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WHATEVER BECAME OF... RICHARD LAMPARSKI?

by Alan Kleinberger

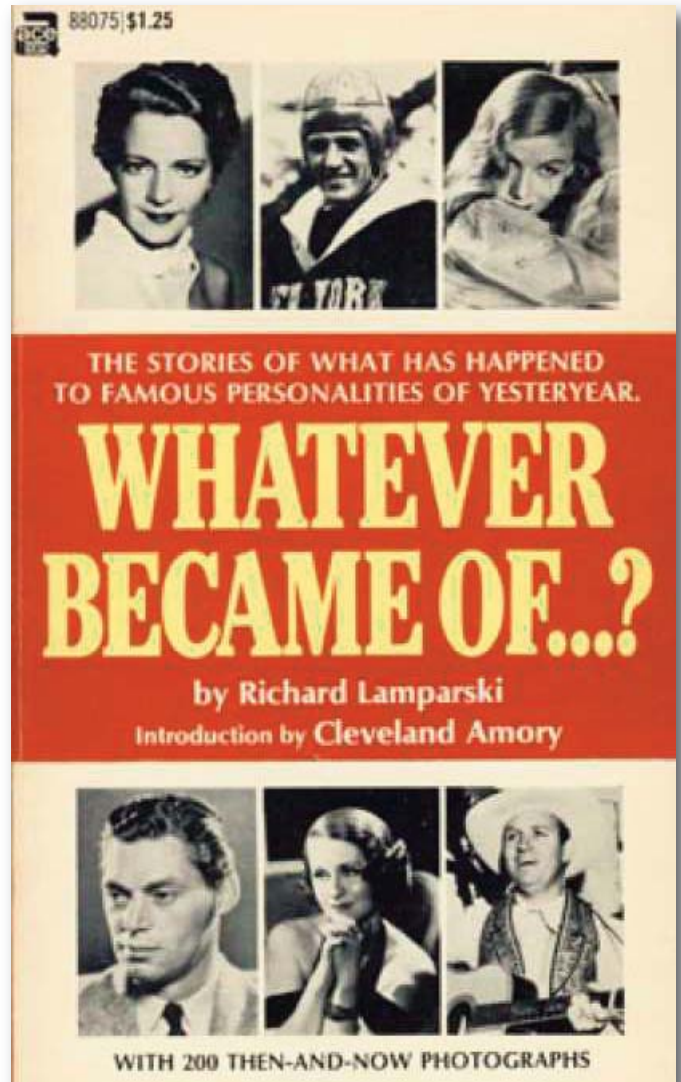
In 1965, the world wasn't ready for nostalgia, or so many people thought. The world was moving forward, and nothing was more disposable than the past. The young and the old may have had very different ideas about where the world was going, but they could agree that the past was not worth much of their time.

Into this mindset came a young man who had been toiling along the edges of Hollywood for a number of years; he was convinced that the public wanted updates regarding notable figures of the past. In fact, he was convinced that many people cared about the not-so-notable figures too. He set about tracking them down, one by one, and the result was a radio series and a series of books that tapped a vein of nostalgia in the public consciousness that few would have predicted was there in the first place.

Richard Lamparski titled his radio series (and later the book series) *Whatever Became Of ?*, which is about as straightforward a description as you could want. Because looking backwards in time hadn't yet become the full-time preoccupation then that it's become today, he met with a great deal of initial resistance, skepticism and outright hostility.

Lamparski recalls that both station managers and book publishers were utterly certain that the only people who would be interested in the present-day whereabouts of Frankie Darrow were "old people." Lamparski tried to explain that the elderly were the last people who would be interested – nobody wants to be reminded that their childhood idols were now old and alienated, because that would make it difficult to avoid the conclusion that *you're* old and alienated.

What Lamparski realized, several years be-



fore the idea hit the mainstream, was that certain people were not convinced that the world had begun on the day that they were born. Some people were actually fascinated with the stuff that went on years, even decades before their time. Their spiritual descendents today are the people under the age of thirty who are willing to watch movies and television shows that are in black and white. Back in the Sixties, when talk of expanding one's consciousness was just getting off the ground, the powers that be had a hard time imagining anyone's consciousness ex-

panding back in time.

Nevertheless, the soon to be enormous wave of Nostalgia that we take for granted today was “in the air.” Lamparski speaks of going to the theaters in New York that specialized in old time movies, legendary venues like the *Thalia* and the *New Yorker* – and in the lobby, and in the men’s room, people would ask one another “Whatever happened to Sally Eilers? Remember her?” Not precisely a *eureka* moment, but not too far from one.

Lamparski himself had the benefit of a somewhat unusual childhood. Because of the ever-present fear of polio that has been forgotten today but was once part of every parent’s list of nightmares, Lamparski’s very protective parents essentially didn’t let their kid out of the house. An only child, growing up in Detroit, Lamparski had the benefit of having his parents’ attention full on and focused, and was essentially raised as a smallish adult. He says that he barely had any idea of what a child was, since he never considered himself one. “I never viewed myself as a child,” he recounts. “I was *me*.” First grade was extremely exotic to him, seeing kids up close for the first time. He also never had people speak baby talk to him, so he was verbally precocious as well.

Lamparski notes that he also never developed a competitive spirit. He was thoroughly puzzled by his classmates’ attempts to best him. He simply didn’t get it.

Viewing children only from a distance (“from my bedroom window, they looked tiny and fascinating”), Lamparski nevertheless did share certain fascinations with his distant contemporaries – a love of movies and radio. Ventures to the movies once a week cemented his fixation on the wider world, and, growing up in the 1930’s, Lamparski had the benefit of having a unique conduit to the outside world, one that most today can barely imagine – the world of radio. This was radio as it existed long before television, disc jockeys, political pundits (well, there was Father Coughlin, but that’s a discussion for another day), or any other elements that now make up what we listen to in the car when we can’t find that CD we want to listen to.

This was radio consisting of comedy shows,



variety programs, big band remotes, anthology drama, genre drama (including Westerns, detective shows, supernatural mystery, red-blooded action adventure, cop shows, and every variation thereof), fifteen minute soap operas, as well as shows for children. Lamparski notes that the latter was just about the only type of show to which he didn’t listen. He listened to children’s adventure shows (*Jack Armstrong*, *Captain Midnight*), but not to the softer kid stuff like *Let’s Pretend*. Again, young Richard Lamparski operated in a sui generis environment. Oh well.

While there was nothing particularly unusual about Lamparski’s fascination with the two great mass entertainment media of his youth, it’s pretty evident that they formed the stuff of his later career. Lamparski’s claim to fame consisted not only of tracking down the whereabouts of the usual suspects, i.e., well-remembered and not-so-well-remembered movie actors, but also the

people who portrayed the memorable characters of radio.

Lamparski's first job in Hollywood when he was a lad of nineteen was delivering teletypes at CBS, not a bad way to get a literal foot in the door in show business. His heroes when he tried to get his start in radio were Robert Ripley ("because I thought he got to meet all of those people – of course he didn't") and John Nesbit of the *Passing Parade* ("he told a very good story, and never exaggerated"). His first adult friend was a woman who had worked as a secretary for Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth, and had remained with Hayworth after the two stars were divorced. She took young Mr. Lamparski under her wing and gave him his first great lesson in journalism – "don't exaggerate." She also encouraged Lamparski in his dream of being a radio personality, because she felt he was a good listener.

By 1965, when Lamparski's radio series got off the ground, radio had already been largely forgotten. References to radio's role in the development of popular culture in this country were limited, virtually non-existent, remarkable when you consider that the final old-fashioned radio series had been off the air for only three years at that point. Lamparski's continuing interest in the actors who had played Lum and Abner, Amos and Andy, Ma Perkins and other forgotten favorites was very much against the grain of mainstream journalism at the time. Of course, Lamparski never really considered himself or his interests to be mainstream.

The radio series began in March of 1965, after Lamparski approached WBAI-FM in New York with the idea of conducting a weekly interview show, an unadorned half hour of conversation with some past star of stage, screen or radio. Against all odds, his idea was taken on and the show began. The odds against acceptance were even greater than they would seem at first glance, because WBAI was a most unusual station. WBAI was, in most ways, the ultimate representation of the 1960's, increasingly so as the decade wore on. Offering mostly political commentary, discussions, interviews with counterculture figures and sporting a consistently anti-mainstream tone, WBAI was pretty much the last place you would expect to find an interview

with the stars of *I Remember Mama*. Interviews with the directors of *La Mama*, perhaps, but that's as close as it would get.

To the surprise of many, the show was a hit. It's difficult to get a fix on how many people tuned in, since WBAI was a non-commercial station and was on the FM dial (in an era when a substantial number of radios came equipped with only an AM tuner), but it was clear that Lamparski was having an impact. And he was right - it wasn't the elderly who were tuning in, but people who had seen these former stars and near-stars on TV, in reruns, on the Late Show at three in the morning, and had heard of them second-hand from their parents.

Lamparski's own theory, which he articulated to the station only once the show was underway, was that older people would avoid the series like the plague, because it made them feel old. The true target audience for *Whatever Became Of?* were the movie buffs, and for the most part, these were college kids.

Most importantly, the interviews did not, as the less empathic members of the media tended to think, consist of portraits of the forgotten. The radio stars, silent movie stars and character actors (with an occasional politician thrown in for good measure) were all fondly remembered by those old enough to have been witness to their earlier fame. These were individuals who had simply slipped from public view. The ideal *Whatever Became Of?* subject was someone you recalled very well. You simply didn't know where they were now.

It was typical, of course, that with the radio show's success, producers would try to capitalize on it without understanding the fundamentals behind that success. Lamparski states that at a certain point, there was talk of mounting a *Whatever Became Of?* TV series. The proposal was that it would be dropped onto the weekend evening lineup right after Lawrence Welk - whose demographic really did consist of the older folks Lamparski was trying to avoid. Three pilot episodes were filmed, but nothing came of it.

What Lamparski realized and what his would-be TV producers did not was that most of

the people he was interviewing were frail and often not especially focused. Audio was acceptable - the audience could and would envision the subject as being not so terribly different from the way he or she appeared in their heyday. And the books that eventually made their appearance were dry enough and distant enough to cushion the blow of seeing the inevitable "what they look like now" photo.

But TV? The show, thankfully, never got off the ground, and Lamparski notes that it would have been "the show that bummed out America." Score one for radio as the "theater of imagination."

In 1967, Crown Publishers got involved, issuing a collection of two page essays on *Whatever Became Of?* subjects, each one complete with one vintage photo of the subject and one current photo. While these were frequently based upon the radio interviews, Lamparski devoted considerable effort to flesh out the narratives and add further details that had not been part of the broadcasts.

Moreover, when read closely, the books reveal a rich vein of rather dry humor, something Lamparski was able to utilize far more effectively in print than he could have done on tape. His subjects, human and fallable as they were, had a habit of interjecting attitudes, delusions, and observations amply illustrating their powers of introspection or utter lack thereof. When laid out for the reader, often pointedly without any clarification, commentary or reaction, these can be very, very telling.

In the very first volume, a portrait of Olympic gold medalist (and former Tarzan) Johnny Weissmuller notes that the athlete's rowdy sense of humor failed to impress local authorities in Florida when he turned in a false fire alarm.

