

Archives for old recordings

By JOHN WOLCOTT
Globe-Democrat-Copley News
Service

SEATTLE. — Nostalgic infatuation with America's past has produced a growing demand in recent years for old movies, music from the ragtime and big band eras and replays of old radio comedies and dramas.

But even before that nostalgia took hold, serious students of history and educators have been living in the past with the help of the University of Washington's "phonoarchives" collection of news broadcasts, speeches and other broadcast memorabilia.

"NINETY-FIVE per cent of our listening material is news and information rather than entertainment so the nostalgia craze hasn't affected us much with the public.

"But for educators and researchers, ours is the only extensive sound library in the nation that's usable," said curator Donald Godfrey, on the staff of the university's School of Communications, which has responsibility for the archives.

So unique is the library that requests for segments of its "history in sound" collection come from the Library of Congress, CBS and the BBC.

Godfrey said the collection is valuable for two reasons. First, transcripts of early radio network news broadcasts are rare because stations normally carried the programs live. Second, the university's collection is the only one that is usable because it is thoroughly indexed. The extensive collection of early radio broadcast recordings in the Library of Congress, by contrast, is still in boxes and little is known about their contents or condition.

IT WAS ONLY by an unusual combination of events that the archives were assembled, Godfrey explained.

To begin with, KIRO-CBS in Seattle had made transcriptions of more than 1,000 hours of network broadcasts between Sept. 7, 1939, when the German army marched into Poland, to April 2, 1945, when Allied forces crossed Germany's borders. They were recorded from New York City broadcasts so they could be replayed in Seattle at more convenient West Coast times.

Fortunately, Saul Haas, then president of Queen City Broadcasting, owners of KIRO, had a sense of history and preserved the metal and glass recording discs.

In 1956, when University of Washington Prof. Milo Ryan began searching for original broadcasts from that World War II era to fit into a television program soundtrack, his sleuthing uncovered the valuable discs in boxes stored in KIRO's transmitter building on Vashon Island.

KIRO management turned the entire collection over to the university and a \$10,000 grant to the School of Communications from CBS in 1957 financed preservation of the recordings, including money to record their historical sounds permanently on tape because the fragile discs themselves could only be played a few times.

There were 2,227 newscasts on the discs, by such men as Edward R. Murrow, H. V. Kaltenborn, Elmer Davis, Quentin Reynolds, William L. Shirer and Eric Sevareid.

They reported on events ranging from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor to the bombing of Japan; landing of Allied forces in North Africa; the invasion of Europe at Normandy; establishment of the World Security Council in 1945; V-E and V-J Day events; and the death and funeral of President Franklin Roosevelt.

Among the speeches by world leaders are 51 by FDR including his famous "Fire-side Chats," and 21 by Winston Churchill. Entertainment programs were few but included such classics as Frec Allen's "Allen's Alley" and "fibber McGee and Molly."

RYAN, WHO retired from the university in 1970, wanted the library to continue growing. In later years, KOMO radio in Seattle added substantially to the collection and the taping of contemporary broadcasts added speeches and interviews during the 1972 presidential campaign, the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, and speeches by Presidents Kennedy and Nixon.

"Last year we helped ABC in their search for historical excerpts from radio broadcasts, finding one they wanted by Winston Burdett for a sound track for a television movie," Godfrey said. "We also provided 40 tapes of historical broadcasts to CBS for an education series being prepared on World War II."

No discs or original recordings leave the archives, which are kept in a temperature- and humidity-controlled room.

April 3, 1975

Phonoarchives Project
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Gentlemen:

In November of last year I read a news story about your work in preserving recordings of the era between 1939 and 1945.

Using a "Soundscriber" recorder and aluminum discs, I recorded about two hours each week of the Sunday radio network news commentaries and related speeches, beginning April 27, 1941 and ending July 27, 1941.

The following is an example of the type of subject matter recorded:

- 4/27/41 - Speech by Winston Churchill
- 4/28/41 - Network news broadcasts
- 4/28/41 - Professor Roland G. Usher, Washington University, "Reasons for the Fall of Greece".
- 5/4/41 - Chicago University Round Table, "Effect of Blitzkrieg on U. S. Economic Order".
- 5/3/41 - H. V. Kaltenborn - Iraq, British, U.S. Naval Patrols
- 5/4/41 - H. V. Kaltenborn, "Hitler's Speech".
- 5/4/41 - America's Forum of the Air, "How Far Should the U.S. Go to Defeat Hitler". Panelists, Ralph Ingersoll, Norman Thomas, Stanley High and Congressman Voorhis.
- 5/4/41 - Walter Winchell, "The Jurgens Journal".

If recordings taken from my aluminum discs or the originals would be of interest to you, you may contact me at the above address.

Yours very truly,

October 3, 1975

Donald G. Godfrey, Curator
Milo Ryan Phonoarchive
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195

Dear Mr. Godfrey:

I have enclosed copy of deed to the various phonographic recordings, as listed on deed, and the "Soundscriber" play-back recording equipment, which has now been sent to you by insured parcel post. The parcel post charges are approximately \$9.00. Would appreciate reimbursement for the shipping charges.

Please have deed signed by an authorized person representing the University, indicating your acceptance, and return copy to me.

