



The Adventure Ahead Radio Program

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Adventure Ahead! was a brilliant Summer feature for 1944. Comprised of fourteen stirring adventure novels and stories from among America's greatest fiction writers, its somewhat masculine orientation may have kept some of the young females of the era listening to *Frank Sinatra* that summer instead of *Adventure Ahead!*.

But it was indeed billed as 'famous stories for *young people*', not '*famous stories for young men*'. And yet, how any *rational* programmer at NBC-Red could have construed the slant of this project to young *people* is anyone's guess. There's no discernible love interest, there are no female protagonists, nor any female authorities or mentors for that matter. Of course this was the 1940s after all, still in the throes of the fight for equality on many fronts. It's just quite obvious that NBC-Red programmers were simply completely out of touch with their era.

That having been said, each of these literary choices did have a uniting theme--*defending Freedom, domestically and abroad*. To be fair to NBC's programmers, there were several jingoistic, over the top, almost fascist 'public service programs' geared toward every facet of the domestic population at one time or another during the World War II years and the Cold War Years that followed. So overlooking the slant for the time being, let's focus in on the selected stories and their themes.

Virtually all of these stories were male-oriented, 'coming of age' tales of one type or another. Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* was one of the books virtually any father would expect his son to have read by the time he was eleven. A stirring tale of independent thinking, the courage to act on it, and the satisfaction of correctly asserting one's convictions is always a satisfying read for boy and man alike. For young ladies, even during the 1940s, not so much. All it would have conjured up was more of the status quo the *Rosie the Riveters* and their daughters across America were fighting against, sweating to defeat, and earning the right to overturn. Sadly the same theme can be set forth in the other twelve selections as well.

Suspending belief a bit further, *The Arrival of The Lily Bean*, ostensibly the one female-oriented theme in the entire run, stems from *Walter Dumaux Edmond's* compilation of short stories that appeared over several installments in *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Atlantic*



Young Ames Goes Down the River, ca. 1938

Monthly entitled simply, *Young Ames*. The fact that this is one of the two exemplars of the series not in circulation doesn't help. But from what I can recall from the Saturday Evening Post installment of the same name, *The Arrival of the Lily Bean* was yet another male coming of age story as well--but in the romantic arena.

T.B. Aldrich's *The Story of A Bad Boy*--as adapted--was a greatly abridged version of the original novel, which basically traced the entire life of the author at various critical 'coming age' junctures throughout his life. What survives in the Adventure Ahead! installment is a series of vignettes of the 'bad behaviour' of the protagonist. The 'bad behaviours' are a series of inspired pranks which, in the final analysis were instigated with the best of intentions. It's just that most of them backfired in one way or the other.

Inside The FBI is a stirring tale of the inner workings of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Clearly fascinating fodder for the imagination of any young male. Reportedly blessed by J.Edgar Hoover himself, it doesn't take much thought to imagine how the piece is slanted. With most of the emphasis on FBI scientific procedure and analysis, there's plenty here to fire the imagination of any young man.



Young Ames Fights A Fire, ca. 1939

Robinson Crusoe is a classic of American literature. Even abridged, it's easy to understand how naturally this selection sprang to mind when developing the project. Daniel Defoe's classic exists here in skeleton form only, but it's a good listen to this day. And if it prompts you to reach for your own copy from the library shelf, so much the better. It's an amazing read--and re-read.

A Tooth for Paul Revere is one of Stephen Vincent Benét's most enduring short stories. It's been adapted and readapted in hundreds of productions over Radio, Animation, Television, and Film. If you've never read it yourself, then don't miss the opportunity to listen to the Adventure Ahead! rendition. It captures all of the key elements of Benét's original story.

Toby Tyler . . . is pure young male adventure fantasy, both delightfully spun and poignantly punctuated. One of the more realistically and sensitively portrayed productions, we found it one of the more enjoyable of the existing eleven exemplars.

Waldo Fleming's *Talking Drums* is pure male juvenile escapism very much in the Jungle Jim or Tarzan mold, but with a bit more cerebral moral dilemmas interwoven into the script. One of the better recorded examples from this run, the foley work is wonderfully evocative and contributes to the many turns in the script.



