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Air Raid Pearl Harbor as reported on radio by Eric Beheim



December 7, 1941

One of the most momentous events to occur during the 20th Century was the December 7th, 1941 surprise attack by Japan on United States military installations located on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. On that day, most Americans relied on radio to keep them informed about the latest developments in an unfolding crisis that everyone knew would result in war.

The following is a summary of what was reported by radio on that day. Bracketed annotations have been included to provide a better understanding of what was taking place while these programs were going out over the air, and to help clarify and expand upon what was being discussed by the news commentators and military analysts. (Please note: all times will be given in Eastern Standard Time which was five and a half hours ahead of Hawaiian time.)

1:00 a.m. Radio Station KGEI in San Francisco reports that President Franklin Roosevelt "had sent or was sending a message to the Emperor." (*Japan's refusal to withdraw its military forces from China and its threatening moves towards Thailand, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies had made war with the United States almost inevitable. As diplomatic relations with Japan continued to deteriorate, the President hoped that a direct appeal from him to Japanese Emperor Hirohito would keep hostilities from breaking until some sort of settlement could be negotiated.*) In Tokyo, American Ambassador Joseph Grew hears the KGEI broadcast at 3:00 p.m. local time.

11:45 a.m. (*At 6:15 a.m. local time, the first wave of 183 Japanese aircraft are launched from six aircraft carriers located 220 miles north of Oahu. Using their radio direction-finding*

equipment, Japanese fliers set a course for Hawaii using the signal from Honolulu radio station KGMB, which had been broadcasting a special all-night program of music as a navigational beacon to a flight of Army B-17 bombers, inbound from the West Coast.)

12:31 p.m. (At 7:01 a.m. local time, two enlisted men on duty at an Army mobile radar station located at Opana Point on the northern tip of Oahu, observe “an unusually large response” on the oscilloscope. They judge it to be a large flight of approaching planes coming in from almost due north and at a distance of some 132 miles. The Opana Station calls the Information Center at Fort Shafter (the nerve center of the Army’s Aircraft Warning Service) to report what they have observed. Believing that Opana is tracking the flight of B-17s, which is due to arrive at 8:00 a.m., the officer on duty tells them “Well, don’t worry about it.”)

1:03 p.m. (At 7:33 a.m. local time, the RCA cable office in Honolulu receives a message sent from Washington by Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall advising Lieutenant General Walter C. Short and Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, the two senior military commanders on Oahu, that Japan would be presenting what amounted to an ultimatum to the State Department at precisely 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Marshall’s message concludes with, “Just what significance the hour set may have we do not know, but be on the alert accordingly.” Since the message has no indication of priority, its delivery is handled as “routine” by the cable office.)

1:25 p.m. (At 7:55 a.m. local time, the first wave of Japanese aircraft begins an island-wide attack. As Japanese dive-bombers strike the airfields Kaneohe, Ford Island, Hickam, Bellows, Wheeler and Ewa, aerial torpedo planes begin their runs on ships in Pearl Harbor. Commander



Logan Ramsey of the Ford Island Command Center instructs all radiomen on duty to send out in plain English “AIR RAID PEARL HARBOR. THIS IS NO DRILL.”

1:30 p.m. (At 8:00 a.m. local time, the flight of B-17’s from the West Coast arrives at Oahu after a 14-hour flight. At this same time, aircraft from the carrier Enterprise arrive at Ford Island. Both flights are caught between enemy and friendly fire.)

1:38 p.m. At 08:08 a.m. local time, KGMB interrupts its musical program with a special announcement ordering all Army, Navy, and Marine personnel to report for duty.

1:40 p.m. (The forward magazines on the battleship Arizona ignite, resulting in a tremendous explosion and fireball. She sinks within nine minutes.)

1:42 p.m. (General Short informs Washington and the entire Pacific Fleet that, “Hostilities with Japan commenced with air raid on Pearl Harbor.”)

1:45 p.m. At 8:15 a.m. local time, KGMB interrupts its music program with a second special announcement, ordering all military personnel to report for duty.

2:25 p.m. (At 8:55 a.m. local time, the second wave of Japanese aircraft begins its attack on



Oahu's military bases. In the White House press room, Presidential Press Secretary Stephen Early reads a brief statement to assembled reporters, informing them of the attack.)

2:30 p.m. At 9:00 a.m. local time in Honolulu, Webley Edwards makes the following special announcement on KGMB: "Alright now, listen carefully. The island of Oahu is being attacked by enemy planes. The center of this attack is Pearl Harbor, but the planes are attacking airfields as well. We are under attack. There seems to be no doubt about it. Do not go out on the streets. Keep under cover and keep calm. Some of you may think that this is just another military maneuver. This is not a maneuver. This is the real McCoy! I repeat, we have been attacked by enemy planes. The mark of the rising sun has been seen on the wings of these planes and they are attacking Pearl Harbor at this moment. Now keep your radio on and tell your neighbor to do the same. Keep off the streets and highways unless you have a duty to per-

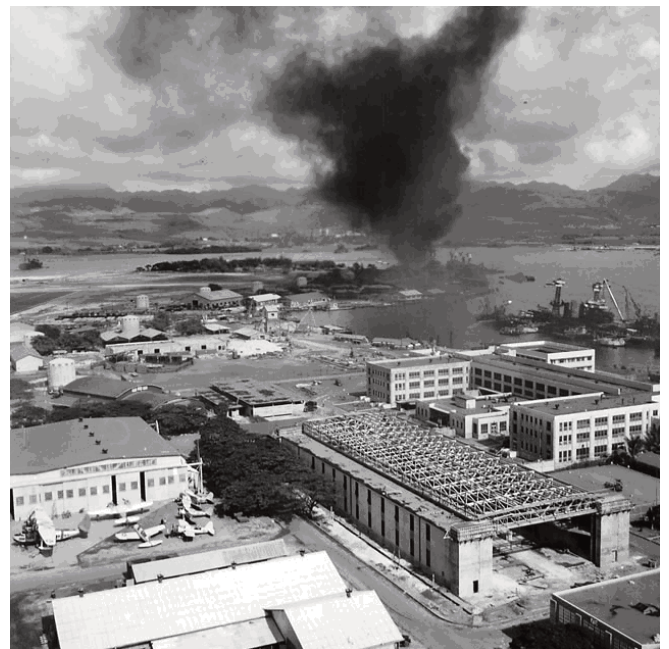
form. Please don't use your telephone unless you absolutely have to do so. All of these phone facilities are needed for emergency calls. Now standby all military personnel and all police -- police regulars and reserves. Report for duty at once. I repeat, we are under attack by enemy planes. The mark of the rising sun has been seen on these planes. Many of you have been asking if this is a maneuver. This is not a maneuver. This is the real McCoy."

The NBC Red Network makes the following special announcement: "President Roosevelt said in a statement today that the Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii from the air." (*In Pearl Harbor, the destroyer Shaw explodes, sending debris everywhere.*)

2:37 p.m. In Washington, CBS commentator Albert Warner reports that the White House has just announced that all naval and military activities on the principal island of Oahu in Hawaii have been attacked from the air. A Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor would naturally mean

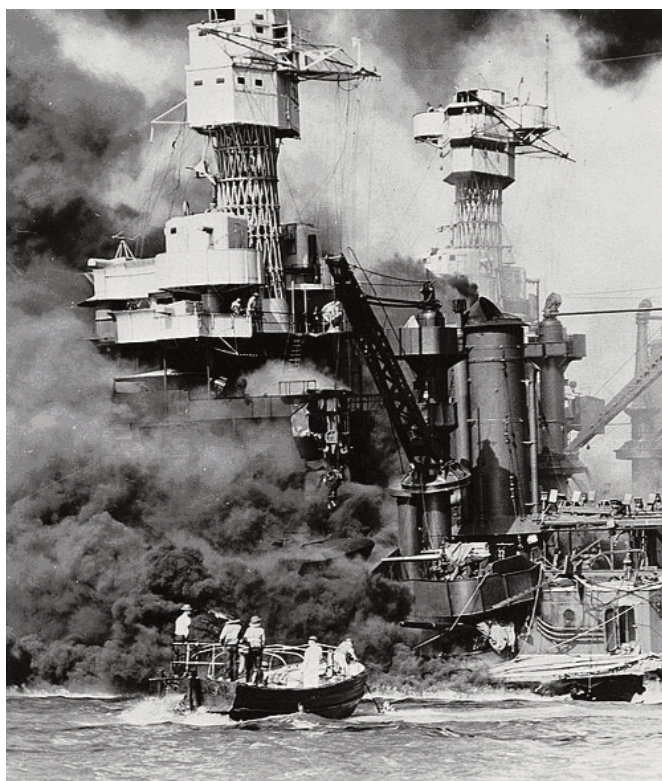
war, as there is no doubt that Congress would grant such a declaration. The White House has just reported that Army and Navy bases in Manila have also been attacked. (*This report proved to be untrue. The Philippines were not attacked by Japan until December 8th.*) Hostilities seem to be opening all over the Southwest Pacific. Japan's two negotiators in Washington (*Ambassador Kichisaburo Nomura and special envoy Saburo Karusu*) are currently meeting with Secretary of State Cordell Hull. (*The envoys had been instructed to deliver Japan's ultimatum to Hull precisely at 1:00 p.m., which would have been 7:30 a.m. in Hawaii and prior to the attack beginning. Due to delays in preparing the ultimatum document, they did not arrive at the State Department until 1:45 p.m. By that time Hull had already been informed that the attack was underway. He did not admit them into his office until 2:20 p.m.*) CBS in New York attempts to contact Honolulu and then Manila without success. CBS' chief military analyst Major George Fielding Eliot speculates that the attack was most likely launched from aircraft carriers and that the attack was a "desperate attempt" to prevent the U.S. Fleet from intervening in Japanese military operations in the Far East. Japanese troop landings on Oahu are unlikely because of the logistics involved. (*On these two points, Eliot's analysis was essentially correct.*) Calls for Honolulu police and firefighters to report for work might be an indication of some sort of uprising among the Japanese living in Hawaii. (*There is no evidence that any sort of uprising by Hawaii's Japanese population took place on December 7th.*) From Manila, Ford Wilkins describes the military preparations that are taking place in various Far Eastern countries. (His report ends abruptly "due to line troubles.") A report has been received from Singapore that

Japanese troop transports have been seen moving into the Bay of Siam, heading for Thailand. Elmer Davis comments that one week ago, the Japanese had asked for two more weeks to negotiate a settlement over the situation in the Far East. In view of today's events, this was obviously an attempt to stall for time and put the United States off guard. London has been "staggered" by news of the attack. Prime Minister Churchill has promised that Great Britain will declare war on Japan within the hour of the United States doing so. (*Churchill was well aware that, by declaring war on Japan, the United States would also be going to war with Japan's ally Nazi Germany, which the British had been fighting since 1939.*) Congress will be meeting tomorrow and will undoubtedly be discussing the possibility of war with Japan. CBS' affiliate station KGMB in Honolulu has reported that the air raid is still going on.



