



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 31, Number 3

March, 2006

Newsman Elmer Davis

(Reprinted from an Internet article)

Thanks to Mary Moliski and Ray Boomhower for much of this information

Born in Aurora, Indiana on January 13, 1890, Elmer Davis began his career in news after his freshman year in high school when he started working for the Aurora Bulletin as a printer's devil. His quick mind and interest in writing moved him in the direction that would eventually distinguish him and become his life's work.

While speaking of his printer's job, his best friend, Alex Cobb, said "Every morning [Davis] sallied forth in clean overalls with lunch pail in hand, returning at night with empty lunch pail and overalls, shirt, face and hands covered with ink and grease." But the printing side was not what Davis had in mind for his career. One of his first professional writing jobs was for the Indianapolis Star. He was paid \$25 and continued working for them as the Franklin College correspondent during his college years.

In 1910 Davis received a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. His time at Oxford, however, was cut short when his father was taken ill and died. Despite his

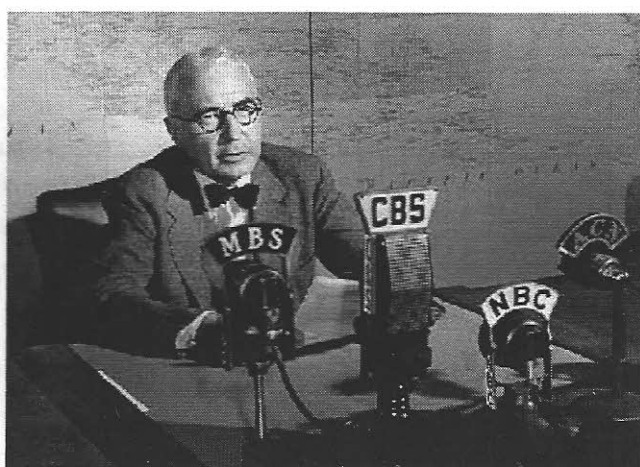
short stay in England, Davis' interest caused him to continue to make frequent trips to the continent. It was during one of these trips that he met and eventually married his wife, Florence.

When he returned to America, Davis took an editorial position with Adventure magazine. Only a year later he was to leave that position for a job as reporter for the New York Times. For the next ten years, Davis would report on stories ranging from pugilist Jack Dempsey to evangelist Billy Sunday. It was his coverage of the latter that earned him fame and fortune. Since reporters were paid by the space their stories occupied, Davis' coverage of Sunday

was a gold mine. Samuel T. Williamson, a fellow Times reporter, said of Davis: he "benefited from his facility with the English language," which "made it possible for him to write a long story so phrased that a copy-reader couldn't cut it much."

Davis continued to climb the ladder of success at the Times but left the publication in

1923 to become a freelance writer. Though he was free to write what he pleased, he was still apprehensive about his decision. In a letter to a friend, Davis wrote: "Can you conceive the relief, after ten years of writing for tomorrow's paper, of
(Continued on Page 3)



RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

PO BOX 1908, Englewood CO 80150 (303) 761-4139 -

Dedicated to the preservation of old-time radio programs, and to making those programs available to our members

Old-Time Radio is Alive and Well in Colorado!

KEZW 1430 AM	"When Radio Was", with Stan Frieberg	Weekdays, 7:00 - 8:00 PM
Pirate Radio 104.7 FM	"Radio Memories" (Greeley)	Sunday, 6:30 - 12:00 PM
	and, Pirate Radio internet streaming at http://www.pirate1047.com	Sunday, 6:30 - 12:00 PM
KNUS 710 AM	"Radio Revisited"	Weekdays, 10:00 - 11:00 PM
KRMA TV Channel 6	Secondary Audio Program (SAP), "Tribute to OTR"	Sunday, 2:00 PM

RHAC WEB SITE <http://www.rhac.org>

RHAC OTR WEB PAGE <http://www.old-time.com/rhac.html>

RETURN WITH US NOW... is the official publication of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado, Inc., a nonprofit organization. Cost of membership is \$25.00 for the 1st year with \$15.00 for renewal. Each member in good standing has full use of the club resources. For further information contact anyone listed below. Any mention of a product in **RETURN WITH US NOW...** does not constitute an endorsement by RHAC.

