



RADIO RECALL

Metro Washington Old Time Radio Club

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Kathleen Hite: Radio Writer Pioneer

By Stewart Wright © 2014

Kathleen Hite traced her roots to pioneering family members who helped settle the West. She was a pioneer in her own right, becoming the first West Coast-based woman CBS radio script writer. After penning approximately 200 radio scripts, she would become a highly successful writer for television.

Hite was born June 17, 1917 and raised in Kansas. She credits her ambition to become a writer to her grandmother who told wonderful stories about Kansas and the West in the 19th century. Other family members, including her father and grandfather related additional narratives about their adventures in the West involving prospecting, mining, and ranching. These stories provided background for her radio and later, television scripts.

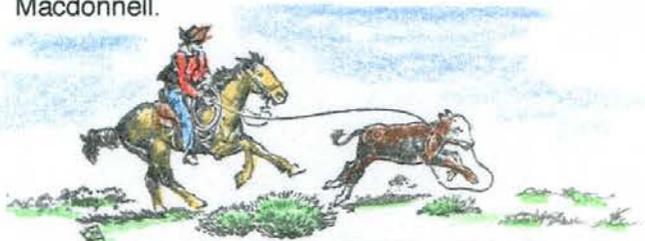
Upon graduation from the University of Wichita in 1938, Hite worked as a continuity writer for NBC affiliate KANS in Wichita. She decided to try to become a network radio script writer. In 1943, she moved to California and got a job with CBS. She remembered at that the time, "CBS had a policy against hiring women writers so I hired on as a secretary. I figured once I got inside the building I could destroy them from within. . . . I badgered the head of the writing department until he gave me a chance to write."

Within a year she became the first woman staff writer at CBS. She wrote scripts for CBS West Coast Network series such as Fact or Fantasy, One For The Book, The People Next Door, The City, The Ghost Walks, and The Private Practice of Dr. Dana. In 1950 she was promoted to script editor of the regional network's most prestigious series: The Whistler. Two months later she also became the script editor of the

nationally aired series, The Adventures of Philip Marlowe.

Sometime in late 1950 or early 1951, Kathleen Hite made a major career decision: she decided to leave her position as a CBS staff writer/editor and then become a freelance radio writer. Freelancing was a more risky proposition, but paid far better. She could write for any of the networks and could earn as much as \$450.00 per script as opposed to less than \$100.00 as a staff script writer.

Hite's first major free-lance assignment was to pen the scripts for the 1951 summer run of Norman Macdonnell's Philip Marlowe series. It was the beginning of a collaboration that would span more than 20 years and continue into the new medium of television. The Marlowe scripts were the first of Hite's 109 scripts and adaptations that she wrote for radio shows directed by Macdonnell. Only John Meston and Les Crutchfield wrote or adapted more scripts for Macdonnell.



Through 1960 Hite would supply scripts for other Macdonnell radio series such as The Judge, Escape, The Lux Summer Theatre, Rogers of the Gazette, Romance, and Suspense. Additionally, Hite penned scripts for 28 of the 40 broadcasts for MacDonnell's Fort Laramie and 7

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MWOTRC was created in 1984 by Jim Burnette (1945-2001), our President Emeritus. Annual dues \$20 to locals and \$ 15 to others, and seniors. Regular meetings are held at Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbia Pike and Wayne St, Arlington, VA the 2nd Friday evening of every month, except Jun and Dec, when meetings are held Saturday noon at a local restaurant TBA.

UPCOMING OTR EVENTS



August 10-17, 2014 **Second Annual Radio Spirits Cruise with Greg Bell**

Booking has started for this cruise leaving out of Port Canaveral on August 10, 2014 to the Caribbean, touching ports in Coco Bay, St. Marten and St. Thomas. Old Time Radio events, games, re-creations (with passengers playing roles and doing live sound effects.) Average cost per person \$ 1450. Learn more from the cruise newsletter and you may go to their official website at <<http://www.cruisingwithgregbell.com>> for more information and pictures from 2013 cruise.

September 18-20, 2014 **Ninth Annual Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention**

Hunt Valley Wyndham, Hunt Valley, MD. A myriad of panels, movies, celebrity appearances, seminars. Topics include TV's *Maverick* and *Cheyenne*, movies of Buffalo Bill and Frankenstein, plus sock-hop and drive-in movie. Dozens of vendors with pop-culture items for sale. Abbott and Costello impersonators will entertain you. Meet celebrities: Connie Stevens, Lana Wood, Angela , Veronica Cartwright and George Lazenby AKA "James Bond" plus more to be announced soon. (Connie Stevens thinks she can talk Robert Conrad into coming.) More details at: <<http://midatlanticnostalgiaconvention.com>>