3:15 p.m. On his regular NBC Red Network news program, H.V. Kaltenborn reports that 50 planes are believed to have participated in the attack and that "many were shot down." (*Of the*

353 planes that participated in the attack, 29 were lost.) The first news flash telling of the attack was received by NBC at 2:25 p.m. The Navy has refused to comment about the attack and said that all information would be channeled through the White House. (It would be almost a year before details of the attack, including the extent of the damage, were made public.) The State Department has announced that the attacks were made "wholly without warning." Kaltenborn assures listeners that "our Army and particularly our Navy were not caught by surprise by this attack." (*History records otherwise!*) The main targets seem to have been Hickman Field and the Pearl Harbor Naval Base. The President has called in the Secretaries of War and the Navy as well as Congressional leaders for an emergency conference at the White House. The air attacks in Hawaii are still believed to be going on. It has just been reported that an Army transport carrying lumber was torpedoed 1300 miles west of San Francisco. The



AP has issued an unverified report that an unidentified foreign warship appeared off the coast of Oahu and is firing at Pearl Harbor. (*This "unidentified warship" might have been the destroyer Helm, which had shelled a midget submarine attempting to enter the harbor.*) Secretary of State Hull's response to the Japanese envoys was that Japan's response was "crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions."

3:25 p.m. (*At 9:55 a.m., the second wave of Japanese aircraft breaks off its attack and returns to the waiting carriers. The air raid on Oahu is over.*)

3:30 p.m. (*Planes from the first wave land on-board their assigned carriers, which have moved to within 190 miles of Oahu.*)

4:00 p.m. On the NBC Red Network, a sermon by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick is interrupted by an extended news update that includes a telephone report from a KGU correspondent in Honolulu. (During this report, a telephone company operator breaks in and asks the correspondent to get off the line for an emergency call!) From the White House newsroom, H. R. Baukhage reports that the President will address Congress tomorrow. The cabinet will be meeting at the White House tonight at 8:30 p.m. and will be joined by Congressional leaders of both parties at 9:00 p.m. It has been reported that 5 people have been killed in Honolulu. (*It was later determined that most of the "bomb damage" that occurred in Honolulu was caused by unexploded anti-aircraft shells fired from Pearl Harbor, 12 miles away.*) Germany had no immediate reaction to the attack. On the West Coast, all military leaves have been cancelled and military personnel have been ordered to report for duty. The FBI is "completely mobilized" to counter Japanese es-



pionage. Beginning on Monday, all active duty military personnel are to report for work in uniform. (*During the military build-up that occurred in the months prior to December 7th, military personnel serving in Washington and other major cities were instructed to work in civilian attire, lest the sight of too many uniforms create a "war scare" within the civilian population.*) Portions of the message that the President sent to the Japanese emperor on Saturday afternoon, is read. Parachute troops have been sighted along the northern coast of Oahu. (Another false rumor!) Sailors in the New York City area are instructed to report to their ships.

4:30 p.m. NBC News on the Red Network: news of the attack on Hawaii was first reported in London by the BBC about an hour and a half ago. In San Francisco, NBC's "expert on the Far East" Upton Close reports that the attack came as a complete surprise to the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco and might have come as a surprise to the Japanese Government itself. It is possible that these attacks

were carried out under German influence and with German support, or by a small faction within the Japanese Navy that is trying to precipitate war. We cannot be sure as yet that the Tokyo government is behind it. Honolulu has reported that the attack has stopped. In Los Angeles, the sheriff has taken charge of Little Tokyo in order to watch for any Japanese "disorders." If the Japanese Government is behind this attack, we are in for a bitter war in the Pacific. From KGU in Honolulu, a reporter gives a brief summary of events that are known to have happened so far. Considerable damage has been done to Hickham Field. Lines of communications between the various military bases seem to be down. 350 men were killed in a direct bomb hit on a barracks at Hickham Field. Bellows Field was also heavily damaged. A telegram from David Sarnoff (president of NBC) to President Roosevelt is read. It pledges that all NBC's facilities are now available to him as needed. Affiliate stations are advised that NBC will remain on the air on a 24-hour basis during

this emergency.

4:45 p.m.: At 11:15 a.m. local time, Hawaiian Governor Poindexter comes on the radio to announce a state of emergency.

5:12 p.m. At 11:42 a.m. local time, the Army orders Honolulu's commercial radio stations to go off the air.

5:14 p.m. The NBC Red Network interrupts *Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air* with a flash announcement: Japanese Imperial Headquarters has announced a state of war with the United States. In San Francisco, Upton Close reports that Japanese Premier Tojo and other high-ranking Japanese military officials will speak in Tokyo at 7:30 p.m. EST. The extent of the damage done to military facilities in Hawaii is unknown at this time. The attack is believed to have come from the south. (*As noted above, it was launched from the north.*) Flash: Japan has just announced a state of war with Britain. Ford Wilkins in Manila is heard via shortwave, describing war preparations being made in the Philippines. Manila is still quiet and peaceful. (*Ford Wilkins was actually CBS' correspondent in Manila. NBC apparently picked up his shortwave report to CBS and aired it. Wilkins signs off, "I return you now to CBS in New York."*) From the NBC newsroom, H. V. Kaltenborn reports that a British gunboat in the harbor of Shanghai has been sunk by the Japanese. There has been no bombing attack on Manila and the original White House announcement was evidently a mistake. It now appears that there has been serious damage in Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. (*As noted above, the damage done to Honolulu was mostly from "friendly fire".*) The attack appears to have come as a complete surprise. There is now complete unity here in the United States regarding whatever course of action the President will ask Congress



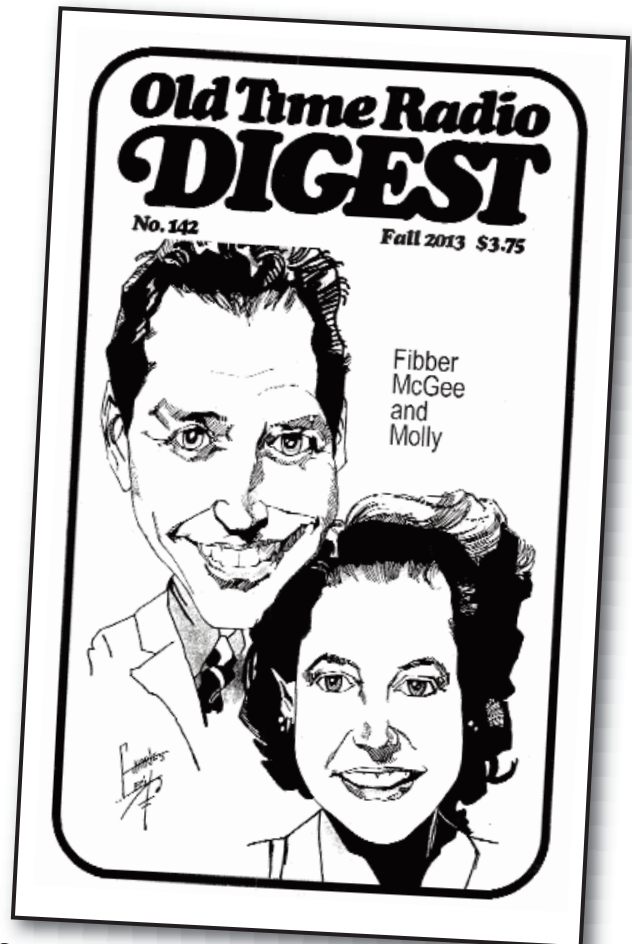
to follow. It is not known what Russia will do if Japan does not attack her. (Already at war with Nazi Germany, Russia did not declare war on Japan until August 8, 1945 when the Pacific war was almost over.)

6:00 p.m. The NBC Blue Network reports that the White House has announced that there has been heavy damage and heavy loss of life in Hawaii. Two Japanese planes are reported to have been shot down. Witnesses in Hawaii saw shell flashes out in the ocean, indicating that some sort of naval battle was taking place. Via shortwave from Manila Bert Silan reports that there have been no bombing attacks in the Philippines. General MacArthur will decide if Manila should be evacuated. Navy Intelligence has announced that no more code messages can be sent from the Philippines. All messages must be in plain English. Honolulu was the last place that anyone expected a Japanese attack to occur. It is believed that the Japanese are planning to invade Thailand. MacArthur's headquarters has announced that all U.S. Army and Navy personnel in the Far East are "on the alert." (As for "being on the alert," on December 8th, when the Japanese made their first air attack on Luzon, the principal island of the Philip-

planes, the Americans were again caught by surprise and lost 86 aircraft, against only 7 Japanese Zero fighters shot down.)

6:30 p.m. (By 1:00 p.m. local time, the last of the Japanese planes are back on board their assigned aircraft carriers. A third wave was to have returned to Oahu to complete the destruction of the morning and to search for the American aircraft carriers Lexington and Enterprise, which had not been in port that day. However, unwilling to expose his ships to a possible American counterattack, task force commander Vice-Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, orders an immediate withdrawal back to Japan.) (NBC Blue Network): From Washington, Drew Pearson & Robert S. Allen report that the Japanese envoys in Washington have asked for their passports. The President first heard about the attack at 2:25 p.m. EST. (As noted above, General Short's message advising Washington of the attack was sent at 1:42 p.m. EST. The White House issued its official statement to the press at 2:25 p.m.) Navy Intelligence believes that the attacking planes were launched from at least several carriers. It is believed that three battleships have been hit and that the rest of the fleet has steamed out of Pearl Harbor. (Only a few ships were able to escape from Pearl Harbor during the attack. Eighteen ships, including five of the eight Pacific Fleet battleships were sunk or badly damaged.) British bases in the Pacific have been bombed. The White House has cancelled the press credentials of all German and Japanese newspapermen effective immediately. The War and Navy Departments have been unable to reach their commanders in Manila. Both houses of the British Parliament will meet in an emergency session on Monday. It has been reported that Guam has been bombed and that Japanese planes are over Burma. The U.S. will

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go on a wartime footing tomorrow. Japan is ruled by an irresponsible military clique, which is responsible to no one. It is unlikely that Russia will declare war on Japan while *Hitler's* army is threatening Moscow. A blackout has been ordered for the whole Panama Canal Zone. Pearson and Allen predict that, after little discussion or debate, Congress will pass a formal declaration of war against Japan. Britain will also declare war on Japan and become a full ally of the United States. There will also be a declaration of war against the German government of Adolph Hitler. Flash: it has been reported that a Japanese aircraft carrier has been sunk off of Latin America. (*This proved to be another false rumor with no basis in fact.*)

