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RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO




Actors on the Radio:

Harry Bartell

by Stewart Wright © 2006

This article is the first in a series of biographical sketches on actors who had extensive careers on the radio. In each article I will list some favorite performances of the actor. If that performance is followed by a number in square brackets [], that is the RHAC Tape Number for that specific performance.

The picture of the actor in each article is through the courtesy of Bobb Lynes and originally appeared in the book "Radio's Golden Years: A Visual Guide to the Shows and the Stars" by Frank Bresee and Bobb Lynes. - Author

A Career In Entertainment

Harry Bartell was born on November 29, 1913 in New Orleans, LA. He grew up in Houston, TX.

Harry's radio credentials are impressive to say the least. He has more than 10,000 appearances on radio, including at least 182 series and 12 years on *Dear Abby*.

During the early 1930's Harry got his start in radio in Houston. He appeared in local radio show condensations of motion pictures and was paid two 25 cent movie tickets for each job. In 1937, he moved to the West Coast



working as a DJ, doing commercials, and performing at the Pasadena Playhouse.

In his first role on network radio, on *Raffles*, Harry was cast as a Hindu. It was the first of his hundreds dialect and accent roles, including many Spanish roles on *Romance of the Rancho*, *Dragnet*, *Have Gun Will Travel*, and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*.

Pick a drama or situation comedy series and there's a good chance that Harry Bartell appeared on it: *Alan Young Show*, *Amos and Andy*, *Broadway Is My Beat*, *Cavalcade of America*, *CBS Radio Workshop*, *Columbia Presents Corwin*, *Crime Classics*, *Dr. Christian*, *Frontier Gentleman*, *I Love a Mystery*, *Let George Do It*, *Lux Radio Theater*, *My Favorite Husband*, *Nightbeat*, *On Stage*, *The Saint*, *Suspense*, *Tales of The Texas Rangers*, and *This Is Your FBI*.

Harry had many starring and featured roles. Harry co-starred in *Horizons West* for Armed Forces Radio, a radio documentary drama series on the Lewis and Clark. Harry played Captain Meriwether Lewis, John Anderson played Cpt. William Clark. He also had starring or featured roles on *Adventures of Nero Wolfe* as Archie Goodwin, *Fort Laramie* as Lt. Siberts, *The Charlotte Greenwood Show* as Tommy Brooks, and *Rogers of the Gazette* as Officer Ed Miller. *Escape* was one of Harry's favorite series. Harry originated

the role of Auguste in the *Escape* classic - "Three Skeleton Key" [829]. He also had leading roles in several other episodes including "An Occurrence At Owl Creek Bridge [787]," "A Shipment of Mute Fate [824]," and an episode written by actor John Dehner - "The Man With The Steel Teeth [834.]" Harry mentioned, "The *Escape* scripts were wonderful, many of them were based on Classics that stood the test of time. They offered me, as an actor, parts that I never would have gotten on any other program. They were exciting, fun to do and very rewarding from a performance standpoint."

His acting abilities made Harry a favorite with many of the best directors in Hollywood including Jack Webb (*Dragnet*, *Pete Kelly's Blues*, *Johnny Modero - Pier 23*), Norman Macdonnell (*Romance*, *The New Adventures of Philip Marlowe*, *Escape*, *Have Gun Will Travel*), and Jack Johnstone (*Yours Truly Johnny Dollar*, *The Man Called X*, *The Six Shooter*, *Hollywood Star Playhouse*). Harry Bartell was a member of both Macdonnell's and Webb's "stock" companies.

Being a member of a regular ensemble of actors on a series had its advantages. Harry told me, "One of the major benefits of regularly work with the same group of actors was that you had great trust in the other actor. You knew if for some reason if you got off-track or you made a mistake, they were going to cover for you. And you would cover for them. As a result, there was an ensemble feeling that was very different than if you had a different cast on the show every day."

Harry appeared in both the first and last episodes of *Gunsmoke* and at least 179 more. Two of Harry's finest performances on *Gunsmoke* can be heard in the episodes, "Cain" [5003 & 5005] and "Blood Money" [199, 5010, & 5036.] These two episodes show how a good actor can convincingly play completely different types of characters. Harry co-wrote two *Gunsmoke* scripts with close friend, Vic Perrin: "Chester's Inheritance" [5041] and "Father And Son" [5041.]

