



The

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## Matinee Theater: CBS Forges a Saturday Date with Daytime Drama

Jim Cox

Certain features were unequivocally synonymous with various networks on Saturdays in the late 1940s and 1950s.

ABC, for instance, proffered a popular kiddy series, *No School Today* (1950-54), initially for two hours, ending in a 90-minute version. With Jon Arthur as star, it closely paralleled a late weekday afternoon entry, *Big Jon and Sparkie* (1950-58), reincarnated on the Family Radio Network from 1962-82. And during most of the winter seasons between 1932 and 1958, NBC Blue/ABC aired the epic live Saturday afternoon broadcasts of the *Metropolitan Opera* company.

NBC's Saturday claim to fame during that epoch was triple-pronged: *Smilin' Ed and His Buster Brown Gang*, another favorite entry of the small fry with entertainer Ed McConnell (1944-53); teen sitcom *Archie Andrews* (1945-53); and culinary expert *Mary Lee Taylor* (1948-54) with cooking tips. All three NBC hits occurred following earlier tryouts on other webs.

And a couple of durable features punctuated Mutual's Saturday calendar. For four decades (1935-75) there was *Hawaii Calls* under the direction of creator-host Webley Edwards leading a cast of authentic Waikiki entertainers. Also on Saturday mornings from 1939-45 and 1946-54, MBS offered listeners the *Man on the Farm Quiz*.

With such diverse amusement available from those three national chains, and much of it narrowly focused, CBS—possibly wisely—assigned a significant portion of its eggs to a mainstream basket. The net created a Saturday agenda that was heavily imbued with quite often humorless drama appealing to multiple ages, genders and interests. In doing so, CBS provided more opportunities for directors, writers, actors and musicians of radio anthologies, serials and myriad dramatic fare aired in the daytime and primetime hours on all four national webs. There they could ply their craft through sporadic or steady Saturday work. That boosted the bottom lines of some of broadcasting's most prolific artists and supplied audiences with a form they had long found absorbing.

The chain applied its strategy through a variety of enduring dramas, mostly collections of plays. An introspective into a half-dozen follows. Each program became a staple of the CBS aural agenda on Saturday afternoons. Excluding the narrowly-focused and longrunning *Let's Pretend* which was beamed to the juvenile set between 1934 and 1954, they include: *Stars Over Hollywood* (1941-54); (*Armstrong*) *Theater of Today* (1941-54); *Grand Central Station* (1944-53, and heard earlier and later elsewhere); *City Hospital* (1951-58); *Gunsmoke* (1952-61); and *Romance* (1953-57, and aired earlier elsewhere).

The first, *Stars Over Hollywood*, an omnibus with a lock on the network's half-hour at 12:30 p.m. (all times Eastern), debuted on May 31, 1941. It persisted to September 25, 1954, interrupted only for a three-week hiatus between sponsors in 1951. The show was always sponsored, with just three firms underwriting it: Bowery's, Inc., for dairy brand Dari-Rich (1941-48); meatpacker

Armour and Company (1948-51); and dairy goods manufacturer Carnation Company (1951-54).

As its moniker implied, *Stars Over Hollywood* distinguished itself from the contemporary dramas that followed its lineage by proffering a surfeit of some of Tinseltown's legendary celebrities. While their appearances could never be equated with glitzy showcases like *Lux Radio Theater*, those venerated icons weren't averse to picking up extra change for the career exposure from such weekend performances, albeit of the also-ran variety. Among their number were Mary Astor, Bonita Granville, Alan Hale, Sr., Phil Harris, Brenda Joyce, Alan Ladd, Anita Louise, Brenda Marshall, Merle Oberon, Basil Rathbone, Ann Rutherford and many more. They appeared most often in light narrative fare, generally of romantic or comedic persuasion, although occasionally displaced by a suspenseful tale.

Laboring alongside the film idols was a plethora of supporting radio actors whose names were sometimes recognized by audiences although at times their work went uncredited. A deputation of West Coast announcers narrated the plots including Jim Bannon, Art Gilmore, Frank Goss, Knox Manning and Marvin Miller. Del Castillo and Ivan Ditmars supplied the music while Paul Pierce and Les Mitchel were succeeded by guest directors of those weekly dramas, on at least one occasion by the likes of actor Hans Conried.

"*Stars Over Hollywood* broke one of radio's strongest prejudices, that Saturday daytime was the ghetto of the schedule," exclaimed historiographer John Dunning. "When Paul Pierce ... announced plans to launch a star-packed dramatic series on Saturday morning, few observers gave it a chance. Getting movie stars to cooperate at 9:30 a.m. (local time) would be impossible, and no one would listen anyway." In less than a decade, of course, those programs—like all their contemporaries—were transcribed at more respectable hours than 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. Dunning concluded: "*Stars Over Hollywood* demolished the negative theories about Saturday programming."

With that successful venture gaining momentum, four months afterward CBS launched a second midday anthology. The *Armstrong Theater of Today* premiered at noon on October 4, 1941 and—never missing a broadcast—lasted to May 15, 1954, four months shy of *Stars Over Hollywood's* withdrawal. (Eventually it was reduced from 30 to 25 minutes, allowing five minutes for news at the top of the hour.) In its final season the program was identified merely as *Theater of Today*. By then its original sponsor, floor coverer Armstrong Cork Company, had departed. The show was instantly picked up by cereal-

maker Cream of Wheat Corporation, then no longer underwriting the longrunning *Let's Pretend*.

John Dunning apparently liked the idiom "ghetto of the schedule" for, in his most recent radio encyclopedia, he used it again to position *Armstrong Theater of Today* among the timeslots. Nevertheless, CBS initiated a trend with the inclusion of those dramas. Together they became a kind of core programming device that—once audience participation features like *Give and Take* (1945-53) and *County Fair* (1945-48, 1949-50) were banished—blitzed and sustained the chain's landscape as radio's final competitive decade emerged at the start of the 1950s.

These, too, weren't very profound narratives, with themes like relationships, both domestic and professional, and often with a humorous bent. Seldom were there more ominous premises exhibited. Actors were generally unidentified although they were amassed from a readily available cadre of seasoned radio thespians.

In the early years, before the five minutes of news became standard practice, interlocutor George Bryan read headlines as the "Armstrong News Reporter," introducing the show with the exclamation "It's high noon on Broadway!" That was followed by pithy acknowledgements of some major events around the nation being staged that very day, accompanied by dramatic instrumental bridges and suitable sound effects, ending with Bryan's pronouncement: "... and all over America it's time for Armstrong's *Theater of Today*." At that juncture, Harold Levy's orchestra burst into a lively stanza of the series' memorable theme, "When the Organ Plays at Midnight."

In later years, Bryan was supplanted by Tom Bryan as announcer while Julie Conway or Elizabeth Reller plugged goods as the "Armstrong Quaker Girl," reading pitches for the durable rug-maker. Producer-director Ira Avery and—later—director Al Ward kept the program percolating. A live studio audience, cued to respond appropriately at intervals, gave the show a spontaneous reaction that contrasted sharply with the more sedate-sounding *Stars Over Hollywood* "which immediately follows over most of these same stations," sans audience. The difference might not have been as noticeable to listeners had the two dramas not been aired back-to-back.

With the notable exceptions of *Let's Pretend*, the fleeting teen sitcom *Junior Miss* (1948-50) and *Armstrong Theater of Today*, few CBS dramas aired within the parameters of Saturday matinee included studio audiences that could audibly acknowledge what was being broadcast on-the-spot. None of the web's major dramas considered hereafter, for instance, was distinguished by a venue full of appreciative witnesses.

Next to make its way onto the Saturday program logs was the rail-oriented *Grand Central Station* which debuted over NBC Blue on Tuesday night, September 28, 1937. It didn't move to CBS's Saturday matinee schedule (at 1:05 p.m.) until March 4, 1944. Over the next decade it occupied multiple 25- and 30-minute time zones between 11:05 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., sustained by a trio of sponsors: the flour milling Pillsbury Company (1944-51); the women's hair care preparations manufacturer Toni Company (1951-52); and the Cream of Wheat Corporation (1952-53). The show left CBS and its afternoon slot with the broadcast of September 5, 1953.

*Grand Central Station's* memorable opening was a classic.

ANNOUNCER: *As a bullet seeks its target, shining rails in every part of our great country are aimed at Grand Central Station, heart of the nation's greatest city. Drawn by the magnetic force of the fantastic metropolis, day and night great trains rush toward the Hudson River, sweep down its eastern bank for 140 miles, flash briefly by the long red row of tenement houses south of 125<sup>th</sup> Street, dive with a roar into the two-and-one-half-mile tunnel which burrows beneath the glitter and swank of Park Avenue and then ...*

SFX: Steam escapes from a locomotive

ANNOUNCER: *Grand Central Station! ... Crossroads of a million private lives ... gigantic stage on which are played a thousand dramas daily!*

Actually, there were a couple of misrepresentations there. First, there never was a Grand Central "Station." It was—is—officially (and always has been) Grand Central "Terminal." Second, the din of chugging steam engines in the opening was a misnomer; all trains to and from Grand Central Terminal are electric, making steam a physical impossibility. "This would have been an extreme health hazard," a historian noted, "due to the smoke exhaust from the engine's boiler." (It *sounded* good anyway.) Legend has it that producer Himan Brown had a standard reply to those inquiring why a steam engine was substituted for a modern diesel: "What does a diesel train sound like?" he admonished.