President:	Larry Weide	5270 E. Nassau Cir. Englewood, CO 80113	(303) 758-8382	lweide@attglobal.net
Vice-President:	<i>Open Position</i>			
Secretary:	<i>Open Position</i>			
Treasurer:	Maletha King	900 W. Quincy Ave. Englewood, CO 80110	(303) 761-4139	dickking@earthlink.net
Newsletter:	Carol Tiffany	1394 Golf Vista Court N. E., Palm Bay, FL 32905	(321) 723-7803	ctiffany@worldnet.att.net
Talking Newsletter	B.J. George	Email - bj39@tds.net		Talking Newsletter egroup - http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rwun
Membership:	Maletha King	PO BOX 1908 Englewood, CO 80150	(303) 761-4139	dickking@earthlink.net
Tape Donations:	Bill McCracken	7101 W. Yale Ave. #503 Denver, CO 80227	(303) 986-9863	
	Herb Duniven	4184 S. Syracuse St. Denver, CO 80237		
Directors at Large:	David L. Michael, Herb Duniven			

LIBRARIES

Reference Material:	Bill McCracken	7101 W. Yale Ave. #503	Denver, CO 80227	(303) 986-9863
Logs & Scripts:	Fred Hinz	c/o RHAC PO Box 1908	Englewood, CO 80150	
Open Reel Tape:	Maletha King	900 W. Quincy Ave.	Englewood, CO 80110	
Cassette Tape:				
#1 (1-499)	David Gatch	PO Box 70	Glen Haven, CO 80532	(970) 577-0805
#2 (500-999)	David Gatch	PO Box 70	Glen Haven, CO 80532	(970) 577-0805
#3 (1000-2000)	Dave Logan	5557 S. Sherman Cir.	Littleton, CO 80121	(303) 730-1430
#4 (5001-up)	Mika Rhoden	3950 W. Dartmouth Ave.	Denver, CO 80236	(303) 937-9476
CD Library:	Thomas Woessner	9693 W. Euclid Dr	Littleton CO 80123-3192	(303) 936-4643

Convention Schedules

20th Annual OTR and Nostalgia Convention, April 21 - 22, 2006; Contact Bob Burchett, 10280 Gunpowder Rd., Florence, KY 41042 (888-477-9112) haradio@hotmail.com

31st Old-time Country and Bluegrass Contest and Festival, Aug 28 - Sep 3, 2006 at Harrison County Fairgrounds in Missouri Valley, Iowa. For information contact Bob Everhart at Box 492, Walnut, IA 51577 (712) 762-4363 bobeverhart@yahoo.com

Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention, Sep 14 - 17, 2006 at Four Points Sheraton, Aberdeen, MD Web site is www.midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com, For information call Michelle or Martin at (717) 456-6208

31st Friends of Old-time Radio Convention, Oct 19 - 22, 2006 at the Holiday Inn, Newark, NJ; For information contact Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887 JayHick@aol.com or check our web site: <http://www.fotr.net>

CREDIT: This publication may, under license, use objects and/or images from one or more of the following: Lotus Wordpro97 and Corel Gallery. These software packages are protected by the copyright laws of the United States, Canada and elsewhere. This publication is copywrited 2006, with all rights reserved.

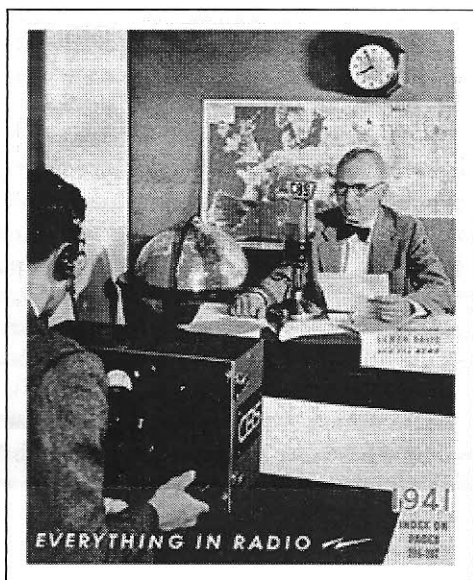
RETURN WITH US NOW...

