

Recreating Old Time Radio Shows to Teach History (1930-1950)



Amy Stephens, Director, Edmond History Museum

Theme...

By hosting “Reader’s Theater” from Old Time Radio Shows, your students can learn history from entertainment



Talk Outline

- Why Radio Is Still Relevant
- How Radio Shows Teach History
- Entertaining Reader's Theater
- Interactive Broadcasts & Scripts
- Resources



Listen...

Recognize any of these Old-Time Radio segments?



Amy's Flashback



SIX Reasons to Listen to Old Time Radio

[Blog article at EdmondHistory.org](http://EdmondHistory.org)



1. Good shows, Minus the Screen Time
2. A Fun Way to Learn (or Re-live) History
3. Kid-Friendly, Clean Content
4. Easily Accessed by Phone or Computer
5. No Commercial Interruptions
6. A LOT of Sinatra and Crosby Music

WWII Exhibit

Fibber McGee & Molly promoted war efforts on their show



A collage of vintage radio show posters for "Fibber McGee and Molly". The central poster features the text "1940s RADIO COMEDY THEATER PRESENTS FIBBER MCGEE CENSUS TAKER". Below this, it says "MONDAY 14TH (2:00PM) RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED". A call to action box on the right says "Count yourself for good times a live performance of the popular radio comedy program! Register online for Zoom meeting code!". The collage includes various images of the show's cast members and promotional graphics.

Other Shows

Selected based on exhibit themes in the museum...

FLASH GORDON



Journey back to the far off retro future of 1954 with Flash Gordon, Dale, Ming and a cast of aliens from across the cosmos! Family friendly and fun for all ages, Radio Comedy Theater presents a camp classic based on scripts by Lorenzo Semple Jr.

ZOOM BROADCAST SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER (2:00PM)

Edmond's 1950s

1940'S RADIO THEATER
THREE-RING RADIO SHOW

SAT, FEB 24 3:30PM

- Circus-themed skits from Old Time Radio
- Inspyral Circus Act
- Circus Music
- Elephant Keeper Talk
- Popcorn

TICKETS: \$12 TICKETS, KIDS 10 & UNDER FREE
RSVP EDMONDHISTORY.ORG

INSPIRAL CIRCUS EDMOND HISTORY MUSEUM

A vintage-style silver microphone icon.

RADIO COMEDY THEATER PRESENTS
HOLIDAY COOKING DISASTERS

Galvalcade of comedy greats on as Fibber McGee, Mel and Irma, Betty and more share revolting and indelicate delicacies!

FREE ZOOM BROADCAST!

YouTube EDMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

A background image showing a kitchen scene with a large explosion or fire coming from a stove.

What's Cooking, Edmond?

Edmond's Overwintering Circus

Video Examples ~ Intro Comments



Creation A Radio Show

A red velvet curtain with a gold tassel hangs on the left side of the slide, partially covering the first column.

1. PLAN

Show Theme

Listen to Shows

Transcribe

2. MARKET

Advertising

Cost

Sponsors

3. PRODUCE

Gather Cast

Rehearse

Sound Effect

Live Music & Dance

1940s RADIO COMEDY THEATER

LIVE DANCE! FAMILY FRIENDLY!

THE CHARLESTON

A LIFE OF RILEY RADIO BROADCAST

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH @ 6:30PM

EDMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM TICKETS edmondhistory.org

Chester A. Riley surprises his wife with dance lessons. Confusion ensues when he's seen two-stepping with another woman!

\$10 Adult | \$5 Child (\$1 Member Discount)
Limited Seating | Advanced Tickets Please!

The poster features a vintage microphone and a film strip graphic. The background shows a man in a suit and a woman in a 1940s style dress.



Local Flair



1940s RADIO THEATER
PRESENTS

**A Special Broadcast of
"WAR OF THE WORLDS"**

EDMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

EDMONDHISTORY.ORG

Prepare for an invasion of laughs and Sci-Fi hijinks with a broadcast beyond belief as we adapt Orson Welles' classic for Twenty-First Century Edmond!

BREAKING NEWS

WAR OF THE WORLDS

14:18 **FAKE NEWSCAST! REAL FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!**

NOVEMBER 7 (4:00PM)
ADMISSION: \$15.00

LOCK IT UP SAFE COMPANY

LIVE Music by Kyle Dillingham & Brent Saulsbury
Plus Appearance by Mayor Darrell Davis



Local Flair



Local Personalities

1940s Radio Theater Presents

SUPERHEROES OF LIBERTY

July 4th, 2022 @4-5:15pm

Actors will present patriotic, old-time, radio dramas from

Hey Kids! Listen to
earn box top prizes
at the show!