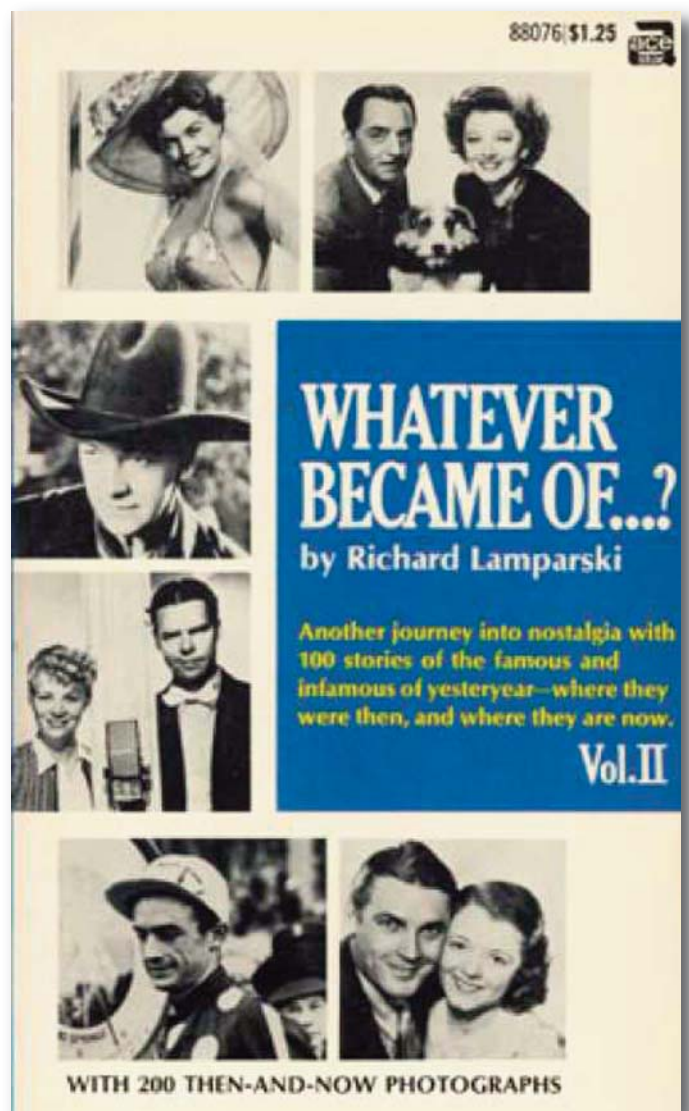
A summary of the career of Clifton Fadiman, found in the third volume of the series, turns a bit harsh when, after observing that Fadiman's intellectual accomplishments, once universally admired, seem rather thin when considered today, Lamparski concludes by quoting Fadiman as saying "I am not a profound thinker." Lamparski follows this quote with the statement that "no arguments have been heard."

A list of puzzling *non sequiturs* to be found in

these books wouldn't be complete without Lamparski's observation (found in the series' first volume) that former musical star Harry Richman, living in retirement, is in excellent health and has the companionship of a pet squirrel.

You just have to admire Lamparski's refusal to elaborate on that.

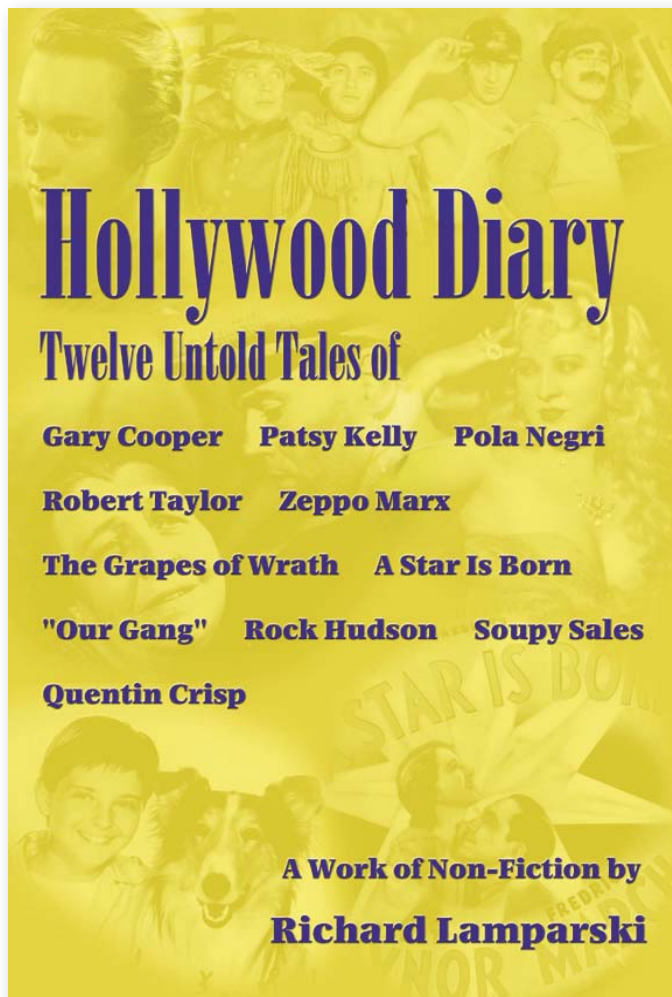
Who could have known that the first volume was just the beginning? Apparently *Whatever Became Of?* sold well. Really, really well. Well enough for "Volume Two" to appear in 1968 (featuring an eclectic mix that included Thomas Dewey, Abbott and Costello, and Nathan Leopold. Let's see someone isolate that demographic). And three more (helpfully numbered as Volumes Three through Five) in the years following. Then, several more volumes numbered Eight to Eleven, the last one published in 1989. I know,



I know - what about Volumes Six and Seven? A mystery to many, but there's a perfectly simple explanation - which I'll get to, later.

Lamparski recorded his shows in impressive bursts of activity. He recalls that "I might do three or four shows in one week. Then I'd go out to the west coast and do one a day for thirty days. Then I might go to Europe and do ten in fourteen days."

He explains that "I would position the shows to my own taste. I would do everything to my own taste - I never had a director, a producer or an agent, so I did everything according to the way I would want to listen to it. There would be a political person one week, and the next week someone very silly."



Not often remembered today are the specials Lamparski would do in addition to his regular broadcasts. They were called "High Tea," and he recalls doing them with P.G. Wodehouse, Tallulah

Bankhead, and Dorothy Parker.

From the very beginning, Richard Lamparski's relationship with counterculture radio station WBA1 was a troubled one. The station's management had agreed to take on the series in a misguided attempt to broaden their demographic ("they thought, well our stuff is much too youth oriented, and so this will appeal to those older folks who remember the Thirties"), but the everyday staff of the station viewed him with undisguised contempt. This was the Sixties, after all, and while Lamparski was not significantly older than most of the young men and women working at the station, he wore a suit and tie, and wore his hair a whole lot shorter than they did.

Forty years later, the nature of that professional relationship still provokes his ire. He notes that if the WBA1 staff had taken the trouble to talk to him, they would have discovered that he wasn't far removed from their political views ("I always opposed the war in Vietnam," he hastens to note.). But something about the very nature of Lamparski's show seems to have offended them - chatting with men and women whose heyday was decades in the past seems to have outraged most of the personnel, who no doubt had little patience for nostalgia at that point in history. Nostalgia for the Thirties and Forties would have implied nostalgia for the values of that era, and that would not have been welcome at WBA1, not at all. At best, Lamparski's efforts would have been dismissed as irrelevant, and back in the Sixties, that was much more of a pejorative than it would be today - if nothing else, we've come a long way in battling prejudice against the irrelevant.

So, the clash between Lamparski and his home station (the show was also heard on several stations on the West Coast and in the Southwest) came down to establishment vs. hippie, not something that would have been conducive to a happy working environment. It meant that the show was often bumped for live discussions of political issues, phone-in shows that ran over their allotted time, and almost anything else that could go wrong. WBA1's programming was notorious for its freewheeling nature ("those shows were filled with angst"), and that less-than-precise sense of priority seemed to work

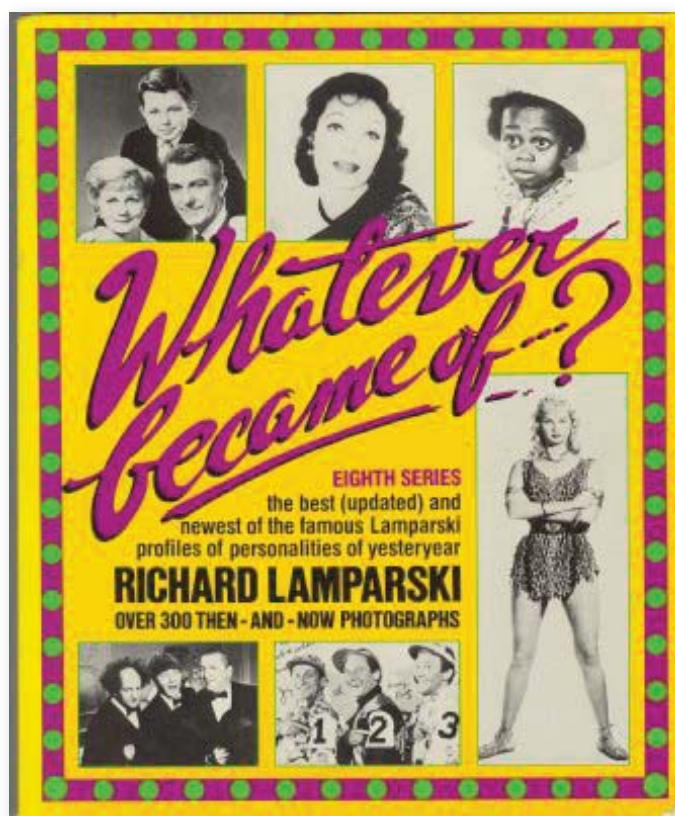
against *Whatever Became Of!* more often than not. If the show was scheduled for nine p.m. on a Monday or Tuesday night, the odds were pretty strong that a listener tuning in at that time was going to hear something else. At best, there might be an announcement that they were running 90 minutes behind schedule. Listening to the show required a lot of patience and determination.

Under these circumstances, it's remarkable that *Whatever Became Of?* thrived, but that's what it did. To this day, Lamparski takes considerable pride in the fact that the show was consistently listed in the *New York Times*' "Radio Highlights" section for that broadcast day. Somebody over at the Times was listening and was suitably impressed.

It's not hard to see why. The show fed a need on the public's part that not only assured its continuation, but also guaranteed that the book series would continue, with a new volume turning up about every other year. Sales must have been quite brisk, because even today, more than forty years after the appearance of the first volumes, they're quite easy to find. There are tons of them out there.

Now about those missing volumes. Crown published the first five collections, and each of those had a later mass market paperback edition as well. Around 1976, Lamparski received an offer he couldn't refuse, from Bantam books. Bantam wanted the *Whatever Became Of?* series for themselves, to be published as mass market paperback originals. Lamparski couldn't overlook what he viewed as a very generous offer, and went with Bantam.

Unfortunately, it was a move he regretted almost immediately. In addition to differences of opinion about formatting, editing and other matters, Lamparski was galled by the fact that Bantam titled their first *Whatever Became Of?* volume as the "First Annual Edition." Lamparski correctly pointed out that this would be terribly confusing to readers, who would naturally assume that the book was a reprint of the Crown Volume One from several years back. That title would ensure that Lamparski would lose a substantial chunk of his established readership. The Bantam collection went out as the "First Annual," nonetheless.



The next Bantam volume was labeled as the "Second Annual Edition," and that was the end of his relationship with Bantam. He found his way back to Crown, and 1982 saw the publication of *Whatever Became Of?* Volume Eight - its number acknowledging the two Bantam paperbacks as phantom Volumes Six and Seven. All you completists can now sleep at night.

What made Richard Lamparski an outstanding interviewer? Obviously, much of his strength lay in his ability to do the research, to track these people down, something that was far more challenging in the Sixties than it is today. As noted already, Lamparski was a pretty good listener, and this comes across in the recordings one hears. He allows his subjects to go on and on, revealing quite a bit about themselves, without displaying much of an agenda of his own.

One clue to the show's success can be found in a clear distinction Lamparski makes today. He states that he was very much taken aback when the Nostalgia market ultimately morphed into the trivia market, when a fascination with minutiae replaced interest in individuals. Lamparski recalls beings increasingly irked when he would be intro-

duced as the "King of Trivia," something he didn't feel related to his work at all. He finally snapped at one interviewer that "I'm not interested in trivia at all. Trivia concerns facts, and I'm interested in people. There are no trivial people."

