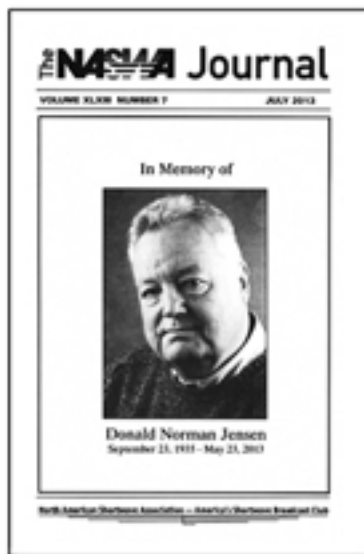


The **NASWA** Journal

VOLUME XLXIII NUMBER 12

DECEMBER 2013



Holiday Greetings

Shortwave Center

John Figliozzi • 45 Algonquin Road • Clifton Park, NY 12065 • jfiglio1@nycap.rr.com

With the knowledge and conviction that one can never have too many receivers, antennae, preselectors, baluns or other radio-related accoutrements... make sure you drop all the required hints in time for the Big Day. (I humbly apologize to those who would have needed this advice by Hanukkah.) A belated Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Joyful Kwanzaa and, of course, Successful Festivus – whatever and whenever you celebrate during the coming Holiday Season!

BOOK REVIEW

The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945

(ISBN 978-0-7864-7411-0)

(Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4766-0474-9)

Written by Jerome S. Berg

Published by McFarland

Reviewed by Richard A. D'Angelo

I have been waiting a few years for the fourth in the series of books written by the author on the history of shortwave broadcasting. Like its predecessors, this one is terrific and highly recommended for anyone with an interest in the early history of shortwave radio broadcasting. *The Early Shortwave Stations A Broadcasting History Through 1945* by Jerome ("Jerry") S. Berg is a detailed year-by-year story of the initial development of shortwave broadcasting told by the leading expert on shortwave broadcasting history. The author describes this as the final book in the series but does leave the door open just a little with the thought that maybe more could be out there eventually ... let's hope so!

For those that may be unfamiliar with the author's previous masterpieces, let me begin by recounting what has previously appeared. In 1999, Jerry Berg's ground breaking *On The Shortwaves, 1923-1945: Broadcast Listening in the Pioneer Days of Radio* (ISBN: 978-

0-7864-3029-1) was released to critical acclaim. *On The Short Waves* was a book that captured the thrill and excitement of the early days of radio broadcasting, radio listening and DXing. In 2009, the next two pieces of the mosaic were published also to critical acclaim. *Listening on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today* (ISBN 978-0-7864-3996-6) was written from the standpoint of the serious shortwave enthusiast presenting the histories of the major North American shortwave clubs, the professional and listener-generated shortwave literature of the era, the DX programs and other listening fare to which shortwave listeners were most attracted, and the QSL-cards sought as confirmation of their reception as well as presenting a chronology of the shortwave receivers available to listeners. *Broadcasting on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today* (978-0-7864-6902-4 and Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4766-0671-2) was a detailed, year-by-year account of the shortwave bands in each year from 1945 to 2008 reviewing what American listeners were hearing on the international and domestic shortwave bands, describing the arrivals and departures of stations, and recounting important events. If you are looking to learn more about the history of shortwave radio and the role of the listener and the broadcasting organizations that used the medium, the *On The Short Waves* collection is required but quite enjoyable

reading. By the way, McFarland is a leading independent U.S. publisher of academic and nonfiction books. McFarland is especially known for covering topics of popular appeal in a serious and scholarly fashion.

As many of you know, Jerry Berg has been an active shortwave listener for over fifty years. He has been involved in the affairs of the North American Shortwave Association for a very long time as an active member, contributor, former editor, current Executive Council member, a member of the club's Country List Committee and Chair of the Committee to Preserve Radio Verifications. Also, Jerry is a shortwave radio historian doing general research into the early days of radio broadcasting and listening, collecting much material over the years and disseminating this information during lectures at radio gatherings, conventions, etc., and his *On The Shortwaves* website (<http://www.ontheshortwaves.com/>). Consequently, there is nobody more accomplished than Jerry Berg to write about shortwave radio from both a listening and broadcasting perspective.

In *The Early Shortwave Stations A Broadcasting History Through 1945* the author revisits the period of his earliest work, *On the Short Waves, 1923-1945*, focusing on the stations that were on the shortwave. Using the same detailed year-by-year account style of his previous book, *Broadcasting on the Short Waves, 1945 to Today*, Jerry chronicles the birth and operation of the big and small broadcast stations. Westinghouse station KDKA was the first to utilize the new spectrum in July 1923 followed soon thereafter by General Electric's WGY. Many of the early broadcasts reflected simulcasting of regular medium wave programs on the newly discovered shortwave range. In 1927, the first bona fide international shortwave broadcaster was PCJJ in Holland with the BBC starting later that year from Chelmsford, England. However, early BBC efforts were quite weak. By the early to mid-1930's stations from all over the world could be heard on shortwave. In subsequent

years, countless stations in practically all countries followed suit, taking to shortwave to extend reception domestically or reach audiences thousands of miles away. By 1936, the Spanish civil war saw increased use of shortwave as the Loyalists and Nationalists both used the medium. As World War II approached propaganda transmissions became prevalent. The shortwave radio scene constantly evolved during the war years as Allied stations began to appear to support the troops. During twenty-two year span of the book, you can see the ever-changing nature of shortwave broadcasting.

The first chapter provides a prelude to the shortwave broadcasting era. The story continues in the detailed year-by-year format with each decade its own chapter. The next three chapters are the heart of the book; a decade-by-decade review of the shortwave broadcasting scene beginning in 1923 and concluding after the Second World War in 1945. Details of new stations first entering the shortwave broadcasting battles and favorites leaving the air are covered as they happened. Name changes were an all too often occurrence as broadcasting entities sought to change their image or at least appear more relevant. The book closes with the author's conclusions before concluding with an Appendix that details the various nations and their shortwave operations, the Chapter Notes, the Bibliography and the Index. I diligently read the Chapter Notes, which is another important positive aspect of this book, flipping from chapter text to the notes for additional details. There is almost another book buried in the Chapter Notes which are worth reading. If you follow them along with the text of each chapter, they add considerable additional texture to the early shortwave adventure.

The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945 By Jerome S. Berg is a 340 page, soft cover (7 x 10 inch) book, which includes 118 photographs and a detailed index. Like its siblings, those wishing to do additional reading or research, comprehensive endnotes and a selected bibliography is included that

contain extensive references to both popular and academic resources. The book is available direct from the publisher, McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640 for US\$45.00. Also, orders may be placed by telephone (1-800-253-2187) or FAX (1-336-246-5018) or through the publishers' website <<http://www.mcfarlandpub.com>>. Orders can be charged to VISA, MasterCard, AMEX, or Discover cards. The book is also available from Universal Radio (\$42.95) in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, and from major Internet booksellers such as Amazon (\$42.75 & Kindle \$16.19), Barnes & Noble (\$45.00 & Nook \$16.49), and Waterstone's (£38.95).

The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945 is the fourth in the

series of books written by well-known shortwave history expert Jerome S. Berg. Like the previous three, this radio book should be in every radio listener's library whether for general shortwave radio hobby interest, academic or historical purposes. It is an amazing excursion into the very early days of shortwave broadcasting development through the Second World War. It is a historical masterpiece with the year-by-year tracking of the station development on the shortwave spectrum. What better time than today to dig into some terrific hobby reading. *The Early Shortwave Stations: A Broadcasting History Through 1945* is another "must read" for every radio aficionado.