September 27-28, 2014 **Tom Mix Western Heritage Weekend**

Downtown Dewey, OK. Free admission: Parade, cattle drive in Main Street, mock gunfights, live bands, western games, and Tom Mix look-alikes. "Cowboy and Indian" re-enactments, and more! Every Straight-Shooter has to make this pilgrimage to Tom's town at least once. All details at: www.travelok.com/listings/view.profile/id.18618

November 14, 15, and 16, 2014: **SPERDVAC Convention**

Holiday Inn -Burbank Media Center, 150 E. Angeleno, Burbank, CA 91502. (Minutes from Disney Studios, Warner Brothers & Universal Studios.....free shuttle to Bob Hope Airport) Dozens of prominent guest stars, some of whom will be in re-creations and panels. OTR authors present for autographs. More details to be announced. Point your mouse at <www.sperdvac.org>



Voice of the Listener



Dear Mr. French,

I'm a long time subscriber to RADIO RECALL and I used to attend FOTR Newark. I never see any replies to the questions asked in Letters to the Editor. Where do I find this information? Please give me the address of Frank Rosin, editor of Air Check for REPS.

Harold Feinstein
University Hgts, Ohio

Dear Editor,

Is it OK to reprint articles from RADIO RECALL in our newsletter? I usually write one or two articles myself but get little help from our own members. I would appreciate very much if you can let me know. Thanks a bunch

**Tom Cherre, Editor:
The Illustrated Press
Cheektowaga, NY**

Dear Mr. French,

Thank you for Rob Farr's review of our Orson Welles book, which appeared in June 2014 RADIO RECALL. It is an excellent, scholarly piece. This review has been posted on the Bear Manor Media blog. We appreciate your efforts at mutual promotions.

David Menefee
Bear Manor Media

Dear Editor

I just wanted to send a thank you note for your club's web page containing information on radio history and other communications

My school kids at Yosemite Park have had some fun "end-of-the-year projects" to do, including a timeline of technology and broadcast communication! We've been looking for resources to cite and your web pages helped my students a great deal.

**Mrs. Kathy Miller
Yosemite, CA**

Dear Jack,

A friend of mine asked me to help identify an western song from (probably) a cowboy radio series. She recalls something like "Ridin', ropin', all day in the hot sunshine" or something similar.

Remember, she's trying to think back a loooooong time! Can you help?

**Henry Ickces
Arlington, VA**

Hi Mr. French,

Issue #41 of *Fadeaway* is out and I've sent you a hard copy. The "Letters to Editor" column has some reader comments about your "Bobby Benson" article (which appeared in *Fadeaway* # 40) you might be interested in reading. Print copy should arrive Monday or so.

Bob Jennings
Oxford, MA

Dear Jack-

Just got the June 2014 issue: A great RADIO RECALL! It certainly does our club's 30th anniversary a great honor. Many thanks to you.

**Ken Neal
Kerrville, TX**

Dear Jack,

Regarding Amanda Bruce's inquiry about Robert Maxwell, please forward to her the attachment enclosed. She should also examine Gary Grossman's 1976 *Superman* book. (I'll loan her my copy.)

Cort Vitty
Davidson, MD

Dear Editor,

Thanks for our first issue of RADIO RECALL. We enjoyed the 30th Anniversary luncheon and look forward to attending the July meeting.

**Margaret and Bill Harris
(via email)**

All letters must be signed, but name withheld if originator so specifies. Letters may be edited for brevity, but original opinion will not be altered. All requesters are urged to provide us with both a postal address and their email address. This is our policy since many potential responders do not have Internet access. However, if writers decline, their requests are still published.

(continued from pg. 1)

scripts for his Gunsmoke; 4 of these being adaptations of Fort Laramie scripts. She also wrote for non-Macdonnell-directed series such as The Hallmark Hall of Fame, Night Beat, and The General Electric Theatre.

Hite's procedure for writing a script began with developing a central character and the qualities, good and bad that made that person interesting. Then she put that person into an exciting situation. From there she created additional characters and filled out the plotline as appropriate for the specific series.

She broke into television script writing in the mid-1950s and became increasingly busy in that lucrative medium. Initially her television script writing efforts were dramas and mysteries such as General Electric Theater, Alfred Hitchcock Presents, Suspicion, Jane Wyman Presents, and Crown Theatre. By the late 1950s she branched out into Western series such as Boots and Saddles, Klondike, Riverboat, Laramie, Zane Grey Theater, and Wagon Train.

In 1961 she started a 5-year writing assignment for the television version of Gunsmoke producing 31 scripts, 8 teleplays, and 2 story lines. After she left Gunsmoke, she wrote for other series including Apple's Way, Lancer, The Guns of Will Sonnett, and The Road West.

Hite created and was the lead writer for

the 1962-63 NBC series Empire. She extensively utilized her knowledge of her family's ranching business in the series. In a 1962 interview she said, "My father was a cattleman and we had a family ranch in New Mexico operated by my brother."