Jim Ameche, Martin Ashe, Beverly Bayne, Helen Claire, Nancy Coleman, Hume Cronyn, Roger DeKoven, Mary Mason, McKay Morris, Arnold Moss, Frances Reed and Sydney Smith were among legions of East Coast radio performers practicing their stuff on *Grand Central Station*. Jack Arthur, John Reed King, Stuart Metz and Alexander Scourby were the stentorian-tongued narrators of *Grand Central Station* while George Baxter, Ken Roberts and Tom Shirley introduced the series. Martin

Horrell and Himan Brown produced and William Rousseau, Ray Kremer and Ira Ashley directed. A reporter observed that Brown (comic Arnold Stang dubbed him "the biggest cheapskate in radio") got blood out of a turnip, occasionally boasting that he produced the show for just \$750 weekly. For that, Brown hired a director, writers, five or six actors, music, sound effects techie, announcer and narrator.

Those tales ("light comedies and fluffy romance" depicted by one source) invariably began at or near Grand Central Station where the preeminent figures emerged. Stories chased their adventurous pursuits which usually had little or nothing to do with railroads. Ultimately, as a scholar explained, they were "about what happened to the characters after they left the station." Sometimes, the protagonists merely detrained and never mentioned travel again. The often colorful romance of the rails was simply the vehicle (pun unintended) for thrusting them into the narrative.

*City Hospital* was the first of a handful of fresh narratives to arrive on CBS Radio's Saturday airwaves in the 1950s. The medic-themed anthology premiered October 6, 1951 at 1:30 p.m. for Carter Products, manufacturer of Carter's Little Liver Pills and other remedies. (Given its thesis, such sponsorship seemed well-placed.) Carter remained sole subscriber to late 1954 when the series was dispatched to a growing fad in paying for radio programming: multiple participation or several non-competing sponsors buying time within the same show. Persisting in several 25- and 30-minute midday timeslots (most often 1:05) until it finally bit the dust on November 8, 1958 *City Hospital* featured some veteran actors in its recurring roles. Santos Ortega and later Melvin Ruick played Dr. Barton Crane while Anne Burr appeared as nurse Kate Morrow. John Cannon announced and Ira Ashley produced.

The series' epigram said it all: "*City Hospital*, where life begins and ends, where around the clock ... 24 hours a day ... men and women are dedicated to the war against suffering and pain." Many of those who suffered, so it seemed, had more emotional and psychological issues than they exhibited of the physical kind. If they hadn't, the stories might not have been as compellingly gripping. While they played out, habitual listeners were invariably aware that there was a second yarn transcending every scene—that of the romantic overtures between the physician who was the hospital's medical director and his nurse. While this wasn't apparent in every episode, fans kept the back story in mind. Otherwise, *City Hospital* might be remembered as *Dr. Christian* with amour.

Some of *Gunsmoke's* staunchest defenders will gladly

argue today that the radio incarnation, inaugurated April 26, 1952 and ending June 18, 1961, was far superior to the CBS-TV manifestation that ran for two decades (1955-75). But it's probably more likely that far more viewers can be found to support the televersion than the original based on sheer numbers of TV's audience alone. While the aural crowd tends to be vocal on the issue, should there really be an issue? Both forms embraced a stellar series, generally classified as the first adult western.

*Gunsmoke* usually occupied the 12:30 p.m. half-hour on CBS Radio. As its acclaim expanded, a second airing of the same transcribed show was added, initially on Saturdays at 8 p.m., later on Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m. The dual broadcasts were an almost unprecedented achievement for radio drama in the 1950s and hinted at the series' widespread approbation. While the show was sustained in its first 17 months and for yet another six months in 1954, General Foods Corporation picked it up for the final quarter of 1953 to market its Post Toasties cereal. From 1954 to 1957, CBS signed Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company as underwriter of *Gunsmoke* for Chesterfield and L&M cigarettes. Beginning in 1957 until its cancellation four years hence the series alternated between a sustaining feature and multiple sponsorship.

For the life of the aural run marshal Matt Dillon of Dodge City, Kansas was played by veteran radio actor William Conrad, whose basso delivery easily distinguished him wherever he performed. Others in the recurring cast included Parley Baer as deputy Chester Proudfoot; Georgia Ellis as Long Branch Saloon proprietress Kitty Russell; and Howard McNear as Doc Adams. While that quartet formed the principals heard in virtually every installment, they were but the tip of the iceberg. Extra voices, some also quite identifiable, turned up in myriad supporting roles.

Their names read like a virtual *Who's Who* among West Coast aural thespians: Lynn Allen, Irene Andres, Michael Ann Barrett, Edgar Barrier, Harry Bartell, Charles Bastin, Jeanne Bates, Dick Beals, Butch Bernard, Eleanor Berry, Ted Bliss, Lillian Buyeff, Frank Cady, Virginia Christine, Hans Conried, Tommy Cook, Joe Cranston, Richard Crenna, Howard Culver, Richard Deacon, John Dehner, Don Diamond, Larry Dobkin, Frances Drew, Paul Dubov, Joe DuVal, Robert Easton, Jack Edwards, Sam Edwards, Barbara Eiler, Herb Ellis, Louise Fitch, Joe Forte, Paul Frees, Frank Gerstle, Clark Gordon, Tim Graham, Virginia Gregg, Bob Griffin, James Griffith, Tom Hanley, Louis Jean Heydt, Sammie Hill, Jonathan Hole, Tom Holland, Bill Idelson, Vivi Janiss, Jill Jarmyn, Byron Kane, Joe Kearns, Jess Kirkpatrick, Helen Kleebl, Lou Krugman, Jack Kruschen, Bill Lally, Mary

Lansing, Charlotte Lawrence, Peter Leeds, Ken Lynch, Fred MacKaye, Kathy Marlowe, Junius Matthews, Joyce McCluskey, Pat McGeehan, Johnny McGovern, John McIntire, Eve McVey, Lee Millar, Ralph Moody, Ann Morrison, Jack Moyles, Jeanette Nolan, Jim Nusser, Jim Ogg, William Oiler, Nestor Paiva, Ed Penney, Vic Perrin, Barney Phillips, Clayton Post, Peggy Rea, Bartlett Robinson, Paul Savage, John Stephenson, Gil Stratton Jr., Bob Sweeney, Eleanore Tanin, Irene Tedrow, Tom Tull, Herb Vigran, Patricia Walter, Stan Waxman, Anne Whitfield, Elaine Williams, Paula Winslowe, Ben Wright and Will Wright.

Roy Rowan and George Walsh announced the series at opposite times while George Fenneman delivered commercial pitches for Chesterfield cigarettes. With Norman Macdonnell producing and directing and music under the direction of Del Castillo and Rex Koury, including the series' signature theme, *Gunsmoke's* scripting was handled by head writer John Meston and colleague scribes Marian Clark, Les Crutchfield, John Dunkel, Antony Ellis, Kathleen Hite and Herb Purdum. The narrative was co-created by Macdonnell and Meston.

Set in Dodge City in the 1870s, which was proclaimed by one reviewer "a suburb of hell," *Gunsmoke* was the epic drama of marshal Matt Dillon—"the first man they look for and the last they want to meet"—who went to Dodge to repress an outpost on the prairie. Dillon exuded integrity while demonstrating an inordinate amount of courage and strength, often in the face of overwhelming odds. Standing six-foot-seven, he was an imposing figure with an indomitable will. The human interest storylines delved into many facets of personal experience on the frontier, incorporating a test of an individual's character quite frequently.

The opening billboard established that out west "there is just one way to handle the killers and the spoilers and that is with the U. S. marshal and the smell of *Gunsmoke* ... the transcribed story of the violence that moved west with young America and the story of a man who moved with it." A pundit of the radio panorama declared it "among the best shows of any kind and any time." *Gunsmoke* on radio defined the adult western genre and set a lofty standard for all other entries to follow. Cited by a critic as the style's "highest achievement," it was labeled by another as "a classy western, with more mature lots, writing, and characterization than almost anything on radio."

The last of the breed of Saturday matinee dramas to be examined here is *Romance*. While the anthology was always a CBS property, it debuted on April 19, 1943 as a Monday late night sustainer. For more than a decade it

filled log slots at varying times on every night of the week, seemingly unable to nail down a permanent niche. That inability changed when the web shifted it to Saturday matinee. *Romance* opened there at 11 a.m. on September 12, 1953, transferring to 12:05 p.m. on May 22, 1954 as it took over the time period *Theater of Today* relinquished after 13 years. *Romance* persisted through the broadcast of January 5, 1957.

Those narratives proffered tales of quixotic pursuits, amorous relationships and passionate love triangles sometimes laced with a tinge of mystery or adventure. Dunning credited the Saturday midday version with “the best stories” of the series’ 14 years on the air. Some of the titles headlining the weekly dramas of the epoch were “Valiant Lady,” “Two and One is Awful,” “Marriage Test,” “Last Summer’s Love,” “Old Army Buddy,” “One Night a Week,” “Home on Approval,” “Home for the Weekend,” “You Ought to Go Away for Awhile” and “The Fling.”

