

Return with us now...

The Radio Historical Association of Colorado

Vol. 3 No. 2
August 1977



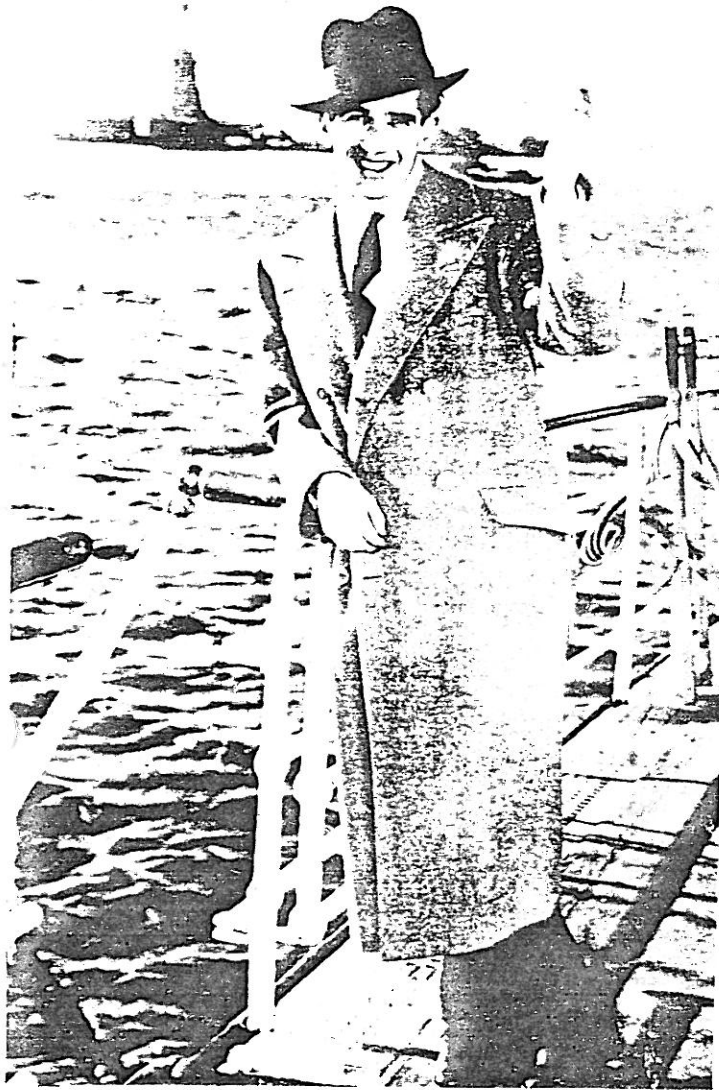
Recently, many of Murrow's most famous broadcasts have been reprinted in In Search Of Light. The book contains Murrow broadcasts from 1938 to 1961.

Here's a broadcast from September 18, 1940-- the height of the London Blitz:

"There are no words to describe the thing that is happening. I talked with eight American correspondents in London today. Six of them had been forced to move. All had stories of bombs, and all agreed that they were unable to convey through print or the spoken word an accurate impression of what's happening in London these days and nights.

"I may tell you that Bond Street has been bombed, that a shop selling handkerchiefs at \$40 the dozen has been wrecked, that these words were written on a table of good English oak which sheltered me three times as bombs tore down in the vicinity. But you can have little understanding of the life in London these days-- the courage of the people, the flash and roar of the guns rolling down streets where much of the history of the English-speaking world has been made, the stench of air-raid shelters in the poor districts. These things must be experienced to be understood."

Murrow was made famous by his journalism, but many remember him for his ever-present cigarette. During one 30-mile car trip once, he consumed two packs of smokes. The bombs never got Ed Murrow. The cigarettes did.



"This...is London." That's the way his college drama coach advised him to say it when the bombs began to drop.

Egbert Roscoe Murrow was perhaps the first giant of electronic news, catapulted into the public ear during the dark days of the late 1930's when it seemed nothing could stop Nazi Germany.

