

***Frontier Gentleman* — 1958**

CBS

A Radio Series Broadcast Log

By: Stewart Wright.

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Audition Shows: 2.
01/29/1958 – Ben Wright.
01/30/1958 – John Dehner.

First Broadcast: 02/02/1958.

Last Broadcast: 11/16/1958.

Number of Broadcast Episodes: 41.

Shows In Circulation: 43 (Complete series – 41 Broadcasts and 2 Auditions.)

Episode Lengths: 25 minutes.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED:

My research on *Frontier Gentleman* started many years ago; I had always been intrigued by this very solid, late-comer entry to the Golden Age of Radio. Over the years my inquiries included identifying, obtaining, viewing and/or listening to a large variety of Primary Sources (scripts and network documents, broadcasts, and interviews) and many Secondary Sources.

At the start of my research, I constructed a database into which I would input episode titles and alternates, broadcast dates and times, cast, crew, and other episodic information. This database also included fields for my observations and additional information from all the sources I consulted throughout the research process. Having the information in a database allows me to easily generate queries and reports on various aspects of the series, such as the number of times that a specific member of the cast or crew worked on the series and in which episodes.

For many years, a nearly complete set of scripts for the series existed in the Printed Materials Library of a long-established Old-Time Radio club; available, but not easily accessible. A few years ago, a complete set of *Frontier Gentleman* scripts with much additional documentation became available in a public archive. Most of the scripts had episode titles on their cover pages. For the

few that didn't, the additional network documentation attached to these scripts supplied the missing episode titles. I reviewed all of the scripts at the archive during a 2012 research trip.

When I am researching an Old-Time Radio series, I acquire and listen to all the episodes of the series that are currently available. Acquisition of shows is an on-going process; I have acquired several additional shows that were not available when I started researching *Frontier Gentleman*. I also acquired and listened to some interviews of people who were involved with the series.

Next, I reviewed many Secondary Sources such as newspaper daily radio programming listings and notes, trade magazine articles, and books on Old-Time Radio.

Information Entry and Evaluation:

An on-going activity throughout the research process is information entry and evaluation. I input episode title and broadcast date, cast, crew, and other episodic information into the database.

Information evaluation is an important component of any research project. It is a winnowing process: separating the accurate information (the wheat) from the inaccurate information (the chaff).

Broadcast Log Updates:

This *Frontier Gentleman* broadcast log will be updated as additional information about the series surfaces.

SERIES BACKGROUND & DESCRIPTION:

From the start of the Golden Age of Radio Westerns were a popular genre; initially aural Westerns targeted children as their primary audience.

With the premiere of *Gunsmoke* on CBS Radio in the Spring of 1952, Norman Macdonnell and John Meston proved that Westerns could be intelligently written and produced and would attract substantial adult audiences. Starting in 1956 additional adult Westerns aired on CBS. They were *Fort Laramie*; *Frontier Gentleman*; *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone*; and *Have Gun, Will Travel*.

Frontier Gentleman viewed the American West through the eyes of a freelance foreign correspondent, J. B. Kendall. However, Kendall was not just a man of the written word. He was an experienced combat soldier, a former officer in the British Indian Army. As such, he was a practiced observer of situations and surroundings and understood that the American West of the 1870's could often be a brutal and perilous place and possessed the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to survive.

Kendall was a "remittance man;" a son who was banished from England by his family and paid to stay away. His indiscretion; he was cashiered from the Army for refusing to give false testimony at the court-martial of a brother officer. He supplemented his "remittance" with the money he earned as a reporter for the London Times. By the end of the series, it is implied that his family has forgiven him and wanted him to return to England.

A mature series, *Frontier Gentleman* came too late in America's Golden Age

of Radio.

For much more background on this series, see the chapter on *Frontier Gentleman* by Stewart Wright in the book *Radio Rides the Range: A Reference Guide to Western Drama on the Air, 1929-1967*. Jack French and David Siegel Editors. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2014. Jefferson, North Carolina, and London.

ANTONY ELLIS: CREATOR, WRITER, DIRECTOR, & PRODUCER

By the early 1950's the handwriting was on the wall: network dramatic radio programming was dying a slow death in favor of the new medium of the Small Screen. Additionally, more and more radio air time was leaving network control and going to local affiliates. However, the last decade of the Golden Age of Radio was also a time of experimentation on radio bringing to the air such classic series as *Gunsmoke*, *On Stage*, *CBS Radio Workshop*, *The Line Up*, *21st Precinct*, and *Frontier Gentleman*.