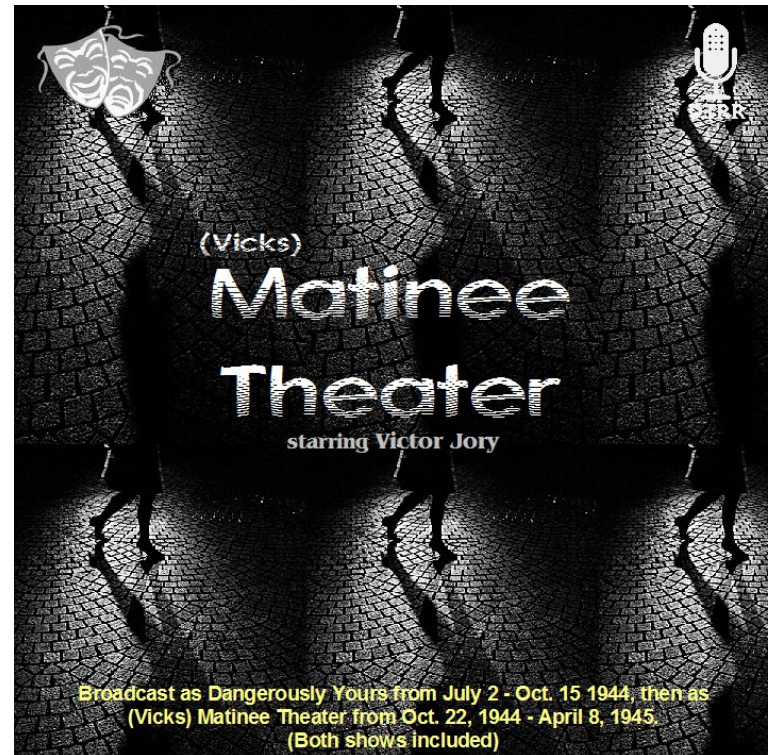
Roy Rowan, Hugh Douglas and Dan Cubberly introduced those yarns: “Now, from Hollywood, *Romance*. *Romance*, transcribed stories of love and adventure, of comedy and crisis, of conflict and human emotion.” In the daytime dramas, Jerry Goldsmith supervised the music. Directors included Fred MacKaye, William Froug and Antony Ellis; scripts were penned by wordsmiths Les Crutchfield, Kathleen Hite, E. Jack Neuman and a few more.

A large contingent of Hollywood aural thespians supplied the voices in the lighthearted narratives. Most of their names have been included in previous lists, but among them: Parley Baer, Bob Bailey, Joan Banks, Michael Ann Barrett, Edgar Barrier, Harry Bartell, Jeanne Bates, Dick Beals, Herb Butterfield, Sarah Churchill, Hans Conried, Dick Crenna, Mary Jane Croft, John Dehner, Larry Dobkin, Jack Edwards, Sam Edwards, Georgia Ellis, Alec Harford, Betty Harford, Sammie Hill, Jack Kruschen, Howard McNear, Jay Novello, Clayton Post, Charles Seel, Eleanore Tanin, Irene Tedrow, Ted von Eltz, Peggy Webber, Paula Winslowe and Ben Wright.

As *Romance* advanced, the twilight of radio’s glow faded. When the 1950s passed, the CBS Radio schedule wasn’t much more than a figment of its former self. To its credit, CBS was the final holdout among rivals in maintaining a major presence imbued with dramatic fare. Alas, with local affiliates that once clamored for diminished national agendas demanding the time so they could sell it more profitably locally, scriptwriting gave way to proverbial handwriting on the wall. While it lasted, however, CBS rendered credible service to

dramatic fanciers. Until the microphones were unplugged, for six—*not just five*—days a week, the theater of the mind came alive, firmly entrenched as a diversionary exponent of matinee melodrama.

*Jim Cox is author of 12 books on broadcasting. His newest, The Great Radio Sitcoms, will be released in September. It may be ordered now from McFarland & Co. at 800-253-2187 (M-F daytime), [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com) or FAX 336-246-4403. The 300-page hardbound volume includes photos, dual appendices, notes, bibliography and index. It spotlights 33 sitcoms and personalities of radio’s golden age. The tome sells for \$55 plus \$5 s/h.*



## Treasury Report

The Old-Time Radio Researchers currently has \$1373.30 in the treasury.

Disbursed during the month of July for postage reimbursement was \$15.00 to Robert Newman.

Many thanks to everyone who has agreed to make made a monthly contribution in 2007. They include Tony Adams, Del Ahlstedt, Dale Beckman, Jim Beshires, Robert Booze, Krys Building, Scott Carpenter, Pete Cavallo, Greg Coakley, John A Davies, Dee DeTevis, Lisa Fittinghoff, Allan Foster, Mike Galbreath, Gary Mollica, Allan George, David Gibbs, Archie Hunter, Roger Hohenbrink, Tony Jaworowski, Dave Johnson, Jim Jones, Ben Kibler, Robert Lenk, John Liska, Tom Mandeville, Henry Morse, Jess Oliver, David Oxford, Robert Philips, Leonard Price, Ron Schalow, David Shipman, Gary Stanley, Gregg Taylor, Daryl Taylor, Clorinda Thompson, Lee Tefertiller, Alan Turner, Joe Webb, Toby Levy and Gordon Whitman. If anyone has been left off please let us know.

One time contributors include Mike Galbreath, Bill Barille, Michael Moles, John Affayroux, Pat Patterson, William Hartig, Gerald Anderson, Archie Hunter, Keith Allan, Louis Shepherd, and John Liska.

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## *Dragnet* Reaches Certification

Any time that Ed Selhlorst announces that he is beginning work on certifying a new series, ears perk up, and it was no different when, about a year ago, Ed announced that he was forming a team to work on *Dragnet*.

During the next few weeks nearly fifty people were assembled to begin this important work. Not much information leaked out of the secret places where people listened, looked, researched, and assembled the various parts that would make up this exciting work.

And when Ed e-mailed me that the work was finished and a copy in the mail to me, I could hardly contain my excitement. It would surly be a fantastic series. I was not disappointed when I put the first disk in my computer and began to peruse the various parts.

Where to start? There was so much more than just episodes, and this series does contain every available episode in the best encodes possible. The first document I opened up was the 'Dragnet Anthology', a 31-page pdf file that contains so much information on the series, actors and trivia that it seems to never end!

Next I spent some time in the 'Bonus Materials' folder. Here such goodies as the Stan Freberg parodies, a WWJ special program about *Dragnet*, a 1992 tribute to Jack Webb, the 1968 appearance on Johnny Carson by Jack Webb, on which they did the 'Clad Coppers Clappers' skit, and much, much more.

In the 'Documents' folder, you'll find the 73-page pdf file 'The Ultimate Guide to *Dragnet*', which is always a hallmark feature of any series that Ed and his team works on.

And if that is not enough, there are hundreds and hundreds of graphics associated with *Dragnet*, that will add much value to the archival certified series.

I won't begin to list those who worked on this series, there is a special 'thank you' dedicated to those 48 people by Ed in one of the documents.

This is a series not to be missed!

# *Theater Royale*

Paul W. Urbahns

During the late 40s and early 50s there was a boom in local radio licenses issued by the Federal Communications Commission. Following the restrictions imposed by World War 2, many small communities applied for and were approved for 250 watt AM stations. Some AMs in larger cities even applied for FM licenses. By having an FM license many “daytime operations” were able to stay on the air past sunset and expand to full time operation.

These developments created a large need and opportunity for new programming.

The boom in 250 watt stations, caused many of these non-network affiliated stations to rely on records played by local announcers or paid religious programming as avenues to boost income. In this environment sprang up the independent producers of syndicated programs that produced programming and distributed them on disks to stations around the country. Many of these syndicated shows were produced very cheaply for very short runs. The ZIV Company was one such example that also branched out into television. About the only ZIV program to survive the ravages of time to be familiar with modern audiences was the televised adventures of *The Cisco Kid*.

The other opposite approach in syndicated programming was taken by Harry Alan Towers with his Towers of London production company in London. Towers produced high quality radio series with at least one famous lead to add prestige to the project, intended for world wide syndication for many years. Stories were generally based on common timeless themes using supporting casts which formed an English stock company of fine, but relatively unknown, actors.

A brief look at Towers Of London productions with titles such as the [\*The Black Museum\*](#) hosted by Orson Welles; [\*The Lives Of Harry Lime\*](#) (based on The Third Man) starring Orson Welles; a series of Sherlock Holmes stories starring Sir John Gielgud (Holmes) and Sir Ralph Richardson (Watson) with a guest appearance of Orson Welles as the infamous Professor Moriarty in [\*The Final Problem\*](#); [\*Secrets of Scotland Yard\*](#); [\*The Scarlet Pimpernel\*](#) and the current series under consideration, *Theater Royale*.

These Towers of London productions remain some of the best remembered in the old time radio community, and most were in active syndication for approximately 30 years. The fact that these series were still being sold to radio stations in the 60s and 70s long after most radio drama had left the airwaves remains a testament to their

quality. Even today many of the episodes are available commercially on recorded media around the world.

Towers concept appeared to be to contract one lead actor of international acclaim, build a series around him, and produce the episodes so that they could be reused in a variety of settings. These series previously mentioned had network runs in the United States, appeared on either Radio Luxembourg or the BBC in Europe, with additional airings in South Africa and Australia as well as other English speaking countries around the globe.

*Theater Royale* appears to have been developed as a vehicle to showcase the talents of British actor Sir Lawrence Olivier. Olivier was “regarded as the foremost actor of the world” according to Don Dowd in his introduction of Olivier during the *ABC Mystery Time* rebroadcast of the *Theater Royale* play, “The Picture of Dorian Gray” during the late 1950s. Yes, some *Theater Royale* plays had more than one network run. Such is the nature of syndication.