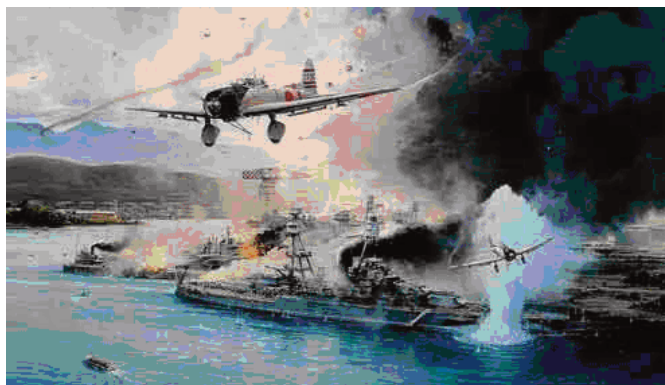
7:00 p.m. NBC's *News Roundup* on the Blue Network: via shortwave from London, Fred Bates reports that Japanese diplomats in London are burning their official papers. German radio has blamed the war on President Roosevelt's "war mongering." The NBC New York newsroom reports that the Secretary of Defense has instructed all U.S. companies involved in war work to take steps to insure that their plants are protected from sabotage. NBC facilities in New York and on the West Coast are being protected by special police squads. From the White House newsroom, H.R. Baukhage confirms that Manila has not been bombed. President Roosevelt is currently in his White House study, working on the message he will delivery to Congress tomorrow. Baukhage describes being present when news of the attack was first announced at 2:25 p.m. EST. When told of the attack, Senator Burton K. Wheeler, the leading isolationist in the Senate was quoted as saying, "We will have to see it through." The broadcast switches to San Francisco for a shortwave report from Manila by Bert Silan. The Japanese



military has announced that it is taking over the International Settlement in Shanghai. The U.S. Consulate in Shanghai has warned all Americans there to keep off the streets. In Manila, troops have been rushed to their battle stations. The Yokohama Bank in Manila is completely surrounded by armed guards with machine guns and sawed off shotguns to prevent sabotage. It is expected that Japanese bank officials will be taken into custody. All Japanese stores in Manila failed to open this morning. Plans are being made to evacuate non-essential civilians from Manila shortly. Schools were closed today and will probably stay closed. Manila is calm, and is confident that U.S. forces will protect it. (*Cut off from any assistance or reinforcements, U.S. forces in the Philippines held out until early May 1942 before they were forced to surrender to the Japanese.*) It has been rumored that Singapore has been bombed. In San Francisco, Upton Close reports that the Japanese Consul in Portland was surprised and unhappy when he learned about the attack. Attempts by the Japanese Consul in San Francisco to burn confidential papers in a fireplace that was more ornamental than practi-

cal resulted in the fire department having to be called in to put out the blaze, which had gotten out of control.

8:28 p.m. (By 2:58 p.m. local time in Hawaii, General Marshall's warning message has finally been delivered, decoded, and given to General Short and Admiral Kimmel.)



9:00 p.m. (NBC Blue Network): on his *Jergens Journal* broadcast, Walter Winchell announces that the Department of Justice is moving rapidly to intern all Japanese nationals. Japanese property in the U.S. will be seized at once. The importance of the Japanese attack is that war between the United States and Hitler is imminent. "National Security" is no longer just a phrase. In an editorial, New York's leading isolationist newspaper *The New York Daily News* said that, "We should all stick by the President." The Japanese who attacked Hawaii were probably a suicide force that did not expect to return to base. American anti-aircraft guns went into action on the spit-second. (Once again, history records otherwise!)

11:00 p.m. (NBC Red Network) *News*: from Washington, D.C., H. R. Baukhage describes talking with Congressional leaders as they emerged from the White House after meeting with the President. None of them would comment on whether or not the President will ask for a declaration of war tomorrow when he speaks

to Congress at 12:30 p.m. EST. In Washington, there is almost a sense of relief, now that the "war of nerves" is over. In New York, Robert St. John reports that Canada has declared war on Japan. The Mexican congress will meet tomorrow to consider a declaration of war. There is an unconfirmed British rumor that Wake Island has been occupied by the Japanese. (Once again, this was a rumor with no basis in fact.)

The Panama Canal Zone is on a full time war footing. In the U.S., all military leaves and furloughs have been cancelled. Armed troops are now guarding defense plants. John Vandercook describes Pearl Harbor as "not a place but a location." The sprawling facility is "the most powerful maritime fortress in the world." Vandercook then reports that Japanese troops have landed in Northern Malaya. Two Japanese bombs fell on Singapore, but did little damage. Japan is now at war with about one-half of the world's population.

11:30 p.m. On the NBC Red Network, Ben Grauer moderates a round table discussion between some of NBC's top commentators, who are heard via 2-way radio, speaking from various locations around the country. It is now clear that the attack on Pearl Harbor was only part of a larger military move by Japan. There is speculation as to whether or not Hitler encouraged the attack, since a two-ocean war would benefit the Axis. (There is no evidence that Germany encouraged Japan to attack Pearl Harbor.) It is believed that the President's message to the Emperor never got through. Protecting the Panama Canal will now be of vital importance. The attack on Hawaii has ended all debate over whether or not the country should become involved in the war. There is speculation on whether the President will ask for a declaration of war just with Japan

or with the Axis. (*The President's message, delivered to Congress on December 8th, asked for a declaration of war on Japan only. However, it was generally understood that, as Japan's ally, Germany would declare war on the United State, which it quickly did.*) There is discussion as to how soon the U.S. Navy will go on the offensive against the Japanese Navy. (*The commentators were still unaware that the Pacific Fleet had been devastated and that U.S. Pacific defenses were in shambles.*) There is discussion on whether or nor Russia will declare war on Japan. (*As noted above, this did not occur until August 8, 1945.*) It is suggested that the Aleutian Islands could be used to launch bombing raids on Japan, since such raids would cause widespread panic among the Japanese people. (*On April 18, 1945, sixteen B-25 bombers launched from the aircraft carrier Hornet, carried out the first air raid on Japan. Although the damage done was trivial, the psychological effect on the Japanese people was profound.*) The commentators are in general agreement that, given its limited natural resources, Japan cannot possibly win a war against the United States.

Epilogue

On December 8, 1941, in his famous "Day of Infamy" speech, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare "that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December seventh, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire." Congress took only 33 minutes to approve the President's request.

Many military historians believe that Admiral Nagumo's failure to launch the third attack wave against Pearl Harbor, and to find and sink the two aircraft carriers Lexington and Enterprise were factors that ultimately determined the final outcome of the Pacific war. The undamaged



Pearl Harbor shipyards began repairing damaged ships almost immediately. (Most all of them, including the destroyer Shaw, eventually rejoined the fleet and took part in the war.) Within days, repairs were made to bombed-out hangers and other installations, and Army and Navy airfields were back in operation in short order. With most of the battleships out of action, aircraft carriers became America's new first line of defense in the Pacific. The effectiveness of their striking power was proven conclusively in June 1942 when carrier-based planes sank four Japanese aircraft carriers at the Battle of Midway. During that battle, which is generally considered the turning point of the Pacific war, Japan also lost a high percentage of its bravest and most experienced pilots. By mid-1945, and after a long and bitter struggle, Japan's Navy and Air Force had been destroyed. Rather than sacrifice more American lives in an invasion of the Japanese home islands, President Truman authorized the use of nuclear weapons to force Japan into surrendering. Following nuclear attacks on Hiroshima (August 6th) and Nagasaki (August 9th), Emperor Hirohito announced unconditional surrender on August 14th. The occupation of Japan began on August 30th, and the official surrender ceremony was held in Tokyo Bay onboard the battleship Missouri on September 2, 1945.

Most of the December 7, 1941 broadcast day was transcribed and is available in the MP3

format. Heard today, these recordings provide a unique opportunity to relive one of the most profound days of the 20th Century as it was taking place.

Additional Reading

Many fine books have been written about the Pearl Harbor attack. Two titles in particular that this writer can recommend are *Dec. 7 1941 - The Day the Japanese Attacked Pearl Harbor* by Gordon W. Prange, and *East Wind Rain - A Pictorial History of the Pearl Harbor Attack* by Stan Cohen.

About the Author

Eric Beheim is a life-long radio enthusiast, and a former commanding officer of a Naval Reserve Combat Camera unit based in San Diego.

Eric Beheim leads a multi-faceted career as a free-lance writer, professional musician, and owner of his own music and sound project studio.

Born in the first wave of "baby boomers" he grew up with radio and remains a life-long radio enthusiast. His particular interests are collecting news and commentary programs from the late 1930s and early 1940s (including World War II news), and programs that feature performances of operettas and musical theater presentations.



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The History of KGO, Oakland, California

By John F. Schneider Seattle, Washington

The General Electric Company had been one of the giants of the electrical industry since its founding by Thomas A. Edison in the nineteenth century. After conquering the worlds of power generation and electric lighting, the company became one of the pioneers in the radio field as a partner with Westinghouse in the new RCA manufacturing conglomerate. As a major early manufacturer of radio receivers, they, like Westinghouse, saw the value in operating broadcast stations to promote the sale of radio receivers. General Electric constructed and operated WGY at its manufacturing facility in Schenectady, New York in 1922.

With the success of WGY, General Electric began making plans to build two other high-powered radio stations. One station was to cover the mountain and plains states, while the third was to be heard on the Pacific Coast. They immediately began investigating the San Francisco area as a base for the Pacific station, because of its location midway along the coast, and because of the ample supply of musical talent in the area. Originally, General Electric announced plans to build the station on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco, and had drawn up plans for several ornamental antenna structures to be built there. However, they finally settled on a site in Oakland, at a G. E. power transformer manufacturing facility there, located at East 14th Street and 55th Avenue. At the time, what is now known as East Oakland was only sparsely populated, and G. E. had just completed their sprawling plant on a 24-acre site earlier that year.

Construction was begun on the studio and transmitter buildings in June of 1923, about a



year before the company's third station, KOA in Denver, was begun. The license was applied for and the call letters KGO assigned. Those call letters had previously been held by a radio store in Altadena, near Los Angeles. That station had gone off the air after less than a year of operation.

Meanwhile, newspapers in the area were heralding the coming of a great new super-station to the Bay Area. The "Examiner" headlined, "Plans Ready for Biggest Radio in the West". It announced that the new thousand-watt station would be strong enough to "throw the human voice one third around the world ... more powerful than any station west of Schenectady, New York," referring to G. E.'s eastern operation.

KGO first took to the air January 8, 1924. A beautiful new two-story brick building had been constructed expressly to house the studios, and the transmitter building and antenna were at the opposite end of the plant. On the first



floor of the studio building were the station offices: Program Manager, correspondence room, and a reception room for visitors. In the rear of the building was the power room, containing banks of storage batteries and large generators, which were used to power the amplifying equipment in the control room upstairs. On the second floor there were two studios, the second considerably smaller than the first, and both equipped with ample soundproofing and a ventilation system. There was also a large control room between the studios, equipped with a loudspeaker to monitor what was taking place in the studios. Three operators were always on duty in the control room -- two to keep the equipment running properly and to maintain a constant output volume, and a third to listen for distress calls from ships at sea on a separate receiver. In the event of a distress call, all coastal stations of the period were required to shut down, clearing the radio bands for emergency traffic.