Antony Ellis was an Englishman who immigrated to the United States with his family and became a naturalized citizen. He started out on the radio as an actor, but soon became a sought-after script writer/adaptor (*The Bakers' Theatre of Stars*, *The CBS Radio Workshop*. *Escape*, *Suspense*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Hallmark Hall Of Fame*, *O'Hara*, *On Stage*, *Pursuit* and *Romance*.) and later one of the best director/producers (*The CBS Radio Workshop*. *Escape*, *Suspense*, *O'Hara*, *Pursuit* and *Romance*.) in the medium.

Ellis was fascinated by the American Old West and had a substantial library on the subject. His first radio Western script, "A Killing In Abilene," a joint effort with Gil Doud, aired on *Suspense* on 12/14/1950 and was adapted in 1951 for the television version of the series. In 1952 he wrote his first radio *Gunsmoke* script, "The Ride Back," for *Gunsmoke*. (The script was adapted for the 1957 motion picture of the same name.) Ellis would write 7 additional radio scripts for the aural version of *Gunsmoke*, including "Meshougah" that would be adapted for television as an episode of *Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theatre*, "Village of Fear." He also wrote a Western for *Escape* "The Notebook."

By the late 1950's Ellis had enough influence at CBS that he was able to successfully pitch his idea for a new Western radio series: *Frontier Gentleman*. Ellis had complete control of the series: he was the creator, director, producer, and primary writer.

EPISODE OPENING:

Episodic opening lines were a brief narration by Kendall and gave a teaser as to the episode's story line and often pointed out that the Old West was a dangerous place.

It was followed by the Announcer stating the Show Opening:

"Herewith an Englishman's account of life and death in the West. As reporter for the London Times; he writes his colorful and unusual accounts.

But as a man with a gun; he lives and becomes a part of the violent years

in the new territories. Now starring John Dehner, this is the story of J. B. Kendall: Frontier Gentleman.”

ACTORS:

As Kendall had no sidekick on his adventures, Ellis populated the series episodes with more fully-developed featured parts for guest actors. While many Hollywood-based actors had totally abandoned the Theatre of the Mind for television, there was still a coterie of very talented actors who split their time between the two mediums. These actors enjoyed working on radio, made themselves available, and were the recipients of wonderful roles.

Four familiar voices with unfamiliar names also appeared on *Frontier Gentleman*: Ron Meader, Richard Perkins, Ray Woods, and Waldo Epperson appeared on the series. Actually these familiar strangers were Jack Moyles, Vic Perrin, Ralph Moody, and Parley Baer respectively using pseudonyms.

There was a very well-done mini-series of four *Frontier Gentleman* episodes that dealt with Kendall’s encounters with the proprietor of a traveling gambling establishment, Belle Siddons a.k.a. Madame Lurlene Monte Verdi.

MUSIC:

The *Frontier Gentleman* theme was an outstanding composition written by noted composer Jerry Goldsmith. The opening version of the theme utilized a full orchestra including tympani and chimes. The closing music featured a trumpet solo supported by the orchestra.

Goldsmith’s theme conveyed a feeling of melancholy that almost presaged the impending end of the American Golden Age of Radio.

NOT TO THE SMALL SCREEN

Frontier Gentleman seems a natural for adaptation for the small screen, but it came along at exactly the wrong time. The 1958-59 season was the high-water mark for American television Westerns. Twenty-six series of the genre aired during the season and they dominated the ratings. Seven of the ten top-rated series were Westerns; an additional seven series were also in the top 30. The numbers in () are the series rating rankings for the 1958-59 season. During the 1958-59 season, the Tiffany Network’s Western line-up included: *Northwest Passage*, *The Texan* (15), *Yancy Derringer*, *Dick Powell’s Zane Grey Theatre* (13), *Trackdown*, *Rawhide* (28), *Wanted Dead or Alive* (16), *Have Gun - Will Travel* (3), and *Gunsmoke* (1).

CBS never brought *Frontier Gentleman* to television even though it held the exclusive rights to the series. Perhaps the network executives considered that the Tiffany Network already had enough Western programming in their prime-time schedule.

CAST AND CREW:

Cast:

Series Leads:

J. B. Kendall Ben Wright – 01/28/1958 Audition Only.
John Dehner – 01/29/1958 Audition and all CBS
broadcasts.

Guest Cast: In order of descending frequency of guest appearances: Jack Moyles (also credited as Ron Meader), Vic Perrin (also credited as Richard Perkins), Jack Kruschen, Virginia Gregg, Harry Bartell, Lawrence Dobkin, Stacy Harris, Joseph Kearns, Eddie Firestone, Jeanette Nolan, Charles Seel, Jeanne Bates (Lansworth), Barney Phillips, Parley Baer (also credited as Waldo Epperson), Ralph Moody (also credited as Ray Woods), Paula Winslowe, Ben Wright, Jean Carson, William Allen (Alan), Will Wright, Ted DeCorsia, Don Diamond, Herb Ellis, Clark Gordon, Tom Holland, Bill James, Vivi Janiss, Helen Kleeb, William Lally, Charlotte Lawrence, Peter Leeds, Charlie Lung, Junius Matthews, John McIntyre, Eve McVeagh, Jim Nusser, Winston Ross, Robert Rudie, and Martha Wentworth. Ad Libs (background voices in crowd scenes): Tom Hanley, Bill (John) James, Gus Bayz, Virginia Christine, Antony Ellis, Johnny Jacobs, Charlotte Lawrence, Gordon Mason, Frank Paris, Cliff Thorsness, and Bill Verdier.