In addition to acting, Harry also worked as an announcer. "I announced *Silver Theatre*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and *The Casebook of Gregory Hood*. I never considered myself an announcer; I sort of played an announcer as an actor."

Harry is justly proud of his work as a radio actor. He told John Dunning that, "Radio was a dream medium, every day or twice a day was like a first night. There was always a freshness, a challenge.

Radio offered an actor or actress opportunities to play roles they couldn't obtain anywhere else."

Television Work:

Harry Bartell also had an active television career. According to his show logs, he performed on at least 77 television series. These included performances on series such as *Dragnet*, *Get Smart*, *Gunsmoke*, *I Love Lucy*, *Perry Mason*, *Peter Gunn*, *Police Woman*, *The Rebel*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Untouchables*, and *The Wild, Wild West*.

Other Accomplishments:

During times when acting roles were scarce, Harry worked as a professional photographer. Many of the photographs he took during show rehearsals have appeared in Old-Time Radio books.

Harry Bartell was often asked to write a book on his career. Unfortunately, he never did. However, to the enjoyment of thousands of readers of the daily Old-Time Radio Digest on the Internet, Harry wrote a series of 15 monographs on wide range of topics. These monographs can be found at: <http://www.lofcom.com/nostalgia/columns/struts/>

Last Years

Harry continued to perform into the 21st Century; mainly at OTR Conventions, but also doing some new radio dramas for Jim French Productions. On Friday, June 27, 2003 Harry went into the recording studio for the last time, to record an episode of Jim French's radio series *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, called "The Adventure Of The Great American" which Jim had written especially for Harry. This episode aired on the syndicated series *Imagination Theatre* on August 24, 2003.

Harry Bartell died on February 26th, 2004 in Ashland, OR. We are indeed lucky that so many of Harry's fine performances survived and can be found in the RHAC libraries.

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>

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	Herb Duniven	4184 S. Syracuse St. Denver, CO 80237		
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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

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>

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Kate Smith, Legendary Singer

by Carol Tiffany

Kathryn Elizabeth Smith was born May 1, 1907 in Washington, D.C. At an early age she found that she loved to sing and dance. She performed locally in theatres and at nightclubs and was discovered by a New York City show producer in 1926. She was featured in the musical comedy *Honeymoon Lane* on Broadway and later in *Hit the Deck* and *Flying High*.



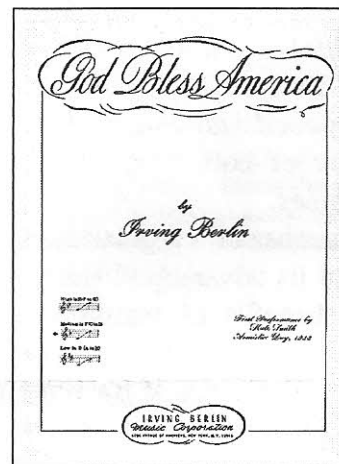
In 1930, she was discovered by Columbia Records vice president Ted Collins, who became her partner and manager. Collins put her on the radio in 1931. She was an immediate success on the air and she soon broke the record for longevity at the legendary Palace Theatre. She had the most popular radio variety program, *The Kate Smith Hour*, which aired weekly from 1937-45. At the same time she had the No. 1 daytime radio show, the midday *Kate Smith Speaks*, a news and commentary program.

In 1932, she had a cameo role in Paramount's *The Big Broadcast*. Kate then starred in her own movie, *Hello Everybody!* with co-stars Randolph Scott and Sally Blane. In 1943 she sang *God Bless America* in the Irving Berlin picture *This is the Army*.

In 1950, Kate entered television with a Monday-Friday afternoon variety show, *The Kate Smith Hour* (1950-54). It proved so popular that NBC gave her a prime-time show on Wednesday evenings, *The Kate Smith Evening Hour*. Her last TV series was CBS's *The Kate Smith Show*, a weekly half-hour musical series in 1960. She made many guest appearances on top TV shows, such as *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *The Tennessee Ernie Ford*

Show, *The Jack Paar Show*, *ABC Hollywood Palace*, *The Dean Martin Show*, *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, *The Andy Williams Show*, *The Tony Orlando and Dawn Show*, and *The Donny and Marie Show*.