Lamparski notes ruefully that some of the most interesting material cropped up after the tape recorder was shut. He'd finish the interview, stick around for a few more questions to flesh out the book pieces, and would make some random observation ("you don't seem to have any photos of yourself around"). The interviewee might say that "those are in the library" - and while they were in there, something would crop up "that would make my hair stand on end."

He credits that phenomenon to the presence, or lack thereof, of the tape recorder. "People were very, very conscious of that tape recorder, and there were many things that they would not say. Once the recorder was off and was put away, my interviews would improve immeasurably."

It took thirty years, but Lamparski managed to set down for posterity some of the more extraordinary admissions in a pair of books he published recently - *Hollywood Diary* and *New York Diary*.

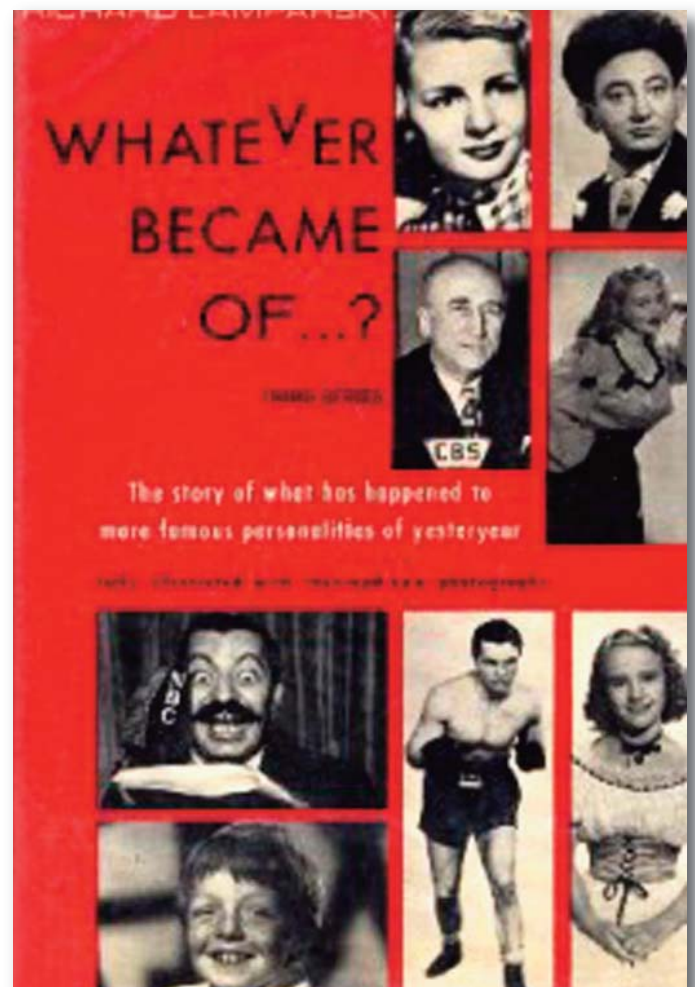
Of course, some guests weren't put off by the tape recorder at all. His interview with Irene Wicker, the famous "Story Lady" of children's radio, was one of his easiest. He asked her how she got her start in radio, and she talked. For thirty minutes. She would have talked for another thirty, but Lamparski signaled that he was running out of tape.

The Story Lady's interview also reflected a phenomenon that Lamparski dealt with in his recent memoirs. Her husband was Victor J. Hammer, a wealthy art dealer and brother of famous business tycoon Armand Hammer. The Story Lady's husband was openly hostile to Lamparski, who realized that the man didn't approve of his wife's former showbiz life. Time after time, Lamparski would be turned down for an interview by a female former celebrity, only to be rewarded with acceptance when he contacted her again some time later - after she was divorced or widowed.

One guest Lamparski recalls not liking at all

was the late Goodman Ace. The legendary radio writer did not bring along his famous wife, Jane, who would have been a great favorite; instead of speaking to Lamparski as an interviewee, all he did was schtick. Lamparski admits that it was probably funny, because people did laugh, but by the end of the interview, he says he was surprised that Ace couldn't tell from his tone of voice that he was, well, really pissed. Ace had held Lamparski at arm's length, and that didn't make for a satisfying interview.

Based on the many, many radio actors Richard Lamparski met during the eight-year run of his program, he came away with the unshakable belief that there were no people in show business who enjoyed their work more than network radio actors. "They were well paid, well treated and had a terrific discipline all their own. Whenever I made a date to meet one of those people, they always arrived in plenty of time. Even when their personal nature was disagreeable,



when they heard that I wanted to talk about *Mister District Attorney* or some such show, they would enjoy themselves immensely."

Lamparski also mentions that he was a friend of the late Mary Margaret McBride, who had her own view of this subject. "She said that when you listened to a television performer being interviewed, most of what they talked about were complaints. Radio people enjoyed their work. Of course, television is a hell of a lot more work than radio was. There were things you had to worry about that you would never worry about in radio. Like maybe you didn't shave that morning, or you were wearing the same tie that you'd worn the day before."

One element Lamparski believes may have troubled radio actors was the lack of personal recognition. "I never met an actor who didn't want to be recognized. Radio actors simply didn't have that." He recalls Lowell Thomas being turned away from a network newsroom on the day Kennedy was assassinated, because the security card simply didn't recognize him.

The last straw in Lamparski's troubled relationship with his home base came in 1973. A trip to Europe had yielded a lengthy interview with 1930's superstar Louise Rainer. While largely forgotten today (due to her decision to retire relatively young), Ms. Rainer was huge in the years before the Second World War. She is one of the few actresses to have garnered two Best Actress Oscars - consecutive, no less. She's been reclusive in the years since her retirement and lives in Germany, so Lamparski's ability to get an hour's worth of conversation from her was quite a coup.

Unfortunately, nobody will ever hear that interview, because the folks at WBAI lost it. When he was informed that the tapes were missing, Lamparski sought out the head engineer. Had the tapes been misplaced? Accidentally wiped? Damaged? The only response he could get was that "these things happen."

It was all too much, and that was it for the audio series. The books continued for another decade and a half, but by the 1980's, the paradigms had shifted. Everybody was doing nostalgia. People were more interested in the Good Old Days than ever before, but there was no

longer any novelty to being the one tracking the old faces down. Nostalgia had gone big business, with regular newspaper features, magazines and many, many other books devoted to the subject. Lamparski's relatively straightforward, one might say *humanist* approach, didn't have the sense of uniqueness that would set it apart from the others mining the same mother lode.

It's also worth noting that by Volume Eleven, Lamparski was no longer able to mix the old with the obscure. The earlier volumes had consisted of interviews with former celebrities who had gone obscure, but who had been a very big deal in their day. Gene Tunney, Charles Lindbergh, and the stars of Amos n' Andy were A-list has beens, one could say. By volume eleven, Lamparski was forced to bring us up to date on some people who hadn't been all that large in the public consciousness in the first place. A little Carmel Myers goes a long way.

Our hero lay low for a time, but continued his investigations. In 1981, he had published *Hidden Hollywood*, a volume examining the former homes of yesteryear's superstars, noting their location, history and eventual demolition. As noted, he has recently generated the twin volumes *Hollywood Diary* and *New York Diary*, detailing some of the relationships he forged during the Sixties and Seventies with his interview subjects, as well as with some of the more colorful members of showbiz found on either coast.

Now well into his seventies, Lamparski remains very much aware of show business history and does his best to keep up. The most surprising thing about the man himself? When asked about file copies of his radio shows, his books and any other showbiz detritus, he states simply that "I'm not very nostalgic or sentimental myself." Who'd have thought?

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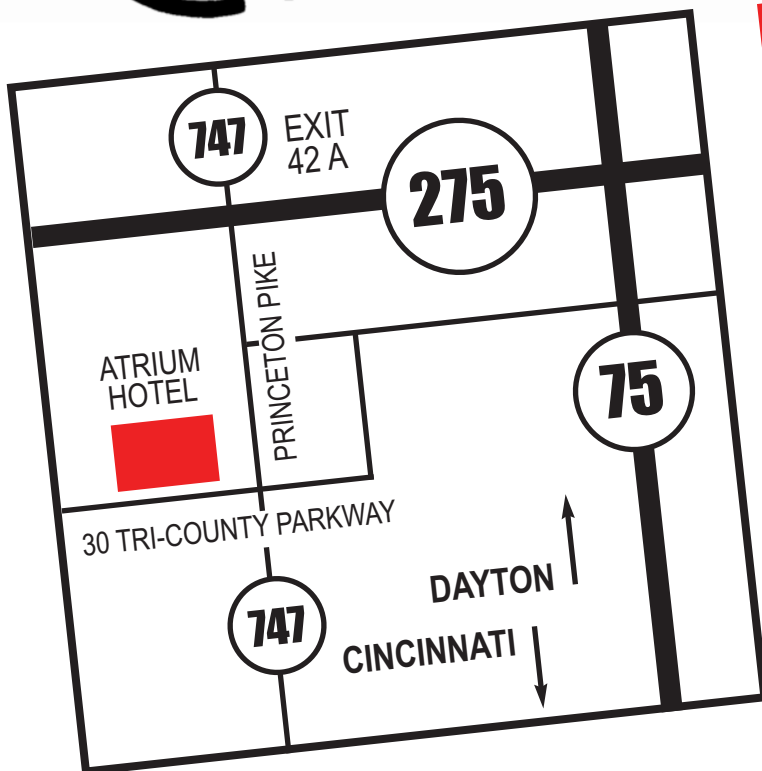
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The Adventures of Detec-a-tives **Black and Blue**

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NOTE: The author wishes to acknowledge the research assistance of Irene Heinstein in the preparation of this article.

They were not the first detectives to appear on radio, as some sources claim today. But they were close. Detectives Black and Blue took to the airwaves on January 5, 1931. Of course, Sherlock Holmes had been featured in several radio programs before that, dating back to 1922, although this Baker Street detective would not get his own series until much later. By 1929, CBS was broadcasting True Detective Mysteries on a weekly basis on Thursday nights, but this analogy did not have a featured crime solver, but rather a series of different ones. The first true continuing detective series was National Surety Secret Cases which began on NBC in 1930 from the studios of WJZ with a "Detective Harkness" as the hero. Despite the intriguing title, most of the "secret cases" turned out to be routine burglaries, thefts, or frauds. On radio "Harkness" worked for National Surety Company (the sponsor) which had been incorporated in New York in 1897, covering casualty insurance, fidelity and surety bonds, plus burglary insurance. By the 1930s it had become one of the largest companies in its field.

"The Adventures of Detec-a-tives Black and Blue" as the network actually referred to it in its publicity blurbs, was created by the familiar team of Harry A. Earnshaw (1878-1953) and Raymond R. Morgan, who included their names in the large advertisements praising the series in flamboyant terms, i.e. "America's Greatest Radio Success." Black and Blue always referred to themselves as "detec-a-tives," underscoring the fact that they were not to be taken seriously. They were stumbling, bumbling investigators



whose purpose was to uncover mirth, not evidence, in the course of their inquiries. Even the sponsors pointed out in their publicity items that Black and Blue were "comedy detectives" and "boys and girls will want to follow their funny adventures." Although the series had started out as a Tuesday through Saturday evening show on the west coast, within a few months it had been moved into "the children's hour" at 5:15 pm.

The firm of Earnshaw-Young, with their offices at 714 West 10th Street in Los Angeles, would create the radio program for Chandu in 1932. Harry Earnshaw and Raymond Morgan wrote the early scripts for this series, with help from Vera Oldham, who eventually took over the writing. When that magician was popular enough on radio to be made into a 1934 movie serial (with Bela Lugosi in the lead) Earnshaw, Morgan, and Oldham received screen credit for their radio shows, upon which the screen play by Barry Barrington was based.

