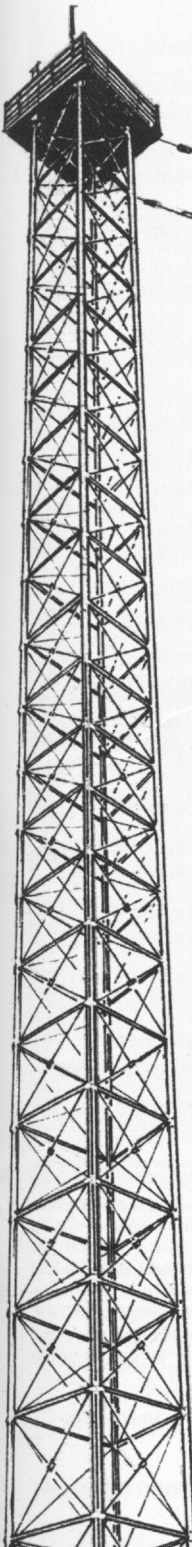


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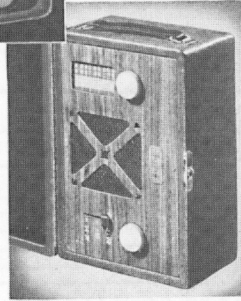
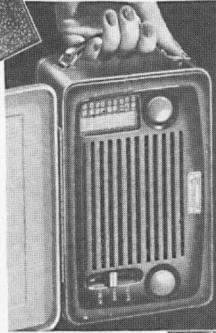
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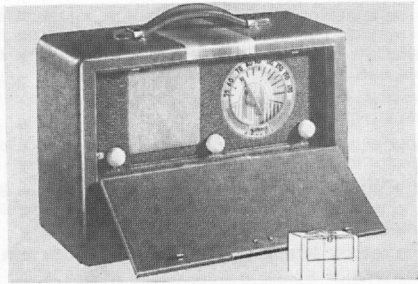
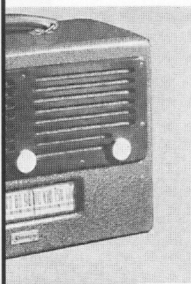


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The favorite of America—at home or "on-the-go"! The luxurious striped

From "A Rose By Any Other Name" — See p. 54



Published for the radio collector, historian, restorer and all vintage communications enthusiasts

CONVENTION 2014 PREVIEW ISSUE

BOOKS AND LITERATURE



ERIC WENAAS, P.O. BOX 676028, 14813 RANCHO VALENCIA VISTA, RANCHO SANTA FE, CA 92067, E-MAIL: ERIC@CHEZWENAAS.COM

Books to be reviewed in this column should be sent directly to Eric Wenaas 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.

The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945. By Jerome S. Berg. Published 2013 by McFarland. Pages: 340; 7" x 10". Softcover, \$45.

The Early Shortwave Stations is the fourth, and according to Jerry Berg, the final book in his tetralogy on short wave broadcasting from an American perspective—unless, of course, he decides to write yet another volume. This book covers the same time period as his first book, *On the Short Waves, 1923-1945*, but with a different slant.

The first book contains general information covering the hobby of shortwave listening, whereas this book focuses on the shortwave broadcast stations themselves with specific information on station locations, frequencies and/or wavelengths, station power, hours of operations, coverage areas, broadcast content, and often geopolitical orientation. These two books mimic the second and third in the tetralogy, *Listening on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today*, and *Broadcasting on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today*, except that the latter two address a later time period.

Berg prefaces the book by stating that he “presupposes” the reader has an understanding of the basics of shortwave—and so it might be a good idea for the novice to read his first book, *On the Short Waves, 1923-1945*, before tackling this one. That book is noted immediately following this review.

The Early Shortwave Stations has more detailed information on specific short wave stations from the early period than you will find in any other single volume anywhere. Jerry provides such a vast quantity of station operating parameters, broadcast schedules and program content that the informa-

tion could have only come from a large collection of QSLs, those coveted cards and letters that broadcast stations sent out to listeners who sent them signal reports.

The book is sprinkled with excellent examples of some of the more attractive, if not rare, cards. It is a pity that the book was not printed in color because, judging from the cards reproduced in color on the cover, many of them were quite eye-catching.

The book begins with a short prelude providing background information on the development of shortwave reception and broadcasting, and then moves quickly into detailed station information organized chronologically in three chapters covering the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to 1945. Each chapter is further subdivided into individual years of the decade. A station may appear one or more times and in different sections of the book, depending on if and when its activities attracted the author’s attention.

The book begins at the beginning with the shortwave experiments by Frank Conrad and KDKA in early 1921 and goes on to identify the shortwave stations developed for several purposes—rebroadcasting long-wave (AM) stations, relaying programs over long distances, remote pickups from sites away from the studio such as sporting events and, in the case of KDKA, broadcasting services to the far north of Canada. Approximately 22 shortwave broadcast stations that went on the air in the U.S. in the 1920s were identified.

Next comes the 1930s, the decade in which shortwave broadcasting matured—as evidenced by the hundreds if not thousands of shortwave stations that are covered. I gave up trying to count them, and I

don't know how the author had the patience to find and document all that he did. In addition to station information, which constitutes the majority of the text covering the 1930s, some common themes were made apparent.