A Christmas Rose for Ames, ca. 1940

The Biscuit Eater by James Street is a wonderfully charming story of a boy and his dog, a useless 'biscuit eater' of a pup, saved from the drowning well by the boy who fell in love with the pup at first sight. It's one of the more enjoyable and inspirational programs of the thirties. A wonderful little morality play, the touching interaction between a boy, his faith in his dog, and his love for his own father resolves itself in a wonderfully satisfying manner.

Mabel Leigh Hunt's *Have You Seen Tom Thumb* is one of the two missing episodes from this production. It's still very easy to see why it was included in this anthology. The original story is the fictionalized account of the famous dwarf, *Charles Sherwood Stratton*, who, as *General Tom Thumb* became a living legend in the Circus world, and eventually made a wonderful life for himself and his family in the process. From performing for the crowned heads of Europe to saving P.T. Barnum from bankruptcy to meeting President Abraham Lincoln himself, Tom Thumb's life story is both a fascinating adventure and a tale of great inspiration to any young person with a physical limitation of any kind.

Hubert Skidmore's *Hill Lawyer* is a wonderful adventure in small town human relations and interaction. Both inspirational and well-grounded in basic American decency, there's no question that this program left an impression on its young listeners--and perhaps a few of its older listeners as well.

G.A Henty's *One of the 28th* and *Greenmantle*, the wonderful espionage story by John Buchan

round out the last two installments of this adventure series. Very similar in their militaristic slant, they're both wonderful period adventures in their own right. The former, a rousing vignette of the Battle of Waterloo, is perhaps the one exemplar in circulation that provides a heroine as a protagonist. *Greenmantle*, by contrast, is a riveting tale of spycraft and espionage at the turn of the century. Espionage adventures almost always build far more anxiety and anticipation in the course of the script and this one is no exception.

The series closed prematurely with *Alexander Dumas'* stirring *The Three Musketeers*, the classic adventure story of four loyalist Musketeers, *D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis* who take a mission to England to retrieve a wooden box full of diamonds and eventually take down *Cardinal Richelieu*. Their motto, "*one for all, all for one*" becomes a popular rallying of enduring friendship and loyalty for millions of youngsters throughout the world for two centuries.

The series was overtaken by events with the NBC-Red-wide broadcast of the Sixth War Loan Drive on November 11, 1944, effectively ending the series.

The better encodes of this remarkable Summer series are wonderful reminders of the type of inspirational fare of the 1940s during a world at War. Not preachy, not particularly jingoistic but clearly selected and adapted to act as both a comfort and inspiration to the thousands of young people anxiously awaiting resolution of the War and the return of their brothers, fathers and uncles. In this respect alone, this gem of a short series is a definite *keeper* from The Golden Age of Radio.

Series Derivatives:	None
Genre:	Anthology of Golden Age Radio Adventure Dramas
Network(s):	NBC-Red
Audition	None
Date(s) and Title(s):	
Premiere Date(s) and Title(s):	44-08-05 01 Two Years Before the Mast
Run Dates(s)/ Time(s):	44-08-05 to 44-11-04; NBC-Red; Fourteen, 30-minute programs; Saturdays in most markets; time varies depending on market.
Syndication:	NBC - World Broadcasting Transcription
Sponsors:	NBC and its Affiliated Independent Stations as a Public Service.
Director(s):	John Mansfield [Supervisor]; Herbert Rice [Supervisor]
Principal Actors:	<i>John Thomas, Alastair Kyle, Craig McDonald, Juano Hernandez, Neil Fitzgerald, Rod Hendrickson, Paul Conrad, Kermit Murdock, Ed Collins, Brad Barker, Roger DeKoven, James Tansey, Joseph Wiseman, Jackie Ayers, Eleanor Audley, Jean Gillespie, Fred Baror, Paul Ford, Jack Manning, Nicholas Joy, Bernard Lenrow, Georgie Walton, Jim Boles, Jan Van Dyke, Martin Begley, Louis John, Brad Barker, Lawson Zerbe, Walter Bond, Richard Keith, Jack McBride, Tony Merrill, Alexander Scourby, Guy Spaul, Jack Stanley, E.A. Krumschmidt, Horace Braum, Guy Sorel, Len Scherer, Kathleen Cordell, Charme Allen.</i>
Recurring Character(s):	Varied with the program
Protagonist(s):	Varied with the program
Author(s):	Richard Dana, Walter Edmonds, T.B. Aldrich, Daniel Defoe, James Street, Waldo Fleming, Stephen Vincent Benet, George A. Henty, John Buchan, Hubert Skidmore, James Otis, John Floherty
Writer(s)	Tom Gutay [Adapter]; Howard Carroway [Adapter]

