indicate that the show is from circa 1934 or 1935. Quips about the New York World's Fair indicate that the program is from 1939 or 1940. References to Harry Truman's piano playing date the program to 1945-1952.

Mention of ration stamps, the shortage of automobile tires, along with violent anti-Japanese commentary show pretty clearly that the program is from 1942-1945, during the Second World War. References to severe housing shortages are probably immediately post-war, 1945-1947.

Listen for references to presidential elections. These elections are held in years ending with even numbers, in this order: 0, 4, 8, 2, 6 (for example, 1920, 1924, 1928, 1932, 1936, 1940, 1944, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1960, etc.).

If many candidates are mentioned, the program is probably from the spring primaries, although the show may be from late the previous year (that is, 1947, 1951, etc.) References to national conventions of the political parties date a program to the summer of an election year. References to races between two presidential contenders are probably from late summer to the first week of November. Here are some of the most notable races and their candidates:

Hoover/Smith (1928), Roosevelt/Hoover (1932), Roosevelt/Landon (1936), Roosevelt/Wilkie (1940), Roosevelt/Dewey (1944), Truman/Dewey (1948), Eisenhower/Stevenson (1952 and 1956). References to Strom Thurmond and the "Dixiecrat" party are probably from 1948. So are references to Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party.

References to television-viewing in radio comedies and dramas are probably from the early 1950s; the earliest they came from in 1948 or 1949 — before that, only the extremely wealthy could afford television sets. Many programs can be dated at least to year, and often even to month, from the titles of motion pictures referred to in the programs. For example, Jack Benny and Rochester go to the pictures to see the new Peter Dragon movie, TRAILS IN THE SAND. Or the Frostbite Foods Radio Theater ends with: "Our stars were Mr. Electric J. Droop and Miss Jezebel Frumpe, currently starring in the new Palooka Studios release, BONGO BILL WRESTLES FRANKENSTEIN."

A library of three or four books makes dating such programs both easy and fun. The first two books are MOVIES ON TV, a Bantam paperback edited by Steven H. Scheuer, and TV MOVIES, a Signet paperback edited by Leonard Maltin; both are regularly revised and updated. These two books give a partial cast list for each

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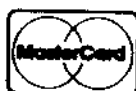
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film, a brief synopsis of the plot, plus the year of the picture's release. Each book lists between 9,000 and 12,000 feature films.

Both books can be purchased in bookstores carrying paperbound books. Careful searching through used bookstores may also turn up earlier editions; a number of more obscure and forgotten movies have been dropped from recent editions, in order to accommodate newer films. By diligent searching I managed to turn up the 1958-1959 edition of Scheuer's book (then titled TV MOVIE ALMANAC AND RATINGS). The volume then listed only 5,000 films, but most of these were from the 1930s and 1940s.

Another book will prove even more valuable, but it will be harder to track down. It is THE FILM DAILY YEAR BOOK OF MOTION PICTURES, an annual volume issued for the film trade. My own copy is the 49th edition from 1967. The magic of this book is that it lists the titles of more than 30,000 feature films, plus the exact date on which they were released.

The fourth volume is THE NEW YORK TIMES DIRECTORY OF THE FILM. This is a massively big book of more than 1200 pages. It lists over 50,000 actresses and actors, in alphabetical order, plus the films in which they appeared. In addition, the book gives the date in which each film was reviewed in the NEW YORK TIMES.

So back to my undated Frostbite Foods Radio Theater. A check in the FILM DAILY book tells me that BONGO BILL WRESTLES FRANKENSTEIN was released on April 10, 1940. A quick peak in the NEW YORK TIMES book reveals that the picture was reviewed in the TIMES on April 20, 1940. This gives me pretty solid evidence that my episode of the Frostbite program was broadcast in the Spring of 1940 — probably in late April or early May.

Programs can often times be dated to an approximate year by the type of music played. Background and incidental music of 1935 was far different than that used in 1945 or 1955. The same is true of dance music. I once dated a syndicated program of "contemporary" dance music to "probably 1935," simply because none of the "contemporary" tunes on the program had been copyrighted later than 1934. It took me no more than an hour or so in the public library to check out the titles.