-2-

March, 2006

cutting loose for once and trying to see if you can do something good? With the awful peril of the abyss, of course, in case you find that even with everything perfect you can't do anything more than hack work." As a freelancer, Davis took up both fiction and non-fiction achieving modest success in both forms.

In August 1939, Davis received a call from Columbia Broadcasting's news chief, Paul White, asking Davis to fill in as a news analyst for H. V. Kaltenborn, who was off in Europe reporting on the increasingly hostile events. Davis later wrote: "I had done some broadcasting at odd times over the past dozen years, had sometimes even pinch-hit for



Kaltenborn during his absences; but to fill in for him in such a crisis as this was a little like trying to play center field in place of Joe DiMaggio." Davis became an instant success. Edward R. Murrow felt that some of Davis' success was that his Hoosier accent reminded folks of home.

During the war years, radio listeners tuned in regularly to hear Elmer Davis report and analyze the day's events. On one occasion he presented the details of the sighting of an unidentified submarine within the U.S. safety (neutrality) zone by announcing, "Of course the safety zone declaration doesn't say that belligerent war ships must keep out; only that they mustn't do any fighting. But what are they there for? American neutrality is a serious matter. It seems a pity that it threatens to provide the war with comic relief..." Again, Ed Murrow wrote to Davis. "I have hopes that broadcasting is to become an adult means of communication at last," said Murrow. "I've spent a lot of time listening to broadcasts from many countries... and yours stand out as the best example of fair, tough-minded,

RETURN WITH US NOW...

interesting talking I've heard." An example of Davis' tough-minded talk was his broadcast recommending the government disseminate news under one organization.

This would prompt FDR to create the OWI, or Office of War Information, which Davis would be asked to head. Though reluctant at first, Davis finally accepted. Davis always thought of himself as a writer first, but eventually managed to create a powerful organization with one goal in mind: "This is a people's war, and the people are entitled to know as much as possible about it."

When the war ended, so did the OWI. Davis returned to broadcasting, this time with ABC Radio. During the next decade he would continue to fight for the rights of the individual, including his public disgust with Sen. Joe McCarthy. But near the end of the 1950s, Davis suffered a stroke and later died.

Raymond Swing tells a funny story about an incident at Davis' funeral. Everyone had assembled in the church. Those who knew him best voiced tribute after tribute. Everyone was a bit teary after a particular heartfelt adieu. Suddenly the microphone crashed to the floor. Everyone jumped, startled. It was obvious that the no human hand had done this. Then the sound of soft laughter waded through the church. It seemed that everyone had the same thought: Elmer was sick and tired of all the excessive speeches and wanted to get on with the business at hand



New in the Tape and CD Libraries

by Maletha King

This Month we continue with CDs of "Candy Matson", lady private detective - or as some say, Private Eyelash. We're then adding "The Private Files of Rex Saunders", a show molded after Bulldog Drummond. Also, we're adding "Speed Gibson of the Secret Police". These are kid shows, but were of great interest because of all of Speed's travel to strange and interesting places.

A note: There have been a number of people, after transferring their tape programs to CDs, that have offered the tape media back to RHAC. Although the thought is very much appreciated, we simply have no use for or storage space to accommodate these tapes.

Old Time Radio Moments of the Century (Part 8)

(The following article by broadcast historian Elizabeth McLeod is reproduced here with her permission.)

Ms. McLeod has listed her "top 100" 20th Century Radio Moments. We will be presenting 10 of her selections in RWUN each month for ten months.