The transmitter building was located about a

thousand feet away from the studio, and the buildings were connected by several cables carrying the program audio plus a system of signal lights and an intercom. It was a small one-story stucco building that housed six power generators in one room and three transmitters in the other. KGO was one of the few stations then to have a duplicate of every piece of transmitting equipment, so that the station could stay on the air in the event of equipment failure. This was the purpose of two of the three transmitters. The third was for communicating with ships in distress, and was kept on standby at all times. The two 150-foot steel towers that supported the antenna straddled the transmitter building, one on each side, at a spacing of 260 feet, so that the antenna was strung directly over the structure. Twelve counterpoise wires were hung parallel to the antenna fourteen feet above the ground and covering an area of 150 x 300 feet. The letters K-G-O were mounted in large illuminated figures on the side of one tower. For its time, the station represented the

epitome of technology.

KGO went on the air initially on a schedule of 8 to 10 PM every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Immediately, it developed a reputation among its listeners for having consistently high program quality. Some of the top musical artists in the Bay Area were enlisted to perform over KGO by Studio Manager Howard Milholland. Indeed, most of the program staff itself was musically inclined. Milholland and three other staff members formed a quartet that was heard frequently over the air waves. Announcer Jennings Pierce, who later announced for NBC, was a very fine tenor. Carl Rhodehamel, Publicity Manager, directed the KGO Little Symphony. In fact, it is quite possible that KGO required all its staff members to have musical abilities.

One of KGO's most popular programs was Ann Holden's Home Forum, which began shortly after the station's first broadcast, and continued to be a regular KGO feature until 1962. The original Ann Holden, whose real name was Flora Davis, was replaced by Francis Minton after the former's death.

KGO pioneered in educational broadcasts as well as music. Arthur Garbett's radio classrooms were listened to daily in schools all over Northern California. These beginnings were expanded in later years to encompass radio courses in history, drawing, chemistry and other subjects, as well as broadcast lectures and University extension courses. KGO also excelled in radio drama. Wilda Wilson Church, who had headed the dramatic department of an all-girl's school in Berkeley and had directed early radio plays at station KRE in that city, became KGO's full time dramatic director. She assembled and directed a dramatic company called the KGO Players, and quickly showed a superb talent in developing radio drama as an entity totally separate from



the theater and suited to the aural properties of radio. It was here that she developed techniques that would later bring her national recognition with NBC.

KGO was part of an interesting experiment conducted by General Electric March 7, 1924. G. E. microphones picked up the proceedings of the alumni banquet at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, held in the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. This program was broadcast over WJZ in New York, and sent simultaneously by wire to Schenectady, where it was broadcast by WGY and the G. E. shortwave station there. The shortwave broadcasts, heard in Europe, were simultaneously picked up by shortwave station KFKX in Hastings, Nebraska, which rebroadcast it for pickup by KGO. Thus, in 1924, a New York broadcast could be heard live anywhere be-

tween the Pacific Coast and Europe. KGO also carried many less-spectacular remote broadcasts in its early years. A San Francisco studio was installed in the St. Francis Hotel in May of 1924. Regular programs by Henry "Hank" Halstead and his Victor Recording Orchestra were heard from the hotel for many years, as well as performances by Isham Jones' Jazz Band. Numerous pick-ups from clubs, churches, auditoriums, hotels, theaters and dance halls on both sides of the Bay were also frequently heard.

In December of 1924, KGO was authorized to increase its power to 1,500 watts under a special arrangement with the government that provided for gradual increases in increments of 500 watts until the station was found to be interfering with other broadcasters. Only five other stations in the U.S. had been allowed to broadcast at 1,500 watts up until that time.

Several frequency and power changes took place over the next few years under this arrangement:

| DATE | FREQ | POWER |
|----------|------|--------|
| 1/8/24 | 790 | 1,000 |
| 12/3/24 | 790 | 1,500 |
| 1/12/25 | 1000 | 1,500 |
| 1/15/25 | 1000 | 2,000 |
| 3/26/25 | 830 | 2,000 |
| 7/13/25 | 830 | 3,000 |
| 10/8/25 | 830 | 3,500 |
| 11/8/25 | 830 | 4,000 |
| 3/30/26 | 830 | 5,000 |
| 4/26/27 | 830 | 12,500 |
| 6/15/27 | 780 | 5,000 |
| 11/11/28 | 790 | 5,000 |
| 11/22/28 | 790 | 7,500 |

In November, 1928, KGO settled on 7,500 watts at 790 kc. and they remained at this power level until 1947, when they were authorized to raise their power to the present 50,000 watts.

Shortly after KGO first went on the air, it was

provided with an emergency source of power by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, at that Company's own suggestion and expense, to provide the area with an emergency radio service in the event of a power failure. KGO began operating with one of the first crystal-controlled transmitters in 1926, and was recognized by the Bureau of Standards as a "constant frequency station". These and other technological advances helped make KGO one of the nation's top stations technically, as well as in programming.

On August 17, 1929, KGO put a short wave station, W6XN, on the air as part of the sixth Pacific Radio Show held in San Francisco's Civic Auditorium. The proceedings of that exposition were transmitted via shortwave to Schenectady, where they were rebroadcast over WGY and her shortwave stations.

In April of 1927, KGO became an affiliate of the new NBC Orange Network, along with KPO in San Francisco. (Keep in mind that NBC was operated by RCA, and General Electric was one of the companies that owned RCA.) On October 1, 1929, KGO was selected as the key station for the west coast network, and NBC took over complete management and operation of the station. After that date, KGO's programs originated from NBC's San Francisco headquarters at 111 Sutter Street. The Oakland transmitter continued to be used until 1947.

In 1946, the F. C. C. decided that NBC controlled too much of the broadcast industry, and it forced a divestiture of NBC's second network. The Blue Network operation was sold to new owners, and it became ABC, the American Broadcasting Company. The Red Network remained under NBC ownership, and was now called simply the NBC radio network.

After the F.C.C. lifted its war-time freeze on the expansion of broadcast facilities, KGO immediately applied for improved facilities. The station was still operating with 7,500 watts from the same General Electric factory where it had originally begun. After the freeze, however, the F. C. C. granted KGO's application to broadcast with 50,000 watts, the maximum allowable power. What is today's KGO transmitter facility was constructed on land fill at the Eastern approach to the Dumbarton Bridge near Fremont. Three 300-foot towers were constructed, each anchored in salt water. KGO became the first San Francisco station to broadcast with one of the new multi-tower directional antenna systems. The new signal favored north-south reception, allowing KGO to be heard clearly along the entire Pacific coast at night, while protecting a New York station on the same frequency from interference. The new KGO transmitter was among



Walter Winchell at the KGO mike

the most modern then in use. It was the first to be air cooled, and featured a complete set of spare tubes that were kept heated at all times, ready to be switched into the circuit at the push of a button.

KGO's new signal took to the air December 1, 1947. The increase in power effectively doubled the station's daytime coverage area. KGO became the second station in Northern California to broadcast with 50,000 watts -- former sister station KPO had preceded it by 14 years.

May 5, 1949, marked the inaugural broadcast of KGO-TV. The city fathers relinquished the historic Sutro Mansion on Mount Sutro to the new station, with a number of restrictions on building modifications. The station began originating most of its programs from the mansion, with the transmitter and tower at the same location. In the early 1950's, both the radio and TV studios were consolidated at KGO's new location on Golden Gate Avenue.

In the 1950's, KGO radio featured a recorded music format hosted by personality disk jockeys. KGO's most popular disk jockey was Rolfe Peterson, a former English instructor at

Brigham Young University who had turned to radio because the pay was better. One KGO program that was notably innovative was a man-on-the-street program, hosted by comics Mal Sharpe and Jim Coyle. The program was essentially a radio version of TV's "Candid Camera". Coyle and Sharpe would pose as researchers for the Milpitas Physical Fitness Institute, and ask passers-by to do calisthenics; or, they would pose as experimenters from the University of California, testing animal-human brain communication through the use of impressive, if not genuine, electrical equipment.

The 1960's saw KGO inaugurate all-talk programming, with a full array of hosts who discussed the issues of the day with their call-in listeners. KGO quickly became one of the foremost talk stations in the country, and continued this format into the 1990's.

FOOTNOTES:

Article: "Station KGO, San Francisco and Oakland, California".

Unpublished, from KGO historical files.

"San Francisco Examiner", June 1, 1923.

"San Francisco Examiner", January 4, 1925.

"Berkeley Gazette", March 27, 1923.

"Radio" Magazine, May, 1922.

"Radio" Magazine, March, 1924.

"San Francisco Chronical", January 9, 1924.

"Big Business and Radio", by Gleason L. Archer.

"Background on Old Personalities in KGO History".

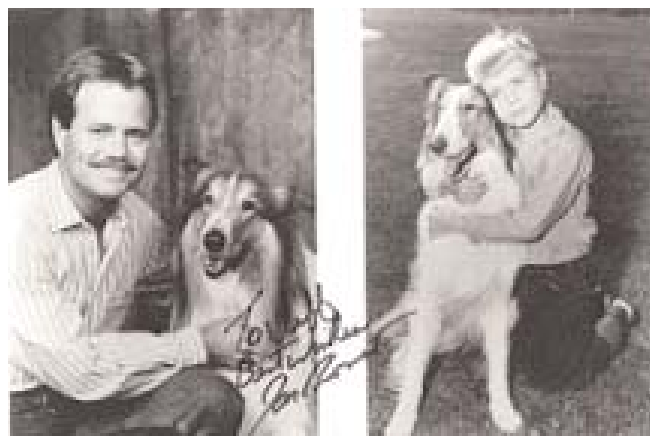
Unpublished; from KGO historical files.

"New Equipment Boosts KGO Broadcast Efficiency".

Press release; from KGO historical files. ■

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Editor's note: I ran this article in last year's Nov/Dec issue. It brought back many memories of my growing up listening to Christmas shows. I thought it might be a good idea to repeat it. Many of the Christmas shows were repeats, and no one seemed to mind.

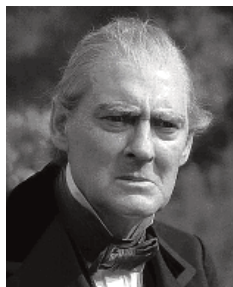
Unexpected Christmas Classics

by Elizabeth McLeod

One of radio's most endearing qualities was its consistency during the holiday season. Every year, December after December, you knew that Bing would sing "Adeste Fideles," that Amos would explain the Lord's Prayer to Arbadella, that Lum and Abner would follow a bright star through a snowy winter night, that Jack Benny would go shopping and trim his tree, and that



Lionel Barrymore would once again "Bah Humbug" his way through "A Christmas Carol." It was that familiarity, that sense of favorite things annually repeated, that gave the holiday season so much of its family flavor during the 1940's and early 1950's ... right up through those last years before television came along with a new set of seasonal traditions.