Towards the end of her career, she became the most frequent contributor of scripts for The Waltons. She wrote her last scripts for the series Falcon Crest.

Kathleen Hite believed in giving back to her profession. For many years she was active in the Writers' Guild and other writing related organizations. She played an instrumental role in helping co-worker Marian Clark become a radio script writer. Clark would go on to be the third most prolific writer of Gunsmoke radio scripts. (An article about Marian Clark will appear in an upcoming issue of RADIO RECALL.)

During her writing career Hite was honored with several awards and honors, including the Women in Communications' Headliner Award and the Heritage Cowboy Hall of Fame Award. She was also a finalist for the prestigious Humanitas Prize which is an award for film and television writing intended to promote human dignity, meaning, and freedom.

After retiring, Hite traveled the country lecturing on script writing. Kathleen Hite died February 18, 1989 at the age of 81.

Detailing the First Husband of "Candy Matson"

THE DETECTIVE AND THE BARITONE (Part I)

by Kathy Hammel © 2014

Natalie Park Masters was the voice of *Candy Matson*, and her second husband, Monty Masters, wrote and directed that NBC series in San Francisco. While OTR fans know a lot about this famous couple, it may be time to shine the light on



Natalie's first husband, Paul Melvin Vickland. Though named Paul Melvin, he preferred to go by P. Melvin Vickland and was familiarly known as "Mel".

Born in 1913, Melvin was a tall (5' 11") good-looking young man with brown hair and blue eyes. Like Natalie and Monty, he also worked in radio. Mel was first heard on radio in the early 1930s as a member of a college quartet that performed on air on WCCO, in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Singing came naturally to Mel. He came from a musical family who'd emigrated from Sweden to the USA in the early 1900s. By day the family ran a successful grocery and meat market in which Mel worked after school; but on off hours, the family were part of the church band. Mel's inherited musical talent and love of singing, along with his rich baritone, won Mel the lead in the University of Minnesota's production of *The Student Prince*.

Mel may have picked up the acting bug from those college appearances; by 1935 he'd transferred to the *College of the Pacific* in

Stockton, California, where he was a member of their debate team. He also won a few talent contests with his singing. Shortly after college, he moved from Stockton to San Francisco where he started his radio career as a baritone with KFRC.

He had a voice that Billy Wilder once praised, by saying of Mel, "*I wish I had his voice - and my money!*" Mel, called the man of the golden voice, did not confine himself to singing. By February 1936 Mel was using his golden baritone at KFRC as a junior announcer.

The very next month (March 1936) Mel left KFRC and joined the announcing staff at NBC, San Francisco. An interesting note is that the now well-known Ralph Edwards succeeded Mel in the junior announcer spot that Mel had left at KFRC. Mel and Ralph were of an age and were good friends; later, they would work together on several projects.

As an announcer, Mel did well and his career in radio was off to a fast and promising start. By October of 1936 he'd been promoted to a senior announcer spot. In 1936 Natalie's star was also on the rise. She was not only appearing in the NBC, San Francisco serial *Hawthorne House*, but was also voicing other roles from time to time. She even enjoyed regular mentions in the trades. It's probable that Mel and Natalie met when he transferred to NBC.

The couple were dating as early as May 1938, which we know from a news clipping of the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* of May 2, 1938. It reported that the couple were injured in their car near Salinas by a drunk driver who struck their vehicle. Vickland had only bruises and a cut knee, but Natalie was taken to the hospital with back injuries.

A little over 3 years after Mel's move to NBC, a tiny blurb appeared in the 1 February 1940 Broadcasting magazine announcing that actress Natalie Park, who worked "... at NBC, San Francisco, recently eloped to Reno Nev., with Melvin Vickland, announcer, formerly with KPO-KGO, San Francisco and more recently with Midwestern stations." According to records stored in the Washoe County Clerk's office, Natalie and Mel were married in Reno, with family as witnesses, on 3 January 1940.

The 1940 U.S. Census, conducted later that year, finds the newlyweds living on Hillegass Street in Berkeley, California, and though, curiously, the Census lists Melvin as a *salesman of retail foods*, we know he was active in radio at this time.

It may have boded ill for the marriage that Natalie was given top billing in their published marriage announcement. In fact, the marriage lasted only a short time; by 1941 the couple no longer lived together. An Oakland city directory for that year shows Mel living with relatives at a location different from his and Natalie's home address as noted on the 1940 U.S. Census

Court documents confirm that Natalie filed for

divorce on August 23, 1941 on the grounds of 'extreme cruelty'. Melvin was ordered to pay \$15 per week in alimony during the separation and Natalie's legal fees. Mel countered, asking that he not be responsible for her attorney fees or support, but he lost. However, in the January 15th Interlocutory Judgment, Natalie waived any further alimony, suit money, or attorney's fees. Natalie was granted the divorce on January 18, 1943. The attorneys took care of that final hearing. Neither Natalie nor Mel appeared. In fact, by 1942, Mel had already relocated to New York.

