

Abroad with the Lockharts (1930)

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Series Synopsis

Abroad with the Lockharts was a 13-episode syndicated romantic comedy radio series first broadcast in 1930. The earliest known broadcast date was August 17, 1930, on WCAO (Baltimore). It was broadcast at various times on various stations throughout the United States for at least the next four years, and overseas until at least 1935.

The series starred real-life married couple Gene and Kathleen Lockhart as Will Lockhart and Mrs. Lockhart (first name never announced). In the opening episode, Will was described as “a businessman: comfortable, blunt, knows his own mind, enjoys his business and his community. A plain American businessman.” Mrs. Lockhart was “a pleasant type of American wife: a thorough housekeeper, belongs to the woman’s club and the literary club of her town – and still retains the spirit of romance.”

Abroad with the Lockharts followed the Lockharts as they embarked on a tour of Europe for their tenth wedding anniversary, visiting “seven glorious countries” over “50 wonderful days.” To get there, though, Mrs. Lockhart had to convince Mr. Lockhart to give up his annual summer fishing trip with his friend Charlie. Will gave in, but made it clear throughout the trip he’d rather have gone fishing. He did occasionally find things he enjoyed – like a burlesque show in Paris – and grudgingly admitted in the final episode that he was glad he went.

Set in the early years of the Great Depression, *Abroad with the Lockharts* provided a glimpse of the American view of traveling to Europe – something out of reach for the vast majority of them at the time. The banter between two very different personalities as they encounter strange new people and circumstances is what makes this show endearing to this day.

Episodes

Episodes known to exist have been marked with an asterisk (*). The generic opening lines (describing the Lockharts) have been skipped in the “First line(s)” section when they occurred before episode-specific lines. Titles are mostly by convention, as there don’t appear to have been official titles for the episodes.

1. Planning a Trip to Europe*

- Plot: Will Lockhart is looking forward to his annual summer fishing trip with his friend Charlie. His wife, however, is tired of fishing trips and wants to visit Europe like many of her girlfriends have. Besides, it is their 10th wedding anniversary this year, and Will promised her he’d give her just what she wanted. Will didn’t stand a chance.
- First line: “Tonight we inaugurate a series of broadcast episodes over this station entitled, *Abroad with the Lockharts*.”
- Next week: “Next week is sailing day, and this typical American Mr. and Mrs. again will delight us from on shipboard.”
- Notes: First known broadcast is August 17, 1930, on Baltimore’s WCAO. On that station, it ran on Sundays at 7:45 PM through September 28, then at 8:45 PM through November 9.

The trip Mrs. Lockhart has settled on promises “seven glorious countries, 50 wonderful days.” Countries mentioned include France (Paris), Switzerland (the Alps), and Italy (Rome, Florence, and Venice). Their tenth wedding anniversary day would be while they are in Venice.

2. Sailing Day*

Plot: The day of the start of their trip is here, and Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart have arrived at the dock. After boarding, Mrs. Lockhart is looking forward to a relaxing trip, but Mr. Lockhart finds the process for scheduling anything exasperating.

First line: “We are about to go abroad with the Lockharts!”

Next week: “Next week, we shall pick them up at sea, as they are enjoying life on board a transatlantic liner.”

3. At Sea*

Plot: The Lockharts are relaxing on their deck chairs when someone Mrs. Lockhart met last night – Mrs. Beauchamp – stops by to chat. Later, Mr. Lockhart serves as chairman of the ship’s concert.

First lines: “Tonight we find Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart, a typical American couple, taking a trip to Europe. That is, Mrs. Lockhart is taking Mr. Lockhart. They are now at sea.”

Next week: “And so we leave the Lockharts, until next week at the same time when we shall join them again as they arrive in England.”

4. Arriving in England*

Plot: Their transatlantic liner has arrived in Southampton, England and the Lockharts make their way to London by train.

First line: “Well, here we are again, abroad with the Lockharts. [...] We find the Lockharts as they are packing their trunks and preparing to disembark at Southampton.”

Next week: “Next week, we shall follow them as they visit some of the sights in London.”

Notes: Southampton is notable for being the departure point for the *RMS Titanic* 18 years earlier.

5. Sightseeing in London*

Plot: The Lockharts take a tour bus to visit the historic parts of London. Mr. Lockhart has a lot of questions.

First lines: “Once again we are abroad with the Lockharts. [...] Here we find we find this typical Mr. and Mrs. enjoying the sights of London and of rural England.”

Next week: “Next week, we shall find them again, crossing the English Channel and arriving in Paris, where they will continue their experiences abroad.”