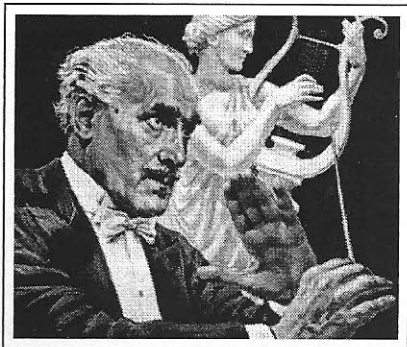
30. Paley's Financial Maneuverings Save CBS. 1928-1929.

William Paley perpetuated a lot of legends about his early years at CBS. Although he styled himself "Founding Chairman," Paley *didn't* found the network -- George Coats and Arthur Judson did, with help from the Levy brothers of Philadelphia and Major J. Andrew White. Nor did the infusion of Paley's personal fortune completely turn the tide for the struggling company. But the real story of how Columbia survived the Depression is even more interesting - and says a great deal about Paley's remarkable ability as a businessman. The young son-of-a-cigarmaker manages to talk the cagey film mogul Adolph Zukor of Paramount Publix Corporation into a complicated stock swap in 1929, which gives the foundering network the boost it needs to stay afloat during the bad years ahead: even though Zukor's own company, ironically, ends up in receivership!

29. The 1923 World Series 10/23

Broadcasting of major league baseball's main event was early on a major attraction -- but it's the 1923 Fall Classic between the New York Yankees and the New York Giants that makes the big impression, and for reasons unanticipated. Originally, plans call for the action to be described over WEAf by veteran sportswriter Grantland Rice -- and he's to be assisted by a recently-recruited member of the station's announcing staff: a former concert singer by the name of Graham McNamee. For the first three games, McNamee provides what would eventually come to be called "color commentary" - and his descriptions are so vivid, so enthusiastic that listeners deluge the station with phone calls and telegrams demanding to see more. And so it is that beginning with game four, McNamee takes over the full play-by-play job -- and is launched on a career as the most important personality of radio's formative years. One can fault his accuracy, one can criticize his style -- but none can deny his impact.

28. Premiere of the NBC Symphony 12/24/37



Arturo Toscanini had been a familiar personality to

27. Eddie Cantor Runs For President Winter 1931-Fall 1932

The Depression's darkest months fall in the middle of 1932: more 15 million are unemployed in the US, and more than 270 thousand families face imminent eviction from their homes. By September of that year, more than 34 million Americans are without any income whatsoever, and the nation has witnessed the grim spectacle of tanks rolling thru the streets of Washington DC against an army of unemployed veterans. Against this backdrop, Americans are desperate for escape, desperate for anything that will take their minds off the horror of the times. And they get it -- in a pop-eyed, hyperkinetic Broadway clown. Eddie Cantor takes the nation by storm with his satirical run for the Presidency, setting an audience record never to be equaled by any other continuing radio series. Cantor's comedy is frenetic and flamboyant, with a strong undercurrent of contempt for authority -- and, by extension, for those who have brought the nation to rock bottom. Small wonder the bouncing chant of "We Want Can-tor!" still echoes thru the memories of that era.

26. The Benny-Allen Feud January-March 1937



"The Bee," by Franz Schubert -- a showy specialty composition for violin -- becomes the most famous piece of music in the country as the question rages: can Jack Benny play it? It all begins, innocently enough, with a boy violinist named Stewart Canin, appearing on the "Town Hall Varieties" segment of Fred Allen's program on 12/30/36. During the second show for the west coast, Allen comments on the boy's rendition of "The Bee" with a single, simple observation: "Jack Benny," he drawls in that inimitable snarling whine, "should be ashamed of himself." And out in Hollywood, Benny listens -- and the following Sunday makes his response: "When I was ten years old, I could play 'The Bee' too!" And the following Wednesday, Allen challenges this assertion -- and from then on, every week marks an escalation of the "argument," until finally, on the night of 3/14/37, the combatants meet face to face in the Grand Ballroom of New York's Hotel Pierre to have it

out once and for all. The results? Inconclusive. But for the next twelve years, Jack and Fred -- in reality old-time friends from vaudeville -- will snipe back and forth in radio's most memorable phony feud. And they don't forget the boy who started it all: in 1940, Benny and Allen jointly award Stewart Canin a scholarship to help cover the cost of his future musical education, helping him along the way to a distinguished adult career in classical music.