All the supporting records in the divorce, except the filings and the final decree, were destroyed years ago by San Francisco's records management, so we may never know what the nature of the claimed 'extreme cruelty' was. Valerie, one of Mel's daughters, by his second wife, is mystified as to that claim; she knew her father to be a kind and encouraging man. She said, like anyone, he could become frustrated or angry and a bit critical at times, but not unreasonably so.



(1940 Wedding photo, courtesy of Valerie Vickland)

Whatever the problems Natalie and Mel may have experienced as a married couple, we know the divorce was certainly not the end of the story for Natalie Park, nor did Mel Vickland disappear from the entertainment scene. Both Mel and Natalie went on to do a lot more in radio, and eventually television as well.

In the next issue, we'll learn more about the rise and unfortunate fall of the golden voiced Mel and his court battle with Ralph Edwards.

NOTE: The author wishes to thank Jack French and Irene Heinstejn for research assistance and suggestions during the preparation of this article.

Pearl Harbor and the CBS News Program: *THE WORLD TODAY*

by Jim Widner © 2014

I have been collecting radio news broadcasts for over forty years and occasionally run into questions for myself on particular events that almost seem impossible to resolve. The questions involve the damaging of news transcriptions through unnecessary and bad editing by other collectors. Often there is a single existing recording of an historic event that is altered and in doing so destroys timing cues that help in authenticating broadcasts.

This happened to one such recording from when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. At the time, radio journalism was in its infancy. Prior to 1938 most networks did not have employees reporting news events. The philosophy of radio news at the time was to utilize wire reporters and print journalists, who gathered the facts, and ask them, along with various other experts, to speak on the events over radio.

People such as Edward R. Murrow and Cesar Searchinger were European Directors providing these experts but rarely offering their own opinions and facts. Hitler's march into Austria in March 1938 changed that. NBC already had people like Max Jordan who sometimes made his own reports but like Searchinger (also with NBC) usually provided experts other than himself. The events in Europe convinced the networks that they needed to beef up their miniscule news organizations.(1)

Even with the beginnings of these organizations, the networks were simply not prepared to handle breaking news. This was partly due to the economic structure of radio programming: the sponsors owned and usually developed the programs (except for network sustained programming) and purchased air time from the networks. In order for the network news organizations to handle news events, they needed the permission of sponsors if they wanted to break into a program. For the most part this rarely occurred.

When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the role of radio news broadcasting was turned upside down. This was a significant event for American broadcast journalism because the news information was breaking so fast that Americans' preferred method for getting the news, via the print papers, no longer was effective; print media was not able to react quickly to these changing events. Americans realized these events were life changing for them and many turned to radio for more immediate information. The attack at Pearl Harbor was different

because it meant a seismic shift in how the United States would move forward in the daily lives of Americans; and it meant a change in how radio would handle news reporting.

As the news broke, the three major networks, CBS, NBC and Mutual treated the news in a different way from previous major events about the war in Europe. This was an attack on American soil unlike the European events; and though many in the news business felt war was coming, no one knew just when or what would be the catalyst.

The attack occurred on a Sunday morning in Hawaii just before 8:00 a.m. or a little before 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time. The flash bulletin from the United Press hit the teletypes at about 2:25 p.m. with little detail from the White House. It merely reported an attack by the Japanese on Pearl Harbor. The first bulletin went out from the Mutual Broadcasting System when they interrupted a football game between the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants at 2:26 p.m. and then returned to the game.

For NBC, according to their Master Logs, that network's bulletin hit the airwaves about 2:29:50 p.m. interrupting the closing theme of Sammy Kaye's band. At 2:30 p.m. they returned to regular programming with the University of Chicago Round Table though like Mutual, they continued to interrupt periodically, as information began flowing in.

Meanwhile, CBS was the only network whose regular programming on Sunday afternoon was a news program - *The World Today* - which aired at 2:30 p.m. The news program placed the network in a perfect conjunction of breaking news, and at least thirty available minutes to cover the breaking events unimpeded by sponsor rules. Unfortunately, for collectors, CBS was not a network that allowed the history of their broadcast to speak for itself.

Preserving the broadcasts

That news broadcasts of the attack survive is due for the most part to the diligence of the networks in making transcriptions of news events. The Columbia Broadcasting System recordings of their news at this time came mostly from the West Coast feed only and not by the network's initiative. While NBC in New York made low-quality reference recordings on Memovox via dictating machines, CBS did not make any of its own recordings.(2)

Unlike NBC or Mutual, it did not have any internal recording department. When they wanted transcriptions, they hired outside recording studios. In Hollywood, Radio Recorders did most of CBS' west coast recording for them and in New York WOR Recording Service and Harry Smith Inc. handled much of the east coast recordings. However, CBS contracted out transcription creation on an as-desired basis and all of this was handled in advance. This meant that the network was never really prepared for breaking news as far



as transcriptions were concerned.