There were two primary sponsors for Black

and Blue; Folger's Coffee at the beginning and lasting about two years. The second sponsor was Iodent Toothpaste for about a year and then it became a syndicated series, ending about 1935. James Folger at age 15 came from Nantucket to California with his two older brothers, seeking their fortune during the California Gold Rush. It turned out that he made his fortune in coffee beans, not gold nuggets. James founded his coffee company in San Francisco in 1850, and named it after himself, of course. It would go on to become the largest coffee company in North America. In 1931 when the firm sponsored "the Adventures of Detec-a-tives Black and Blue" five times a week, they also sponsored a second program, which aired weekly on Thursday nights at 9 pm entitled "Folgeria." Billed as "the comic opera of the air" it supposedly featured music, intrigue, and humor.

Folger's tried to connect their two programs in their advertising campaign by referring to Black and Blue as "the sleuths of Folgeria" or "the comedy detectives from Folgeria." Throughout the year of 1931, Folger's ran regular ads, primarily in west coast newspapers, that promoted both their crime-solving pair and their comic opera. These ads frequently had caricatures of Black and Blue, which actually resembled the two actors in the leading roles, Charles Forsyth (Jim Black) and Len Wright (Frank Blue.) In both the drawings and actual photographs of the two used in the publicity campaign, Forsyth, a large man who resembled Oliver Hardy, dressed like him too: dark suit, black tie, and dark bowler hat. Slender Len Wright whose mustache was more noticeable than Forsyth's, was usually portrayed in black and white checkered coat and a Sherlockian deerstalker hat which sat crosswise on his head.

Folger's produced a number of premiums directly connected to the show. They sent out a

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PINEAPPLE, can 17c <small>LIBBY'S Extra Fancy Sliced—Large No. 2 1/2 Cans</small>	LEGS LAMB lb. 21 1/2c <small>Baby Nevada Spring Lamb</small>
BUTTER lb. 35c <small>BROOKFIELD—Solid—America's Largest Selling Brand of Butter</small>	FRYERS ... lb. 35c <small>OR PROBLETS—Fancy Fresh Bressed</small>
EGGS doz. 28c <small>THE VALLEY—U. S. Extra—Medium Size</small>	HAMS lb. 19c <small>Eastern Sugar Cured—Half or Whole</small>
MAYONNAISE . 24c <small>SHARPS or BEST FOODS—Fine Jars—Limit 2 Bottles</small>	LEGS PORK lb. 17 1/2c <small>Small, Eastern Pork—Half or Whole</small>
TUNA FISH can 12 1/2c <small>SHANCO—Large Pieces—3/4's—Wonderful for Sandwiches and Salads</small>	BEEF ROAST, lb. 12 1/2c <small>Prime Beef—Shoulder Cuts</small>
PEAS can 10c <small>MARYLAND CHIEF—Small Sweet Sugar Peas—No. 2 Tall Cans</small>	PORK STEAK lb. 25c <small>Center Cuts of Fresh Legs</small>

Good News For Our Neighbors on the Peninsula

STEAKS lb. 37c

SIRLOIN, TENDERLOIN or PORTERHOUSE—SWIFT'S SELECT CHICAGO CORN FED PRIZE BEEF—Each cut stamped—money gladly refunded if you are not entirely satisfied. This quality meat can only be obtained at the Peninsula Stores Meat Markets.

CORN, S & W can 14c <small>EXTRA FANCY BABY KERNEL—No. 2 Tall Can—Limit 4 Cans</small>	HAM SLICES 2 for 25c <small>Large Center Slices of Eastern Sugar Cured Ham</small>
LETTUCE each 3c <small>Large Fancy Head Heads</small>	LAMB ROAST lb. 11c <small>Baby Lamb Shoulder</small>
TOMATOES. lb. 4c <small>Large, Fancy and Firm</small>	LAMB LOINS. lb. 22c <small>Baby Lamb—Delicious for Roasting</small>
CELERY each 7 1/2c <small>Large Fancy Stalks</small>	RACK of LAMB . . lb. 21c <small>With Vealies in Stuff and Bake</small>
CORNED BEEF . . can 19c <small>LIBBY'S Fancy No. 1 Cans</small>	LAMB CHOPS, . . . lb. 22c <small>Baby Milk Lamb—Rib Chops</small>
ASPARAGUS Tips, tin 15c <small>LIBBY'S Pickle Size Tins</small>	STEAKS lb. 19c <small>Round, Young Baby Beef</small>
SANKA COFFEE . . can 45c <small>One Pound Cans</small>	BACON lb. 22c <small>By the Piece—Sugar Cured</small>
Tea, Tree 1/2 lb. Orange Pekoe 35¢ 1/2 lb. Japan 29¢	Carrots and Peas, can 19c <small>Tender Carrots and Peas Ready to Serve—S. & W. No. 2 Tall Cans</small>
CATSUP bottle 15c <small>S. & W.—Large Bottles</small>	PEACHES can 21c <small>S. & W. EXTRA FANCY, in Extra Heavy Syrup—Large No. 2 1/2 Cans</small>
MILK 5 cans 24c <small>LIBBY'S or GOLDEN STATE—Tall Cans</small>	BAKED BEANS. . . can 21c <small>S. & W. Oven Baked, New England Style—Large Cans</small>
FRUIT SALAD. . . can 15c <small>DEL MONTE—No. 1 Tall Cans</small>	ANCHOVIES. . . . glass 25c <small>GIANNI'S Gold Label, Stuffed and Stuffed—3 1/2 oz. Glass</small>



Folger's Coffee

33c
65c

One-Pound Cans
Two Pounds

A Rubber Toy Balloon of Detective Black or Blue with every can. Also if you send in piece of tin from can you receive set of Handcuffs, Detective Caps and Badges.

large photo of the two actors, both in business dress and in their “detec-a-tives” costumes. The company also distributed brass badges, embossed with an eagle and the inscription:

DETECTIVES BLACK & BLUE FOLGER'S COFFEE

By far the most unusual premium offered by the coffee company was a free rubber doll of the funny private investigators, with each pound of Folger's Coffee purchased. So a customer could plunk down the 33 cents it cost for a pound of coffee in 1931 and get their choice of Black or Blue toy doll. Apparently the manufacturer of the rubber toy dolls was working with insufficient information of the two as they had previously been portrayed. Black doll was still the taller of the two and he had his bowler on, but he was wearing the black and white checkered suit that Blue had always worn. Blue doll was smaller than Black

and wore what looks like a sports jacket and dark trousers with his deerstalker.

The second sponsor, the Iodent Chemical Company of Detroit, which advertised its toothpaste on the show, did not publicize the program as much as Folger's did in the press. But they did offer a few premiums, including a similar brass badge (on which “Iodent” replaced “Folger's”) and a deerstalker hat, resembling the one Blue supposedly wore all the time.

Earnshaw, who wrote most of the early scripts, placed his fictional detectives in a city he knew well, Duluth, the port city of Minnesota on Lake Superior. He had spent 15 years living and working in Duluth in the early 1900's. He was employed there with a wholesale grocery firm, Stone, Ordean and Wells Company and edited their house organ, a humorous magazine called “Ginger.” A 1915 advertisement in a journal that listed jobs for writers, Earnshaw stated his monthly magazine was always in need of “snappy jokes that are clever and original.” In addition, he indicated jokes about the grocery business or food products were preferred and he would pay twenty -five cents each for jokes he accepted. Around 1918, he moved to Boston, MA where he and a partner, Edward Randall, had bought the publishing firm of Everett Press. A decade later, he had his own advertising and production firm in Los Angeles, but he never forgot the northwest territory of Minnesota.

Approximately a half dozen audio copies of this series have survived, the first episode, and five others from the syndicated period....dates not confirmed but probably 1933-34. In the first episode Black and Blue (they never used their first names with each other) are clerks at Brownstone and Parker, which not surprisingly, is a wholesale grocery warehouse. Both men are single and reside at Mrs. Webster's boarding house on Lake Street. Gayne Whitman (1890-1958)



**“The Adventures of Detec-a-tives
BLACK and BLUE”**

COLUMBIA NETWORK

Every Night (except Sunday and Monday)

AMERICA'S GREATEST RADIO SUCCESS

FOLGER'S COFFEE

SPONSORED BY AMERICA'S FINEST COFFEE

Tuesdays 8:15 p.m.

Other Nights . . . 8:00 p.m.

EARNSHAW-YOUNG, INC.

HARRY A. EARNSHAW and RAYMOND E. MORGAN

the announcer in this first episode, assured us Black and Blue are “the dumbest and luckiest” detectives and “we promise you thrills, suspense, humor, and action” in this series. It will take a few episodes before these warehouse employees are officially “detec-a-tives” but they quickly uncover crime at the warehouse and they make mention of Roy Bowman, the warehouse foreman who will become their arch nemesis in subsequent adventures.

Every episode started off with a lively, rousing march tune which ran at least a minute at the beginning and end, sometimes a minute and a half. Of course this permitted any local sponsor to make his pitch (over the music after the engineer lowered the volume) and thus not interrupt the story of the day. As in soap operas, the announcer (not Gayne Whitman in later episodes) would provide a “catch-up” section, telling briefly of the circumstances leading up to “today’s adventure.” Sometimes mention is made of the intrepid duo’s motto, “Detec-a-tives Black and Blue; good men, tried and true” which was used to impress potential clients or bolster their own courage.

Two of the episodes are consecutive ones from the story of Olga Ragloff and the stolen bonds. (Note that episode titles differ from one dealer to another since none exists in the recordings so conflicting names have been accorded the episodes by various dealers and collectors.) In these two programs, Black and Blue, having just saved Olga Ragloff from a fiery death in an old flour mill near Duluth and are in the process of trying to steal back her bonds from gangster Roy Bowman. He was the former crooked warehouse foreman stealing sugar but now he’s an arch criminal. Black and Blue make their way to his 5th story apartment where he catches them in the act of escaping with the stolen bonds. A fight in the darkness ensues and Black accidentally



throws Blue through the skylight.

Three other shows in circulation are from another case, and while related, are not consecutive. They deal with Black and Blue going north into Canada to help capture the scar-faced Indian named “The Ghost”. In the course of that investigation, they take the wrong train, are thrown off in the snow, are captured by railroad bandits, later captured by renegade Indians, but manage to escape in a horse-drawn sleigh.

Sound effects are what you’d expect in a low-budget 30s syndicated show. Those from the sound effects albums are good (motor boats, fog horns, steam trains) while the ones performed manually by the sound effects man are mediocre. Footsteps, door knocks, and broken crockery are not realistic. The most noticeable need for improvement is in the gunshots, which sound exactly like a wooden lathe slapped against a leather pillow, which was probably how they were done. Moreover, all gunshots sound exactly the same, regardless of firearm called for in the script: pistol, shot gun, or Winchester repeating rifle.

Supporting cast is kept to a minimum, with Black and Blue having 75 % of the lines. One or

Are You Searching for a New Kind of Coffee?

Once you have tasted the rare tang and full-bodied richness of Central American high-altitude coffees, you will never be satisfied until you have made this coffee secret your own. What you get is a new *kind* of coffee; a FLAVOR produced by a peculiar combination of rich soil, altitude, sun's rays and tropic rainfall that is found nowhere else in the world.

Only a fraction of the world's supply is grown in the favored areas where we secure these coffees. Consequently, the average ordinary blends have the same common taste of coffees from a common volume-supply region. Folger's is a rich, clear flavor—Nature leaves out the "rough," offensive oils from the selected mountain-grown coffees used. We suggest you try the famous Folger Coffee Test.

A fair challenge—accept it!

Just go to your grocer today and buy a pound of Folger's Coffee. Drink it tomorrow morning. Next morning serve the coffee you have been using. The third morning serve Folger's again. Judge the flavor. After this critical

taste test, we are confident you will decide for Folger's—the flavor treasure from Central America. If our prediction is wrong, then your grocer will refund your purchase price. We'll pay him. Could anything be more fair?

FOLGER COFFEE COMPANY
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VACUUM PACKED
of course... always fresh!