But, not all of radio's Christmas classics were the old familiar favorites. Every year, lis-



teners could expect to come across something unusual or unaccustomed, a chance to hear a fresh and different angle on the holiday season. Consider Sherlock Holmes, for example -- ever the coldblooded intellectual criminologist in his longrunning radio series, he is hardly a figure one normally associates with Yuletide. But, there he was on Christmas Eve of 1945, as portrayed by Basil Rathbone, bringing all the powers of his analytical brain to bear in an effort to recover a sack of Christmas gifts stolen by one of Professor Moriarty's innumerable henchmen. An Elementary Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

Likewise, one doesn't normally think of Milton Berle when Christmas cheer comes to mind. Unlike many of his comedy colleagues, Berle was never associated with a particular festive holiday tradition. He had no Christmas theme song to call his own; he never gathered his cast around the fireside for a warm family evening of carols and egg nog; and, if Santa walked onto his show, Berle would have been likely to hit him flat in the face with a Christmas



creme pie. And yet, there he was in 1947 (just before he moved on to bigger things in television), getting all the legitimate laughs he could out of the holiday season in a well-written, highly entertaining "Salute To Christmas." And, contrary to his gaghogging, Berle was generous with the laughs in this broadcast -- with one of the funniest bits allocated to his double-talking stooge Al Kelly, who brings down the house with a virtuoso reading of "The Night Before Christmas."

Even less likely to be associated with Christmas festivities than Berle, was the venerable Nick Carter, Master Detective -- who normally devoted himself to the eradication of ruthless Nazi spies and saboteurs, and the occasional mad scientist (who might easily have wandered in



from a nearby Shadow script). But, on Christmas night 1943, there was Nick himself -- in his straight-arrow Street-and-Smith sort of way -- setting out to cure a modern-day Scrooge of his dislike for the holiday season. As adaptable as ever, and accompanied as always by Patsy and Scubby, Nick fit right into this scenario ... as though he were related in some way to that other well-known Nick...the one in the furtrimmed red suit.

And, then there's Rocky Fortune! He was one of the many hard-boiled freelance adventurers who popped up in legions over the postwar era, as unavoidable to listeners at the time as ribbon candy on Grandma's Christmas table. Since Rocky and his fellow tough guys of the late forties were never particularly known for their sentimentality, you might expect him to spend the holiday in a lonely office with the

lights off.. .forlornly polishing his roscoe with a half-empty quart of rye sitting on the desk next to him. But, given the appropriate crime, a man such as Rocky Fortune was fully capable of giving his adventures a Christmas



twist. Sure enough, there he was in 1953 solving "The Plot To Murder Santa Claus." Rocky was the sort of character who'd do anything for a buck, as tough and cynical as they came, but nobody messed with the fat man when he was on the case! Frank Sinatra may have made more memorable contributions to the nation's holiday lore over the course of his long career, but his work as the enterprising Mr. Fortune is an oft-forgotten Christmas treat.

Had enough of the city streets? How about some sagebrush? When the Christmas season arrives, it arrives everywhere ... even the ever wild West. In 1950, the timeless heroes of Tales From The Texas Rangers offered a tale from their 1930's files dealing



with the desperate acts of a Depression-ravaged bandit at Christmastime. That adventure demonstrated that, while crime never pays, holiday kindness always does. Film star Joel McCrea is suitably earnest in his Ranger role, giving radio one of its better attempts at a modern-day Western anthology program.

Will Rogers wasn't a particularly Christmas-oriented performer in his lifetime, although one could certainly imagine him suiting up as Santa for his small-town neighbors in some for-

gotten 1930's film role. Although his son, Will Rogers Jr, never quite matched his dad's charisma, he put forth an entirely credible latter-day twist on his father's established persona in the early 1950's comedy-drama *Rogers of the Gazette*. He was just the sort of folksy down-home editor you might



actually expect to hear stating that all he knows is what he reads in the papers. In this role, the junior Rogers offers up a perfectly agreeable holiday outing with "A White Christmas Tn llyria," a warm 1953 tale of smalltown folk banding together to help those in need of help.

And, don't forget Radio's Outstanding Theatre of Thrills when you make up your holiday listening plans. Over its twenty-year run, Suspense took on just about every topic you could dramatize on the radio, and Christmas is no exception. One of the series most unusual holiday episodes was one of its most timely. In late 1957, the Cold War was at its frigid worst, with Americans whipped into yet another anxious frenzy by the launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik. Producer-director William N. 32 Robeson and writer Michael Frost offer an allegory called "Dog Star," the tale of an innocent young girl who wants a puppy for Christmas ... and gets her wish granted ... from a most unexpected, sky-spanning source. Suspenseful yet poignant, the episode demonstrates the creativity and thoughtfulness that year after year characterized this long-running program. Familiar performers might also show up in unfamiliar guises over the holiday season. Consider Harold Peary, for example -- the actor best known for his portrayal of pompous-yet-endearing Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve.

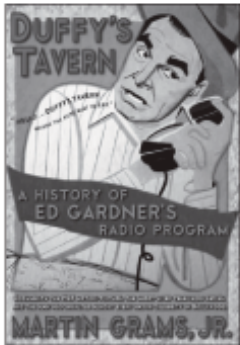


Christmas was always a big deal around the Gildersleeve household, with niece Marjorie's yearnings and nephew Leroy conniving as always for one spectacular gift. Peary's naturally-jovial personality made him an ideal hero during these episodes, always out to do right by his family and friends. But, when Peary left *The Great Gildersleeve* in 1950, one might have expected his holiday-season presence to disappear as well. And yet, there he was, jolly and well-meaning as ever as the star of his new series *Honest Harold*. While not an identical to Gildersleeve, the new-show had enough in common with the old to easily carryover the mood of the original series. So, when "Honest Harold" hosts a Christmas party for the neighborhood kids, there's no disguising his trademark good-natured Gildyness. Whether it was old stars in new roles, unaccustomed settings for familiar themes, or just the comforting presence of a glowing dial on a cold, snowy night at home, radio was an integral part of the holiday season for a generation of Americans. However you observe the season, whatever listening you enjoy with your own family and friends this December, may your own holidays be happy and healthy -- and memorable too. ■
(Reprinted from Radio Collectors of America newsletter 2012 December issue)



“Hello, Duffy’s Tavern, where the elite meet to eat. Archie the manager speakin’... Duffy ain’t here”

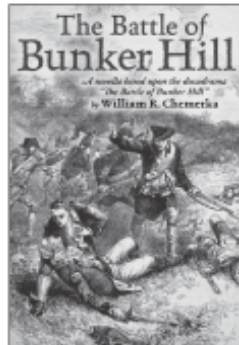
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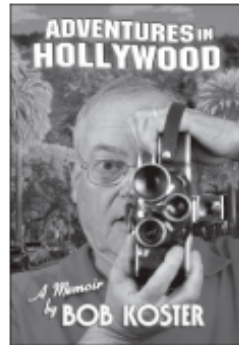
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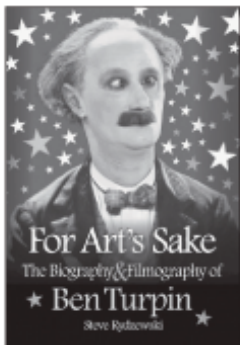
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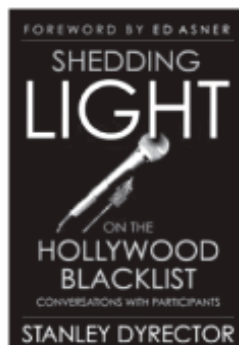
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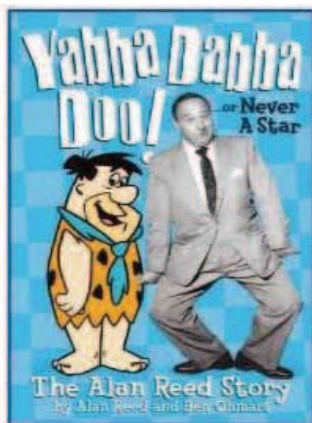


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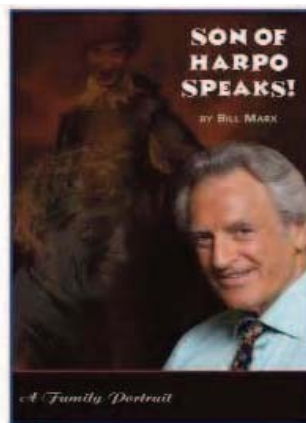
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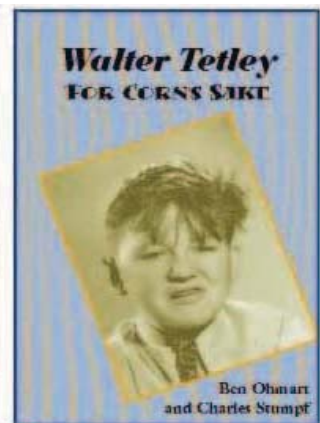
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The Great Gunns: A Forgotten All-Star Show

by Ryan Ellett

The Great Gunns, a “hilarious” but “dramatic” serial, debuted on Chicago's WGN and the Mutual network from 9:30 to 10:00 on Thursday evening, May 8, 1941. The series was developed as a summer replacement for the station's *In Chicago Tonight* and was aired from the station's large audience studio.

The program followed the private and public adventures of the Gunns, a fictional show business family billed as “America's first family of the theater.” William A. Bacher was producer and Forrest Barnes the writer. Barnes, a former Chicagoan before relocating to California where he resided on a ranch near Redwood Park, CA, was a successful radio writer who had written for *First Nighter*, *Grand Hotel*, *the Alex Templeton Hour*, *Knickerbocker Playhouse*, and *the John Barrymore Shakespeare Series*.

WGN assigned some of its biggest names to the series and it was billed as a veritable all-star program at its beginning.

Bret Morrison, then the star of *Chicago Theater of the Air*, had the leading role of Christopher Gunn, the “accomplished tho somewhat wacky” head of the Gunn family “who realizes



Bret Morrison

he is God's gift to the stage.” Barbara Luddy was Veronica Gunn, Chris's wife, described as “a leading lady . . . on the Broadway stage.” Luddy was familiar to many listeners for her headlining role with the *First Nighter* program.

Phil Lord, a veteran actor (but almost surely not the prominent creator of *Gangbusters*, Phillips H. Lord, as suggested by earlier publications), was heard as Pop Gunn, the patriarch of the Gunn clan and Bob Jellison, a member of the WGN Players who often played comedic roles, was Buster, Chris's brother. Two other future radio stars earned roles on the Great Gunns: Willard Waterman as Chris Gunn's rival Gordon Van Gordon and Herb Butterfield as Patty, a theater critic.

John Goldworthy had the part of the Gunn family vin Miller (still working as Marvin Mueller at the time) as theater agent Moe Hoffman. Two other actresses had recurring

parts: Donna Reade (not to be confused with the Hollywood actress Donna Reed) and Rita Ascot who was making her debut on WGN after appearing on other local radio stations, most notably the serials *Ma Perkins* and *The Guiding Light* on NBC. Ascot had the part of Janes, Buster's girlfriend. Harold Stokes, prolific musician for WGN and maestro of the WGN Dance Orchestra, was responsible for the music.

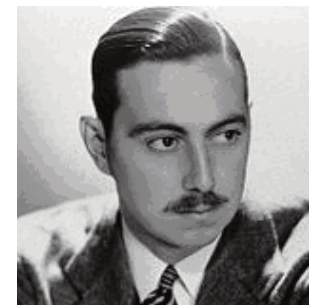
For the debut broadcast employees and officials of the Chicago Plant, Flower, and Fruit Guild, which was working with the *Chicago Tribune* to sponsor a two-day distribution of



Barabara Luddy



Marvin Miller



Willard Waterman

blooms to local shut-ins, were special studio guests. Local critics responded to the premier with great gusto, recalling the “salvos of riotous laughter and applause” from the studio audience. Perhaps in a moment of excessive exuberance the same critic gushed that the Gunns called to mind the famous acting couple Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne and the legendary Barrymore clan with some Marx Brothers and W. C. Fields thrown in to the mix.