Oliver’s career spanned over 50 years and continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as in 2004, 15 years after his death, he was starring as Dr. Totenkopf in a Hollywood fantasy film titled, *Sky Captain and The World of Tomorrow*. This was accomplished by the producers who selected footage of Lord Olivier from various films and used them to create a villainous leader of killer robots. Jude Law, who stars in the film, said film-makers used Olivier because few other actors possessed his authority.  
<http://www.skycaptain.com/>

Oliver was apparently contracted to host the first series of 29 shows, even though his theater schedule conflicted so that he did not have time to commit to the first few weeks of broadcasts. Instead while he was on tour out of London, he simply introduced the programs with plays starring some of Britain’s most talented actors. Starting with Orson Welles, no surprise here as he was a Towers Productions regular, Michael Redgrave, Ralph Richardson, Sir John Gielgud, Robert Donat, and Trevor Howard all took turns filling in for the great one.

Starting on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1953 Oliver played all the leads through the end of the first series. For the second series, Sir Ralph Richardson was signed on as host and star, playing the leads for another 13 episodes. This gave Towers 42 episodes, more than enough for syndication. To complete the NBC contract 6 episodes were repeated as “Command Performances” bringing that first network run to a conclusion on September 1, 1954.

That was not the end of the series on radio as selected episodes were repeated, with different opening and closing remarks on the *ABC Mystery Time* series during the late

1950s. *Theater Royale* remained in active syndication by Towers of London in the United States well up into the 1970s, making it one of the few old time radio series actually heard by fans on the radio! Many of the copies in circulation among collectors today, come from those 1970s repeats where the individual episodes were cut to about 20 minutes. Luckily these cuts were made by the production company and generally do not take away from the actual program enjoyment. This reduced length comes from a combination for factors including removing dated introductory material from the beginning of the early episodes, and a need to make time for local stations to include modern features such as an hourly 5 minute newscast or to insert commercials locally.

*Theatre Royal* even moved to television, produced again by Harry Alan Towers, for the 1955-56 season. One episode broadcast on ABC, September 25, 1955 was a 30 min adaptation of the Dickens story "Bardell v Pickwick." The same story had been used on the radio series February 6, 1954.

The music used on the radio series was credited to the renown British organist and arranger, Sidney Torch. However much of the same music was also used in other Harry Alan Towers productions on which Torch also worked, such as the *Secrets Of Scotland Yard*, *Black Museum*, and *The Many Lives of Harry Lime*. So how much of it was actually written for this series will probably never be known.

A parting word must be said about the stories themselves. The great authors of literature, Alexander Dumas, Robert Lewis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Charles Dickens, H.G. Wells, the Russian author Nikolai Gogol, as well as many others are represented. What makes the series rather unique among most anthology series, in addition to the famous Charles Dickens story, A Christmas Carol, you also hear the not so famous stories based on characters such as Mr. Pickwick (from The Pickwick papers) or the very particular character, Mr. Micawber (from David Copperfield). Robert Lewis Stevenson is represented not only by his famous story, Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde but also by the lesser known masterpieces such as Sire de Maletroit's Door, Markheim, and The Suicide Club. Each story in this series is very different in subject matter and design, but all are from the pens of masters. One I can personally recommend, that maybe unfamiliar to you, is 'The Country of The Blind' written by H.G. Wells and previously published in the Strand magazine.

In conclusion, this series consisted of new radio adaptations of famous, and not so famous stories by some of the best authors in the United States and England. It is

the inclusion of some of those little known masterpieces by many familiar authors that gives the series a variety element usually missing in this type of anthology series. Its long syndication run, well into the 70s, proves once again classic stories presented by talented actors never really go out of style.

The complete OTTR log for [Theater Royal](#) is posted on line.

## *Pacific Story*

The Old Time Radio Researchers announces the release of *The Pacific Story* as an archival certified series. Doug Hopkinson and his team have been working on this series for over a year, attempting to locate missing episodes and upgrading the sound quality of those already in existence.

Many missing episodes were supplied by David Siegel, and Ted Davenport - both of whom are members of the group and support its aims.

*The Pacific Story* was broadcast on NBC at 11:30pm, with the first broadcast on July 11, 1943. The series lasted 184 weeks with two weeks pre-empted and ended on January 26, 1947. It was considered a documentary.

The premise of the show was that with Europe in ruins, the Pacific might emerge as the center of political and social change in the world, and people should know something about it.

The series touched on every nation around the Pacific Rim and told of their importance in the years to come when the war ended. It was narrated by Gayne Williams and featured such authorities on pacific affairs as Henry Luce and Pearl S. Buck.

This set will be distroed as two DVDs, or 7 CDs.

Those working on the set include -  
Series Coordinator - **Doug Hopkinson**  
Provided missing episodes - **Ted Davenport, Dave Siegel, Clorinda Thompson**  
Quality Listener(s) - **Doug Hopkinson, Andrew Steinberg**  
Series Synopsis - **Ed Martin**  
Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - **Fred Bertlesen, Jim Beshires**  
Audio Briefs Compiler(s) - **Jim Beshires**  
Artwork - **Brian Allen**

Thanks to the members and friends of the group for suppling financial support, missing episodes and other support.



## Family Doctor Series Re-Certified

In its continuing mission to bring to the Old Time Radio community, OTRR has re-issued the *Family Doctor* series. This series was first released on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

While no new encodes were located, audio briefs were prepared and new labels created in order to bring this series up to the standards adopted by the group.

This is a dramatic serial aired in 1932, and tells the story of Dr. Grant Adams, a wise and humorous doctor in a small town who doubles as the community's physician and also their moral rectifier. Week after week, Dr. Adams confronts communal issues, from robbery to suicide, armed with common sense and gentle moral judgment.

Even though his old-fashioned remedies for sicknesses are outdated compared to modern medical practicing, The Family Doctor's attitude towards life's daily issues transcend time. Only 12 of these 39 episodes from this entertaining series were every aired.

"This is the family doctor. I'll be in to see you again right soon. Goodbye..."

Those working on the series include -

Series Coordinator - **Roger Hohenbrink**

Quality Listener(s) - **OTRR Members**

Series Synopsis - **Jon - OTRCAT**

Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - **Andrew Sernekos, Jim Beshires**

Missing Episodes Moderator - **Clorinda Thompson**

Pictures, other extras - none available

Artwork - **Brian Allen**

Stars Bios - **Jim Wallace**(none found)

The OTRR wishes to thank its members and friends for their financial support, provision of episodes and other assistance.

Look for this updated series to come to a distro near you!

The following people worked on the series, and we'd like to thank each of them for their contributions -

Series Coordinator - **Jim Beshires**

Quality Listener(s) - **Marc Olayne**

Series Synopsis - **Jim Scott**

The Ultimate Boston Blackie Log - **Charles Laughlin, Arlene Osborne, and Al Huber**

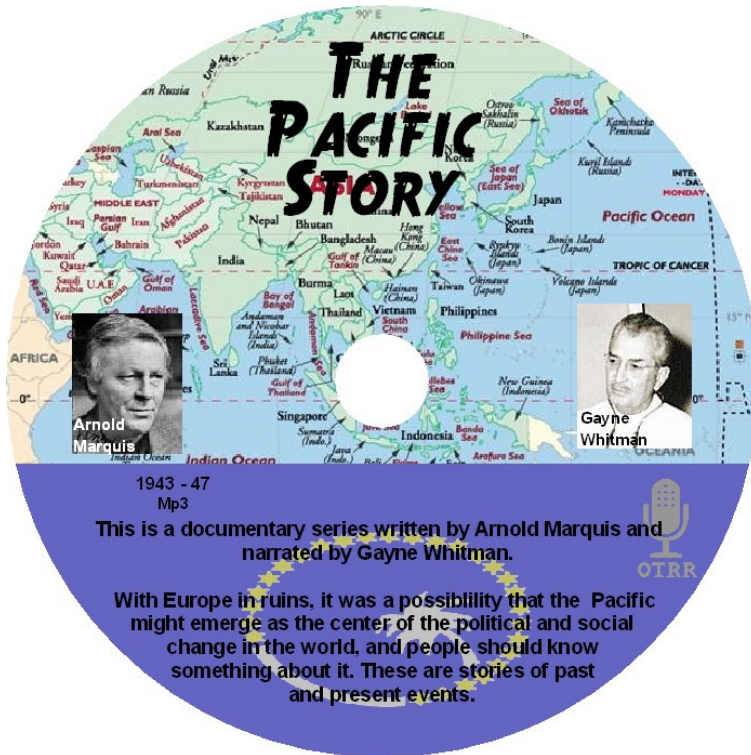
Audio Briefs Announcer(s) - **David Schwegler, Fred Bertlesen, Sue Sieger**

Audio Briefs Compiler(s) - **Jim Scott**

Missing Episodes - **Clorinda Thompson**

Pictures, other extras - **Terry Caswell**

Artwork - **Brian Allen**



## *Boston Blackie* Released

After nearly two years of starts and stops, the Old Time Radio Researchers has released the archival certified set of *Boston Blackie*. It was a long process with several people working on the series at various times, and then shelving it in favor of more pressing series.

This set contains many extras, including several different Label versions, a 'First Line of Dialog' pdf file, many pictures, some scripts, and 'The Ultimate *Boston Blackie* Log', prepared especially by Charles Laughlin, Arlene Osborne, and Al Hubin, and several textual reports prepared by Marc Olayne.