Writer(s) Tom Gutay
[Adapter];
Howard Carroway
[Adapter]

Music 'Doc' Whipple; Leo Kampinsky - Composer/Conductor; Henri Nosco - Composer/Conductor

Direction:

Musical 'Doc' Whipple Organ Music

Theme(s):

Announcer(s) [Unknown]

):

Estimated 14

Scripts or

Broadcasts:

Episodes in 11

Circulation:

Total 11

Episodes in

Collection:

Provenances

:

RadioGOLDINdex, Hickerson Guide, Wisconsin State Journal.

Notes on Provenances:

The most helpful provenances were the log of the RadioGOLDINdex and The Wisconsin State Journal. The Hickerson Guide was almost entirely in error, as was its source, otrsite.com.



This entire run was a public service directed toward the young people of America during a time of war. Clearly transcribed, it was made available to all NBC-Red independent affiliates, who for the most part aired the fourteen installments in order for fourteen weeks. The two departures from the log we prepared appeared to be the El Paso, Texas stations and most of the Ohio Stations.

OTRisms:

We point out the above to illustrate the major *misconception* circulating about this fine, short series: it aired for *only* fourteen unique installments, *not* the sixteen installments reported everywhere else throughout the 'otr' community. Underhanded 'otr' sellers have intentionally clipped two of the key episodes in an effort to justify their inaccurate dating and numbering of the sets. We've annotated those episodes below.



Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks With A Circus is misnamed *Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks With the Circus*. The most 'otr' logs.

There was never a book entitled *Green Mantle*. The correct title is *Greenmantle*, by John Buchan. The newspaper listings simply got it wrong.

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We continue to provide *honest research* into these wonderful Golden Age Radio programs simply because we love to do it. If you feel that we've provided you with useful information or saved you some valuable time regarding *this log*--and you'd like to help us even further--you can help us keep going. Please consider a small donation here:



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[*Date, title, and episode column annotations in red* refer to either details we have yet to fully provenance or other unverifiable information as of this writing. *Red highlights* in the text of the 'Notes' columns refer to information upon which we relied in *citing dates, date or time changes, titles.*]

Adventure Ahead Radio Program Log

Date Episode Title Avail. Notes 44-08-05

1

Two Years Before the Mast

Y

[*Premiere Episode*]

9 a. m. — Adventure Ahead

(WIBA): new program; dramatization of Richard Dana's' "Two Years Before the Mast," 44-08-12

2

The Arrival of The Lily Bean

N

9 a. m. — Adventure Ahead

(WIBA): new program; episode from Walter D. Edmonds' "Young Ames," "The Arrival of the Lily Bean." 44-08-19

3

The Story Of A Bad Boy

Y

9 a. m. — Adventure Ahead

(WIBA): "The Story Of A Bad Boy" by T.B. Aldrich 44-08-26

4

Inside the FBI

Y

[open intentionally clipped]

9 a. m. — Adventure Ahead

(WIBA): "Inside the FBI" by John J. Floherty 44-09-02

5

Robinson Crusoe

Y

12 n. -- Adventure Ahead (WMAQ): "Robinson Crusoe" by Daniel Defoe 44-09-09

6

A Tooth For Paul Revere

Y

12 n. -- Adventure Ahead (WMAQ): "A Tooth for Paul Revere" by Steven Vincent Benét

44-09-16

7

Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks With A Circus

Y

12 n. -- Adventure Ahead (WMAQ): "Toby Tyler, or Ten Weeks With A Circus" by James Otis

44-09-23

8

Talking Drums

Y

12 n. -- Adventure Ahead (WMAQ): "Talking Durms" by Waldo Fleming

44-09-30

9

The Biscuit Eater

Y

8 p. m. ...Adventure Ahead (WIBA): "The Biscuit Eater," by James Street. 44-10-07

10

Have You Seen Tom Thumb

N

8 p. m. ...Adventure Ahead (WIBA): "Have You Seen Tom Thumb," story by Mabel Leigh Hunt. 44-10-14