Crew:

Director: Antony Ellis.

Producer: Antony Ellis.

Writers: Lead writer: Antony Ellis. Other writers: Tom Hanley and Charles B. Smith.

Announcers: Bud Sewall, John Wald, Allen Botzer, Dan Cubberly, Johnny Jacobs, and James Matthews.

Music: Jerry Goldsmith - Main Theme. Episodic Music – Wilbur Hatch and others.

Sound: Primary: Bill James and Tom Hanley. Others: Gus Bayz, Frank Paris, Gordon Mason, Bill Verdier, & Cliff Thorsness.

SPONSORS:

Frontier Gentleman was a sustaining series for most of its run. It attracted some spot advertisements from Chrysler and Dodge early in its run. During the series' final 8 episodes sponsors included GMC Trucks, Kent Cigarettes, Chrysler Corp., Plymouth, Studebaker Lark, and Tums Anti-Acid tablets.

REUSE OF SCRIPTS:

Three script were reused during the run of *Frontier Gentleman*:

"Remittance Man" which was initially used as the audition script was reused for the first broadcast episode "The Shelton Brothers."

"Aces and Eights" which was first used on 04/20/1958 was reused on 10/12/1958. The two productions featured several different cast

members.

"Random Notes" which was first used on 04/27/1958 was reused on 11/16/1958. The second productions had several scene changes to the script. The two productions featured some different cast members.

LOG:

Correcting Misinformation – Episode Titles:

There is much incorrect information floating around the Old-Time Radio hobby and this series has its share. As with many series, this misinformation is in regards to the episode titles.

For a series of such short duration, *Frontier Gentleman* has an unusually large number of collector-assigned titles. (These collector-assigned titles are shown in the Log in a sans-serif font.) The episode titles for *Frontier Gentleman* were usually NOT announced during the episode opening or at other times during the broadcast. This broadcast log addresses much of this misinformation.

All Episode Titles used in this Broadcast Log were taken from the episode scripts or other CBS documents.

Lack of Consecutive Episode Numbers:

As a variety of numbering schemes were used on the scripts for this series, no consecutive episode numbers are included in this broadcast log.

Episodes in Circulation:

All episodes of *Frontier Gentleman* are known to be in circulation.

Broadcast Dates and Air Times:

Broadcast Dates and Air Times shown in this broadcast log are from a variety of sources including the series broadcasts scripts and Network and other documentation. Whenever possible, Broadcast Dates and Air Times have been verified using Secondary Sources.

East Coast Broadcast Time

02/02/1958 – 06/15/1958 2:30 PM
06/29/1958 – 09/21/1958 7:00 PM
09/28/1958 – 11/16/1958 7:05 PM

West Coast Broadcast Time

02/02/1958 – 02/09/1958 12:30 PM
02/16/1958 3:30 PM
02/23/1958 – 03/23/1958 12:30 PM
03/30/1958 – 04/06/1958 3:30 PM
04/13/1958 – 04/27/1958 4:00 PM
05/04/1958 – 05/18/1958 6:05 PM
05/25/1958 – 08/31/1958 4:00 PM
09/07/1958 – 11/16/1958 6:00 PM

Auditions

Dates

01/29/1958
01/30/1958

Audition Show Title and Lead Actor

Remittance Man – Ben Wright Audition
The Shelton Brothers
Remittance Man – John Dehner Audition

The Shelton Brothers
Madam Verdes (Actually a mislabeled copy of Gambling Lady.)

Network Broadcasts

Broadcast Date	Episode Title
02/02/1958	The Shelton Brothers South Sunday
02/09/1958	No Guns In South Sunday Halfbreed A Meeting With Sitting Bull Charlie Meeker Rosebud Sitting Bull Six Toes
02/16/1958	The Honky-Tonkers The Honkytonkers The Honky Tonkers Bill Bascomb Wild Bill Bascombe
02/23/1958	J.B. Becomes a Surgeon Kendall's Last Stand Shorthorn Tom Little Big Norn Waterloos
03/02/1958	The Lost Mine Lost Mine
03/09/1958	The Claim Jumpers Bill Richmond, Prospector Three Greedy Prospectors Claim Jumpers
03/16/1958	Big Sam for Governor Big Sam For Governer Big Sam
03/23/1958	The Actress Actress
03/30/1958	Gentle Virtue
04/06/1958	The Powder River Kid Powder River Kid
04/13/1958	The Trial Trial Defense For McCream Kendall For The Defense A Lawyer For McKuen