AT 8 P.M.
TONIGHT—
AND EVERY NIGHT EXCEPT SUNDAY AND MONDAY
(TUESDAY AT 8:15)
COLUMBIA COAST NETWORK

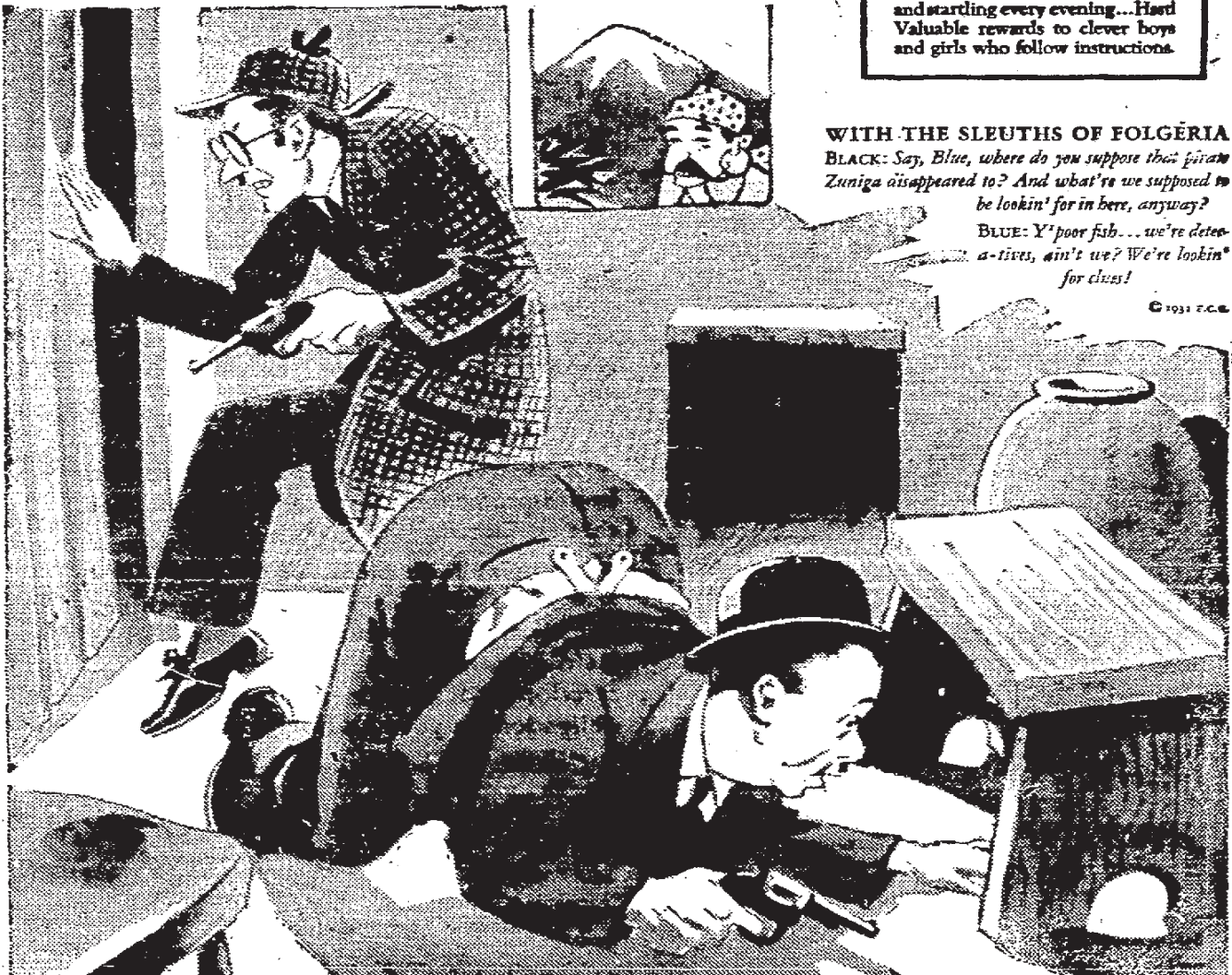
BLACK & BLUE

Radio's star comedy team, Black and Blue, invite you to enjoy their amusing adventures in the detecting business. Something new and startling every evening...Hard Valuable rewards to clever boys and girls who follow instructions.

WITH THE SLEUTHS OF FOLGERIA
BLACK: Say, Blue, where do you suppose that pirate Zuniga disappeared to? And what're we supposed to be lookin' for in here, anyway?

BLUE: Y' poor fish... we're detectives, ain't we? We're lookin' for clues!

© 1931 F.C.C.



two other males voices are occasionally heard in each episode, rarely three. There are no women's parts in the existing audio copies but presumably ladies were portrayed in other episodes. The vocabulary is typical of the 30s; guns are called "gats" and an expression of dismay is "For the love of mud." At least once or twice in each show either Black or Blue mispronounce a common word, i.e. "Russia" is referred to as "Roosha" and "Grant's Memoirs" become "Grant's Muh-MOR-eez."

It's difficult to determine when any syndicated show stops airing. While this series started on the west coast on the Columbia Network, it eventually went into syndication and would have been heard mostly on smaller, non-network stations. Best guess would be in the 1934-35 range. It was usually a daily show, so conservatively over 400 episodes might have been produced. (And today, some of them might still be in a little-used broom closet of an 800 watt station in Podunk.)

Long after Black and Blue disappeared, the firm of Earnshaw & Young continued its entertainment business, including "Chandu, the Magician" which was broadcast through the late 1940's. The original announcer, Gayne Whitman, remained at the microphone for many years. He left "The Adventures of Detec-a-tives Black and Blue" in 1932 to take over the lead in "Chandu," a role he would hold for three years. Thereafter he was the announcer or narrator on dozens of radio series: Cavalcade of America, Pacific Story, The Greatest of These, The Telephone Hour, etc.

Little is know of Len Wright after his years of playing Blue. His partner at the mike, Charles Forsyth, switched to the sound effects table at CBS in Los Angeles and became the chief sound effects artist for "Lux Radio Theater." John Dunning praises Forsyth's work there as "capturing authentic recorded sounds as he traveled during summer breaks" and also he "developed innovative manual effects." Having heard so many inadequate sound effects as Black, Forsyth may have been inspired to do much better when he had the chance.

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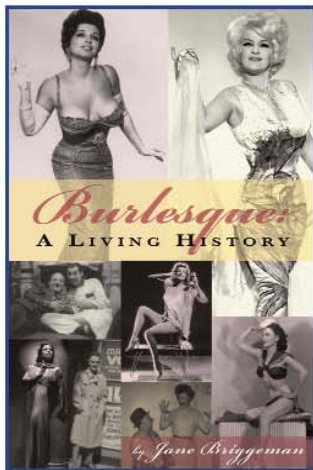
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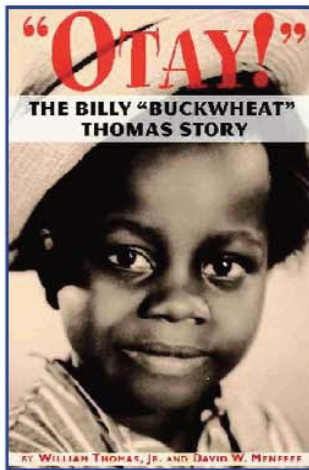
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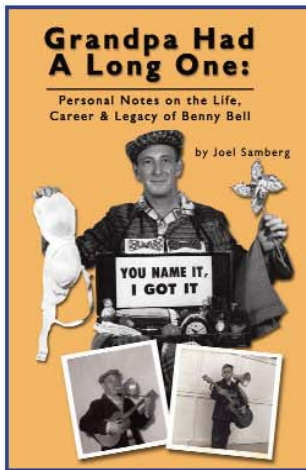
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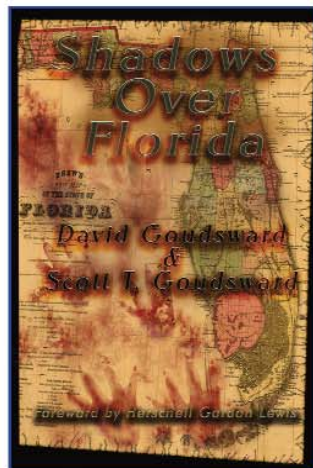
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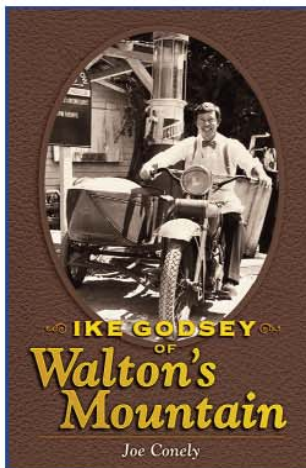
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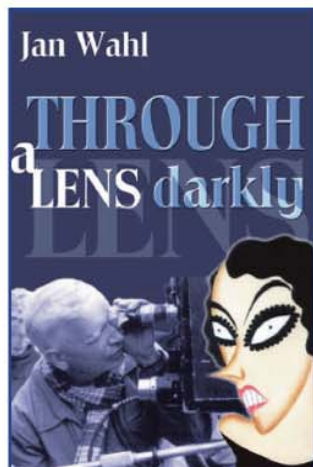
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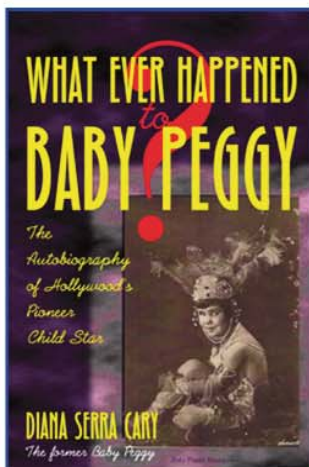
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Dramatic Dénouement: Radio Playhouse & **The Faces of Love**

By Jim Widner © 2009

I began collecting in the early seventies just as there was a resurgence of dramatic radio at the start of that decade. While I have fond memories of listening to the last of radio drama in the early sixties, I was actually a child of television having grown up in the fifties, and most of my radio drama experience came from the programs that were broadcast as a result of the resurgence.

During that period, it seemed as if there was no end to radio drama as many stations began carrying the programs that gave many of today's young collectors their spark of interest in the hobby. I was familiar with many of the programs being broadcast, but was surprised when Jack French, editor of the Metro Old Time Radio Club publication, *Radio Recall*, brought to my attention some episodes of a radio soap called *The Faces of Love* which the Old Time Radio Researchers organization released recently in one of their Distribution CDs. Neither Jack nor I had ever heard of the program and that sparked the two of us to want to find out more.

After its offering of the Zero Hour in 1973 and its subsequent demise of that series due to low response, the Mutual Broadcasting System decided to try again creating a series of four programs under an umbrella called *Radio Playhouse*. *Radio Playhouse* was originally the name of the umbrella created by Mutual in 1953 through which it offered over 1 million dollars worth of transcribed series to its network. Using the same concept, the umbrella of four programs premiered over WOR Mutual on August 4th, 1975. The series was produced by a division of Young and Rubicam, one of the major advertising agencies of the time. Richard Cox was the creator and producer of the series and head of



Morgan Fairchild

Young and Rubicam Ventures, a division of the advertising agency.

The four programs would run Monday through Friday, originating out of the WOR studios and available to Mutual Network subscribing stations. Each of the four programs would be fifteen minutes in length and run contiguously thus creating a single hour long program umbrella each day. The programs' storylines all were themed to women and with a touch of feminist rebellion prevalent in the culture in the mid-seventies. The broadcast time was from three to four o'clock PM near the end of the Daytime serial broadcast period.

First off was: *The Faces of Love*, which Mutual described in publicity releases:

"Suddenly, a young woman is thrust, completely unprepared, into a life of complete freedom. Her traditional background conflicts with her new-found freedom to confront her with difficult decisions at every turn."