Pay close attention to historical references. For example, a character in a soap opera says "your father was killed during the Second World War and I've missed him all these past ten years." The program has got to be from the period 1951-1955.

Statements like "during these post-war years" date the program as being from late 1945 to early 1948. By late 1948 or 1949 this had changed to "as we approach the 1950s." On the other hand, the phrase "as we enter the 1950s" would probably be from the year 1950 itself, or possibly late 1949.

Soap operas and situation comedies often adopted a remarkable consistent approach as to the ages and anniversaries of their characters. If GIGGLES AND GILHOOLEY celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary on the broadcast of September 15, 1945, the 13th anniversary broadcast is from mid-September, 1948.

Programs can also be dated by reference to seasons mentioned in commercials ("Have you purchased your spring wardrobe yet?"), but this can be risky. I once bought a partial broadcast day (or, rather, partial broadcast evening) dated as November, 1958. From other evidence, the shows were correctly dated as November. But the dealer had listed the year as 1958 because one commercial touted the "new" 1958 Ford automobile. Apparently the dealer had never heard of automobiles before, or had just emigrated

here from Saturn, or was a Boldavian spy, or something. Certainly all other Americans know that new cars come out in September. A Ford commercial from November, 1958, would push 1959 cars. The programs in question were broadcast during November, 1957.

A number of collectors (myself very much included) were originally confused by the detergent commercials advertising the "new 1950 Rinso." Those of us who were fooled didn't pay attention to the six words which immediately followed the name of the produce — that is, "the new 1950 Rinso, a full year ahead of time." These commercials and the programs they accompany (such as AMOS 'N' ANDY) date from early 1949 (and perhaps even late 1948?), but NOT from 1950!

If I can be of assistance to anyone who is trying to date old shows, send me a copy on reel-to-reel or cassette (or even eight-track) and I'll do my level best to help you. In fact, I'm looking forward to all those free shows!

Publisher's note

Have you ever wondered what goes into getting a publication like *Old Time Radio Digest* into your hands, the subscriber?

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OUR MISS BROOKS

- 183 10/24/48 Birthday Bite; 11/07/48 Overwork Leads To Hobby
- 184 11/14/48 Connie Babysits Overnight; 12/26/48 Connie Drives To The Game
- 185 01/09/49 Poor Heat; 01/30/49 Student Banking
- 186 02/20/49 Le Frog; 02/27/49 Stretch Snodgrass and Harriet
- 187 03/06/49 Connie's Hairdo; 03/13/49 The Cafeteria Boycott
- 188 03/20/49 Poetry Mix-up; 04/03/49 Talent
- 189 05/15/49 Friday the 13th; 06/12/49 Wishing Well Dance
- 190 08/07/49 Hot Weather; 08/14/49 Stretch Snodgrass Bar BQ
- 191 09/11/49 Head Of State Board; 10/02/49 Short One Athletic Uniform
- 192 10/23/49 Gifts For Phillip; 11/20/49 Party Line
- 193 12/04/49 The French Teacher; 12/25/49 School Teacher's Christmas
- 194 01/08/50 Board Of Education Day; 01/15/50 Cure That Habit, Inc.
- 195 01/29/50 School On Saturday; 02/05/50 Poor Heat In School
- 196 03/12/50 The Burglar; 05/21/50 Uranium and Orchid
- 197 05/28/50 The Traffic Ticket; 09/10/50 Rumors
- 198 10/01/50 Measles; 02/25/51 Skits In Class