Kate began making records in 1926; among her biggest hits were *River, Stay 'Way From My Door* (1931), *The Woodpecker Song* (1940), *The White Cliffs of Dover* (1941), *I Don't Want to Walk Without You* (1942), *There Goes That Song Again* (1944), *Seems Like Old Times* (1946), and *Now Is the Hour* (1947). In the fifties she began making LP albums, with such best sellers as *Kate Smith at Carnegie Hall* (1963), *How Great Thou Art* (1965), and *America's Favorites: Kate Smith/Arthur Fiedler/Boston Pops* (1967).



Kate Smith's theme song was *When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain*, whose lyrics she helped write. Irving Berlin regarded the song she made most famous, *God Bless America*, as his most important composition. In 1938 Kate predicted that the song would still be sung long after all of us are gone - and it surely will.

During the last decade of her career Kate gave dozens of live concerts in various American cities. In 1972-73 she had extended engagements at the largest nightclub in the Reno area, giving two shows each day.

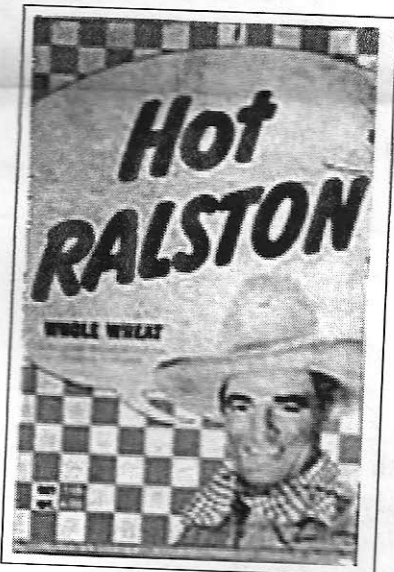
Kate ended her career on a high note. She became a singing good-luck charm for the Philadelphia Flyers hockey team with her renditions of *God Bless America*, helping to inspire them to two successive Stanley Cups (1974 and 1975). In 1976 she was named Grand Marshal of the Tournament of Roses Parade. Fittingly, the last song she sang was that Irving Berlin anthem on a bicentennial special just before July 4, 1976. She died in Raleigh, North Carolina on June 17, 1986.

"Ralston Revisited"

by Jack French

With the exception of Jim Harmon and Gary Yoggy, I'm probably the most fervent fan of radio's "Tom Mix Ralston Straight-Shooters." Despite that, like many other OTR fans, I've harbored unhappy childhood memories of trying to get Hot Ralston down my gullet in order to obtain the box tops for the radio premiums Tom was anxious to send me. To this youngster, growing up in Kaukauna, WI, that bowl of gray, tasteless mush was a far cry from its description (by announcer Don Gordon) as "DEE-licious!"

About the time I was in 6th grade, Ralston brought out Shredded Ralston, a cold cereal for warm weather seasons, and I was delighted with the choice. This crisp cereal, later to be re-named Wheat Chex, made it easier for me to accumulate the required box tops. Therefore I could get the decoder pins, whistling sheriff's badge, arrowhead compass, etc. with greater ease.



Then some 60 years later, I'm ambling through a country store near Frederick, MD when I chanced to spot Ralston in bright red and yellow boxes on the shelf. Grabbing one, I flip it over and on the back is Tom Mix winking at me. (Not any of radio's Tom Mix's, but the cowboy movie star.) Included is a brief history of Ralston (originated 1896) superimposed over a U.S. history (i.e. "The 50s gave rise to television.")

I bought two boxes; one to consume at home (if I could) and a second to donate to the raffle prizes at FOTR Newark. And today, with an inch of snow on

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my northern Virginia lawn, I break out the Ralston and follow the microwave directions. As I carry the steaming bowl to the breakfast nook, I have a box of brown sugar and a jug of maple syrup standing by, if they are needed.

I take my first bite and SURPRISE; it doesn't taste bad at all. Another spoonful and my amazement continues. My Ralston has a pleasing, nut-like flavor, quite different from my memories of childhood. Has Ralston (now Ralcorp Holdings, Inc) changed the recipe or improved the flavor? Or are my 70 year old taste buds betraying me? I dunno, but hot Ralston now tastes darn good. My wife's theory is that as a kid we like our cereal "sweet" so Hot Ralston appealed to few. I'm not sure that's the reason, since my folks wouldn't put sweetened cereals on our table. We willingly ate un-sweetened Cheerios and Kix (for Lone Ranger premiums) and Kellogg's Pep (for Superman prizes) but I don't recall any pre-sweetened breakfast food at our house.