We have so many West Coast news recordings from CBS because of the time shift which required stations such as KIRO in Seattle to record the program while the East Coast version was broadcasting. KIRO found it possible to gain a usable quality of sound through instantaneous disc recording. (3)

This allowed them to repeat the program on a delayed schedule due to the time difference and usually to avoid interrupting sponsored programs. The recording was done with the network's permission, and with pending war, KIRO felt a need to preserve these broadcasts. If an East Coast based network news program fell within a typical news time slot on the West Coast, it would be carried live. Some instead fell during West Coast airings of sponsored programs and so were either pre-recorded or not broadcast. CBS' 2:30 p.m. news program, *The World Today*, however was different.



Japanese Zero A-1-108 leaving carrier Akagi to attack Pearl Harbor, Dec 7, 1941 (Photo: National Archives)

***The World Today* confusion**

The World Today was an exception to the "time of day" rule used for many of the network's standard news broadcasts and was a simultaneous airing east and west. It was carried on the west coast at 11:30 a.m. or 2:30 p.m. Eastern. There was one other difference between the two; the West Coast version had a sponsor in Golden Eagle Gasoline while the East Coast version was sustained.

Consequently, there were two different openings that were heard since the West Coast version had to allow sponsor time. It does not appear that an East Coast version of the program was transcribed on this day; the only recording appears to be from the West Coast.

Over the years, the extant recording of this program for this day was edited with pieces cut out into separate recordings and removal of silence gaps that came mostly from switching between major cities where events were unfolding. This

"editing" of the west coast version and the lack of program logs, results in not knowing exactly what is correct or how the program probably sounded on this historic day.

The East Coast version opened with this on December 6, 1941 and most likely a similar but abbreviated intro was used on December 7th:

"The World Today: The Columbia Broadcasting System now presents a summary of all the important news in the world today. Reports from CBS correspondents by trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific shortwave radio and the latest developments as received by Columbia's newsroom, here in New York."

After an extra second, the announcer would then normally explain which reporters around the world would be called upon by anchor John Daly. This would begin at about 18 seconds from the opening of the program and usually began with "Tonight John Daly will call in..."

Meanwhile, the West Coast version began with a different announcer and opening on December 7th:

"The World Today. By shortwave radio, Columbia now brings you reports from its foreign correspondents overseas, with summaries of the latest world news, presented over these stations by Golden Eagle Gasoline. Go ahead New York."

This was roughly 13 seconds in length. Most likely both the New York and the West Coast openings were abbreviated from what listeners normally heard due to the immediacy of the event and the need to broadcast the bulletin.

When the United Press bulletin hit the teletypes at 2:25 p.m. and was picked up in CBS New York, there was quick discussion on how it should be handled since the newscast was to begin in five minutes. There was little time to coordinate things with the West. The late Bob Trout explained in a 1999 feature on NPR's *All Things Considered* just how chaotic things were. (4)

At that time he was in London and prepared to report on London's reaction to the news. Normally, he would be connected just before air time to then news director Paul White as the circuit was opened so that it could be cut in at the appropriate time. Instead, he explained in 1999, he was connected into the studio itself. Less than two minutes before air time, he explained what he heard:

"I suddenly heard a burst of commotion through my headphones; doors opened; teletypes clattered in the news room and I picked up fragments of agitated conversation: 'War?' I heard someone say. 'Why it's automatically war.'...seconds before program time, Paul White came on the line...he said he had cancelled reports from Cairo and Geneva. The network would go to Washington for a special report, then I would give London's reaction."

Because this was an unprepared event and the network had no time to react and set up things properly, the news team felt it necessary to go quickly into the bulletin from the United Press. Whether there was the normal opening before the bulletin cannot be confirmed since the East Coast broadcast does not exist. Because the other networks had already flashed the news, John Daly broadcast the bulletin in this way:

"The Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by air, President Roosevelt has just announced. The attack also was made on all naval and military activities on the principal island of Oahu."

This is the bulletin from CBS that exists in circulation. However, according to Edward Bliss, former writer-producer for Edward R. Murrow and news editor for Walter Cronkite at CBS, in his book, *Now the News*, (5) there was an additional sentence on the bulletin. This is also confirmed by a book published by CBS at the end of the war (6) *"The news came in just after the two Japanese envoys in Washington made the appointment to call at the State Department, and follows reports from the Far East that Japan was ready to launch an attack on Thailand."*

That sentence does not appear to exist in audio form. If it was broadcast, collectors apparently cut it off. Why it was cut by collectors seems odd since the importance of the bulletin to history would prompt one to include it with the rest of the existing bulletin.