Understated but highly personalized, Murrow's style of reporting carried a subtle editorial slant. The style would be copied widely in the broadcast medium-- rather than the more restrained style of his superior and later rival Paul White.

MEETING

The next meeting of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado is Thursday, August 18 at Majestic Savings, 2807 S. Colorado Blvd. at 7:30 p.m. That building is across the street from Skaggs. Try to be there promptly at 7:30 because we have to be out of our meeting room by 9.

OTR DENVER

For the 16 or so of us who attended, the July 30 picnic was a lot of fun. But, unfortunately, many of the members we contacted-- who said they'd be there-- didn't show up. In fact, the attendance at our last two meetings has been spotty.

It was particularly disappointing that so many failed to make it to the picnic, because Ernie Jessen had to shell out some bucks for the use of the park, and he's now, of course, come up short. It's up to RHAC now to make up the shortage. So for those of you who said you'd be at the picnic and who didn't come through on your word, we'd like for you to nonetheless contribute your buck for the park rental. That's only fair -- to Ernie, to RHAC, and to yourself.

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KF/MIL

Here's John Dunning's schedule for year
number six, month number one-- also known as
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8/7 Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show
"A Present From The Sponsor"
12/26/48

Fred Allen
(last show with Jack Benny & Henry
Morgan) 6/20/49

The Railroad Hour
"The Student Prince"

8/14 Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show
"A Letter From Uncle Sam"
1/15/51

Escape
"The Vanishing Lady"
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Information Please
8/13/40

8/21 Phil Harris-Alice Faye Show
"Willie Is Engaged"
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"The Letter" with Betty Davis, Herbert
Marshall and Vincent Price 3/5/44

8/28 Phil Harris-Alice Faye
"Inaugural Ball"
1/16/49

Counterspy
"The Case Of The Washington Woman Spy"
6/8/42

Dragnet
"10-Year Old Boy Disappears"
6/7/51 (first of a series of Dragnets)

The VOICE of FIRESTONE

*Introducing Vaughn De Leath and
Franklyn Baur, Two Well-Known
Radio Personalities*

By
P. H. W.
Dixon



Vaughn De Leath



Franklyn Baur

THE Voice of Firestone stands high among the radio presentations of the National Broadcasting Company, and high in the estimation of its listeners. It features two of the outstanding personalities of the air—Vaughn De Leath and Franklyn Baur.

Miss De Leath and Baur have several things in common. Both have been before microphones almost from the time when they were born. (Miss De Leath was the first woman ever to sing in a broadcast program.) Both are limited by contract to one broadcast a week. Both are at the top of radio's ladder of fame.

Vaughn De Leath was born in Mount Pulaski, Illinois, and made her debut there as an entertainer. She was just three years old when she first faced the footlights in a home-talent minstrel show.

She directed an orchestra when she was twelve years old. When thirteen, she sent out to thirteen different publishers thirteen copies of a song she had written. She sold the song to the first bidder, although there were several other offers. Recently she has had published another song, "Old Glory, I Salute You," that she first made popular on the air and that was written when she was twelve years old. Not long ago she found it in an old trunk and tried it out on the air—with success.

She was graduated from Mills College in California, going from there directly onto the concert stage. She did her share of starving in those early days of her musical career, she says.

After coming to New York, in 1919, she began to taste success when it was discovered that her voice was excellent for phonograph records. In January, 1920, she did something she had never done before, and something no other woman had done at that time. She sang before a microphone.

The event is important enough to be told in some detail. The studio was a little room in the tower of the Pulitzer Building in Park Row—a room reached by climbing three flights of winding stairs. There wasn't space enough for a piano, so an accordion was used. Dr. Lee DeForest was in complete charge of the broadcasting, which was still very much in the experimental stage. The microphone had a horn on it—a horn originally designed for a 1904 model.

From then Miss De Leath has been definitely associated with radio broadcasting. She sang for WJZ when that station was the only one east of Pittsburgh. In 1923 she managed and directed station WDT. On occasion she even did her own announcing. During the early days of radio tests her voice was picked up at seven European listening points at the same time.