Program two was Author's Studio, which was described as:

"Dramatizations of famous novels in serialized form, the first of which is William Makepeace Thackeray's Vanity Fair. A romantic story featuring the bright and clever Becky Sharp, a liberated woman a century ahead of her time."

Program three was The Little Things in Life:

"A light-hearted and high-spirited program which takes a fond and good-natured look at the trivialities which serve to frustrate us in our daily lives. You'll recognize and identify with the events in the series."

This program was written by a name well-known to old time radio fans: Peg Lynch, creator of the probably better known *Ethel and Albert*.

Finally, the last quarter was To Have & To Hold:

"The stresses and demands which face two families of doctors who are daily involved with life and death decisions is the setting for this highly-charged dramatic program. You'll recognize and sympathize as the doctors mix the volatile combination of emotion and intellect in a contemporary society."

When *Radio Playhouse* premiered in 1975, *The Faces of Love* in its initial offering starred Joan Loring and Mason Adams with Jackson Beck announcing. I haven't heard any episodes of that run, so I'm not sure about the storyline. The second run starred a young and upcoming Morgan Fairchild as Kate Wakefield. In an email exchange with Ms. Fairchild, she told me she was living in New York City at the time and working on the television drama, *Search for Tomorrow* as well as appearing occasionally on *Kojak* and doing commercials.

In addition she had appeared on some of the *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre* shows, created and directed by Himan Brown. She said she got the role of Kate Wakefield because of her appear-

ances on *Radio Mystery Theatre*. "There were a lot of name actors doing them and we had so much fun!" she wrote. For her radio appearances she only got AFTRA scale of \$44.00 an episode!

Yet Ms. Fairchild felt it well worth the low pay for an up and coming young actress: "I got to meet so many good actors and they [the radio programs] were a hoot to work on. Also, as a young actor, I loved being able to use only my voice to convey a scene. I thought it was good training for me."

I originally had stated in my email to her that she had appeared occasionally on *Search for Tomorrow* but she corrected me: "I was not 'appearing occasionally' on *Search at the time*. I was one of the regulars on it [playing the paranoid murderess, Jennifer Pace Phillips]. Susan Lucci and I were emerging as the early 'bitch goddesses' of daytime, as the genre went through the transformation from 'kitchen table discussion' shows to more high style and upscale formats."



Mason Adams



Jackson Beck

The title of the program, *The Faces of Love*, apparently comes from its opening: "Love is gentle, faithful, swift, passionate, blind and wondrous. All these are 'faces of love'." The gist of the storyline, at least for the programs available, has the now-widowed Kate Wakefield working for a Real Estate company in a city in the U.S. Her

late husband, Tom Wakefield, apparently had been involved in drug smuggling as well as being an addict himself. His death apparently is a mystery, but he died near Glory Point in Jamaica the location of the one hundred year old estate, now-in-decline, and belonging to the Pomeroy family. Kate decides to visit the family seemingly in search of both her past life with Tom and looking for the real cause of Tom's death.

The series was written by Margaret Lewerth, a veteran radio writer with roots in the late thirties. Her credentials include the *Columbia Workshop* (adaptation of Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage* and others), *Cavalcade of America*, *Ford Theater*, *Powder Box Theater*, and *Americans at Work*. Her work in the soap genre includes a stint in the Frank & Anne Hummert radio factory where she penned a soap called *Helpmate* (1941-1944).



Clement Fowler

The veteran actor just recently passed away in August 2009 at the age of 84.

The rest of the cast was filled out by off-appearing radio acting veterans based in the New York City area including Bryna Raeburn, Staats Cotsworth, Teri Keane, Mason Adams, Joan Shea and many others. Mel Brandt was the regular announcer.

In her email to me, Ms. Fairchild stated she loved the training the radio series gave her in

Besides Morgan Fairchild, the other primary star was Clement Fowler (as Lewis Pomeroy), who has an extensive stage acting career as well as film and television. In later life Fowler had an extensive career in day time television serials based out of New York

using her voice to convey a scene. This is somewhat surprising because, quite frankly, she is very, very good in the role of Kate Wakefield. Considering this was early in her career, she is amazingly adept at emoting with her voice, sounding very natural in the role. The series is actually very well written and fun to listen to though the existing copies in the OTRR library have no dates. It is easy enough to put them in order even if the dates are missing.

In creating the hour long series, *Radio Playhouse*, Richard Cox explained that its genesis was somewhat fortuitous. At a lunch with one of his clients, Bristol Myers, the company officials were complaining about the costs of television sponsorship. Cox, a self-described radio fan, suggested radio as a medium for sponsoring a program. During the course of that lunch, the ad exec had mapped out an hour long umbrella consisting of "two soaps, the adaptation of a famous novel or play, and the comedy." The show was offered to stations on a barter basis in which Bristol Myers got six minutes of commercial time and local stations would get 12 minutes to fill with their own sponsors.

At the time, and ultimately what occurred, the idea of a new dramatic program was considered "an uphill fight." By 1975 when this series debuted, Mutual had already pulled its free offerings to local stations including *Zero Hour* because of



Staats Cotsworth



Teri Keane

disappointing response. Others had also failed. Though he was hopeful at the time, so too, *Radio Playhouse* including *The Faces of Love* would end its run and leave the air by summer's end in 1976 after 26 weeks.



History of the Hobby Part 3 **Old Time Radio Books** by Ryan Ellett

Old Time Radio fandom has always recognized radio broadcasts, naturally, as the core of the hobby. Without the audio recordings there really is no hobby. But in addition to broadcasts there have developed some other pillars to which the hobbyists give considerable attention. Premiums have long been an area of interest, albeit an increasingly expensive one. Crossover appearances in music, film, and television by radio stars have also been of special interest to OTR fans. But next to the shows themselves, perhaps no aspect of the hobby is more appreciated and

beloved by fans than the body of literature that has slowly grown over the past half-century.

A review of the entire realm of radio books is beyond the scope of this article, and would be a book unto itself. This article does not pretend to be anywhere near comprehensive but it does try to give the old time radio fan an idea of the key books that have appeared over the decades as well as an idea of trends in OTR book publication.

Those getting into the hobby in the past ten years may not appreciate the abundance of radio-related publications now so readily available. Only those with a sizable checkbook could purchase all the old time radio-themed books currently being published. This is one benefit for the contemporary collector, but there has not always been such a rich book library. This body of literature is closely intertwined with the hobby itself, and it seems appropriate in chronicling the history of the old time radio hobby to examine this thread of the old time radio world.

As detailed elsewhere, the hobby's roots stretch back to the mid-50s, but old time radio didn't really become the hobby as we now know it - a group of individuals who enjoy listening to, learning about, and preserving for future generations, America's radio drama heritage - until the 1960's. Therefore, in looking at the books that have informed old time radio fans, we'll begin with the hobby's forefathers of the 60s, many of whom had close connections to the radio industry themselves. Those earliest hobbyists were coming to the realization that a whole part of American culture had quietly faded from existence and very likely would never reappear. These fans enjoyed shows on transcription discs and, increasingly, on tape, as well as on the air in the form of reruns which were still relatively common at that time. Fans of the day also had a strong collective memory of dramatic radio, a collective memory that is quickly disappearing except in a small cir-

cle of the hobby's most veteran members. While they were rediscovering programs, what fans lacked then was much in the way of books or magazines that helped them learn about these treasured programs.

The bulk of material available to the first generation of OTR collectors was the commercial publications and promotional works put out during the days of radio's golden age. Such material included *Here They Are - Amos 'n' Andy* (1931), *Jot 'Em Down Store: Catalogue and Game and Party Book for 1939* (1939), and *One Man's Family Looks at Life* (1938). These publications were of dubious value as historical readers but they offered a direct connection to the beloved shows and did offer some general information. Many of these books today can be found on internet auctions sites for a few dollars and are entertaining, if not highly informational.

First generation OTR hobbyists also had a surprising number of collections of scripts published during the 30s and 40s, such as *Thirteen By Corwin* (1947), *Obler Omnibus* (1945), and *National Broadcasting Company Presents Great Plays 1939/1940*. The reason for publishing such works is not readily apparent to the contemporary reader. The best reason would seem to be that since most material was not rebroadcast and listeners during the 30s and 40 would not likely

have ever heard a particular program more than once, those that were considered of sufficient cultural importance should be collected and made available. These books, too, are not overly difficult to find for the contemporary OTR fan.

Of course there were a fair number of general books related to the radio industry such as *Popular Radio Stars* (1942), *Radio Stars of Today* (1937), and *Radio Personalities* (1935). These are generally of limited interest to modern readers as they rarely offer new information about a favorite program or performer, the information contained within them having been mined in later years for some of the books that have become staples of the hobby.

One of the earliest books that could be considered a radio retrospective was Harrison Summers' *A Thirty Year History of Programs Carried on National Radio Networks in the United States 1926-1956* (Summers) released in 1958, then again in 1971 (maybe to cash in on the nostalgia craze). The book was rarely, if ever, mentioned in the OTR press during that time, indicating knowledge of its existence was slight. It is referenced regularly now, however. Irving Settler's *A Pictorial History of Radio* was published soon after, in 1960. Short on text, it includes many interesting photographs from the era.

In the 1960s hobbyists began to see a few titles



trickle out that were directed especially at them and that attempted to satisfy the growing curiosity in this recently lost entertainment medium. Perhaps the hobby's first dedicated work was Buxton and Owen's freshman effort, *Radio's Golden Age*, published by Easton Valley Press in 1966. At 417 pages it was a hefty tome by any comparison for fans to feast upon, and the first published after dramatic radio's demise in 1962. A year later came Jim Harmon's classic *Great Radio Heroes*. Nineteen sixty-eight witnessed the release of one of the classic OTR memoirs - and sadly one of the very few - Mary Jane Higby's *Tune in Tomorrow*. In 1970 a few other volumes were released: Harmon's *Great Radio Comedians*, Howard Koch's *The Panic Broadcast*, Curtis Mitchell's *Cavalcade of Broadcasting*, and Ron Lackman's *Remember Radio*. For the reader interested in old time radio, the published volumes dedicated to the history of classic aural programming were no more than a dozen or two, the above-mentioned titles among them.

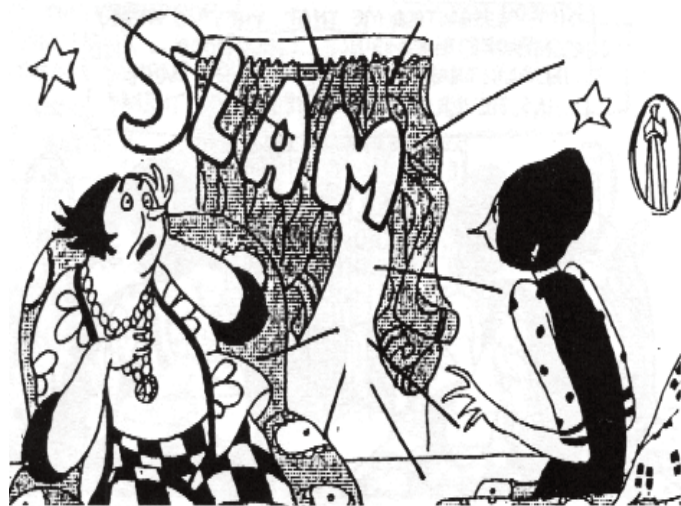
Most notable about these early works is their broad scope; most attempted to cover the entire scope of radio's golden age (Buxton & Owens, Settler, Lackmann, Summers) or a large swath of it (Harmon's two volumes). Koch's book is a notable exception to that trend, focusing just on a single episode, albeit arguably the most fa-

mous of the era. Overall, we do not find the kind of depth in these books that hobbyists would come to expect in later years. This does not diminish from these early efforts. A body of literature on any topic must begin somewhere, and books such as these which give the reader a big picture view of old time radio laid the foundation for future works that would drill further into a topic and correct and build upon the earlier works.