This modern hot Ralston, Jim Harmon tells me, has been distributed sparingly for several years. Ralston used to sell it directly from St. Louis, MO to consumers at the amazingly low price of \$ 8.50 for six boxes. But now it's only available on-line or in a few retail stores. Neither Safeway nor Giant carry it in my area. The Maryland store where I bought my two boxes is a small chain in Maryland and Pennsylvania called Weis Foods; they sell it for about \$ 2.75 a box. The Vermont Country Store, with its user-unfriendly web site at www.vermontcountrystore.com, sells Ralston too, but only in batches of three boxes for \$ 12.90, plus S & H.

Other former Straight-Shooters are invited to replicate my discovery....

"OTR From The Rockies"

The RHAC Internet Show
by Larry Weide - President, RHAC

Hello everyone,

I have the unique pleasure of being able to announce to you that RHAC has been offered, and has accepted, the opportunity of having a reoccurring spot on an internet radio station. This means that once a month you will be able to hear interviews, book reviews, newsletter and tape/CD catalog reports, OTR programs from the RHAC tape and CD libraries and other features. The show will be focused around the Rocky Mountain Region - the home of RHAC. For example, our first show will feature an episode of the "Jack Benny Program" when the show was broadcast from Denver in 1948, during a March of Dimes campaign.

Our show is being hosted by Fred Hobbs, who has had a long career in Denver radio and TV broadcasting. Fred brings a warm and familiar style to the microphone that OTR fans will certainly appreciate.

Perhaps some of you are already familiar with "Yesterday USA Radio Network". This is one of the premier OTR internet sites where you can literally listen to OTR programs at any time through your home PC or MAC computer - and usually without any additional software. The site can be found at <http://www.yesterdayusa.com>. It's through the generous offer of a time slot by **Walden Hughes**, the host of a Saturday night YURN show, that we can bring you the RHAC segment.

Our schedule calls for the first show to be aired on **July 29th at 9:30 mountain time**. Subsequent shows will continue in this same monthly time slot. You can go directly to Walden's Saturday night show information page at <http://www.yesterdayusa.com/SaturdayLive.htm>. To listen (to any of the station's programs) you simply click on the "listen" icon and choose the option that best suits your computer and current media program.

I would love to receive an email from those who hear the program and have comments about likes, dislikes, requests and future show ideas.

The very best to you all, Larry

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From the Desk of
the Editor
by Carol Tiffany



Hello from sunny and somewhat soggy Florida. We are finally getting some much-needed rain to ease our drought conditions and help with our numerous brush fires. Hopefully, the weather all over the USA will get back to normal soon.

In this issue of the RWUN we are beginning a great new series from Stewart Wright (*longtime editor of this publication*) focusing on individual OTR performers. The initial article on Harry Bartell gives a tantalizing taste of the rest of the series. Another article in this issue comes from Jack French, editor of *RADIO RECALL*, the newsletter of our sister OTR club in Washington, D.C. Readers may also remember Jack as the author of the recent (very successful) book on OTR's distaff detectives, *Private Eyelashes*.

In the August issue of RWUN we will be featuring a wonderful article on Nero Wolfe from Dr. Charles Beckett as well as the second in Stewart Wright's series on OTR personalities.

Your newsletter staff hopes that you and yours have a glorious Fourth of July celebration, and, as always, we wish you

Good listening to all...



New in the Tape and CD Libraries

by Maletha King

This month we continue with additions of the "Amos 'n' Andy" show. We continue on with some episodes of "Now Hear This" and then a few "Rocky Fortune" episodes. Finally we've added the first show of "Dangerous Assignment" - a great adventure series. We'll be adding a lot more of this show in future months. Next month we will offer more additions to our CD library for all to enjoy.

In the past few months I've listened to and have truly enjoyed the skills of the old time radio actors and will always cherish the great shows offered in the library. But now summer in Colorado seems to be bringing a lot of out-of-state visitors. They come to enjoy our cool temperatures and get away from the heat of the lowlands. Let's see if our unusually hot spring continues through the summer.