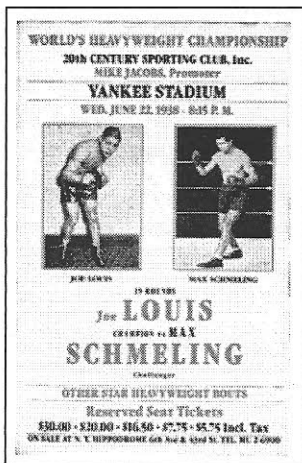
25. The Rise Of Syndication 1928-1932

When all is said and done, the invention of the syndication concept is without doubt the most important of Freeman Gosden's and Charles Correll's contributions to the broadcasting industry. The idea of distributing recorded programs to individual stations begins with "Amos 'n' Andy" in 1928, and the two performers attempt to patent the concept, only to be told by their attorney that they can't. And so it is that before the end of 1928, the National Radio Advertising Company is selling recorded programming to national advertisers -- and by the end of 1930, syndication is sweeping the industry, offering real competition to the wire-line networks in attracting major national sponsors like Chevrolet and major nationally-licensed properties like Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan." Syndication remains an essential element of both radio and television to this day: a billion-dollar industry that owes its existence to Gosden and Correll and their simple, ingenious idea for a "chainless chain."

24. WGY and the Birth of Radio Drama 9/22

You might not have heard of Kolin Hager, unless you're from Schenectady. He was the program director and chief announcer at General Electric's station WGY in the early twenties -- and he could well be considered the Father of Radio Drama. In September 1922, Hager gives a forty-minute weekly time slot on WGY to "The Masque," a troupe of community-theatre actors from nearby Troy, NY, headed by one Edward H. Smith. As the "WGY Players," Smith's company offers condensations of recent stage plays -- forty-three of them in the first season -- and gain national attention for their efforts: the first regular dramatic series ever broadcast on American radio. Among the members of the group - a former stage technician named Frank Oliver: radio's first true sound effects man. The WGY Players are a fixture at the station for more than a decade, and in 1928 perform another historic first: the first play ever to be televised.

23. The Second Louis-Schmeling Fight 6/22/38



RETURN WITH US NOW...

He was called "The Brown Bomber," "The Tanned Titan," "The Sepia Superman," and, most embarrassingly, "Shufflin' Joe." But on a steaming June night at Yankee Stadium, all the condescending "credit to his race" talk is forgotten, as Joe Louis stands as the symbol of America -- facing the equally-formidable symbol of "Aryan Superiority," German heavyweight Max Schmeling. Schmeling had defeated Louis in a prior bout -- but not this time. Before NBC announcer Clem McCarthy has a chance to get warmed up, Louis gives Schmeling the beating of his life -- and gives radio listeners a few quick minutes they will never forget.

22. NBC Takes Over 11/15/26

Not the first network broadcast, but the most heavily publicized. When the newly formed National Broadcasting Company takes over operation of the AT&T Red Network in November 1926, it's taking over a network that's already providing sixteen-hour-a-day service to seven stations, and varying hours of service to twelve others. NBC puts the whole operation on a full-time basis and with a four-hour gala from the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, announces to the whole nation (or at least the whole nation as far west as Kansas City) that the age of Big Time Radio has arrived.

21. London After Dark August/September 1940

Americans receive a jolting dose of reality when CBS begins a dramatic series of broadcasts from the heart of a city under siege. Airing as a joint venture of the BBC and the CBS London staff headed by Edward R. Murrow, "London After Dark" is a heart-stopping document of the Blitz. CBS correspondents Larry LeSeur, Eric Sevareid, Vincent Sheehan and author J. B. Priestly all contribute to the program, but it's Murrow who makes the dominant impression in the initial broadcast of 8/24/40: his chilling account of defiant Londoners strolling casually to the air raid shelters -- illustrated by the hollow sound of their footsteps -- provides an audio picture that will echo forever in the annals of radio journalism. Less than a month later, on September 21st, Murrow tops this broadcast with an even more dramatic scene, as "London After Dark" presents a bomb-by-bomb description of another air raid, live from the rooftop of Broadcasting House. Similar broadcasts will be made by NBC's Fred Bate -- who is nearly killed in a subsequent air raid -- and by Mutual's Arthur Mann: but Murrow gets the credit for the idea, and for forcefully bringing the horrors of modern war into American homes.