Sincerely yours,

November 30, 1989

Milo Ryan Phonoarchive
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195

Gentlemen:

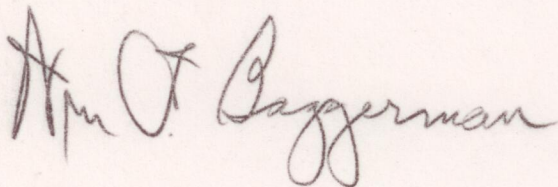
In 1975 I corresponded with Mr. Donald G. Godfrey of the archive and then gave a group of original recordings of WWII speeches of world leaders.

In a recent move of my home I came across the old correspondence and a book of "Columbia Masterworks, Set MM-800, I Can Hear It Now", as shown on the enclosed sheets.

I bought the records new and believe they have not been played through over two times.

If these records should be relevant to you for the archive I will send them to you for the mailing cost which I estimate will be about \$7.50.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Wm F. Baggerman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Wm" and last name "Baggerman" clearly distinguishable.

The undersigned, Wm. F. Baggerman, hereby deeds the below-listed phonographic recordings made by him to the Milo Ryan Phonoarchive of the University of Washington at Seattle, Washington, a public educational institution, and with the recordings a portable "Soundscriber" recorder/play-back machine, is included. This machine being the same, or of the same type, used to produce the recordings on the aluminum disks:

4/27/41	-	Speech by Prime Minister Winston Churchill
4/28/41	-	News Broadcast
4/28/41	-	Prof. Usher commentator "Reasons for Fall of Greece"
5/4/41	-	Chicago University Round Table, Effect of Blitzkreig on U.S. Economic Order
5/31/41		H. V. Kaltenborn, Commentator "Iraq & British, U.S. Naval Patrols"
5/4/41		H.V. Kaltenborn, Commentator "Hitler's Speech"
5/4/41		America's Forum of the Air, How Far Should U.S. Go To Defeat Hitler; speakers, Ralph Ingersoll, Norman Thomas, Stanley High, Congressman Voorhis.
5/4/41		Walter Winchell, Jurgens Journal
5/11/41		H. V. Kaltenborn, News Comments
5/11/41		Charlie McCarthy Program
5/11/41		Walter Winchell, Jurgen's Journal
5/11/41		Speech by Herbert Hoover
5/17/41		H. V. Kaltenborn, Commentator "Iraq and Dakar"
5/18/41		H. V. Kaltenborn, Commentator "Fall of Italians in Ethiopia"
5/18/41		Chicago University Round Table "Roosevelt vs. Hitler".
5/18/41		America's Forum of the Air, Should There Be a Separate Air Service.
5/18/41		News, by Wythe Williams
5/18/41		Walter Winchell, Jurgen's Journal
5/25/41		America's Forum of the Air, Food and Defense; speakers Sec. of Agriculture Wickard, Surgeon Gen. Parren, Paul V. McNutt.
5/25/41		Walter Winchell, Jurgen's Journal
5/25/41		News Broadcast
5/28/41		President Roosevelt, Speech Declaring National Emergency
5/28/41		Comment of President's Speech, Kaltenborn, Clapper, Baukage
5/28/41		News Broadcast KSD
5/28/41		Capt. Herne, Commentator
6/14/41		H. V. Kaltenborn - News Comment
6/15/41		H.V. Kaltenborn - News Comment, Robin Moor Incident; Pacify Japan
6/15/41		America's Forum of the Air - North American Aviation Strike
6/15/41		Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal
6/15/41		Upton Sinclair - Far East Situation
6/22/41		America's Forum of the Air - Should U.S. Sever Relations With Germany Now - Congressmen
6/22/ 41		News Broadcast - WIL - Russia Invaded
6/22/41		Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal
6/28/41		H. V. Kaltenborn - News Comment, Battle for Minsk
6/29/41		Upton Close - The Far Eastern Situation
6/29/41		Pearson & Allen Predict
6/29/41		Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal
7/ 6/41		H. V. Kaltenborn - News Comments
7/6/41		Pearson & Allen "Predictions"
7/6/41		Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal
7/7/41		News Broadcast - Station KSD
7/12/41		H. V. Kaltenborn - News Comments
7/13/41		News Broadcast - Station KSD

(continued)

7/13/41 Pearson & Allen Predict
 7/13/41 America's Forum of the Air - An Appraisal of the
 Present Condition of U.S. Army by newswriters.
 7/13/41 Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal
 7/20/41 H. V. Kaltenborn - News Comments
 7/20/41 Upton Close - The Far Eastern Situation
 7/20/41 Pearson & Allen "Predict"
 7/20/41 America's Forum of the Air - Shall Term of Selective
 Service be Lengthened, Senators Pepper, Wiley, Willis
 and Kilgere.
 7/20/41 Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal
 7/27/41 Upton Close - Far Eastern Situation
 7/27/41 H.V. Kaltenborn - News Comments
 7/27/41 Pearson & Allen Predict
 7/27/41 America's Forum of the Air - The 3½ Billion Tax Bill
 Congressmen Doughten, Treadway, Cooper, Disney, Jenkins
 7/28/41 Walter Winchell - Jurgens Journal.

Wm. F. Baggerman

STATE OF MISSOURI } ss
 County of _____

On this _____ day of _____, 1975, before me, a notary public in and for said County, personally appeared _____, to me known to be the persons described in _____ and who executed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged that they executed the same as their free act and deed.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal at my office in _____ in said County and State, the day and year first above written.

My Term expires: _____

Notary Public

The above described recordings and "Soundsciber" recorder/play-back machine are accepted in the name of the Milo Ryan Phonoarchive, University of Washington, and the recordings are valued at _____ and the "Soundsciber" recorder/play-back machine at _____.

MILO RYAN PHONOARCHIVE,
 UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Authorized Signature.