Superman & American Trail

Guest & Comic Artist **JERRY BENNETT AS SUPERMAN!**

Jerry will do a live drawing of Superman before
the show, available for raffle.

Radio Show tickets \$5/ea, kids under 5 free.
Tickets at the door or at EdmondHistory.org



EDMOND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
&
MUSEUM

1940s Radio Theater
Presents

A Valentine Variety Show

Includes Old-Time Radio-style comedy,
romantic drama and Edmond lore

Vocal Guest:
Alicia Vanderschaaf, Soprano

RESCHEDULED DATE

Fri, Feb 25 @ 6:30-7:30pm

Tickets on sale January 24th

EDMOND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
&
MUSEUM



Local Personalities

SINGING COWBOY SHOW

with Kyle Dillingham in the style of Gene Autry

Thurs, Nov 3

@ 6:30-7:30pm

Old-time radio music,
comedy, cowboy poetry
and horse-thieving!



Guest: Cynthia Ridge Band



Guest: Flora Knight



A 1940s Radio
Theater Production

Tickets On Sale Soon!
EdmondHistory.org



EDMOND HISTORY MUSEUM PRESENTS

THE RODEO ROGERS SHOW

The Legacy of Will Rogers & Roy Rogers

Buckaroo Bart Taylor as Will Rogers

Brandon Cheng as Roy Rogers



Ticket Info

Sun, Oct 5, 2025 @ 4:30

\$10 Adults, \$3 Kids, \$0 Veterans

RSVP @ EdmondHistory.org

Holiday Shows

Songs & Stripes BIG BAND SHOW

Celebrating Edmond's military heroes with comedy & music



THE HAUNTED RADIO STATION
Oct 11, 6:30
Show Tickets \$16
EdmondHistory.org

EDMOND HISTORY MUSEUM
HYPERION REALTY

1940S RADIO THEATER



Kid's Reading Scripts



Actual Commercials

Actual Radio Announcement from World War II

LEVEL: MEDIUM—2 PERSON SCRIPT

Read into Microphone in your best actor voices. This is like a play.

This commercial is about buying War Bonds (like buying gift certificates to give to the government, to help with war expenses).

Mom: Merry Christmas!!!

Child: Mother where are my presents?

Mom: Dear, come sit down a minute. This is for you, mother's Christmas present: War bonds. Yes, darling, war bonds

Child: (sound sad) Gee, thanks a lot mom, but I wanted a bicycle.

Mom: I know you wanted a bicycle, but I think you are old enough to realize that your country's at war and to be willing to make sacrifices for it. Just think if Daddy were wounded, one single war stamp might pay for the medicine to save him from pain Even save his life!

Child: Couldn't I have a bond *and* a bicycle?

Mom: Yes, you could—we could afford that. But if everybody bought everything they wanted, it would take thousands of people to make the goods to sell them, and those people are needed to make essential things for the war.

Child: Maybe next year?

Mom: Maybe. I know that's one thing your father is fighting for--so we can celebrate future Christmases in peace. And that will mean that he'll be with us again, and you'd like that wouldn't you?

Child: Oh boy, yes

Mom: (to audience) Any bond that you give as a present is much more than a gift--it's a Christmas blessing to those men who will be far away on this Christmas day, many under actual fire. It is a gift of appreciation from us to them for the incredible sacrifices they are making. A gift for their future and ours. Thank you.



From an actual World War II television commercial with the famous actress, Bette Davis called "A Present with a Future." (Some words changed/shortened to be better understood by modern children. The television commercial originally had 2 children.)

Actual Radio Announcement from World War II

Read into Microphone in your best announcer voice

LEVEL: EASY

This commercial is about recycling paper

Stuff we need
to win the war
has to be wrapped in paper,
And paper is getting hard to find.

So save paper.
Save all kinds of paper and cardboard.

Don't burn it!
Don't throw it away!
Recycle it!



From an actual commercial read by famous singer, Bing Crosby, (who sings "White Christmas") on his radio show with singer Cass Daley during World War II (Some words modified or shortened to be better understood by modern children, for example, "salvage agency" was changed to "recycle center.")

