

NEW BOOKS AND LITERATURE



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Books to be reviewed in this column should be sent directly to David Kraeuter at the address above. After review, all such books become a permanent part of The AWA Library, which is part of The AWA Electronic Communication Museum and is available to members for browsing and research.

On the Short Waves, 1923–1945: Broadcast Listening in the Pioneer Days of Radio

By Jerome S. Berg. Published 1999 [2007] by McFarland, (www.mcfarlandpub.com), 800-253-2187, 7 x 10 inches, 280 pages, softcover, \$39.95 (See page 57 of the August 1999 OTB for a review of this volume; this volume not seen by DWK).



Dual Review: Broadcasting on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today

By Jerome S. Berg. Published 2008 by McFarland, 7 x 10 inches, 496 pages, hardcover, \$65.

Listening on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today

By Jerome S. Berg. Published 2008 by McFarland, 7 x 10 inches, 423 pages, hardcover, \$65.

We used to call Milton Berle “Mr. Television.” With the completion of this trilogy on shortwave radio I am tempted to call Jerome Berg “Mr. Short Wave.” Perhaps it was his training and experience in law that makes Berg treat his subject with the competence and thoroughness that is evident in these volumes. (You know you’re dealing with a savvy author when, in the preface, he apologizes to James Watt for using the abbreviation *kw* instead of *kW*.)

In *Broadcasting*, Berg provides a year-by-year history of shortwave transmission since the War, highlighting hundreds of shortwave stations worldwide. But first he provides an overview of shortwave broadcasting, patiently and clearly

explaining the differences among such esoterica as surrogate and nonsurrogate governmental broadcasting, nongovernmental clandestine broadcasting, etc. If nothing else, this volume makes evident the protean forms and sources of shortwave broadcasting, many of which will be unknown to the average listener.

Thousands of facts are presented here, making for an interesting indexing problem. In 19 pages of dense text, an appendix attempts to list all stations covered by country and, within country, by year. These pages must have required Job’s patience to produce and proofread, but their usefulness immediately becomes obvious when particulars are wanted.

The *Listening* volume presents shortwave from the reception viewpoint, and is the one most beginning SWLers will turn to. There are detailed chapters on the shortwave audience, clubs, literature, listener programs, receivers, QSLing and computers.

The 100-page chapter on literature provides a good example of the inclusiveness of these volumes. In the subsection on “DX Newsletters” I count 19 titles covered, some with as few as 30 subscribers. Nevertheless, each entry includes a history of the newsletter, naming the major players, inclusive dates of publication, etc. Not content to let the matter rest there, the author follows up with “Other Newsletters,” and these are further divided by geographical area and special topics—equipment, women, education.

Mr. Short Wave wrote to me in an email: “...no one is likely to walk this ground again any time soon.” There are at least two reasons why this is so. First is the

depth with which shortwave radio is covered in these three volumes. Second is the changing nature of shortwave; even if you don't read these books, do not deprive yourself of reading the conclusion Berg provides at the end of *Listening*—a bitter-sweet summary of the effects of computers and the Internet on shortwave radio.

I have been an on again/off again shortwave listener for over half a century, but to this day I don't know the difference between the 80 meter band and the 40 meter band. I just turn the thing on and see what I hear, i.e., hear what I hear. And so, I believe, it is with many SWLers. As PARS- and AWA-member John W. Haught once said to me, "Shortwave radio is like a deep well. You never know what you're going to pull out of it."

These meticulous, first-rate volumes will be valued by shortwave enthusiasts and included in radio reference collections throughout the radio world. The set comes highly recommended.