11

Hill Lawyer

Y

12 n. -- Adventure Ahead (WMAQ): "Hill Lawyer" by H. Skidmore

44-10-21

12

Adventure Ahead Radio Program Biographies

Bernard Lenrow (Actor, 'Talking Drums')

Stage, Radio, Television
and Film Actor
(1903-1963)

Birthplace: Binghamton,
New York, U.S.A

Education: Cornell
University (1926)

Radiography:

1938 Great Plays

1939 Ideas That Came True

1942 The Jack Benny Program

1943 Words At War

1944 NBC War Bond Parade

1944 Molle Mystery Theatre

1944 Adventure Ahead

1944 The Eternal Light

1944 We Came This Way

1944 Perry Mason

1945 Treasury Salute

1945 Voice Of the Army

1946 Casey, Crime Photographer

1946 NBC Parade Of Stars

1947 Famous Jury Trials

1947 The Shadow

1947 The Adventures Of

Sherlock Holmes

1948 The Golden Door

1948 You Are There

1948 Secret Missions

1949 Mystery Theatre

1950 Up For Parole

1951 Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar

1951 Now Hear This

1951 Dimension X

1951 Cavalcade Of America

1951 The Silent Men

1952 Out Of the Thunde

1953 New World A' Coming

1953 The Chase

1954 From the House Of
Bondage

1954 Hallmark Hall Of Fame

1956 X Minus One

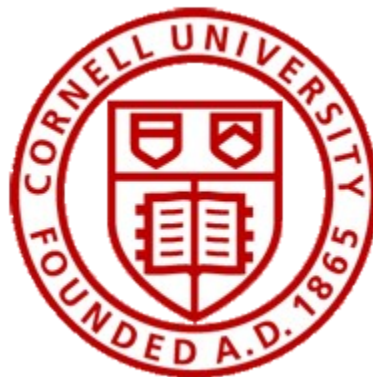
1958 The Ave Maria Hour

1961 Suspense

Hollywood's Open House



Bernard Lenrow, ca. 1947



Cornell University Seal



*1957's The Violators, Bernard
Lenrow's last Film credit*

Although Actor Bernard Lenrow had his first NBC audition in 1928, it was the fan mail he received while broadcasting occasionally in connection with his Cornell teaching eight years later that made him decide to go into Radio. Lenrow was born in Binghamton, N. Y., and educated at Cornell where he also did graduate study in Speech and Dramatics. He became an instructor in the University's Department of Public Speaking and Assistant Director of the *Cornell Dramatic Club*. He later taught Speech at *Hunter College* in New York, and at the U. of Iowa, where he also directed the *Iowa State Players*.

His Radio debut in a commercial spot was a success, and he was busy from that time on as free-lance actor and narrator-announcer. He was narrator at *The City of Light* at the *New York World's Fair*, and had done the narration for such film documentaries as *"Men Against Microbes."* Tall and powerfully-built, red-haired Lenrow kept busy with gardening and carpentry at his Englewood, N. J., home. An ardent cyclist, he taught his three young sons equal proficiency in long-distance cycling.

Lenrow's Radio work wasn't confined to narration or announcing chores. Lenrow performed in several straight drama roles over his 32-year career in Radio, including recurring roles in *Perry Mason* (1944), *Mystery Theatre* (1945), and *Casey Crime Photographer* (1946). Indeed, Lenrow's most memorable role in Radio was *Detective Captain Logan* on *Casey, Crime Photographer*. Lenrow often appeared as authoritarian figures such as doctors, judges, lawyers or senior detectives.

Not long after his debut in Radio, Lenrow found himself performing in several New York Stage plays, among them, *Ten Million Ghosts* (1936), *The Man with Blond Hair* (1941), *Compulsion* (1957) and *The Gang's All Here* (1959). Lenrow also performed in the Stratford Shakespearean Festival for several years, beginning in 1955.

Lenrow's Film debut was in an uncredited role in 1942's *The House On 92nd Street*. Lenrow's last Film appearance was in 1957's *The Violators*, as Judge McKenna. Bernard Lenrow also performed in several early Television programs, among them, *Tales of Tomorrow* (1951), *Decoy* (1959) and *The Defenders* (1963). Bernard Lenrow passed away shortly after his last performance in *The Defenders* of a sudden, unexpected heart-attack while hospitalized in an Englewood hospital.