FREE FREE FREE FREE FREE

I'm in the process of moving and I have a number of mostly Teac reel to reel tape machines that I would like to give away - simply for picking them up in the N/W Denver area. I also have tape reels and boxes to go with these machines.

Fred Bantin
(303) 427-5431
bantin@sprynet.com

Music Radio: The Great Performers and Programs of the 1920s through Early 1960s

By Jim Cox

A Review by Stewart Wright



Radio brought live entertainment into American homes; not only dramas and comedies, but also live music programs were beamed across the airwaves during the Golden Age of Radio. Because of Radio, listeners could hear live music of every genre without ever leaving their homes.

Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that only a relatively few overview books have been written about the music programs of Radio's Golden Age. Old-Time Radio authority and author Jim Cox has helped rectify this oversight with the publication of **Music Radio: The Great Performers and Programs of the 1920s through Early 1960s**. In doing so, he has significantly increased our knowledge of broadcast music.

Music Radio covers the entire gamut of radio musical programming starting in the 1920s and continuing through the early 1960s. Classical, operatic, big band, jazz, country, western, gospel, sacred, pop, and semi-classical music forms are explored in the entertaining and informative style that is a trademark of Jim Cox volumes on American Old-Time Radio.

Jim has written comprehensive essays on ten major musical programs: *The Bell Telephone Hour*, *The Bing Crosby Show*, *The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street*, *Cities Service Concerts*, *The Fred Waring Show*, *Grand Ole Opry*, *The Kate Smith Show*, *The Railroad Hour*, *The Voice of Firestone*, and *Your Hit Parade*. The treatment of each of these series includes considerable

RETURN WITH US NOW...

information on performers, writers, production personnel, sponsors, ratings, dates on the air, and time slots.

Additionally, he has provided chapters on The Big Bands, The Classics, The Contests, The Disc Jockeys, The Hummert Musicales, The Horse Operas, The House Bands, The Sacred Singers, and The Vocalists. These chapters provide significant insight into the origins and development of these music genres on the radio airwaves. Also included is extensive information on many radio series in these various genres.

Throughout his book, the author provides extensive biographical and program credits information on more than 125 prominent performers and groups, conductors, producers, announcers, hosts, and disk jockeys from the Golden Age of Radio Broadcast Music. For example, "The Vocalists" chapter includes information on the signature and hit tunes, career highlights, and radio programs of The Andrews Sisters, Jack Berch, Eddie Cantor, Rosemary Clooney, Perry Como, Bob Crosby, Morton Downey, Eddie Fisher, Jane Froman, The Happiness Boys, Dick Haymes, Al Jolson, Peggy Lee, Curt Massey, Vaughn Monroe, Jane Pickens, Lanny Ross, Ginny Simms, Jack Smith, Jo Stafford, Mel Torme, Arthur Tracey, and Rudy Vallee,

Jim Cox is one of the most productive writers on the Golden Age of Radio. He has written entertainingly and authoritatively about Radio soap operas, audience participation shows, detective and police shows, the programs of Frank and Anne Hummert, and the final decade of the Golden Age of Radio. With his new book, **Music Radio**, Jim has added much to our knowledge of this important segment of Old-Time Radio.

Music Radio is a book well worth adding to your Old-Time Radio library.

Music Radio: The Great Performers and Programs of the 1920s through Early 1960s

By Jim Cox, ISBN 0-7864-2047-2

photographs, notes, bibliography, index
380pp. hardcover 2005, \$55

McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Box 611

Jefferson, NC 28640

800-253-2187

Fax Order: 336-246-4403

<http://www.mcfarlandpub.com>