Interactivity



Superman was sponsored by a Kellogg's Pep cereal in the 1940s. A radio advertiser would tell children to collect cereal box tops and mail them in for prizes through the mail, such as a radio, a watch, a

One popular cereal box prize was the Pep "Button" pins, which are now very collectible.

EDMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Radio Theater Workshop

Sat, July 23, 10am-5pm

One-Day Training & Production

includes a 4:00 show for the public

Would you like to perform in an old-time radio show? During this workshop: learn the history of radio shows, practice sound effects, read from famous original scripts, and perform for your friends and public.

receives 10% discount) being held at Rodkey will be at the (many restaurants Huddleston and Amy EdmondHistory.org.



Sound Effects

**Commercially Made
Sound Devices**



Hand-Made Sound Items

Audience-Produced Noises



Finding Clips & Scripts

GenericRadio.com (scripts)

Show: *Miracle on 34th Street*

Date: Dec 21 1950

OTRCAT.com (Old Time Radio Catalog); RadioSpirits.com; Archives.org; LOC.gov

Welcome to OTRCAT.com: Old Time Radio Catalog Your country: **United States**


[HOME](#) [CATEGORIES](#) [SALE](#) [NEWEST](#)

Free Daily Download

OTRCAT features thousands of old time radio recordings for fans of the golden age of radio. Our collections are available on MP3 CD, Audio CD, and Instant Downloads.

Today [Yesterday](#) [2 Days Ago](#)

The following were broadcast today, March 17th



Ruby Dee in Old Time Radio

Order this episode and 9 additional episodes on MP3 CD (only \$0.50 per episode) \$5.00

On the air in 1957, 69 years ago today:
Ruby Dee in Radio Workshop from Ruby Dee

[Click here to save the Mp3 file to your computer](#)

WLS Radio (Chicago) Recorded Broadcast on the Hindenburg Disaster

delivered 6 May 1937, Lakehurst, NJ



CAST:

The Playhouse Team:

VOICE (1 line)
ANNOUNCER
BING CROSBY
BOB HOPE
GIRL SINGERS
2ND ANNCR (1 line)
GEORGE SEATON, director
NBC ANNCR (1 line)

Dramatis Personae:

KRIS KRINGLE
DRUNK, unfriendly
DORIS WALKER, department store executive
SHELLHAMMER, unctuous
SUSAN WALKER, Doris' precocious daughter
FRED GAILEY, lawyer
PETER, a little boy, New York accent
MOTHER, Peter's mother
MACY, department store owner
SAWYER, nervous, high-strung
MARA, district attorney
JUDGE
SALESMAN, on radio (1 line)
TOMMY, Mara's young son

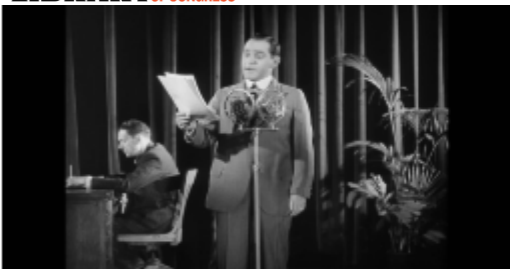
VOICE: (TERSE, ON FILTER) Screen Directors' Playhouse. Star: Edmund Gwenn. Production: "Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street." Director: George Seaton.

MUSIC: LENGTHY MAJESTIC FANFARE ... IN AND OUT

ANNOUNCER: This is the Screen Directors' Playhouse, the Thursday night feature on NBC's All-Star Festival of comedy, music, mystery, and drama -- brought to you by: RCA Victor, world leader in radio, first in recorded music, first in television.

LIBRARY

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



500,000 radio broadcasts!

FILM, VIDEO

Behind your radio dial

This program presents a backstage view of radio and television broadcasting. It includes capsule summaries of the departments making up the NBC network organization, scenes of rehearsals and broadcasts by NBC's top stars.

Contributor: Shulman, Alan - Reisman, Philip H. - Montagne, Edward J. - Sullivan, Neil - RKO-Pathe - Toscanini, Arturo - National Broadcasting Company - Grauer, Ben

Date: 1949

Conclusion

By hosting “Reader’s Theater” from Old Time Radio Shows, your students can learn history from entertainment



Contact Amy Stephens,
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Resources

OTRCAT.com (Old Time Radio Catalog), LOC.gov (audio, pics)
RadioSpirits.com; Archives.org
GenericRadio.com (scripts)
Transcribe.Wreally.com
YouTube.com (Edmond History Channel)