It's worth pointing out that Erick Barnouw's three-volume *A History of Broadcasting in the United States* was published between 1966 and 1970, directly overlapping with the genre's first hobby-focused books. Interestingly, it may be that Barnouw is more appreciated now by fans than in the hobby's early days. He is rarely mentioned in the earliest fan magazines and periodicals of the hobby. Why this is can only be a matter of conjecture, but in the sixties and seventies the average collector seemed primarily focused on the actual programs and getting hold of new material that was continuously surfacing. They wanted books that informed them about their favorite programs, which was not a central focus of Barnouw's work. Interest in a program's place in radio history and of the wider broadcasting industry-Barnouw's focus-was perhaps less than it is now.

While the focus of this article is the develop-

Cartoon from *The Wireless Age* November, 1922



ment of the hobby's body of reference books, it would be impossible to review the hobby's literature without highlighting three other important reference sources. First and foremost were the hobby publications, most prominent of them being Jay Hickerson's *Hello Again*, *Radio Dial* of the Radio Historical Society, and then the club publications that sporadically began popping up with each new group. These mimeographed publications frequently featured an article or two, usually on the more popular series, with varying amounts of research behind them. Length was frequently no more than a page.

Next were the radio and entertainment magazines of the 30s and 40s, including *Radio Mirror*, *Billboard*, and *Variety*. These publications are cited and reproduced frequently in the later hobby magazines. While such magazines now cost not insubstantial sums, they had yet to obtain such collector value in the early 70s. Similarly, newspaper back issues are frequently cited, though one can only imagine the time necessary to peruse back issues then compared to the relative ease with which database search engines can now do so.

Finally, for many fans the ubiquitous program log provided significant information in the form of dates and episode titles. For many hobbyists this was all the further they ever dealt in the detailed history of old time radio. Logs still circulate among old-school collectors, but most of them have gone online and fewer and fewer hard-copies seem to be for sale. The episode log has a special place in the hobby's heart, as can be seen from the significant number of contemporary OTR books that still include some sort of log/episode guide (albeit much more informational and detailed than their forebears).

For the average fan, then, the 60s produced a handful of books that were mildly informative, with many more books, premiums, and radio fan publications from the 30s and 40s rounding out

their libraries. The succeeding decade, the 1970s, was good to the old time radio in many ways, notably the explosion of material that continually surfaced and the growth of clubs and conventions. It also witnessed the birth of two of the hobbies long time bibles, John Dunning's *Tune in Yesterday* (1976) and Buxton and Owen's revamped *The Big Broadcast* (1972). While tomes of such magnitude inevitably were found to contain numerous flaws, they were standard reference works for the next twenty years.

To make up for the lack of radio-specific books, radio fans could buy any number of biographies of radio figures, including Ozzie Nelson (1974), W.C. Fields (1973), Jim Bannon (*The Son That Rose in the West*, mid-70s), Joseph Julian (*This Was Radio*, 1975), and George Burns (*Living it Up*, 1976). Jack Benny's death inspired a spate of material, notably three books: *Jack Benny: An Intimate Biography* (Irving Fein, 1975), *The Jack Benny Show* (Milt Josefsberg, 1977), and *Jack Benny: A Biography* (Mary Livingston, 1978). At least two additional "overview" books were released by 1976, *The Old Time Radio Book* (Ted Sennet, 1976) and *The Golden Years of Broadcasting* (A history of NBC by Robert Campbell, 1976). Additionally, two early fan-oriented titles entered the market. The first of what would be a number of books on the Lone Ranger was released by Dave Howe. Charles Stumpf, a regular contributor to OTR periodicals of the time, released his first book, *Ma Perkins, Little Orphan Annie and Heigh Ho Silver*.

The most important books of the 70s, aside from Buxton and Owens and Dunning were probably *Golden Throats and Silver Tongues* (Ray Poindexter, 1978), *Radio Comedy* (Arthur Frank Wertheim, 1979), *Don't Touch That Dial* (Fred MacDonald, 1979) and *The Mighty Music Box* (Thomas DeLong, 1980). All of these volumes are regularly cited by contemporary radio authors and represent some of academe's first attempts

to analyze the era of dramatic radio.

The 1970s saw a considerable number of publications emerge and die off, including *World of Yesterday*, *National Radio Trader*, the Milwaukee Area Radio Enthusiasts club newsletter, *The Big Bandwagon*, *Collectors Corner*, *Return With Us Now*, *NARA News*, *Illustrated Press*, annual *Sperdvac* magazines, *On the Air*, *Airwaves*, *Radio Dial*, *Nostalgia Digest* and *Stay Tuned*. These fanzines became an important source of new OTR writing and scholarship, some of which has better stood the test of time.

With the nostalgia craze of the early 1970s passed, the decade of the 1980s was a relatively dry period for old time radio books. The periodicals asserted themselves as the primary source of OTR literature and hobby's tradition of self-publication (not uncommon to any niche hobby) was cemented. Nevertheless, a few important radio books appeared.

The first prominent book of the 80s was Dick Osgood's *WYXIE Wonderland* (1981), a retrospective of the famous Detroit station WXYZ and Osgood's 50 years of work there. This book serves as the cornerstone of the hobby's subgenre of WXYZ literature, which includes an impressive number of works about the station's

three big shows, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Green Hornet*, and *Challenge of the Yukon*. Announcer Fred Foy's later book and presence at OTR conventions added to the station's outsized popularity among OTR buffs.

The middle of the decade witnessed the release of two important works. The first was LeRoy Bannerman's *Norman Corwin and Radio: The Golden Years* (Indiana University) in 1986. Bannerman provided a nice volume on this prominent radio writer which continues to be referenced by many works in the field.

The next year Vincent Terrace added to the "encyclopedia" genre of OTR writing with his *Radio's Golden Years* (1987). Along with Buxton and Owens and Dunning, the hobby now had a core set of encyclopedia-style reference books which was not added to until Dunning's updated work in the late 90s. Terrace's book was not as heralded as the preceding two and is the least referenced of the three by modern writers.

Outside of these two volumes, the early and mid-80s primarily saw the release of small press or self-published OTR works, the most prominent being Tom Price's *Fibber McGee and Molly* work, which also included thorough coverage of the Jordans' other radio work. The tome is massive,



over 1,000 pages, and provided the hobby much of its information on the pair's work. Unfortunately, it was not widely distributed even when released at the beginning of the decade and is all but unknown to most hobbyists who have discovered OTR in the last fifteen years. Later in the decade Price would write (with Charles Stumpf) the only published biography of the Fibber McGee show, *Heavenly Days* (1987).

Other notable small press efforts were another Lone Ranger volume by David Rothel (*Who Was that Masked Man?*, 1981) and *The Sound of Detection: Ellery Queen's Adventures in Radio* (Francis M. Nevins, Jr. and Ray Stanich, 1983). This represents one of the very few book-length works by Stanich, who was a prolific producer of logs stretching back to the early 70s (and is the namesake of an FOTR award).

The modern age of old time radio writing and scholarship began in the late 80s, when the hobby began to see a sudden increase in the number of radio-related volumes, the quality of scholarship behind them, and the variety topics focused upon. 1988 saw the release of at least three volumes that received generous attention in the OTR press and continue to be referenced today. These volumes are Carlton E. Morse's *The*

One Man's Family Album: An Inside Look at Radio's Longest Running Show, *From out of the Past: A Pictorial History of the Lone Ranger* by Dave Holland, and *That's not All Folks! My life in the Golden Age of Cartoons and Radio* by Mel Blanc and Philip Bashe. The next year saw the release of another university-based scholar's work, *Children and Radio* by Marilyn Lawrence Boemer (University of North Texas). The flood gates opened with a new decade and the old time radio book catalog has grown practically exponentially since. A sample of 1990 books exemplifies the growing diversity in the field: *Fred Allen's Radio Comedy* by Alan Havig, *Sunday Nights at Seven: The Jack Benny Story* by Joan Benny, Robert Mott's *Sound Effects: Radio, TV, and Film*, and *Gunsmoke* by Suzanne and Gabor Barabas. The last book exemplified what would become a common format for old time radio books; focusing on a single radio show with a comprehensive program history accompanied by exhaustive episode guide.

Thanks in large part to McFarland Press and, later, Bear Manor Press, radio-centric books proliferated. The 90s witnessed the release of two new bibles of the field, Jay Hickerson's self-published *Ultimate History of Network Radio Pro-*



gramming and Guide to all Circulating Shows and Dunning's revised Encyclopedia of Old Time Radio. Even now those two books lie at the center of the hobby's literature canon. The books of the 90s are almost too many to mention. From Religious Radio and Television in the United States, 1921 - 1991 (McFarland, 1992) to Radio's Morning Show Personalities (McFarland, 1995) to Anthony Tollin's The Shadow: The Making of a Legend (1996), the hobbyist could read about nearly any aspect of their beloved old time radio. The decade also saw the debut of two of the genre's most prolific and respected authors, Martin Grams, Jr. with Suspense: Twenty Years of Thrills and Chills (1998) and Jim Cox with The Great Radio Soap Operas (1999).

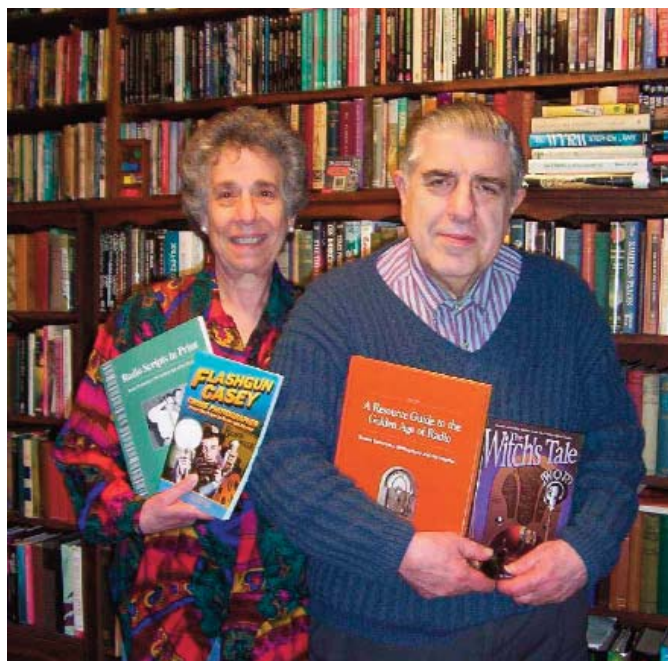
Old time radio also hit the mainstream market again with a few volumes issued by the large publishers. Major press releases included Cloud and Olson's The Murrow Boys: Pioneers on the Front Line of Broadcast Journalism, Tom Lewis' Empire of the Air, movie guru Leonard Maltin's The Great American Broadcast, and Gerald Nochman's Raised on Radio. Ironically, despite large press credentials, their place in the hobby's pantheon is minor.

Radio-related books hit the new century with a full head of steam, and Bear Manor's debut in 2001 played a significant role in that. Only the most dedicated fans now can add every volume to their personal library as they are published. For the OTR hobbyist, Cox and Grams continue to define the genre's literature, each producing at least one volume a year. Cox, in general, makes broader sweeps of the genre with his literary pen, while Grams, in general, specializes in creating authoritative volumes on specific series. Both approaches have their place and the results have been invaluable to the hobby. The presses noted above, McFarland and Bear Manor, continue to put out dozens of radio-related books a year, enough to keep even the most voracious reader

– and spender - satisfied.

In addition to the rapidly increasing book base, the club magazines continue to put out a quality crop of researched articles every year. Comparing a contemporary issue of SPERDVAC's Radiogram or Nostalgia Digest to their ancestor of 30, 25, or even 20 years ago shows how much expectations have been raised among OTR fans for quality in both research and writing prowess. In reviewing the growth of the old time radio literature, especially that in book form, one cannot but accept that modern readers are experiencing a golden age of research and writing in the genre. If contemporary OTR hobbyists miss the olden days when the biggest stars still appeared at conventions and on the interview circuit, they can't miss the olden days literature that was so sparse compared to that of today.