*Boston Blackie* is a fictional character who has been on both sides of the law. As originally created by author Jack Boyle, he was a safecracker, a hardened criminal who had served time in a California prison. Prowling the underworld as a detective in adaptations for films, radio and television, the detective Boston Blackie was "an enemy to those who make him an enemy, friend to those who have no friend."

Jack Boyle's stories first appeared in the early 20th Century. "The Price of Principle" was a short story in the July, 1914 issue of *The American Magazine*. Boyle's character also turned up in *Cosmopolitan*. In 1917, *Redbook* published the novelette, "Boston Blackie's Mary," and the magazine brought the character back with "The Heart of the Lily" (February, 1921). Boyle's stories were collected in the book, *Boston Blackie* (1919), reprinted in 1979 by Gregg Press. Boyle died in 1928.

The *Boston Blackie* radio series, also starring Morris, began June 23, 1944 on NBC as a summer replacement for *The Amos 'n' Andy Show*. Sponsored by Rinso, the series continued until September 15 of that year.

Unlike the concurrent films, Blackie had a steady romantic interest in the radio show: Lesley Woods appeared as Blackie's girlfriend Mary Wesley. Harlow Wilcox was the show's announcer.

There is some disagreement on how many episodes actually aired.

On April 11, 1945, Richard Kollmar took over the title role in a radio series syndicated by Frederic W. Ziv to Mutual and other network outlets. Over 200 episodes of this series were produced between 1944 and October 25, 1950. Other sponsors included Lifebuoy Soap, Champagne Velvet beer, and R&H beer.

While investigating mysteries, Blackie invariably encountered harebrained Police Inspector Farraday (Maurice Tarplin) and always solved the mystery to Farraday's amazement. Initially, friction surfaced in the relationship between Blackie and Farraday, but as the series continued, Farraday recognized Blackie's talents and requested assistance. Blackie dated Mary Wesley (Jan Miner), and for the first half of the series, his best pal Shorty was always on hand. The humorless Farraday was on the receiving end of Blackie's bad puns and word play.

Stars Bios - **Jim Scott**

And all the members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers Group for their contributions of time, episodes, finances, and support.

Look for this series to come to a distro near you. It will also be uploaded to Archive.org, both as a zipped set and with individual downloadable episodes. (*Some of the material for this article came from Wikipedia.*)



## PRESS RELEASE

# New Book Explores Jewish Stereotypes on Radio

Like the famous 1960s ad campaign, "You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy Levy's rye bread," old time radio fans know that the radio audience didn't have to be Jewish to enjoy *The Goldbergs*, or African-American to enjoy *Amos 'n' Andy* or Italian to enjoy *Life With Luigi*. For better or worse, ethnic and racial stereotypes were very much a part of radio's golden age.

In a provocative new book, *Radio and the Jews: The Untold Story of How Radio Influenced America's Image of Jews*, radio archivist David Siegel and his wife Susan Siegel explore how radio influenced a nation's perception of a minority group. Depending on which program/s listeners tuned in to, they were exposed to both positive and negative stereotypes of Jews.

The 283 page book examines more than 100 programs that featured Jewish themes and/or characters. While several books have been written about Jewish performers on radio, such as Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor and George Burns, *Radio and the Jews* is the first in-depth look at the Jewish image on radio across all program genres, from comedy and drama to soap opera, religious oriented programs and World War II era programs.

The book includes:

- 3 Jewish themed series, from the familiar *Goldbergs* to long forgotten programs such as *Meyer the Buyer* and *Potash and Perlmutter*.
- 4 Mainstream programs with Jewish themes such as *The Fleischmann's Yeast Hour*, *The Lux Radio Theatre*, *Columbia Workshop* and *Mr. District Attorney*.
- 5 Special broadcasts such as *Behold the Jew* and *Operation Nightmare* as well as short-wave broadcasts from Europe during World War II.

The book sheds new light on the popular program, *Abie's Irish Rose*, and why its writers experienced the same conflict that Gosden and Correll faced when *Amos 'n' Andy* came under attack from segments of the African-American community. With access to 65 year old correspondence and internal memos, original scripts and audio of episodes, the authors detail the controversy and how each side viewed the issue.

In another first, the authors document the history of the longest running Jewish themed program, the *Message of Israel*, which aired from 1934 to 1986.

The book also includes the darker side of radio and how the airwaves were used to spread the anti-Semitic messages of people like Father Charles Coughlin, Charles Lindbergh and Gerald L. K. Smith.

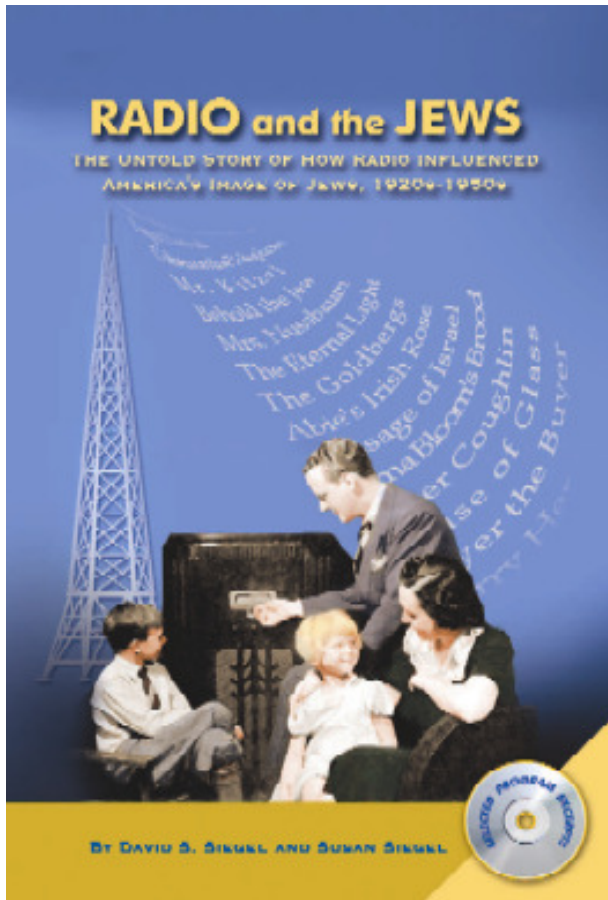
*Radio and the Jews* retails for \$24.95, plus \$4.00 for media mail shipping, and includes a CD with samples of many of the programs featured in the book. Copies can be ordered directly

from the publisher, Book Hunter Press, [www.bookhunterpress.com/radio](http://www.bookhunterpress.com/radio), via email, [bookhunterpress@verizon.net](mailto:bookhunterpress@verizon.net), or by phoning (914) 245-6608 or faxing (914) 245-2630. Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

## Radio and the Jews Table of Contents

1. In the Beginning  
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2. "Yoo, Hoo, Is Anybody?"  
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3. "Those People"  
(Father Coughlin, Charles Lindbergh, Gerald L. K. Smith, Henry Ford.)
4. *Americans All, Immigrants All*  
(The program that celebrated the contributions of various ethnic groups to American society, including a special episode on the Jews.)
5. Forgotten Series  
(Including *Krausemeyer and Cohen*, *Potash and Perlmutter*, *Meyer the Buyer*, *House of Glass* and several others.)
6. Funny, You Don't Sound Jewish  
(Yiddish dialect characters, including Mrs. Nussbaum, Mr. Kitzel, Shlepperman, Papa David, Izzy Finkelstein and others.)
7. *Abie's Irish Rose*  
(The story of a mixed marriage)
8. Judaism Aired: Religious Oriented Programs  
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9. Jews in the Mainstream  
Part I: The Gathering Storm, 1930-1938 (*Lux Radio Theatre*, *Fleishmann's Yeast Hour*, etc.)  
Part II: The War Years, 1939-1945 (*Orson Welles Theater*, *Theatre Guild on the Air*, *Words at War*, etc.)  
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- Appendix II. *Abie's Irish Rose Controversy* (A side-by-side comparison of objections and actual text.)
- Selected Bibliography
- Index

For more information contact: Susan Siegel,  
[bookhunterpress@verizon.net](mailto:bookhunterpress@verizon.net)



## In Remembrance Dee DeTevis

I'd like to say a few words about the passing of Michael St. John. When Michael first showed up and began participating in distributions, he immediately offered to do tracking and moderating in various groups in his unselfish way those of us who knew him would become so accustomed to. He always handled the groups' business with great care, generosity and kindness. One of the many things I will remember about Michael is how much he loved the wide variety of things available in the share groups and his enthusiasm to get them. No matter what was offered, Michael was there to sign-up for it, sounding just as excited to get it as all those he'd signed up for before. He was one of the share community's greatest fans and supporters. And a good friend to many of us.

He always was a gentleman and considerate of everyone's feelings. When we lost Michael, we lost a wonderful friend in our community. Rest in peace, Michael.



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Old Time Radio I alive and well in the pages of The **OLD TIME RADIO DIGEST**. Our recipe is to have a nice mix of current articles by collectors with material from old radio publications of the past. We are in our 20th year. Oldest OTR publication without a club association.