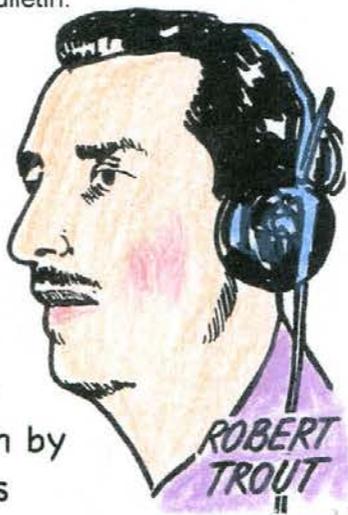


Illustration by
Bobb Lynes

As per Bob Trout, immediately after this bulletin, New York would switch down to Washington D.C. where Albert Warner would add detail. This is where part of the confusion lay; what did the West Coast actually hear: The opening, followed by the bulletin, silence, then Albert Warner; or no bulletin due to being caught in the middle of a fast change? In one copy that exists, we hear just that: after the opening announcer, there is a silence from 8 to 15 seconds, depending upon your copy followed by the voice of Albert Warner apparently continuing the news from the bulletin when he begins *"The details are not*

available..." Because no East Coast copy exists of the opening, what NPR used with Bob Trout's explanation, was the West Coast opening.

But there is a second bit of confusion: In his NPR explanation, Trout offers the timing schedule when certain events occurred in the broadcast as does Edward Bliss in his book. Both indicate Albert Warner came on at 2:37 p.m. EST. As previously mentioned the opening plus bulletin takes only seconds.

According to the book published by CBS, after Daly read the bulletin (the longer version as mentioned above) at 2:31:00 p.m., Daly then repeated the bulletin and "amplified it" and then prepared listeners for the switch by saying *"We take you now to Washington."* Daly might have read bulletins about other areas affected by the Japanese ship movements including Thailand before switching to Washington. He also could have mentioned what they hoped to do in the broadcast including trying to get Ford Wilkins in Manila on the line and the upcoming switch to Bob Trout in London.

"It is, after all, a part of our history and it is the point where broadcast journalism first really began to cut its teeth in its infancy of covering news."

There simply does not seem to be any circulating copies to verify these details forcing me to go only by the reported sources in my research. Whatever was heard meant that after the bulletin at 2:31, there were six more minutes before the switch to Albert Warner in Washington.

So why does any of this matter? For a collector and interested radio news historian, I would like to know just what actually occurred during the broadcast. It is, after all, a part of our history and it is the point where broadcast journalism first really began to cut its teeth in its infancy of covering news.

POSTLUDE

I am reminded of the late Frank Reynolds in 1981 when he anchored the ABC News, and news of an assassination attempt on Reagan had occurred. When it was reported that Reagan Press Secretary James Brady had died and then found he was only seriously wounded, Reynolds became visibly upset on camera yelling *"Let's get it nailed down...somebody...let's find out! Let's get*

(continued on pg. 9)

it straight so we can report this thing accurately!"

Certainly, the accuracy of news reporting does matter.

Footnotes:

- (1) A year or so earlier, newspapers attempted to shut out radio from using the wire services. This also convinced the networks to create their own news services.
- (2) The source of these broadcasts for collectors was J. David Goldin, though discs in the Library of Congress per letter from Kenneth H. Berkeley, NBC General Manager, dated April 29, 1942.
- (3) *History in Sound*, Milo Ryan, University of Washington Press, 1963, page x.
- (4) Pearl Harbor Anniversary; <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1067553>
- (5) Bliss Jr., Edward, *Now the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism*. Columbia University Press, New York. 1991.
- (6) "From Pearl Harbor Into Tokyo" Columbia Broadcasting System, 1945.

Tonight at 6:30

THE *Funniest and Brightest* PROGRAM.

Laugh with Fire-Chief

ED WYNN

and

GRAHAM McNAMEE

Enjoy the Charming Music

of

EDDY DUCHIN

N. B. C. Coast to Coast



(1934)

GUIDELINES FOR RADIO RECALL ARTICLES AND SUBMISSIONS

Contemplating writing an article for this club journal? Here are some things you ought to know...

Our general guidelines specify that submissions should not exceed two typewritten pages (not over 1,200 wds.) and the dominant theme must be an OTR series, star, or genre. For an exceptionally fine (but very long) piece we have made it a two-parter. We're looking for variety so if we've just published an article on *The Whistler* we

wouldn't be interested in another one until a year or so has lapsed. Roughly half of our articles are directed assignments and the remainder come in over the transom unexpected.

We publish only nonfiction (except for our April Fool issue) and we expect all standard articles to be factually accurate. We accept book reviews, but only of recently published books. We also save (and usually later publish) "filler" pieces of a paragraph or two that are anecdotal in OTR history.

Articles should concentrate on the OTR subject, not the author. Any piece that is more about the author than the topic is rejected, so that would exclude most "opinion" pieces. Pieces on the more obscure series are preferred over yet another article on *The Lone Ranger*, *Jack Benny*, or *The Shadow*.