Stories revolved around the grandiose egos of the four principal Gunns as they went about the mundane daily tasks of an average family. Each Gunn continually fought for the spotlight, trying to steal every scene in life's daily routines. The smashing premier episodes concluded with Bret Morrison reading the lines of Shakespeare's Romeo while lying prostrate on the floor speaking into a microphone just a foot high and Barbara Luddy reading Juliet's lines from a “balcony,” a microphone set at the normal height of five feet. Principal plot threads were introduced including Chris and Veronica quarreling over rival Van Gordon, Buster's struggles to learn his lines for a new role, and Pop's continual reminders to everyone of his successful run as Macbeth, a role he played for fifty years. Gloomy the butler, meantime, spent the half hour fetching coffee, cointreau, cold milk, warm milk, hot milk, whiskey and soda, chicken sandwiches, and oatmeal.

Reade and Miller joined the series for its sec-

ond broadcast on May 15. Reade, fresh off a number of roles on the *Chicago Theater of the Air*, was featured as Myra, an actress friend of Veronica Gunn. Miller was introduced as Moe Hoffman, a theatrical agent. Loretta Poynton also appeared in an unidentified part of the episode. The second show, which focused on Chris's efforts to get estranged wife Veronica to sign a contract to appear in “Romeo and Juliet,” was followed by studio audience auditions for a new WGN quiz show *Shoot the Works*.

For the third broadcast (May 22) Forrest Lewis made his debut on the show as Winchy Walters, a Broadway gossip columnist inspired, naturally, by Walter Winchell. A juicy tidbit published by Winchy Walters caused havoc for the Gunn family during the episode. Walters came with considerable acting experience; eight years on radio and fifteen years before that on the stage. Like Barbara Luddy, Lewis was a veteran of the *First Nighter* program and had recently been a regular on *Scattergood Baines* over the previous three years playing 25 different characters. His radio premier had come eight years earlier on WGN's *Uncle Quin's Scalawags* program.

Yet a new character, Leander Bistle, was added to the cast for the fourth episode (May 29). In a move which may have been more for publicity than anything else, Pete Panos, a waiter at the Wrigley Building restaurant, was hired for the part. An apocryphal story relates



that producer William Bacher was dining at the eatery and knew the unknown Panos had to be the new Bistle character as soon as he heard Panos talk. Caught off-guard when Bacher blurted out “Bistle!” upon hearing the waiter’s voice, Panos indignantly responded “I am not! My name is Pete Panos. This Whistle, he does not even work here. You want soup?”

Bacher patiently explained to Panos, who had been the captain and assistant head waiter for a dozen years without a thought of pursuing acting, that the radio spot was perfect for him. Panos, who played Bistle, a costumer and frock fitter, was originally from Thebes, Greece, and arrived in the United States in 1914. He began waiting tables in Minneapolis, MN, then continued in the line of work after relocating to Chicago in 1925.

A review of the May 29 episode raved about Panos’ debut. As Leander Bistle he kept the audience in stitches measuring Veronica Gunn for a costume in the midst of her rehearsal for “Romeo and Juliet” and family quarrels over love and acting. In addition, Hugh



Hugh Marlowe

Marlowe, a Broadway actor, was featured on the episode as Chris Gunn while regular Bret Morrison fulfilled a separate obligation in New York.

The next week’s fifth episode on June 5 found Veronica Gunn close to giving in to the sweet talk of Waterman’s Gordon Van Gordon, playing Mercutio in the Shakespeare production, who encouraged her to leave Christopher and elope with him. Unable to bear the thought of life without his wife, Morrison’s Chris Gunn threat-

ens suicide. The troubled couple make an uneasy peace by imagining themselves as another famous historical couple, Abelard and Heloise.

The stage performance of “Romeo and Juliet,” a storyline running back to the premier episode of *The Great Gunns*, was wrapped up in episode six, broadcast June 12. As soon as the curtain is drawn on the Shakespearean tragedy, a Hollywood producer, played by *The Great Gunns*’ own writer Forrest Barnes, arrives on the scene to offer the Gunns a contract to appear in a motion picture. Veronica signed Barnes’ contract, unbeknownst to her husband who was, in turn, furious and insisted that motion pictures were below the dignity of the Gunns. His wife’s charm and outright bribery eventually brought her husband, Chris, around to the possibilities offered by Tinseltown.

On June 19 a new storyline was introduced with the Great Gunns heading out to the bright lights of Hollywood. Chris Gunn was sure that his family could raise the artistic level of Hollywood and agreed to appear with Veronica in “The Swordsman.” Hijinks were sure to follow and the Gunns found themselves waist-high in trouble after Chris knocked out a prominent leading man and then a police officer. The appearance of arch-rival Van Gordon only furthered Chris’ problems.

Pete Panos, the Greek waiter who unexpectedly found himself on the WGN program just a few weeks before, returned for the June 26 broadcast, again as dress designer Leander Bistle. It was reported in the press that Panos was subsequently required to join the American Federation of Radio Actors (AFRA). The necessary fifty dollar membership fee was supposedly paid by fellow *Great Gunns* cast members in the form of a tip left for Panos while he was

back on duty at the Wrigley Building restaurant. Now in Hollywood, the Gunns wrestled with whether or not Chris should hire a press agent to maximize his work potential. Bob Bailey, who years later would thrill listeners as the legendary Johnny Dollar, appeared as publicity man Birdy Russell. William A. Bacher was replaced by Lou Jacobson as producer for the week's episode.



Bob Bailey

Washed up with film, the following week (July 3) the Gunns found themselves considering entering summer stock theater. Chris put pressure on his wife to appear in Somerset Maugham's "Rain," adapted for the stage by John Colton and Clemence Randolph in 1922. He was sure Veronica would make an ideal Sadie Thompson, lead female in the play.

Interest in live theater quickly passed that week and by July 10 the Gunn family returned to their silver screen pursuits. No sooner do they strike a deal than Chris Gunn began to quarrel with the film's director, Eric Von Eisenstein. Von Eisenstein left in a huff and "long bearded genius" Lorson Swells (a take-off of the prominent Orson Welles played by Marvin Miller) took the reins of the Gunn film. Chris could not get along any better with the new director, calling him a "glorified Quiz Kid." Compounding the family problems, Chris and Veronica were busted for stealing popsicles. Malcolm Meacham also appeared in the episode.

Unable to match their stage success in California, the Great Gunns departed the West Coast for their Long Island home on the July 17 broadcast. Family preparations for the fiftieth

anniversary celebration of patriarch Pop Gunn as Macbeth came to a screeching halt when Bust abruptly announced to his parents that he plans to marry Hannah Wilson, the daughter of a lowly farmer. Chris and Veronica were flabbergasted; it had been a family tradition for five generations that the Gunns only marry theater professionals. To address the dilemma, Chris dreamed up a scheme by which he'd travel to the girl's home state of Michigan, join a stock troupe, and convince her that theater is the life for her. Miller, heard in earlier episodes as agent Moe Hoffman and Lorson Swells, spent the week in the part of Gloomy the butler while John Goldworthy, the regular Gloomy, participated in another theater production.

John Gunn's plan unfolded during the next two weeks and the Great Gunns indeed took summer stock of Michigan's Upper Peninsula by storm. Writer Barnes took the opportunity to introduce new characters with the change in location. Mrs. Budge, president of the Tuesday Afternoon Ladies Get-Together, Chit-Chat and Play Reading Society, was played by Eva Parnell and Miss Sarah Brump, village spinster, was played by Ruth Perrott. Willard Farnum, a WGN veteran and former star of the station's Harold Teen in the early 1930s, was cast as Tommy Benson, a typical country boy, and Mr. Harper, owner of an Avoirdupois, MI, hotel.

It wasn't until the August 14 episode that the Gunn family finally arrived back in New York. Without a moment to waste they were thrust into a new adventure when the opportunity to purchase an old showboat presented itself. Two new characters were introduced, playwright Norvell Courage (Marvin Miller's Noel Coward parody) and Lancaster, an African-American porter (Murray Forbes).

Joining the cast on August 21 was no less than the illustrious Virginia Payne, then starring

in the lead role of *Ma Perkins*. She had also been featured in the local WGN show *The Carters of Elm Street*. Payne was heard as Ada, a former stage star who marries her beau Pop Gunn.

With the short summer season winding down, Barbara Luddy left *The Great Gunns* to concentrate on the more prestigious *First*



Virginia Payne

Nighter on which she continued as the leading lady. In her place as the new Veronica Gunn stepped Betty Winkler, a regular on Chicago radio. *The Great Gunns* only lasted a short time after Winkler took over as Veronica but one last notable achievement for the series was its inclusion on the broadcast schedule of W59C, WGN's brand new FM sister station.

Without fanfare *The Great Gunns* aired its finale on September 25, 1941. The following week it was replaced with *Three Ring Time*, a program which featured the likes of Charles Laughton, Milton Berle, Shirley Ross, Bill Goodwin, and Bob Crosby over the next few weeks.

Unfortunately, it does not appear that any recorded episodes of this program have survived. Though short-lived, that it featured such future radio luminaries as Brett Morrison, Barbara Luddy, Willard Waterman, and Herb Butterfield, Bob Bailey, and Virginia Payne would make it an interesting listen for any old time radio enthusiast. With so many prominent radio performers involved with the series, we can hope more detailed information about *The Great Gunns* will be discovered in archival collections some day.

Interestingly, *The Great Gunns* actually first appeared on the air down under on Australia's 3XY in 1939. The lack of documentation on the series, however, means we currently don't know how the show – written by the American Forrest Barnes – came to be broadcast in Australia and why it debuted there two years before the United States. The known episode synopses – all provided by Ian Grieve – prove that the Australian series' storylines mirrored those of the American version, though it's not clear to what extent.

Premiering on February 14th, 9:00, over 3XY, the series was described as "The story of America's first family of the theatre - *The Great Gunns*." The cast has been identified as: Marcia Hart - Joan, Guy Hasting - Gloomy, Mayne Lynton - Scriptwriter, Tom Miller - Buster Austen Milroy - Pop, Catherine Neill - Veronica John Storr - Patty, Lloyd William - Gordon Norman Winter - Chris ■

EVERYBODY COMES TO RICK'S PLACE!