# Fizzy Pain Reliever Provides Own Sound Effects

Danny Goodwin

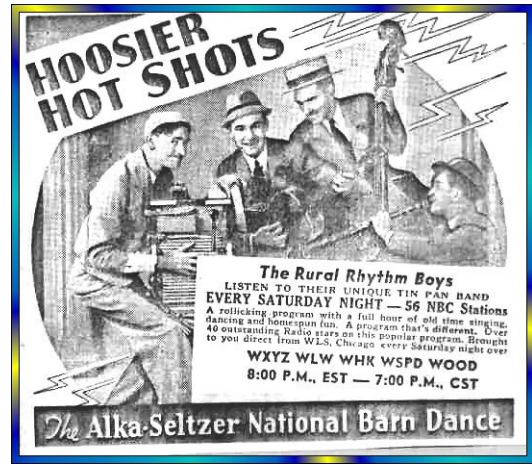
“When your tablets get down to 4.....  
that’s the time to buy some more.” -- *Gene Baker*

On Saturday, September 30, 1933, listeners who tuned into the network radio debut of NBC (Blue’s) *Alka-Seltzer National Barn Dance* heard some good things about the program’s sponsor, an unusual and strange product called Alka-Seltzer. The listeners who used it found out this product wasn’t your everyday pain reliever. Instead of taking 1 or 2 tablets and washing them down with a glass of water, 2 Alka-Seltzer tablets were plopped directly INTO the glass of water. Once the tablets were dissolved, a typical human who was suffering from minor aches and pains could drink it. Although it took some getting used to, the people took announcer Jack Holden’s advice and tried Alka-Seltzer for any minor ailment they may have. To make a long story short, the network debut of both program and sponsor were both successful--- and the era of Alka-Seltzer advertising began.

Unlike other radio sponsors, Alka-Seltzer provided its own sound effects. Instead of using fancy gadgets to make noise, all the sound effects man had to do was to hold a glass of water next to the microphone; drop two *Alka-Seltzer* tablets into that glass of water; and the listeners heard a refreshing fizzing sound. The announcer said that fizzing sound meant Alka-Seltzer was ready to go to work.

Since its introduction to network radio, Alka-Seltzer sales increased dramatically, and the product became a leading brand of pain reliever. It was also a sought after radio sponsor. With the popularity of the *Alka-Seltzer National Barn Dance*, a spin off program was created featuring one of the program’s regular characters. The program, *Uncle Ezra’s Radio Stations*, starred Pat Barrett as Uncle Ezra, the operator of E-Z-R-A, a “powerful 5 watter” radio station in the town of Rosedale. The program was originally heard on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings at 7:15 PM on NBC’s Red Network. Of course, since it was an *Alka-Seltzer National Barn Dance* spin off, Alka-Seltzer was the sponsor. The program, in this format, enjoyed a 4+ year run on the air.

As you might have already noticed, the 2 programs I’ve mentioned had a rural touch to them--- and successfully at that! To keep the hot streak going, Alka-Seltzer sponsored a third radio program with a rural background. The only difference, this program was



already established on network radio. On Monday, September 29, 1941, Alka-Seltzer began sponsorship of the popular serial *Lum & Abner* over NBC’s Blue Network. The adventures of Lum Edwards and Abner Peabody enjoyed a 7 year run on the air over NBC(Blue), Blue (renamed ABC), and finally CBS.

*Alka-Seltzer* had a knack of sponsoring popular radio programs during the golden age. It was also the sponsor of *The Quiz Kids*. Although this program doesn’t have a rural theme as the others I have already mentioned, there is a connection from the *Alka-Seltzer National Barn Dance*. Joe Kelly, who was the M.C. of the *ASNBD*, was also the M.C. of *The Quiz Kids*. For music lovers (and maybe for music haters), Alka-Seltzer sponsored *Alec Templeton Time* on NBC (Red). On this entertaining program, Alec Templeton combined classical music with his own unique brand of humor.

During the daytime and early evening, Alka-Seltzer sponsored *Queen for a Day* on the Mutual Network; the second version of *Hilltop House* on CBS; and *One Man’s Family* on NBC. All had respectful runs on the air.

We all know of the classic and clever advertising for Alka-Seltzer on television. Although the commercials weren’t necessarily humorous during radio’s golden age, Alka-Seltzer had an array of popular slogans--- and of course, the sound of it fizzing in a glass of water. Over the span of radio’s golden age, listeners heard slogans like, “Listen To The Fizz”, “There’s Nothing Quite Like *Alka-Seltzer*”, “Favorite Of So Many For Relief That Does So Much”, and “Be Wise, Alkalize With Alka-Seltzer.” On the *Alka-Seltzer National Barn Dance*, the program opened with “Alka-Seltzer For Headache, Alka-Seltzer For Acid Indigestion, Alka-Seltzer For Colds..... Ask Your Druggist For Alka-Seltzer.” This introduction informed the listeners that Alka-Seltzer was an all-purpose pain reliever. Not only could Alka-Seltzer be used for relieving a headache, it was also effective for easing the

*Lum & Abner -*  
**Rural American and the Golden Age of  
Radio**  
Reviewed by Jim Beshires

One of the joys of being the publisher and/or editor of a magazine is that of reviewing newly published books on subjects of interest to its' readers. Therefore it was an unexpected pleasure to receive a preview copy of the above named book, both from the reviewers standpoint, but also as a big fan of the Lum & Abner series. The goin's on of the boys from Pine Ridge has always been of interest to me.

The book is a good read, with a lot of information in the first sixty-eight pages. I suspect, however, that it was not published for the ordinary fan, but for scholars and researchers into the times and attitudes of America during the Depression and years following and also serious fans of the series. Nevertheless, it is very welcomed, as the number of publications dedicated to any aspect of old time radio is small.

If you are a member of the National Lum & Abner Society, you are probably familiar with the information in the book. Some of its contents are readily available in various OTR publications, including many published in the OTR magazine archive located at [www.otrr.org](http://www.otrr.org)., but there is enough new stuff to keep your interest.

The material in the book is supported by copious notes that are of great value and well worth your perusal. I believe the strong point (and one that would be of most interest to Lum & Abner fans) to be the approximately three months of scripts from the private collection of Duncan McCoy. None of these programs are in circulation, and they give you a feel for the content of the broadcasts of those early days.

It was a joy to read them.

This book would make a good addition to your library of publications dedicated to old time radio. The author and publishers have truly done the hobby a service.

aches and pains of a cold or flu, and to soothe excess acidity in the stomach after the sufferer went a little overboard with eating or drinking. For those people who had a blah feeling in the morning, a sparkling glass of Alka-Seltzer instantly picked up their spirits.

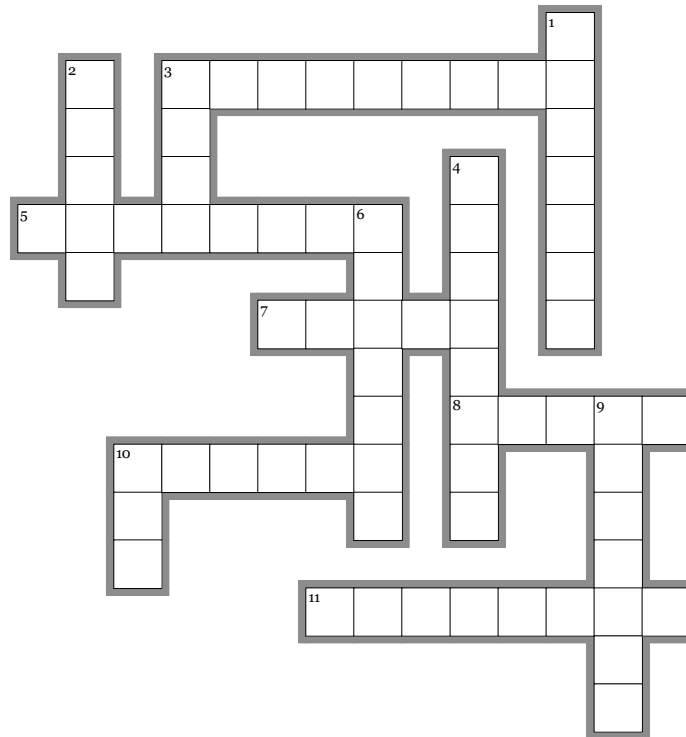
There were also friendly reminders for the radio listeners on when to buy more Alka-Seltzer. Gene Baker, *Lum & Abner's* announcer, said it this way: "When Your Tablets Get Down To 4, That's The Time To Buy Some More." The main objective here was to remind the listeners never to run out of **Alka-Seltzer**. Considering that human beings were (are) human, it was too easy to put it off until the bottle was empty--- but it also had the potential of someone who needed Alka-Seltzer desperately at that very moment--- and there was nothing but an empty bottle! The empty bottle may say Alka-Seltzer on the label, but it will not fizz when placed in a glass of water. What you end up with is a bottle in a glass of water--- and nothing more!! To avoid this problem, Alka-Seltzer launched another reminder to the listeners when it had to be purchased, buy 2 packages instead of 1. The second package was like a spare tire for a car--- it wasn't needed at that moment, but it was nice to know it was there. With this method of keeping an extra package on hand, the chances were slim to none of running out of Alka-Seltzer--- especially when it was needed the most.

Alka-Seltzer was such a popular product, other Miles Laboratories products also shared in on that success. As an added sponsor, the listeners heard about "One A Day B Complex Vitamin Capsules" and "One A Day Multiple Vitamins," the potent vitamins that when taken once a day and provided the minimum daily requirement of vitamins. Nervine was a product that helped calm down nerves. It was made in liquid form and effervescent tablets--- the same type of effervescence Alka-Seltzer made famous. When anti-histamines became popular, the people were seeing red--- the red boxes of Tabcin, that is! Tabcin was the "Bright Red Tablets In The Bright Red Box" for easing the discomforts of colds. Rounding out this list was Bactine, an antiseptic liquid/germicide that was used for first aid and disinfecting.