Special thanks to Dave Siegel who provided input concerning some of the referenced books. Back issues of Hello Again, NARA News, Old Time Radio Digest, and Radiogram were key to identifying books that made the biggest splash in old time radio circles.



Susan and Dave Siegel with their books

Editorial Policy of the Old Radio Times

It is the policy of The Old Radio Times not to accept paid advertising in any form. We feel that it would be detrimental to the goal of the Old Time Radio Researchers organization to distribute its' products freely to all wishing them. Accepting paid advertising would compromise that goal, as dealers whose ideals are not in line with ours could buy ad space.

That being said. The Old Radio Times will run free ads from individuals, groups, and dealers whose ideals are in line with the group's goals and who support the hobby.

Publishing houses who wish to advertise in this magazine will be considered if they supply the publisher and editor with a review copy of their new publication. Anyone is free to submit a review or a new publication about old time radio or nostalgia though.

Dealers whose ads we carry or may carry have agreed to give those placing orders with them a discount if they mention that they saw their ad in 'The Old Radio Times'. This is in line with the groups goal of making otr available to the collecting community.

We will gladly carry free ads for any other old time radio group or any group devoted to nostalgia. Submit your ads to: haradio@msn.com

From The Treasurer's Corner

Happy 2010 from the OTRRPG group!

Over the past five years, The Old Time Radio Researchers has spent approximately \$14,500.00 in obtaining new and better quality audio programming and radio

related print material to the OTR community. All material is released freely and available to anyone desiring it. The Old Time Radio Researchers currently has \$2,197.48 in the treasury. Recent disbursements include a CD purchase for Fred Allen programs for series certification as well as reimbursement of legal fees associated with the creation of the OTRRPedia site. A detailed report of the treasury transactions is available to members of the Old Time Radio Researcher's purchasing group.

Many thanks to our monthly supporters who include : Tony Adams, Dale Beckman, Jim Beshires, James Blazier, Robert Booze, Larry Brist, Scott Carpenter, Terry Caswell, Pete Cavallo, Albert Christian, Greg Coakley, Gary Costel, Ryan Ellet, Scott Erickson, Allan Foster, Tony Galati, Michael Galbreath, Allan George, David Gibbs, Michael Harron, Charlie Henson, Roger Hohenbrink, Mark Huffstutter, Archie Hunter, Donald Husing, Tony Jaworowski, Robert Johnson, Dave Johnson, Jim Jones, Ben Kibler, Robert Lenk, Toby Levy, John Liska, Thomas Mandeville, Gary Mollica, Henry Morse, Jess Oliver, David Oxford, Robert Phillips, Lenny Price, Peter Risbey, Ron Schalow, Kurt Schriever, Richard Sheckman, David Shipman, Charlie St.George, Gary Stanley, Doug Stivers, David Taylor, Gregg Taylor, Daryl Taylor, Lee Tefertiller, Clorinda Thompson, Eugene Ward, Joseph Webb, George Wentzler, Gordon Whitman, and Jim Wood. In addition to our monthly supporters we also received a donation from Bob Hicks. This support assists us in bringing new and better quality old time radio programming to the entire OTR community. It is truly appreciated.

If you are interested in becoming a monthly supporter of the Old Time Radio Researchers, please contact the treasurer, Tony Jaworowski via email : tony_senior@yahoo.com Monthly support dues are currently \$5.00 per month, and monthly supporters receive advance releases of all purchases made, usually high quality MP3 files distributed on DVD media in a 'round robin' fashion. As always, one time contributions of any amount are also welcome and will greatly be appreciated. Donations can be made with PayPal by using the ID ajaworowski@ameritech.net or via cash, check, or money order made out to: Tony Jaworowski 15520 Fairlane Drive Livonia, MI 48154

Thanks to all for your continued support!

Gassman Brothers To Return To Broadcasting

The Gassman twins, John and Larry, plan to return to old time radio internet broadcasting, it was announced here today. What is so unusual about this is that both brothers are blind.

The brothers began in 1970 to collect old time radio shows. In 1972 they met Jerry Haendiges who at the time, lived 10 minutes from them in Whittier. Haendiges is one of the hobby's most premier collectors and dealers.

With his encouragement, they began working in radio in 1973. They eventually got involved with SPERDVAC, the Old Time Radio Organization in Southern California, in 1974.

Later, Larry served as its' President for 6 years. He also chaired 13 of their Old Radio Conventions in Los Angeles.

Their first old radio show broadcast "Same Time Same Station", began in 1980. The brothers worked for 20 years for KPCC in Pasadena California and for 15 for Bill Bragg, and Yesterday USA. They also worked for a year at KCSN Northridge in 2001.

Larry Gassman got married in 2002 and for a variety of reasons, work related mostly, we stopped working in radio and left the radio hobby.

More recently, the brothers have been active members of the Old Time Radio Researchers Group.

Over the last 8 years they have done several on line radio related symposiums for "Radio out Of the Past", just to keep their hands in the water.

Beginning on February 7 2010, they will again host a radio show, called, "Same Time Same Station", which will be heard initially, on the Old Time Radio Network.

<http://www.vintageradioplace.com/broadcast/>

They have been asked by others to also carry the on line broadcast. They are still work-

ing out the logistics, and hope to announce something soon.

Jerry Haendiges for hosted 'Same Time, Same Station' for the brothers during their hiatus. "It was in very good hands during the time we were away", the brothers stated.

Their plans are very simple. They will play the old radio shows, plus many of their earlier interviews done since 1980.

They also will plan to record new interviews with radio performers, plus those involved with new radio books and other radio related projects. So we invite you to spread the word.

You can reach them both through e-mail.

Larry: Lgsinger@sbcglobal.net

John: JohnGassman@roadrunner.com

Skype: Larry.Gassman John.Gassman

Twitter: Larry: [Lgsinger](#) John: [Vibrant Voice](#)

Face Book [Larry Gassman](#) [John Gassman](#)

OTRR ACQUIRES NEW EPISODES & UPGRADED SOUND ENCODES FOR JAN/ FEB

The following is a list of newly acquired series/episodes. They may either be new to mp3 or better encodes. These were acquired by the Group during the months of November and December. They were purchased by donations from members and friends of the Old Time Radio Researchers. If you have cassettes that you would like to donate, please e-mail beshiresjim@yahoo.com. For reel-to-reels, contact david0@centurytel.net and for transcription disks tony_senior@yahoo.com.

A Saga

xx-xx-xx A Saga Of New York (AFRS).wav

BBC Classics

xx-xx-xx The Lost World (pt missing).wav

The Bennetts

46-xx-xx.wav

Call Of The Wild

46-09-19 First Song - Where The West Is As Wild As Ever.wav

Carson Robinson

3x-xx-xx First Song - Oh Give Me A Home.wav

Carter Sisters

4x-xx-xx (01) First Song - Cimmaron (Audition).wav

4x-xx-xx (02) First Song - Country Girl.wav

4x-xx-xx (05) First Song - No Vacancies.wav

4x-xx-xx (06) First Song - Eight More Miles To Louisville.wav

4x-xx-xx (08) First Song - Plain Old Country Girl.wav

4x-xx-xx (13) First Song - Stay A Little Longer.wav

4x-xx-xx (14) First Song - Wish I Had A Nickel.wav

Carter Sisters 4x-xx-xx (15) First Song - Sugar Hill.wav

4x-xx-xx (17) First Song - Divorce C.O.D..wav

4x-xx-xx (18) First Song - An Old Fashioned Hoedown.wav

4x-xx-xx (19) First Song - Skip To My Loo.wav

4x-xx-xx (20) First Song - Oklahoma City.wav

4x-xx-xx (21) First Song - Cindy.wav

4x-xx-xx (22) First Song - Sourwood Mountain.wav

4x-xx-xx (23) First Song - A Feudin, A Fussin, and A Fightin.wav

4x-xx-xx (24) First Song - The Beautiful Morning Glory.wav

Cavalcade Of America

45-03-26 Grandpa And The Statue.wav

Cavalcade Of America 49-08-30 Wire To The West.wav

Checkerboard Jamboree

46-11-23 First Song - Too Young To Get Married.wav

Cowboy Slim Reinhart

46-xx-xx (05) First Song - Father Along.wav

46-xx-xx (06) First Song - Land Of No More Blues.wav

46-xx-xx (07) First Song - She's My Curly Headed Baby.wav

46-xx-xx (08) First Song - My Little Mohee.wav

46-xx-xx (09) First Song - Red River Valley.wav

46-xx-xx (10) First Song - Don't You Believe It.mp3

46-xx-xx (11) First Song - They're All Going Home.mp3

xx-xx-xx (12) First Song - I'll Never Let You Go.wav

xx-xx-xx (13) First Song - Why Don't You Come Back To Me (crosstalk).wav

xx-xx-xx (14) First Song - I A'int Goin' Honkey Tonkin' Any More (crosstalk).wav

xx-xx-xx (15) First Song - You'll Love Me Too Late.wav

xx-xx-xx (16) First Song - When The Whip-o-wills Sing.wav

xx-xx-xx (17) First Song - I Wonder If She's Blue.wav

xx-xx-xx (18) First Song - Down Among The Budded Roses.wav

xx-xx-xx (19) First Song - It's All The Things That Might Have Been (Op clipped).wav

xx-xx-xx (20) First Song - Echoes From The Hills.wav

xx-xx-xx First Song - The Moon Hangs Low On The Ohio.wav

Hollywood Theater Of Stars

49-02-09 Say It With Flowers.wav

49-12-01 Something Borrowed, Something Blue.wav

Interview

with Richard Lamparski.wav

Intrigue

46-08-14 (03) Sinister Errand.wav

Little Man Inside

45-09-05 (01) Meet John Nelson (AUDITION).wav

Living 1949

49-01-30 State Of American Humor.wav

Molle Mystery Theater

48-05-14 (222) Close Shave.wav

48-05-21 (223) Performance.wav

Mystery In The Air

47-08-21 The Horla.wav

47-08-28 Beyond Good And Evil.wav

Player, The

48-xx-xx (80) Fate Upsets Plans.wav

48-xx-xx (81) Pinwheel Roll.wav

48-xx-xx (82) Prophecy.wav

Results, Inc

45-01-01 New Years.wav

Sammy Kaye - Swing And Sway

xx-xx-xx First Song - Embrascable You (AFRS).wav

xx-xx-xx First Song - I Still Care (AFRS).wav

Silent Men

52-03-19 (22) Confess Or Die.wav

52-03-26 (23) Murder In Vienna.wav

Speed Gibson

37-01-02 (1) The Octopus Gang Active.wav

37-01-09 (2) Speed Is Inducted into Secret Police.wav

37-01-16 (3) Heading for Hong Kong.wav

37-01-23 (4) A Shooting Attempt.wav

The Long Wolf

49-01-01 Golden Santa.wav

The McCoy

51-04-24 Three Wayward Girls.wav

The Old Corral

41-xx-xx (27) First Song - Shiloh Ranch.wav

41-xx-xx (28) First Song - When Payday Rolls Around.wav

41-xx-xx (33) First Song - Out West To Texas.wav

41-xx-xx (34) First Song - My Deal Old Arizona Home.wav

xx-xx-xx (100) First Song - Yodel Your Troubles Away.wav

xx-xx-xx (103) First Song - Way Out There.wav

xx-xx-xx (104) First Song - Go Long Mule.wav

xx-xx-xx (69) First Song - Renfro Valley Trail.wav

xx-xx-xx (70) First Song - Ride Ride Ride.wav

xx-xx-xx (79) First Song - Buckaroo Sandman.wav

xx-xx-xx (80) First Song - Wagon Train.wav

xx-xx-xx (99) First Song - Echoes From The Hills.wav

The Star And The Story

44-07-09 Thief Is An Ugly Word (op clipped).wav

W. C. Fields Bits

xx-xx-xx.wav

RADIO RARITIES BY *Dooley*

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