For example, short waves were used for communication by exploration expeditions such as the Byrd Antarctic expedition in 1930 and the Dickey Orinoco Expedition in Venezuela in 1931. There were also numerous special broadcasts such as news bulletins about the Lindbergh kidnapping and comments by Amelia Earhart from London.

The biggest practical challenges for the shortwave listener are mentioned—including knowing just what frequency was being received and finding schedules showing the time and frequency information necessary to pick up stations of interest. Publications for short wave hobbyists, such as *Short Wave Craft*, *All Wave Radio* and *RADEX*, began to appear.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book describes how shortwave broadcasting was used during World War II. For the first time, shortwave broadcast stations had very specific and important missions. There was a plethora of propaganda broadcasts designed to either demoralize the enemy or provide moral support to friendly troops and civilians. Discussed, with their eventual fates, were English-language propagandists and such as Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally and Lord Haw-Haw.

Broadcasts were also used to transmit clandestine messages to groups behind enemy lines, send messages to loved ones, and convey the status of POWs. Also discussed was the expansion of foreign-language broadcast monitoring, which had many uses including the anticipation of political, diplomatic and military moves by the identification of shifts in propaganda content. One example provided in the book was the altered tone of certain broadcasts that gave the first indications that Japan intended to occupy Indo-China.

This book is an unparalleled source of information on shortwave broadcast stations and, as such, constitutes a classic reference

book on the subject. With more than 100 illustrations, extensive notes, a bibliography and an index, the book is also a valuable starting point for further study and research. Indeed, the book is filled with images of QSL cards, shortwave stations, broadcast schedules, shortwave receivers and ads, and maps with coverage areas.

Sprinkled here and there are sidebars containing short factoids about broadcasts that I found very interesting. While the collection, cataloging and organization of all this data is truly impressive, even more remarkable is the author's ability to go beyond the facts and figures and weave in the important geopolitical events occurring each year, thereby providing a backdrop for the objectives of many of the stations.

After reading the book straight through, I was impressed, nay, overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data in the book on so many shortwave stations. While the text is very readable, there is such a plethora of stations organized by year and then by country that a straight read through requires a bit of concentration. Clearly, the book will be very valuable as a reference book for information about a specific station, about stations in a specific country, or about activities of all stations referenced during a selected time period.

Along the way, I noticed that some stations appeared repeatedly, and I wondered what kind of an index would allow the reader to find all the entries for a particular station. It turns out that the index to the stations is actually an appendix entitled "Nations and Stations," which is a most appropriate title given the order and layout of the information.

The entries are listed according to nations, so you have to know what country the station is in before you can look it up. The stations are then listed alphabetically (for the most part), with named stations listed first followed by stations with call letters and numbers. The cited locations in the book are given by year rather than by page number, which I found to be an interesting approach because at a glance one can easily see the year or years of relevant activity for

any given station instead of a sea of page numbers.

It was not until I attempted to look up several stations that I realized each referenced station can be localized only to the group of pages that appear for the year in which it appears. This turns out to be an average of eight pages for years in the 1920s, twelve pages for the 1930s, and fourteen pages for the 1940s. While many of the stations are printed in bold letters in the text—presumably to help in locating them—many are not. In several attempts to locate specific stations, I found the process of searching through ten to twelve pages for a station to be somewhat time consuming.

This is truly a great book for the advanced shortwave hobbyist who is interested in information on specific stations, whether it be electrical data, schedules, area of coverage, programming or in many cases, geopolitical orientation. If you already have the first three volumes, this one is a must. If you don't, and you are a shortwave wannabe, you should consider acquiring the entire set. You will not be disappointed.

Jerry Berg, referred to by an earlier reviewer as "Mr. Short Wave," is well qualified to write this book. Not only has he been a shortwave fan and participant in the hobby since 1958, he took an active interest in the history of shortwave broadcasting in 1986 by becoming the first chair of the Committee to Preserve Radio Verifications, which was created under the auspices of the North American Radio Clubs. In this capacity he first came in contact with a large number of QSL cards from which much of the information appearing in this book is derived. He also began attending radio clubs and meets where he searched out shortwave magazines and memorabilia.

— Also Noted —

On the Short Waves, 1923-1945 ~ Broadcast Listening in the Pioneering Days of Radio By Jerome S. Berg. Published 1999 by McFarland. Pages: 280; 7" x 10"; 171 photos. Softcover, \$39.95

Jerry Berg prefaces his new book, *The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945*, with a statement that he presupposes the reader has a background in shortwave radio. So the novice may want to consider reading this book first. It is an excellent introduction to the history and hobby of shortwave listening. While this book has much in common with *The Early Shortwave Stations*, the distinction between the two is that this introductory book focuses on a variety of topics of general interest to the shortwave hobbyist or listener, while The new book focuses on the shortwave stations themselves.

According to the author, *On the Short Waves* is a technical history examining the medium's development and tells the story of a listener community that spanned the globe. Included are overviews of the primary shortwave stations operating worldwide in the 1930s, along with clubs and competitions, publications and prizes. There are a large number of illustrations of QSL cards that are much prized by long-distance collectors. This is one fine book written by someone who "wrote the book" on short waves.

For a full review of this book by William E. Denk, see *The OTB* (now the *AWA Journal*) for August 1999, Vol. 40, No. 3, p. 57. It was originally published as a hardback book, which is still available on the used market, but it has been reprinted in paperback.