

THE OLD-TIME RADIO GAZETTE

APRIL, 1994 - VOLUME 2, NUMBER 9



IN FOND
MEMORY
OF:

EZRA
STONE
DEAD AT 76

Ezra Stone

By Ralph Doty

Ezra Stone began his show business career as a child star in vaudeville and made his first appearance on Broadway when he was in his late teens.

Stone got his start in radio on a little remembered program, "Coast to Coast on a Bus". The program was also sometimes called "The White Rabbit Line" from the name of the bus it was supposed to represent. It came on the air in 1924 as a local program, "The Children's Hour", and became part of the early-morning Sunday lineup with the establishment of NBC.

"White Rabbit Line" served as the air's outstanding amateur hour for children from 1927 - 1948. Milton Cross was conductor of the bus - general host for the show from its inception. (Only three episodes of this program are known to exist.)

Ezra Stone was one of many children who became established in show business because of their appearance on this show.

Stone's big break came in 1939 as the first Henry on "The Aldrich Family". Stone played Henry to perfection. It was a role he had perfected on stage; he badly wanted the film role later but lost it to Jimmy Lydon.

"The Aldrich Family" had one of the highest turnover rates in the business, with new actors coming aboard almost every year. Stone kept the lead role until 1942 when he went on tour during World War II. He resumed the part in October, 1945, playing the eternal teenager well into his thirties. He became a television director when the show finally folded in 1953.

Even as a middle-aged man, twenty years later, he could still get his voice "up" on demand for a facsimile of that long - lost croak, "Coming, mother!"

Sources: Handbook of Old Time Radio, Swartz and Reinehr
Tune in Yesterday, Dunning.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I want to express a thanks to Ralph Doty of Ohio for sending articles for this newsletter, frequently. I am sure that all readers enjoy reading Ralph's articles!

Thanks, and God bless... TOM C. MILLER

Gangbusters and the '90s

WHERE ARE WE TODAY??

The opening sounds of a Thompson 50 caliber machine gives way to Universal's Gangbusters... "Calling the police. Calling the G-men. Calling all Americans to war-on the underworld! Gangbusters, with the cooperation of law enforcement officers around the United States, presents a picture of the endless war of the police and the underworld..." Yes, this is all "exciting" but what do people look for in the 1990s? Surely not cliffhangers that continued from one week to another, COPS jumping from running board-to-running board on automobiles, and G-men (as they were called then) firing small pistols that took as much as five bullets to shoot a criminal down. This all seemed like big-stuff to an audience in a theater during the '30s and '40s. But what do people want to view when they spend tons more to view a movie? Try looking at the type of films being shown in the '90s, compared to something like Gangbusters in 1942, where they still captured a great audience. WHY?

Do you remember when you could get into a theater for a nickel? Ask most people, who did not live in those years about city halls being threatened by fictional, and somewhat unrealistic, mobs of criminals. Try talking about films that ALWAYS proved one point--that CRIME DOES NOT PAY and the good guy in the white clothes always gets the right hand in the very end!

What do we do about it? We need to stop, and view an old Gangbusters serial, or a nostalgic Laurel and Hardy short subject to experience original film work, and, perhaps, REAL film work...

Radio 'Tid-bits'

Audio Editions, P.O. Box 6930, Auburn, CA 95604 has released a new catalog, in which some radio tapes are included.

Old-Time Radio Co., Box 9032, Grand Rapids, MI 49509 (1-800-334-3225) has sent some new cassette supplements.

Dean Wentworth, Box 2523, Vancouver, WA 98668 has released some new "cassette specials, including shows like **I Love a Mystery, Fibber McGee & Molly, Mark Trail**, etc.

OLD-TIME RADIO DRAMA

April 1994

04/03/94	Dragnet	Ralph Tabor Disappears	01/25/52
04/03/94	Frank Merriwell	The April Shower Adventure	
04/03/94	Columbia Workshop	A Circular Tour	01/23/39
04/03/94	Big Story	Gambling, Divorce Cn Mean Mur	
04/03/94	Inner Sanctum	The Hitchhiking Corpse	01/23/50
04/03/94	Mindwebs 051	The Evergreen Library	04/02/76
04/10/94	Peril	The Long Walk	
04/10/94	Cavalcade of America	Daniel Boone	
04/10/94	T-Man	Show Business is No Business	
04/10/94	Toad Theatre	JWB	04/10/94
04/10/94	Mindwebs 050	Wasted on the Young	03/26/76
04/17/94	Gangbusters	The Ray Earnest Case	
04/17/94	Mark Trail	Wildlife Acres	03/03/50
04/17/94	High Adventure	Wild Pitch	
04/17/94	Marriage for Two	Maid Quits	12/09/49
04/17/94	Henry Morgan	All-Night DJ	00/00/46
04/17/94	Whistler	Meet Mr Death	04/23/45
04/17/94	Mindwebs 049	Light of Other Days	03/19/76
04/24/94	Gunsmoke	Pete Brass Gang Kidnaps Kitty	
04/24/94	Six-Shooter	A Silver Belt Buckle	00/00/54
04/24/94	Grand Marquee	A Woman's Place	07/12/48
04/24/94	First-Nighter	Help Wanted--Female	
04/24/94	Escape	Yellow Wake	07/21/50
04/24/94	Mindwebs 048	Or All the Seas with Oysters	03/12/76

*April 24th is
"William Conrad/
Olan Soule Night"
on "Old-Time Radio
Drama"!