All pieces must be original; we never publish reprints. We also expect to publish the article first, and usually last. Authors who submit the same piece to several OTR club journals will not be considered for RADIO RECALL. One author, whom we recently published, got that same article published in three other club newsletters. He will not be published again by us until he mends his ways. Many OTR fans in the country belong to two or more clubs and are discouraged seeing the same article over and over.

Graphics can be submitted with the contribution; we prefer line drawings to photographs, as our printing press can handle them better.

We only will accept submissions in electronic form; our staff is too small to re-key hand written or hard copy contributions.

Like most OTR hobby magazines, no honorariums are paid for any submissions. Non-members get a free copy of the issue in which their piece appears; members get only the warm fuzzy of seeing their work in print and the adulation of their fellow members.

LONGEST RADIO SHOW AND IT'S ALL IN THE SAME FAMILY....

The show started in 1925 by one man. He passed it to his son, who then passed it to his son. It would continue until September 11, 2000, racking up a total of 75 continuous years on the air.

It was, of course, *Rambling With Gambling* on WOR in Manhattan. John B. Gambling originated this morning show of news, interviews and light-hearted chat that audiences loved.

Decades later, son John B. Gambling took over the show in 1954 and its popularity continued. Grandson John R. Gambling got the family microphone in 1985. The show celebrated its 20,000th broadcast in 1989, still going strong.

But in the end, the demographics of its audience doomed the show; the over-55 crowd didn't impress sponsors and they pulled the plug.

The impressive career of Peg Lynch.....
THERE IS ONLY ONE ETHEL ARBUCKLE
by Don Ramlow © 2014

Story: Man's Barber Returns to Italy. On the surface, one has to ask what would make the story above interesting. The answer for most is nothing. However, when a story is seen through the eyes of talented writer and actress Peg Lynch, one knows that they are in for a comedy ride. Peg's ability to see the humor in normal everyday activities sets her apart from many other comedy writers.

Peg Lynch was born on November 25, 1916, in Lincoln, Nebraska and eventually moved to Minnesota with her mother. Peg graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1937 with a degree in English and obtained her first radio writing and acting job at radio station KATE in Albert Lea, Minnesota. It was here that Peg began developing the characters of Ethel and Albert. In 1944 Peg moved New York to begin writing scripts for network radio. However, this changed when Peg was offered the opportunity to bring *Ethel and Albert* to national radio. Peg did not initially plan on playing Ethel, but a lack of actresses capable of playing the character as she envisioned resulted in her taking on the role not only of writer but also actor. Her first radio husband was Richard Widmark. However, he only portrayed the character for six months. Albert was then recast and Alan Bunch took on the role, playing the character into the 1960s. Alan was a well respected stage and radio actor and people listening to the radio or watching the couple on TV enjoyed the natural rapport between the two actors.

Ethel and Albert was broadcast on radio from 1944 through 1950, appearing on ABC, CBS and NBC. Ethel and Albert then moved to the new medium of television in 1952, first appearing as a short sketch on the *Kate Smith Hour* before becoming a regular program for NBC in 1953. It eventually moved to CBS and then ABC. The last regular program was in July of 1956.

Ethel and Albert were not through with television, however. In 1960, Peg Lynch and Alan Bunch appeared in a series of commercials for a Chemical of New York Bank. Then in 1961, A. T. & T. had a seventeen minute film about their telephone number changing to an all digit number. The skit, *Bubbling Brook* featured their characters Ethel and Albert finding out why their telephone number had to change. The skit is in color, showcasing Peg and Alan in their prime. An additional character is voiced by Howard McNear. Imagine; Doc Adams commercials and skits may be written. An interesting side of the show appeared in Sweden under the name *Greta och Albert* and in 1981 a British TV program entitled *Chintz*, was produced based on *Ethel and Albert*. The show was adapted by the British actress Dilys Laye with Peg credited as the writer.



not through with television, and Alan Bunch appeared in a Chemical of New York Bank. Peg and Alan appear in a their telephone number changing entitled *Mr. Digit and the Battle of* characters Ethel and Albert finding number had to change. The skit is Alan in their prime. An additional character is voiced by Howard meets Ethel Arbuckle. The found on YouTube, as of this note is that in 1958 a TV version Sweden under the name *Greta* TV program entitled *Chintz*, was

Throughout all of this Peg was busy with her family. In 1948 she married Odd Knut Ronning, a third cousin of hers who had moved to the United States in 1946, and they eventually had a daughter Elise Astrid Ronning. Odd passed away on July 2 of this year at age 96. Odd and Peg were married for almost 66 years.