Everyone who is on the internet and has email needs to take a quick few seconds and click on this link: www.RicksPlace.info and sign up. It's absolutely free. Rick's Place, named after the upscale nightclub and gambling den in Casablanca (1942), is a newsgroup that started back in January, providing the latest news about conventions, comics, books, movies, old-time radio and anything in between. This has proven to be a valuable vehicle that delivers pertinent information and items of interest to the membership. The discussion group has, in past issues, discovered that the Asheville Western Film Festival was recently cancelled due to a disagreement with the convention management and the hotel, new DVD releases, and recent old-time radio findings. Over 2,000 people have subscribed already, according to Dave, the man in charge, and an average of two additional people subscribe every day. "What I would like to see is more discussions about old-time radio," he explained. So take a moment and subscribe at www.RicksPlace.info. If you do not like what you read, you can always unsubscribe. ■

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Old-Time Radio Recreations on Stage!**

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Crowne Plaza Blue Ash
in Cincinnati, Ohio**

<http://expo.wayback.net>

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Mike Wheeler (859) 402-0853 expo@wayback.net



NOSTALGIA EXPO



OTRR ACQUIRES NEW EPISODES AND UPGRADED SOUND ENCODES FOR Nov/Dec

This 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 Sept and Oct. 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 & for transcription disks tony_senior@yahoo.com

Fibber McGee And Molly

55-06-16 The Woodpecker.wav
55-06-19 Counseling The Old Timer.wav
55-06-20 McGee Pawns Molly's Coat.wav
Fibber McGee And Molly 55-06-21 Hit And Run.wav
55-06-22 The Autographed Baseball.wav
55-06-23 McGee Bustles In The Kitchen.wav
55-09-26 The McGeeGas Saver.wav
55-09-27 McGee Gives A Gift To The Elks.wav

Gang Busters

50-06-10 The Case Of The Inside Track.mp3
50-09-30 The Case Of The Temperate Thief.mp3

Green Hornet, The

52-10-01 Political Crossfire.wav
52-10-03 Spy Master.wav
52-10-08 The Changing Alibi.wav
52-10-10 Keys To A Robbery.wav
52-10-15 Election Boomerang.wav
52-10-17 Proof Of Treasure.wav
52-10-22 Jeff Warren's Safe.wav
52-10-24 Unknown Assassin.wav
52-10-29 The Microfilm Of Death.wav
52-10-31 The Hawkridge Gems.wav
52-11-05 A Friday Night In The Mountains.wav
52-11-07 The Simple Clue.wav

52-11-12 The Triple Cross.wav
52-11-14 Ceiling On Crime.wav
52-11-19 The Cigarette Filters.wav
52-11-21 Shipment For Korea.wav
52-11-26 Gas House Ending.wav
52-11-28 Murder And Espionage.wav
52-12-05 Axford's Romantic Disaster.wav
52-12-03 Pretenders To The Throne.wav

Inner Sanctum

45-01-09 Desert Death.mp3
45-04-17 The Judas Clock.mp3
45-05-01 The Girl And The Gallows.mp3
45-05-22 Dead To Rights.mp3
45-06-19 Dead Men's Holiday.mp3
46-05-07 You Could Die Laughing.mp3
46-05-21 Detour To Terror.mp3
49-01-10 Murder Comes To Life.mp3
49-01-31 The Devil's Fortune.mp3
49-03-28 Appointment With Death.mp3
49-05-16 The Unburied Dead.mp3
52-08-24.mp3

Jack Benny

1948-11-07 Jack Hears an Echo (The Psychiatrist).mp3
1951-01-21 Jack Goes to Doctor for a Check-up.mp3
1951-03-18 Jack talks about his illness.mp3
1951-05-27 Jack meets Speed Riggs at the Doctors Office.mp3
1952-04-06 Jack goes to the dentist.mp3
1952-11-09 Jack goes to doctor for a vitamin shot.mp3
1953-09-27 Polly goes to the psychiatrist.mp3
1954-11-28 Dennis sees a psychiatrist.mp3

Life of Riley

1944-04-16 Proxy Wedding (Part 1).mp3
1944-04-23 Proxy Wedding (Part 2).mp3
1945-03-18 Riley tries to become a pal to Junior.mp3
1945-03-25 Missing five dollars.mp3
1946-06-29 Paper route subscription contest to go to camp.mp3

Life of Riley

1946-11-02 Peg & Riley both run for park supervisor.mp3
1947-02-01 Mr X - Riley switched as a baby.mp3
1947-11-29 Thanksgiving with the Gillises.mp3
1948-04-24 Spring fever.mp3
1948-08-27 Riley's night job.mp3
1949-02-25 Sneak preview of 'The Life of Riley' movie.mp3
1949-11-25 Thanksgiving dinner with the boss.mp3
1950-05-19 The electric company and Simon and Babs.mp3
1950-05-26 Peg in a beauty contest.mp3
1951-05-04 Riley and the marriage certificate.mp3
1951-06-01 Riley and the ballet.mp3

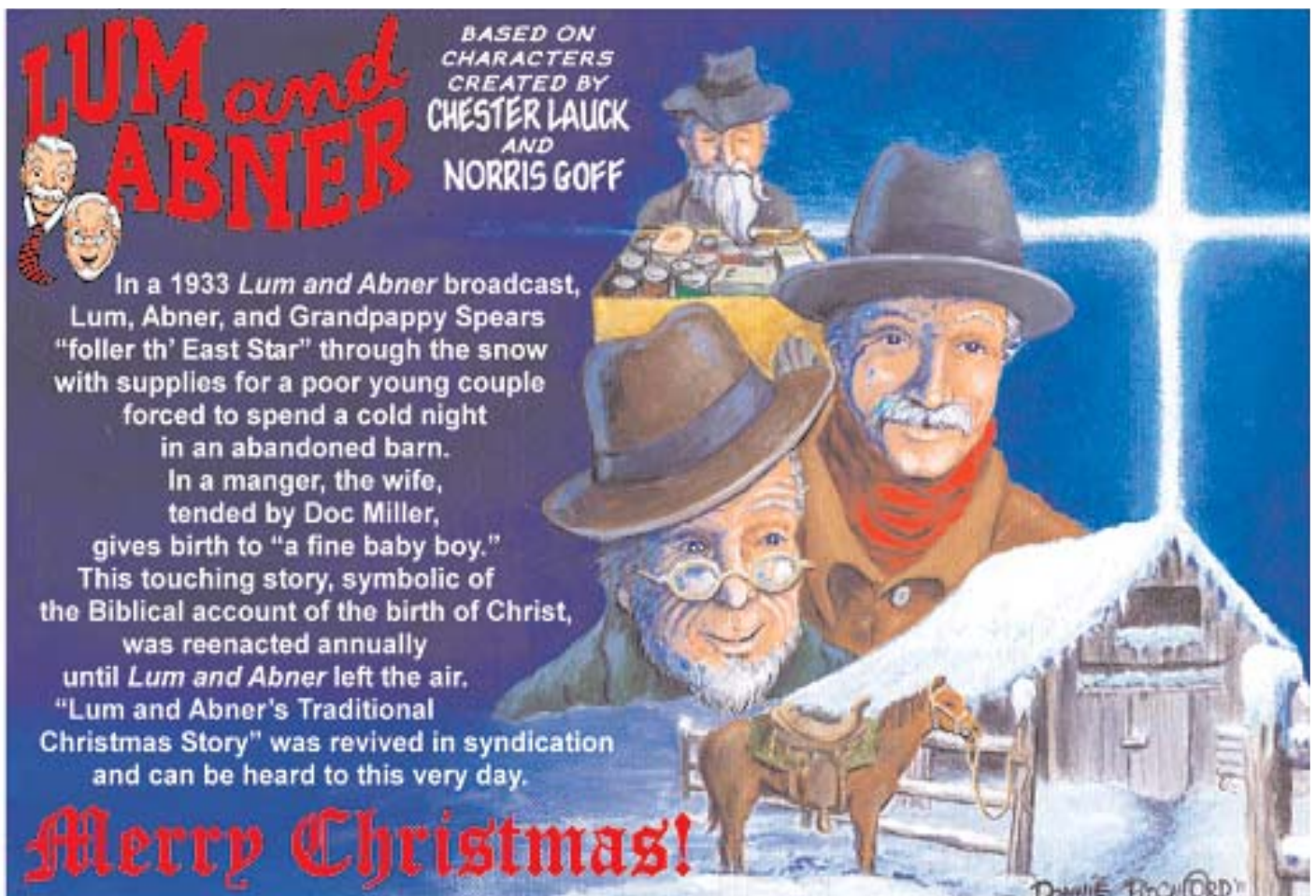
Line-Up, The

51-01-11 The Mad Bomber Case.mp3
51-03-27 The Lapinish Lighter-Upper Case.mp3

Lone Ranger

1942-06-08 Lumber for the Railroad (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-10 The Wrong Redskin (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-12 Outlaws in War Paint (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-15 Race to Dry Creek (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-17 Ambush at Bright Rainbow (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-19 Mortgages Paid Off (Iron Spur Series).mp3

LISTEN to this comic strip! lumandabnersociety.org Facebook: Lum and Abner Comic Strip Group



LUM and ABNER

BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY CHESTER LAUCK AND NORRIS GOFF

In a 1933 *Lum and Abner* broadcast, Lum, Abner, and Grandpappy Spears "foller th' East Star" through the snow with supplies for a poor young couple forced to spend a cold night in an abandoned barn. In a manger, the wife, tended by Doc Miller, gives birth to "a fine baby boy." This touching story, symbolic of the Biblical account of the birth of Christ, was reenacted annually until *Lum and Abner* left the air. "Lum and Abner's Traditional Christmas Story" was revived in syndication and can be heard to this very day.

Merry Christmas!

Donnie Pitchford

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Lone Ranger

1942-06-22 Badlands for Badmen (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-24 Clouds Across the Moon (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-26 Quicksand for a Gambler (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-06-29 Trouble at the Canyon (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-07-01 Kidnapped (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-07-03 Surprise at Sunrise (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1942-07-06 End of the Iron Spur (Iron Spur Series).mp3
1947-03-03 Runaway Railroad.mp3
1947-11-07 The Union Pacific Series - Part One.mp3
1947-11-10 The Union Pacific Series - Part Two.mp3
1947-11-12 The Union Pacific Series - Part Three.mp3
1947-11-14 The Union Pacific Series - Part Four.mp3
1948-11-01 The Flashlight Ring - Part One.mp3
1948-11-03 The Flashlight Ring - Part Two.mp3

Man From Homicide, The

51-07-09 Don Shelberger Murder.mp3
51-07-16 Old Man Kelso.mp3

Mr And Mr North

53-12-29 The Witness.wav
43-09-22 The Contagious Confession.wav
44-08-05 Pam Keeps Out Of Trouble (Mystery Plhse).wav
50-12-05 Who Killed Mr Stefano.wav
52-02-12 The Premature Corpse.wav
53-12-22 Background For Murder.wav
54-02-23 Winter Honeymoon.wav
xx-xx-xx Murder For Sale.wav

Nick Carter

1943-09-27 Glass Coffin.mp3
1943-10-18 State's Prison Evidence.mp3

1943-11-10 Drug Ring Murder.mp3
1943-11-17 Substitute Bride.mp3
1944-04-01 Professor's Secret.mp3
1946-04-02 Eight Records of Death.mp3
1946-04-09 COT Disappearing Corpse.mp3
1946-05-28 COT Demented Daughter.mp3
1946-06-04 COT Dictaphone Murder.mp3
1947-12-07 COT Exploded Alibi.mp3
1947-12-28 COT Missing Street.mp3
1948-01-04 COT Devil's Left Eye.mp3
1948-03-14 COT Last Old Timer.mp3
1948-03-21 COT Magic Rope.mp3
1948-04-04 COT Star of Evil.mp3
1949-12-25 COT Phantom Shoplifter.mp3