"Old Time Radio Drama" is aired each Sunday evening from 8:30 to 11:00...

Ideas Network Stations:

91.5FM WGBW Green Bay	90.3FM WHLA La Crosse
91.1FM WLFM Appleton	930AM WLBL Auburndale
90.7 FM WHAD Milwaukee	88.3FM WHWC Eau Claire
970AM WHA Madison	90.3FM WHBM Park Falls
91.3FM WHHI Highland	91.3FM KUWS Superior
	90.3FM WRST Oshkosh

Deaths in Radio

William Saunders, 88, died of lung cancer and emphysema. Saudners was a radio actor in shows like **The Lone Ranger** and **The Green Hornet**. He retired from radio in 1970.



* * * **ON TO HOLLYWOOD** * * *

WHEN we heard that it would take us three days to git from Pine Ridge to Hollywood and that they never do no cookin' on the bus, we was glad that Lizbeth had fixed up some victuals as a feller would git awful hungry without something to eat in that length of time. We found out, though, that they stop ever so often and give you a chance to git off to do your eatin' and hits a good thing they did fer Lum got hisself acquainted with a girl on the bus named Miss Memphis Tennessee that had won a beauty contest somewheres and was going out to Hollywood to git her screen

tested, whatever that is. Anyway, she was goin' out there to be a actor and bein' Lum was too, they got real friendly and he insisted on feedin' her so many sandridges that there warn't nothin' left and agin' Cedric got done eatin', the vittles was all gone the first day. Squire Skimp says that he thinks we hold the world's settin' up record as none of us laid down to sleep fer three days. Facts is, after I got here and got a bed to sleep in, hit was four or five days before I could git myself stretched out level with the bed and I still walk like I was fixin' to set down all the time. *Turn over*



BETTY GRABLE, featured in the new Paramount production, "Thrill of a Lifetime."

Betty Grable Says:

"Horlick's keeps me Slim and Trim"

"Like every other actress, I must watch my weight constantly. Yet so tiring and exacting is picture work that I simply can't afford to cut down on my meals unless I substitute something unusually nourishing. That's why I find a glass of Horlick's for lunch so effective. It's light on calories which might add to my weight—yet is surprisingly sustaining. So it not only keeps me slim and trim, it keeps me feeling at my best, too—even when I have to act for long hours at a stretch."

HANDBOOK OF OLD-TIME RADIO
A Comprehensive Guide to Golden Age
Radio Listening and Collecting

Jon D. Swartz & Robert C. Reinehr

825 pp. 1993 92-42120 ISBN 0-8108-2590-2 \$92.50

The *Handbook of Old-Time Radio* is intended for both the casual listener to programs from radio's Golden Age and the serious hobbyist or researcher. Included in this one-volume handbook are a descriptive log of more than 2,000 different programs (from *A&P Gypsies* to *Ziegfeld Follies*), with casts, announcers, network, length of program, duration of appearance, availability, and, where appropriate, story lines; categorized logs of more than 4,500 programs, organized by type of program (music/variety, comedy, adventure, juvenile, drama, serials, quiz/audience participation, talk/information, religious, sports, news); separate chapters covering each type of program, with historical information and guidelines for researching and understanding each category of old-time radio programming; descriptions of the better-known premiums offered during radio's Golden Age (including the Lone Ranger's Atomic Bomb Ring, Kellogg's Pep Pins, Sergeant Preston's Yukon Land Deed, the Green Hornet's Secret Seal Ring, and many others); a history of the networks; a chapter on resources available for those interested in acquiring old-time programs, reference material, and/or memorabilia; and indexes of over 8,000 performers and program titles.

This ready-reference book is the result of over 12 years of research, including a period of residence at the Library of Congress using the NBC archives.

Jon D. Swartz (Ph.D., University of Texas), Chief of Psychological Services, Central Counties Center for MH-MR Services, Temple, TX, was previously Associate Dean for Libraries and Learning Resources and Professor of Psychology and Education, Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX. Robert C. Reinehr (Ph.D., University of Texas) is Associate Professor of Psychology, Southwestern University. Both have been fans and collectors of old-time radio programs, premiums, and other radio-related memorabilia for many years. They contributed the article, "Radio Program Recordings," to the *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound in the United States*.

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