Although she is primarily a radio artist, she still makes phonograph records which are popular in Europe as well as in the United States. She writes both the words and music to songs, and is the author of a number of popular compositions. Her semi-classical compositions may be found in any modern library.

Franklyn Baur, the tenor Voice of Firestone, made his debut as an entertainer somewhat later in life than Miss De Leath. He was eight years old before he tucked a violin under his chin and took his bows at public gatherings. With no insistence on the part of his family he studied violin for six years. Then he gave up the violin and devoted two years to studying piano. It was not until he was sixteen, however, that he discovered his singing voice.

When he was eighteen, Baur heard that the Park Avenue Baptist Church of New York was looking for a soloist. He applied for the job. So did more than one hundred professional singers. Baur was selected.

Concerts followed, and then he went abroad to sing. He was heard by the Prince of Wales, who commended him publicly. Homesick, he returned to America and began making phonograph records. Scouts from the radio studios discovered him, and he went on the air. One of his early radio appearances was as tenor with the Shannon Four in an Eveready program series. He was also featured in programs which are now part of radio history. Florenz Ziegfeld heard him and sent for him. The result was that Baur was featured in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1927. But he left the Follies the next year to return to radio.

Although he is a familiar and well-known person to radio audiences, Baur is only twenty-six years old.

RADIO NEWS

Collecting radio shows is great fun, but we may be short-changing ourselves if we neglect radio's historic context. With that thought in mind, here's a section on the mood of the nation when radio came onto the scene in the 1920's. This is taken from Only Yesterday, a very fine book about the 1920's by Frederick Lewis Allen. As we pick it up, he's writing about America shortly after the first World War:

"A sense of disillusionment remained; like the suddenly liberated vacationist, the country felt that it ought to be enjoying itself more than it was, and that life was futile and nothing mattered much. But in the meantime it might as well play-- follow the crowd, take up the new toys that were amusing the crowd, go in for the new fads, savor the amusing scandals and trivialities of life. By 1921 the new toys and fads and scandals were forthcoming, and the country seized upon them feverishly.

"First of all was the radio, which was destined ultimately to alter the daily habits of Americans as profoundly as anything that the decade produced.

"The first broadcasting station had been opened in East Pittsburgh on November 2, 1920-- a date which school children may some day have to learn-- to carry the Harding-Cox election returns. This was station KDKA operated by the Westinghouse Company. For a time, however, this new revolution in communications and public entertainment made slow headway. Auditors were few. Amateur wireless operators objected to the stream of music-- mostly from phonograph records-- which issued from the Westinghouse station and interfered with their important business. When a real orchestra was substituted for the records, the resonance of the room in which the players sat spoiled the effect. The orchestra was placed out-of-doors, in a tent on the roof-- and the tent blew away. The tent was thereupon pitched in a big room indoors, and not until then was it discovered that the cloth hangings which subsequently became standard in broadcasting studios would adequately muffle the sound.

"Experiment proceeded, however; other radio stations were opened, market reports were thrown on the air, Dr. Van Etten



Jeanne Eagles, getting an "earful" of wireless jazz over her new radio outfit. It was new, at least, when this picture appeared in the Denver Post on July 11, 1922. RHAC is indebted to John Dunning for letting us use pictures from his collection.

of Pittsburgh permitted the services at Calvary Church to be broadcasted, the University of Wisconsin gave radio concerts and politicians spouted into the strange instruments and wondered if anybody was really listening. Yet when Dempsey fought Carpentier in July, 1921, and three men at the ringside told the story of the slaughter into telephone transmitters to be relayed by air to eighty points throughout the country, their enterprise was reported in an obscure corner of the New York Times as an achievement in "wireless telephony"; and when the Unknown Soldier was buried at Arlington Cemetery the following November, crowds packed into Madison Square Garden in New York and the Auditorium in San Francisco to hear the speeches issue from

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