Night Watch

54-05-03 Glass Breaker.mp3
54-07-10 Hammer 211.mp3

OLBB

1948 Pgm #10 You and Your Ballot w Robert Montgomery (C).wav
1948 Pgm #11 Men of Tomorrow w Abbott and Costello (C).mp3
1948 Pgm #12 Voices in the Dark (C).wav
1948 Pgm #13 Play Ball w Bob Hope (C).wav
1948 Pgm #2 No Vacancies w Joan Fontaine.wav
1948 Pgm #3 Program for Peace w Herbert Marshall (C).wav
1948 Pgm #4 Little Red School House w Adolph Menjou (C).wav
1948 Pgm #5 Legislative Forum w Brian Aherne (C).wav
1948 Pgm #6 Win the Peace w Jack Carson (C).wav
1948 Pgm #7 Veterans At Work w Jack Carson (C).wav
1948 Pgm #8 Religion - War and Peace w Madeleine Carroll (C).wav
1948 Pgm #9 For Those Who Served w Herbert Marshall (C).wav

Official Detective

56-02-03 Butcher Shop Murder.mp3

Our Miss Brooks

1948-11-21 The Model School Teacher.mp3
1949-02-13 Stretch the Basketball Star.mp3
1949-05-01 Walter v Stretch Grudge Match.mp3
1949-05-22 Peanuts, the Great Dane.mp3
1949-05-29 Arguments, Arguments!.mp3
1949-07-10 The Telegram.mp3
1949-07-24 Mrs Davis' Cookies.mp3
1949-08-07 Heat Wave.mp3
1949-09-25 Conklin Causes a Fight.mp3
1949-12-11 Game at Clay City.mp3
1949-12-18 A Letter to Santa.mp3
1950-01-01 Babysitting on New Year's Eve.mp3
1950-01-22 Professorship at State U.mp3
1950-02-05 Miss Enright's Dinner.mp3
1950-02-19 Valentine's Day Date.mp3
1950-05-07 Boynton's Barbecue.mp3
1950-05-14 Mr Boynton's Parents.mp3
1950-10-01 Measles Diagnosis.mp3
1955-08-21 Who's Going Where.mp3
1955-09-18 Oo-Oo-Me-Me-Tocoludi-Gucci-Mo-O-Moo.mp3

Phil Harris

1952-04-13 Alice's Easter Dress.mp3
1952-04-20 Alices' Old Boyfriend, George Henderson.mp3
1952-04-27 Phil is Directed to Fire His Band.mp3
1952-05-04 Helping Alice with Spring Cleaning.mp3
1952-05-11 The Harris Kids on TV.mp3
1952-05-18 Julius is Missing.mp3
1952-05-25 Alice's Surprise Party for Mr. Scott.mp3
1952-10-05 Hotel Harris.mp3
1952-10-12 The Stolen US Mail.mp3
1952-10-19 Phil the Television Star.mp3
1952-10-26 Baby Alice's First Date.mp3

1952-11-02 Phil Helps Get Out the Vote.mp3
1952-11-09 Surprise Party for Phil.mp3
1952-11-16 Alice Buys a Business.mp3
1952-11-23 The Football Tickets.mp3
1952-11-30 Elliot's Girlfriend's Name is on Phil's Chest.mp3
1952-12-07 Julius is in Jail.mp3
1952-12-14 An Elephant for Mr Scott.mp3
1952-12-21 Women's Club Santa Claus.mp3
1952-12-28 New Year's Eve Party at the Har-rises.mp3

Police Blotter

56-xx-xx Homicide By Hurricane.mp3

Somebody Knows

50-08-24 The Black Dahlia.mp3

Squad Room

55-xx-xx Body Found In A Plastic Bag.mp3

Treasury Agent

47-08-11 The Case Of The Faithful Wife.mp3

Twenty-First Precinct

56-06-28 Abandoned Baby.mp3

Under Arrest

49-05-08 Mrs. Mollison's Handbag.mp3

Unit 88

57-11-01 First Call - Attempted Suicide.mp3

VOTA

Pgm #231 Red Points (C).wav
Pgm #232 Time Runs Out (C).wav
Pgm #253 Independence Day (C).wav
Pgm #254 They'll Always Remember (C).wav
Pgm #257 Someone to Watch Over Me (C).wav
Pgm #258 The Broken Strands (C).wav

YTJD

55-10-17 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 1.5.mp3
55-10-18 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 2.5.mp3
55-10-19 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 3.5.mp3
55-10-20 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 4.5.mp3
55-10-21 The Chesapeake Fraud Matter 5.5.mp3
55-10-24 The Alvin Summers Matter 1.5.mp3
55-10-25 The Alvin Summers Matter 2.5.mp3
55-10-26 The Alvin Summers Matter 3.5.mp3

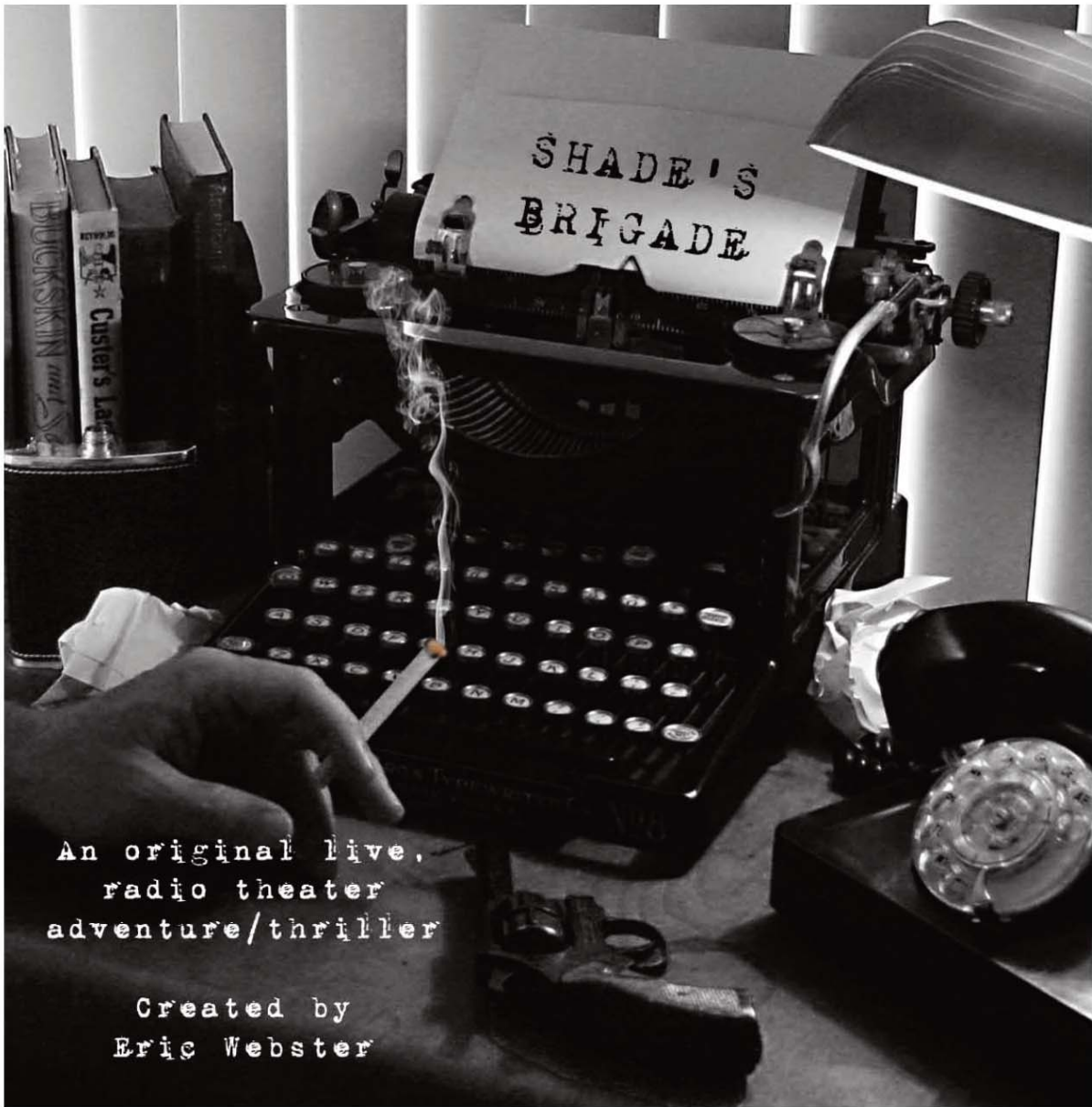
YTJD

55-10-27 The Alvin Summers Matter 4.5.mp3
55-10-28 The Alvin Summers Matter 5.5.mp3
55-10-31 The Valentine Matter 1.5.mp3
55-11-01 The Valentine Matter 2.5.mp3
55-11-02 The Valentine Matter 3.5.mp3
55-11-03 The Valentine Matter 4.5.mp3
55-11-04 The Valentine Matter 5.5.mp3
55-11-14 The Broderick Matter 1.5.mp3
55-11-15 The Broderick Matter 2.5.mp3
55-11-16 The Broderick Matter 3.5.mp3
55-11-17 The Broderick Matter 4.5.mp3
55-11-18 The Broderick Matter 5.5.mp3
56-02-27 The Fathom Five Matter 1.5.mp3
56-02-28 The Fathom Five Matter 2.5.mp3
56-02-29 The Fathom Five Matter 3.5.mp3
56-03-01 The Fathom Five Matter 4.5.mp3
56-03-02 The Fathom Five Matter 5.5.mp3
56-03-26 The LaMarr Matter 1.5.mp3

56-03-27 The LaMarr Matter 2.5.mp3
56-03-28 The LaMarr Matter 3.5.mp3
56-03-29 The LaMarr Matter 4.5.mp3
56-03-30 The LaMarr Matter 5.5.mp3
56-07-23 The Open Town Matter 1.5.mp3
56-07-24 The Open Town Matter 2.5.mp3
56-07-25 The Open Town Matter 3.5.mp3
56-07-26 The Open Town Matter 4.5.mp3
56-07-27 The Open Town Matter 5.5.mp3
56-08-24 The Kranesburg Matter 1.6.mp3
56-08-27 The Kranesburg Matter 2.6.mp3
56-08-28 The Kranesburg Matter 3.6.mp3
56-08-29 The Kranesburg Matter 4.6.mp3
56-08-30 The Kranesburg Matter 5.6.mp3
56-08-31 The Kranesburg Matter 6.6.mp3
56-11-18 The Markham Matter.mp3
56-11-25 The Royal Street Matter.mp3
56-12-16 The Rasmussen Matter.mp3
56-12-20 The Red Mystery Matter.mp3



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