Ethel and Albert (though not mentioned by name) returned to the audio airwaves in 1957 in the program *The Couple Next Door*, lasting until November 1960. The show then appeared on NBC's Monitor in 1963 as a series of 5 minute sketches featuring Peg and Alan in the leading roles. That was the last time that Alan Bunch appeared on a regular series with Peg Lynch. However, Peg's stories continued to appear on radio. In 1973, she wrote a series of *Ethel and Albert* episodes for National Public Radio's *Earplay* program and then in 1975, a new series of plays entitled *The Little Things In Life*, appeared on the radio airwaves featuring Robert (Bob) Dryden as the husband. This was the last regular series of radio shows.

Ethel did not disappear, however. Peg has delighted her many fans over the years with appearances at old-time radio conventions throughout the country, performing just two years ago at the Cincinnati Nostalgia and Old-Time Radio convention. It is always fun to see Peg perform, especially with

the many different actors portraying Albert. Her "convention husbands" have included Parley Baer, Bob Dryden, Bob Hastings, Ron Lackmann and others. People ask me who was the best Albert at the conventions and I decline to answer, since part of the fun in seeing Peg perform is watching the different approaches that the actors take to the character of Albert. I will say this; I once asked my friend Parley Baer "Who was the best actress you ever worked with?" and without a moment's hesitation he said "Peg Lynch." He said he considered her one of the most talented people he had ever known. I couldn't agree more.

BACKGROUND: Material for this article was derived from multiple sources, including Radio Mirror and its many iterations, the Internet Movie

Data Base, the Odd Ronning Obituary and the University of Oregon Guide to the Peg Lynch papers.

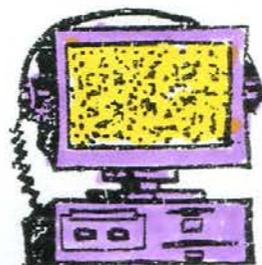
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donald Ramlow obtained his BA and MA from Western Michigan University and has spent most of his adult life in Michigan. He has been active in directing over 300 radio re-creations since 1982 at various old-time radio conventions throughout the country. Among the performers he has directed are Academy Award winner Kim Hunter and Emmy winner William Windom, in addition to Parley Baer, Peg Lynch, and Will Hutchins. He co-founded "All-Ears Theater" and has lectured on radio history throughout the Kalamazoo region.



from the EDITOR'S DESK

Email: editor@mwotrc.com



In our *Letters to the Editor* page, Harold Feinstein raises a question that we hear in the editor's office frequently. [*Why don't you answer those questions?*] There are three reasons:

First of all, we usually do answer the queries, but only to the original requester. If we did print the answer on that page next to the question, we'd only have room for half the number of letters, which is not a good choice and defeats the purpose of encouraging members to express their opinions.

Secondly, sometimes we don't know the answer so we hope some of our readers will. A good clue is: if the letter contains a snail mail or email address, we didn't know the answer so we were hoping someone else did and will contact the letter writer.

Thirdly, sometimes the question asks for personal information (i.e. author's phone number or email address) and we have to check with a third party to see if they will release this information to the letter writer.

My co-editor, David Siegel, and I were very pleased to read the July 2014 issue of the *Ladies Auxiliary VFW Magazine* and found a two-page full color article on our new book. The article not only covers RADIO RIDES THE RANGE, but also the OTR program, *The American Trail*, which the VFW Ladies created and got on the air in the 1950s. That organization was very helpful to us in

documenting the history of that radio show but they had no audio copies of it in their archives so David furnished them a disc with all the episodes. This July issue will be distributed to their 252,000 members throughout the U.S.

Several club members who watch Netflix have told me they've seen me in *House of Cards*. I was a background actor, portraying a Cabinet Secretary, in three different episodes in Season Two. Anytime you see a cabinet meeting, I'm in there somewhere, but only in Chapter 23, Episode 10, do I get enough face time for you to spot me. In early July I was included in another Cabinet meeting for an episode in Season Three which just started filming and will be aired in 2015.

Your editorial staff frequently asks talented OTR researchers to write an article on a specific topic, but few of them can take the time to do so. In this issue we are very proud that four OTR historians accepted our invitation. Stewart Wright wrote our cover piece on Kathleen Hite, and Kathy Hammel wrote a two-part article on the first husband of *Candy Matson* (second portion comes in October, as will Stewart's article on Marian Clark.) Jim Widner sorts out the confusion on CBS News on Pearl Harbor Day, Dec 7, 1941, while Don Ramlow wrote a personal tribute to Peg Lynch and her impressive career in broadcasting. We thank these four for their stellar contributions.

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33 $\frac{1}{3}$ OUTSIDE START

SPADE COOLEY with the PAUL TAYLOR CHORUS

Take No. 1.—Ride Ranger Ride - Chorus	1:41
Take No. 2.—Devils Dream - Instr.	2:35
Take No. 3.—Boogie Woogie Cowboy - VC	1:45
Take No. 4.—Home In Old Wyoming - Chorus	2:00
Take No. 5.—Twilight On The Trail - Chorus	1:56

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