6. Crossing the English Channel*

Plot: We join the Lockharts as they are arriving by boat at Calais. The process for exiting their boat, gathering their luggage, clearing customs, and making the train for Paris is confusing, but thankfully Mrs. Lockhart takes care of it. Rather than going to the opera that evening, Mr. Lockhart convinces his wife to see the Folies Bergère – a burlesque show!

First lines: “Here we are again, abroad with the Lockharts. [...] We find them crossing the English Channel to France.”

Next week: “Next week, we pick them up as they continue their experiences in Paris.”

7. Wagon-Lit Office in Paris*

Plot: Mrs. Lockhart insists on practicing her French as the Lockharts attempt to buy a train ticket to visit Biarritz in southwest France, near the Spanish border.

First line: “Today we find Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart in Paris, about to visit the wagon-lit office.”

Next week: “And so we shall have to leave the Lockharts until next week, when we join them as they visit the historical places of Paris.”

Notes: This episode has normally been called “Sightseeing in Paris”, but it really involved them trying to get a train ticket for Biarritz. Since the next episode is about seeing the sights in Paris, it makes more sense to use that title for that episode.

8. Sightseeing in Paris

9. Title/location unknown

10. Title/location unknown

11. Sightseeing in Venice

Plot: Today we find this typical American couple in Venice, about to visit the Doge's palace. Mr. Lockhart is all for sitting in the shade of one of the trees until Mrs. Lockhart comes out, but she insists that he go into the palace and examine every little thing. She starts with the Stairway of the Giants, and this assignment is not a little one for Mr. Lockhart's aching feet. Finally, they get a guide who explains all the wonders of the frescoes of Tintoretto and the work of Galileo, the great astronomer. The guide also points to the wonders of the canal and by the time he gets to the Doge's palace itself, both the Lockharts are leg-weary. [*San Antonio Light*, via Digital Deli Too]

Notes: According to Digital Deli Too, The *San Antonio Light* listed this as the second-to-last episode. However, in the final episode Mrs. Lockhart listed the order of their travels in Italy as Venice, Florence, and finally Rome. Additionally, the Rome episode has otherwise been listed as the penultimate episode of the series.

12. Sightseeing in Rome*

Plot: We join the Lockharts towards the end of their stay in Rome, as they plan to do some sightseeing on their own.

First lines: "Once again, we are abroad with the Lockharts. [...] We listen in on them, as they are in their hotel in Rome, preparing for a sightseeing trip."

Next week: "Next week, we hope you will again be abroad with the Lockharts". Nothing more specific.

Notes: It's not clear from listening to it that this is the penultimate episode. However, it must be late in the trip, since they got a letter that said it has been too hot all summer for Charlie to fish.

It is possible there was more than one episode with the Lockharts in Rome, like there was with Paris. An article in the *Wichita Falls* from November 2, 1930, mentioned "their encounter with the Fascisti in Rome", which does not occur in this episode (though there is a reference to Mussolini). If so, the Venice episode would be the tenth one, instead.

13. Homeward Bound*

Plot: The Lockharts are aboard an ocean liner, returning to America tomorrow. Mrs. Lockhart reminisces about all the wonderful things they have seen, while Will grumbles about his sore feet.

First lines: "Mr. and Mrs. Lockhart have been to Europe. That is, Mrs. Lockhart took Mr. Lockhart. They are now homeward bound."

Conclusion: "We hope you have enjoyed their wanderings over Europe, and perhaps in some future time we shall again have the pleasure of going abroad with the Lockharts."

Where Else Did They Go?

We know from the available episodes that the Lockharts visited at least the United Kingdom/England (London), France (Paris) and Italy (Rome). We also know from the first episode that the trip was supposed to take them to seven countries over 50 days, and Switzerland is one of the countries mentioned then. They attempted to visit Biarritz in southwest France, but it is not clear they ever made it there. From the Rome episode, we know they visited Scotland, because Will compared togas to kilts. We also know from the final episode that they visited Belgium (the mannequin statue in Brussels, presumably "[Manneken Pis](#)" by her reaction), as well as in Italy the cities of Milan (the Milan Cathedral), Venice, Florence, and Rome (the latter three in specifically that order). Those last three cities were also mentioned in the first episode, as they were going to be in Venice the night of their tenth wedding anniversary. So, a possible itinerary might have looked like this:

1. United Kingdom/England (arrive in Southampton and then to London)
2. United Kingdom/Scotland
3. France (arrive in Calais and then to Paris, also possibly Biarritz)
4. Belgium (Brussels)
5. Switzerland
6. Italy (Milan, Venice, Florence, and Rome)

...and one other country not mentioned. Possibly Spain if they did go to Biarritz, or maybe the Netherlands, Germany, or Austria.