04/20/1958	Aces and Eights Dead Man's Hand
04/27/1958	Random Notes Some Random Notes From A Stagecoach Random Notes - Stagecoach Version Random Notes (Stagecoach Version)
05/04/1958	Daddy Buckbucks The Richest Man In The West Daddy Buck Horton Buck Whorton Daddy Buck Buck
05/11/1958	The Cannibal Cannibal Shelter For The Night Shelter From A Storm Shelter From The Storm
05/18/1958	Advice To The Lovelorn Advice To Lovelorn Tom Hart Seeks Revenge Love's Labors Are Not Always Lost
05/25/1958	The Cowboy Cowboy Rescue Slim Woman Held By Indians Bound For Laramie
06/01/1958	Schools Days Teacher of Rottenhead Gulchz Duel For A School Marm
06/08/1958	Beljoy's Prisoner Sheriff Belljoy's Prisoner The Belljoy's Prisoner The Belljoys Prisoner The Bellboy's Prisoner
06/15/1958	The Well Well
06/29/1958	Gambling Lady Madame Belle Siddons, Confederate Spy Madam Verdi in Cheyenne Madame Birdie Belle Siddons Madam Verdi in Deadwood

07/06/1958	Madam Verde's Gambling House The Education of Kid Yancey Education Of Kid Yancey The Education of Kid Yancy Education Of Kid Yancy
07/13/1958	Justice of the Peace
07/20/1958	Mighty Mouse Jesse James, Part 1 Mighty Mouse, Sheriff Harper Jesse James Robs Kendall Mighty Mouse Jesse James
07/27/1958	Mighty Tired Jesse James, Part 2 Kendall Robs Jesse James Mighty Tired Jessie James
08/03/1958	Nebraska Jack
08/10/1958	The Cat Man A Wagon Full Of Cats
08/17/1958	The Wonder Boy Wonder Man The Fastest Gun That Never Was
08/24/1958	Belle Siddons Encore Belle Siddons' Encore Belle Sidon's Encore Belle Siddon's Encore
08/31/1958	Belle Siddons Strikes Back Belle Siddon Strikes
09/07/1958	The Last of Belle Siddons Madam Verdi in Cheyenne Last Of Belle Siddons Last Of Belle Siddon
09/14/1958	A Horse For Kendall Kendall Buys A Horse
09/21/1958	Indian Lover Injun Lover
09/28/1958	The Golddigger The Gold Bug The Gold Digger
10/05/1958	The Librarian Claim Jumpers Librarian
10/12/1958	Aces and Eights How The 'Dead Man's Hand' Got Its Name

10/19/1958	The Preacher Preacher
10/26/1958	The Rainmaker Rainmaker
11/02/1958	Nasty People Deadly Homesters The Grover Family The Deadly Grover Family
11/09/1958	Holiday Silver Belt Buckle
11/16/1958	Random Notes Radom Notes Random Notes From A Train Random Notes - Train Version Random Notes (Train Version) (Some Random Notes From A Train)

SOURCES CONSULTED:

Scripts and Network Documentation

The Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety & Comedy.
Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters, Special Collections - Thousand Oaks Library.

Radio Broadcasts and Audition Shows

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Interviews

John Dehner by John Dunning. 02/19/1984.

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Lakewood, CO, Stewart Wright, 2005.

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"Sunday on Radio," February 02, 1958.

Los Angeles Times.

Daily Radio programming listings 1958.

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Daily Radio programming listings 1958.

The Old Radio Times

(Newsletter of the Old-Time Radio Researchers)

"Revisiting The Frontier Gentleman," by Stewart Wright, March 2006

Number 4, pg 3-5.

Radio Recall

(Journal of the Metro Washington Old-Time Radio Club)

"We Offer You. . . *Escape*" by Stewart Wright, Volume 28 August & October

2011 Numbers 4 & 5.

"The Reluctant Westerner" by Stewart Wright, Volume 29 February 2012

Number 1.

Return With Us Now. . . .

(Newsletter of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado)

"The Reluctant Westerner" by Stewart Wright, November, 2005.

Upcoming Article:

"Partial Transcriptions: A Mystery "Partially" Solved, " by Stewart Wright.

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Internet:

TV Ratings Top 30 Shows for each year, from 1950 to 2000.

<http://www.classictvhits.com/tvratings/index.htm>

RadioGOLDIndex

<http://radiogoldindex.com/>

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B. J. Watkins who verified that Parley Baer used the name Waldo Epperson,
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