Alka-Seltzer was an instant success story. When television became the dominant means of communication, the torch was passed from the slogans on radio to television, where a character named "Speedy Alka-Seltzer" became the commercial spokesman. Speedy continued the tradition of selling a popular product that people in 1933 thought was a little unusual.

# Broadway Is My Beat

By  
Fred Bertelsen



Created with EclipseCrossword — [www.eclipsecrossword.com](http://www.eclipsecrossword.com)

## Across

---

3. \_\_\_\_\_ was this shows theme music.
5. David \_\_\_\_\_ and Morton Fine were the writers for this series.
7. This show moved to hollywood after only three months when Elliott \_\_\_\_\_ took over as Producer/Director.
8. Music was by Wilbur \_\_\_\_\_ and Alexander Courage.
10. Danny \_\_\_\_\_ was the NY Police Detective whose beat was Time Square.
11. Lester \_\_\_\_\_ was the original Producer.

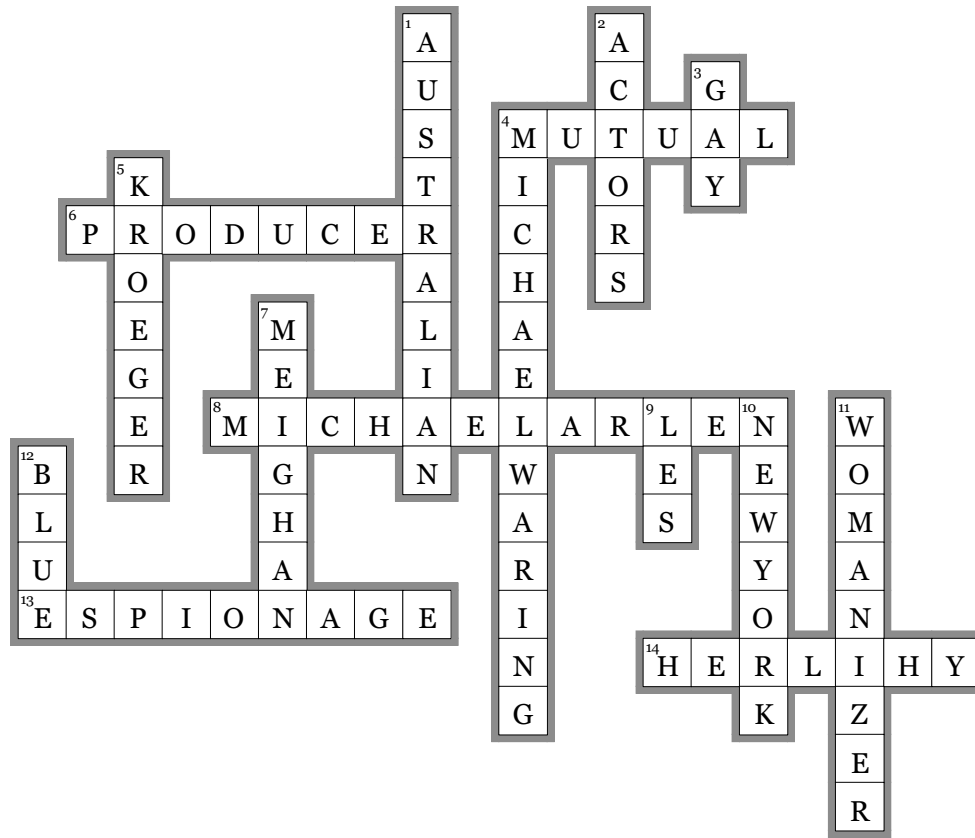
## Down

---

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Ross was the original actor who played the Detective in #10 across
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Thor was the Hollywood actor who played Danny #10 across
3. Broadway was referred to as the "Lonelist \_\_\_\_\_ In The World."
4. Sgt. Muggavan was played by Jack \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Thos show was originally broadcast from \_\_\_\_\_ . (2 wds)
9. Charles \_\_\_\_\_ played Sgt. Gino Tartaglia.
10. This show was heard over the \_\_\_\_\_ Radio Network.
- 11.

# Last Month's Answers

## The Falcon



Created with EclipseCrossword — [www.eclipsecrossword.com](http://www.eclipsecrossword.com)

### Wistful Vistas

Ryan Ellett

Well, we've reached the point of the summer doldrums, where we often find ourselves doing as little as possible besides hugging the air conditioner, waiting for the height of summer's heat to pass. The halls of the Old Radio Times, however, have been buzzing this month, trying to bring you the latest goings-on around the Old Time Radio Researchers.

You'll find several new series releases this month; thanks to all the folks who have contributed countless hours putting these great sets together.

We're very pleased to have Jim Cox returning to our pages with his piece on Saturday dramatic programming. As usual, he brings us great information in his engaging, easy-to-read style.

Group member and long-time OTR hobbyist Paul Urbahns contributes a piece on *Theatre Royale*, a syndicated series produced by Towers of London.

On a sidenote, if you've been looking fruitlessly in your area for other old time radio fans you might visit your local ham radio club. I've spent a good deal of the summer getting back into ham radio and have found many local hams are very interested and knowledgeable about old time radio programs. It's always nice to find fellow hobbyists with whom you can meet and talk with about the hobby; plus you might find a new hobby in amateur radio, a logical extension of your interest in OTR.

In any case, be ever vigilant for other local fans. Just this summer I discovered a local OTR fan who's been into the hobby since the late '60s and has an incredible collection of OTR programs. I've been into the hobby six years myself yet we never knew of each other until two months ago! It's been invigorating for both of us to poke through the audio and book collections of the other.

I'm out of space this month but keep the OTR playing and watch out for kids heading back to school; they might be future OTR fans.



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**Contributors:**

Fred Bertelsen \* Jim Beshires \* Jim Cox \* Dee DeTevis \* Ryan Ellett \* Paul Urbahns

Submissions and submission inquiries should be sent to Ryan Ellett, Editor, [OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com](mailto:OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com). Articles may be submitted as a word-processing file or in the body of an email.

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**Old-Time Radio Researchers Information**

**OTRR INFORMATION AND OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

123 Davidson Ave, Savannah 31419

Telephone 912-961-7956

**GROUP LEADERS**

Jim Beshires ([beshiresjim@yahoo.com](mailto:beshiresjim@yahoo.com))

Clorinda Thompson ([cthompson@earthlink.net](mailto:cthompson@earthlink.net))

Dee Detevis ([dedeweedy@aol.com](mailto:dedeweedy@aol.com))

## TREASURER

Tony Jaworoski, 15520 Fairlane Drive, Livonia, MI 48154 ([tony\\_senior@yahoo.com](mailto:tony_senior@yahoo.com))

## ASSISTANT GROUP LEADERS

Acquisitions (cassette) - Ed Sehlhorst ([ed.sehlhorst@gmail.com](mailto:ed.sehlhorst@gmail.com))  
Acquisitions (paper-based items) - Ryan Ellett ([OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com](mailto:OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com))  
Certified Series Moderator - Bob Yorli ([yorli@yahoo.com](mailto:yorli@yahoo.com))  
Webmaster - OTR Project - any of one ([otrmail@mail.com](mailto:otrmail@mail.com))  
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Distro Moderator - Dee Detevis ([dedeweedy@aol.com](mailto:dedeweedy@aol.com))  
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OTR Project Moderator - Andrew Steinberg ([nightkey5@yahoo.com](mailto:nightkey5@yahoo.com))  
Final Preparations Moderator - Roger Hohenbrink ([rhothenbrink@earthlink.net](mailto:rhothenbrink@earthlink.net))  
OTTER Moderator - Archie Hunter ([y\\_know\\_archie@hotmail.com](mailto:y_know_archie@hotmail.com))  
Hubmaster - Philip ([phlipper376@yahoo.com](mailto:phlipper376@yahoo.com))  
Software Development - any of one ([otrmail@gmail.com](mailto:otrmail@gmail.com))  
Streamload - Allan ([allanpqz@gmail.com](mailto:allanpqz@gmail.com))  
Mail Library - Paul Urbahns ([paul.urbahns@gmail.com](mailto:paul.urbahns@gmail.com))  
Wiki Master - Menachem Shapiro ([m.shapiro@gmail.com](mailto:m.shapiro@gmail.com))  
Sound Restoration Moderator - Henry Morse ([spock1@yahoo.com](mailto:spock1@yahoo.com))  
Sound Restoration Moderator - Anita Boyd ([synagogue@yahoo.com](mailto:synagogue@yahoo.com))  
Purchasing Group Distro Moderator - David Oxford ([david0@centurytel.net](mailto:david0@centurytel.net))  
Newsletter Editor - Ryan Ellett ([OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com](mailto:OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com))  
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Acquisitions (reel to reel) - David Oxford ([david0@centurytel.net](mailto:david0@centurytel.net))

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Old Time Radio Researchers

OTR Project

Distro

Distro 2

Purchasing

Sound Restoration

Software Development

## New Acquisitions By the Old- Time Radio Researchers

Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (01) April 16, 1940 Opening Game.mp3

Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (02) All Star Game 1941.mp3

Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (03) Giants Vs Colts 1958.mp3

Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (04) Braves Vs Cubs August 1941.mp3

Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (05) Final Game of the 1957 Season.mp3

Foy Willing and Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (72)

First Song - Until Payday Rolls Around(partial).mp3

Freedom USA 52-05-25 (23) For Those Who Served.mp3

Freedom USA 52-06-01 (24) Municipal Bond Fraud.mp3

Grand Ole Opry xx-xx-xx (146) First Song - Old Number Nine.mp3

Grand Ole Opry xx-xx-xx (358) First Song - Back Pocket Money.mp3

Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (06) The Boston Marathon.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (07) Indianapolis 500.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (08) Basketball History.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (09) Pro Football.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (10) Johnny Vandermeer.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (21) Ernie Covery.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (22) Kentucky Derby.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (23) Bob Feller.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (24) Yankees World Series 1959.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (25) Olympic Basketball.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (26) Lou Gerig.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (27) Hockey.mp3  
Bob Feller Show 60-xx-xx (28) Green Bay Packers.mp3  
Ceiling Unlimited 42-11-09 (1) Flying Fortress.mp3  
Columbia Country Journal 42-12-19.mp3  
Command Performance xx-xx-xx Robert Young, Cass Dailey.mp3  
Coronet Storyteller 44-12-24 The Little Lamb.mp3  
Ford Theater 48-06-06 (36) Michael & Molly.mp3  
Foy Willing And Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (68) First Song - Sage Brush Symphony.mp3  
Foy Willing And The Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (65) First Song - Way Down Yonder on the Indian Nation.mp3  
Foy Willing And The Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (66) First Song - Round-up Time in Texas.mp3  
Foy Willing And The Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (67) First Song - Ridin' Down That Ole Texas Trail.mp3  
Foy Willing and Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (69) First Song - At The Gate of the Home Corral.mp3  
Foy Willing and Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (70) First Song - There's A Rainbow.mp3  
Foy Willing and Riders of the Purple Sage xx-xx-xx (71) First Song - Out on the Open Range.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 38-12-24 Shakespeare.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 38-12-31 Spinoza.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 39-01-21 Goethe.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 39-02-11 Jefferson.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 39-03-16 Lee.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 39-03-25 Lincoln.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 39-04-01 Browning.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 39-04-08 Tolstoy.mp3  
Lone Ranger 39-03-08 (954) Race To Cattle Market.mp3  
Lone Ranger 39-03-10 (955) Trail Across The Desert.mp3  
Lone Ranger 39-05-10 (981) False Grand Son.mp3  
Guest Star xx-xx-xx First Song - Buttons and Bows.mp3  
Hank Thompson 52-xx-xx (24) First Song - Love Thief.mp3  
Hank Thompson 52-xx-xx (25) First Song - The Green Line.mp3  
Hank Thompson 52-xx-xx (3) First Song - These Things Money Can't Buy(muffled).mp3  
Hank Thompson 52-xx-xx (4) First Song - Today.mp3  
Hank Thompson 52-xx-xx (26) First Song - The River Road Twostep.mp3  
Hank Thompson 52-xx-xx (27) First Song - Wild Side Of Life.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (1) Guest - Eddie Spanky.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (10) Guest - Harvey Haddox.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (11) Guest - Bill Verden.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (12) Guest - Tom Alston.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (13) Guest Bill Posel.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (2) Guest - Wally Moon.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (3) Guest - Dixie Walker.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (4) Guest - Frank Smith.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (5) Guest - Vic Rashy.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (6) Guest - Gordon Jones.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (7) Guest - Joe Fraiser.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (8) Guest - August Busch, Jr.mp3  
Joe Garigiola Show 55-xx-xx (9) Guest Bill Sarney.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 38-12-10 Erasmus.mp3  
Lives of Great Men 38-12-17 Gliordano Bruno.mp3  
Men Who Made America 37-03-04 (05) The Dean Without a College.mp3  
One Man's Family 52-01-01 B091C22 A New Year Begins.mp3  
Radio Dot 37-11-11 (2) First Song - Down By The Mill(no op).mp3  
Radio Dot 37-11-14 (4) First Song - You're the One Rose(no op).mp3  
Story Behind The Headlines 43-01-03 Russia's Winter

Lone Ranger 39-05-12 (982) Bat Freeman's Supply Scheme.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-05-15 (983) Pablo & the Baby.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 38-01-31 (782) Horse Thieves Steal Silver.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-03-11 (799) Andy Beechum, Prospector.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-04-19 (972) The Not So Crooked Election.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-04-21 (973) Thirty Day Option.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-05-03 (978) Secret of Aztec Cave.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-05-05 (979) Rustling at the Half-Circle 'C'.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-05-22 (986) Trail of the Train Robbers.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-05-24 (987) Andy's Identity.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-06-12 (999) Plans to the Fort.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-06-14 (996) Pedro Accuses (poor sound).mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-06-16 (997) Blackmail for Marriage.mp3  
 Lone Ranger 39-06-19 (998) Lame Crow's Prisoner.mp3

Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (01) Doctor-Patient Relationship.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (02) Arthritis.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (03) The Breath of Life.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (04) Blindness.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (05) Alcoholism.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (06) Automobile Safety.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (07) Premature Infants.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (08) The Heart-Lung Machine.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (09) Physical Rehabilitation.mp3  
 Medical Milestones 61-xx-xx (10) The Blue Baby.mp3

Men Who Made America 37-02-25 (04) November's Child.mp3

Offensive #2.mp3  
 Story Behind The Headlines 43-07-25 Mosellini.mp3  
 Story Behind The Headlines 43-12-04 Cairo and Teteran.mp3  
 Story Behind The Headlines 44-11-19 The Allied Western Offensive.mp3  
 Story Behind The Headlines 45-05-16 The Landing of The Marines On Iwo Jima.mp3

The Eddy Arnold Show xx-xx-xx First Song - I'll Keep Right On Loving You.mp3  
 The Eddy Arnold Show xx-xx-xx First Song - If I Had A Nickel.mp3  
 The Eddy Arnold Show xx-xx-xx First Song - If It's Wrong To Love You.mp3  
 The Eddy Arnold Show xx-xx-xx First Song - It Makes No Difference Now.mp3

The World is Yours 38-01-30 Whales, The Largest Mammals.mp3  
 The World is Yours 38-02-06 The Four Elements of Mechanics.mp3

Voice of New York 43-06-16.mp3  
 Voice of the Army xx-xx-xx First Song - Homeward.mp3

We Came This Way 45-02-16 (20) Story of a Boy named Carl.mp3  
 We Came This Way 45-07-12 (02) The Story of Alexander Petoff.mp3  
 We Came This Way 45-07-19 (03) Victor Hugo.mp3  
 We Came This Way 45-07-26(04) Walt Whitman - Poet Of Democracy.mp3  
 We Came This Way 45-08-30 (09) Gambetta - A Republic is Born.mp3  
 We Came This Way 45-09-06 (10) Emile Zola.mp3

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## “And Now, Let’s See What’s Going on Down in Pine Ridge.”

Lexington, KY—As Americans increasingly fell victim to the hardships wrought by the Great Depression, they looked for outlets capable of both entertaining them and distracting them from their ills. A proliferation of radio programs and musical numbers featuring farmers and small-town residents emerged to fill this need, offering laughter and characters sympathetic to Depression-era troubles. Though most of these programs have been forgotten, a few have persevered in the hearts of contemporary audiences nostalgic for a simpler era.

With its lovable and laughable title characters and famous opening phrase “And now, let’s see what’s going on down in Pine Ridge,” *Lum and Abner* garnered attention from audiences across the country from its first broadcast on April 26, 1931. In *Lum and Abner: Rural America and the Golden Age of Radio*, author Randal L. Hall pays tribute to this brainchild of Chester “Chet” Lauck and Findley Norris “Tuffy” Goff, two businessmen from tiny Mena, Arkansas. Set in the fictional hamlet of Pine Ridge, Arkansas, the program featured the comedic adventures—and, more often than not, misadventures—of Lum Edwards and Abner Peabody, proprietors of the Jot ‘Em Down Store. The program attracted a diverse audience, including northerners interested in the country way of life and southerners used to being the butt of the humor of the era.

Created by southerners and set in the South, Lauck and Goff’s *Lum and Abner* humorously challenged the hillbilly stereotypes promoted by other radio programs of the period and addressed issues pertinent to rural people. The program became a vehicle for addressing the ills wrought by the Great Depression and audiences across America identified with the Pine Ridge community as they fought for political representation, struggled to earn enough money to participate in consumer culture, and strived to maintain community ties in the face of great social change.

The twenty-nine previously unreleased scripts included in the collection are an invaluable contribution to the *Lum and Abner* canon, particularly since audio recordings of these early broadcasts have not survived. Hall’s lengthy introduction is essential reading material for both longtime fans and those embarking on their first foray with Lum and Abner, meticulously detailing the conception and rise of one of the period’s most loved and remembered radio programs. *Lum and Abner: Rural America and the Golden Age of Radio* rediscovers a radio gem traditionally overshadowed by more popular and controversial programs and reinstates its place both in American society and in the contemporary American consciousness.

Randal L. Hall, managing editor of the *Journal of Southern History* at Rice University, is the author of *William Louis Poteat: A Leader of the Progressive-Era South*.

### LUM AND ABNER RURAL AMERICA AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO Randal L. Hall

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For additional information, please contact: Mack McCormick, Publicity Manager, 859/257-5200