STORY BEHIND THE SONG

- 199 #1 The Star Spangled Banner; #2 Bless Be The Tie That Binds
#3 La Marseillais; #4 My Old Kentucky Home
- 200 #5 There's No Place Like Home; #6 Maryland My Maryland
#7 The Sound Of A Great Amen; #8 Annie Laurie
- 201 #9 And I Shall See Him Face To Face; #10 Missouri Waltz
#11 Serenade By Franz Schubert; #12 Hold The Fort For I Am Coming
- 202 #13 Yankee Doodle Dandy; #14 Sweet Adeline
#15 124th Psalm; #16 Old Black Joe
- 203 #17 By James Lawson; #18 Robin O'Dare
#19 God Preserve The Emperor; #20 Old Folks At Home
- 204 #21 Britannia; #22 Battle Hymn Of The Republic
#23 Rock Of Ages; #24 After The Ball
- 205 #25 Gentle Annie; #26 By Joseph Hopkinson
#27 We Will Meet, But We Shall Miss Him; #28 Scots Wha Hae
- 206 #29 St. Louis Blues; #30 Rally Round The Flag
#31 My Grandfather's Clock; #32 The Girl I Left Behind Me
- 207 #33 Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming; #34 Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight
#35 Thou Silent Voice Of My Heart; #36 Uptidee
- 208 #37 Beautiful Dreamer; #38 The Wearin' Of The Green
#39 Auld Lang Syne (End Of Series)

THE ADVENTURERS CLUB (1932)

- 209 #1 Papua Escape; #2 Manchurian Limited
#3 Pancho Villa's Treasure; #4 The Borneo Diamond
- 210 #5 The Frozen North; #6 The Land Of Doomed Souls
#7 Land Of Death; #8 Land Of Darkness
- 211 #9 Land Of The Black Hand; #10 India - Land Of Mystery
#11 The Tattooed Rose; #12 Norway's Luck
- 212 #13 The Elephant's Graveyard; #14 The Living Dead
#15 The Treasure Hunt; #16 Hidden Fangs
- 213 #17 The Fire Dog; #18 The Black White Man
#19 Grains Of Death; #20 Hairy Wild Man
- 214 #21 Malay Madness; #22 The Pale Flame
#23 NO TITLE; #24 The Fawn
- 215 #25 Kaditcha; #26 Mukin In The Kyber
#27 The Madonna's Tear; #28 Dead Men Walk
- 216 #29 The Living Mummy; #30 The Mad Monk Of Angkor Wat
#31 Vengeance; #32 Continental Express (End Of Series)

ACADEMY AWARD THEATRE

- 217 03/30/46 Jezebel; 04/06/46 Kitty Foyle
- 218 04/13/46 The Life Of Louis Pasteur; 04/20/46 The Great McGinty
- 219 04/27/46 Snow White; 05/04/46 Stagecoach
- 220 05/11/46 If I Were King; 05/18/46 My Sister Eileen
- 221 05/25/46 The Informer; 06/01/46 Arise My Love
- 222 06/08/46 Ruggles Of Red Gap; 06/15/46 Pride Of The Marines



THE ADVENTURES OF FRANK RACE

- 223 #1 Adv. Of The Hockensack Victory; #2 Adv. Of The Darling Debutante
- 224 #3 Istanbul Adventure; #4 Adv. Of Black 17
- 225 #5 The Enoch Arden Adventure; #6 Adv. Of The Vanishing President
- 226 #7 Adv. Of The Baradzan Letters; #8 The Airborne Adventure
- 227 #9 Adv. Of The Shanghai Incident; #10 Adv. Of The Juvenile Passenger
- 228 #11 Adv. Of The Reckless Daughter; #12 Adv. Of The Silent Heart

GUNSMOKE

- 229 07/07/57 Word Of Honor; 07/14/57 Bloody Hands
- 230 07/21/57 Kitty Caught; 07/28/57 Cow Doctor
- 231 08/04/57 Big Hands; 08/11/57 The Jayhawkers
- 232 08/18/57 The Peace Officer; 08/25/57 Grass
- 233 09/01/57 Jobe's Son; 09/08/57 Loony McCluny.
- 234 09/15/57 Child Labor; 09/22/57 Custer

THE WHISTLER

- 235 11/21/48 The Lovely Look; 11/28/48 Murder In Paradise
- 236 12/05/48 Hired Alibi; 12/12/48 Stormy Weather
- 237 12/19/48 Bangree Affair; 12/26/48 Delayed Christmas Present
- 238 01/02/49 Men Of The Roof; 01/09/49 Tell Tale Brand
- 239 01/23/49 Impulse; 01/30/49 All Damages Covered
- 240 02/06/49 The Cheat; 02/13/49 Last Curtain

THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE

- 241 09/07/41 The Cake; 09/14/41 LeRoy's Paper Route
- 242 09/21/41 The Girlfriend; 09/28/41 The Hiccups
- 243 10/05/41 Investigating City Government; 10/19/41 School Pranks
- 244 10/26/41 A Visit From Oliver; 11/02/41 Gildersleeve Minds The Baby
- 245 11/09/41 Birdie Quits; 11/16/41 Servicemen For Thanksgiving
- 246 11/23/41 Cigars; 11/30/41 The Canary Won't Sing
- 247 12/14/41 The Iron Deer; 12/21/41 McGee's Christmas Gift
- 248 12/28/41 The Big Dog; 01/04/42 The Diet
- 249 01/11/42 Arrested For Auto Theft; 01/18/42 The New Bed
- 250 01/25/42 The Matchmatch; 02/01/42 LeRoy Runs Away

HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL

- 251 11/23/58 Strange Vendetta; 11/30/58 Food To Wickenburg
- 252 12/07/58 Ella West; 12/14/58 The Outlaw
- 253 12/21/58 Hanging Cross; 12/28/58 No Visitors
- 254 01/04/59 Helen Of Abajinian; 01/11/59 The Englishman
- 255 01/18/59 Three Bells To Perdido; 01/25/59 The Teacher
- 256 02/01/59 Matter Of Ethics; 02/08/59 Killer's Widow
- 257 02/15/59 The Return Of Doctor Thackeray; 02/22/59 Winchester Quarantine
- 258 03/01/59 Hey Boy's Revenge; 03/08/59 Monster Of Moonridge
- 259 03/15/59 Death Of A Young Gunfighter; 03/22/59 The Five Books Of Owen Deaver
- 260 04/05/59 Maggie Benton; 04/12/59 The Colonel And The Lady
- 261 04/26/59 The Gunsmith; 05/03/59 Gunahy
- 262 05/10/59 Statue Of San Sebastian; 05/17/59 Silver Queen
- 263 05/24/59 In An Evil Time; 05/31/59 Blind Courage
- 264 06/07/59 Roped; 06/14/59 Bitter Wine
- 265 06/21/59 North Fork; 07/05/59 Commanache
- 266 07/12/59 Young Gun; 07/26/59 The Wager
- 267 08/02/59 High Wire; 08/09/59 Pinn Alley
- 268 08/16/59 The Lady; 08/23/59 Bonanza
- 269 08/30/59 Love Bird; 09/06/59 All That Glitters
- 270 09/13/59 Treasure Hunt; 09/20/59 Stardust
- 271 09/27/59 Like Father; 10/04/59 Contessa Marie Beaumouline
- 272 10/11/59 Stopover In Tombstone; 10/18/59 Brothers Lost
- 273 10/25/59 When In Rome; 11/01/59 Wedding Day
- 274 11/08/59 Assignment In Stone's Crossing; 11/15/59 Landfall
- 275 11/22/59 Fair Fugitive; 11/29/59 Bitter Vengeance
- 276 12/06/59 Anything I Want; 12/13/59 Out Of Evil
- 277 12/20/59 Range Carnival; 12/27/59 About Face
- 278 01/03/60 Return Engagement; 01/10/60 The Lonely One
- 279 01/17/60 French Leave; 01/24/60 Nataemhon
- 280 01/31/60 Bad Bert; 02/07/60 The Boss
- 281 02/14/60 Bring Him Back Alive; 02/21/60 That Was No Lady
- 282 02/28/60 Dollhouse In Diamond Springs; 03/06/60 Somebody Out There Hates Me
- 283 03/13/60 Montana Vendetta; 03/20/60 Caesar's Wife
- 284 03/27/60 They Told Me You Were Dead; 04/03/60 Shanghai Is A Verb
- 285 04/10/60 So True, Mr. Barrow; 04/17/60 Brunella's Fella
- 286 04/24/60 Irish Luck; 05/01/60 Dressed To Kill
- 287 05/08/60 Pat Murphy; 05/15/60 Lina Countryman
- 288 05/22/60 Lucky Penny; 05/29/60 Dusty
- 289 06/05/60 Apache Concerto; 06/12/60 Search For Wylie Dawson



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