

# ***Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* – 1958**

## **CBS**

A Radio Series Broadcast Log

By: Stewart Wright.

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**Audition Shows:** 1 – 02/18/1958.  
**First Broadcast:** 02/23/1958.  
**Last Broadcast:** 06/15/1958.  
**Number of Broadcast Episodes:** 16.  
**Shows In Circulation:** 17 (Complete series – 1 Audition and 16 Broadcasts).  
**Episode Lengths:** 25 minutes.

### **RESEARCH CONDUCTED:**

The research on *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* included identifying, acquiring, 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, 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.

A complete set of *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* scripts was found in mid-2015. Cast and crew information from the scripts was incorporated into the database. One of the scripts referenced a previously unknown audition show for the series.

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 the audition show for *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone*.

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

I also gathered much historical information on the Tombstone area which in turn led me to some surprising information on the Luke Slaughter character. See the **Fiction Based on Fact** section of this broadcast log.

#### **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 *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* 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*.

*Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* had nearly all of the components needed to become a successful series, one of the best directors in the business and superlative acting, writing, music, and sound effects. All of the components except timing, *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* simply came too late in America's Golden Age of Radio and left the air waves after only 16 weeks. The reasons behind the cancellation of the series may never be determined.

#### **Fiction Based on Fact:**

*Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* took place in the American Southwest of the early 1880's, mainly in and around the environs of "The Town That Was Too Tough To Die": Tombstone, Arizona. The Slaughter character was written and played as a tough, no nonsense man with a lot of experience in surviving in tough, dangerous environments and dealing with the unsavory elements of society that frequently were drawn to them. Luke Slaughter was not afraid to use his guns for his fists, but often chose to use his intelligence to resolve tense situations. He had a strong sense of Justice and could be counted on to help people needing assistance. Slaughter was assisted by his side kick, a

grizzled old cowhand named Wichita Bagby.

The Luke Slaughter character was based on one of the Old West's legends: John Horton Slaughter aka Texas John Slaughter, a former Civil War cavalryman; Texas Ranger; pioneer; Indian fighter, cattleman and trail-driver; Sheriff of Cochise County, Arizona; and Arizona State Representative. John Slaughter was also the inspiration for Walt Disney's 1957-1961 television series *Texas John Slaughter*. For sources of information on John Slaughter, see the Internet portion of the **Sources Consulted** section of this broadcast log.

For more background on this radio series, see the chapter on *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* written by Barbara Watkins 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.

### **William N. Robson: Legend of the Theatre of the Mind**

William Northrup Robson was one of the giants of the American Golden Age of Radio. He wrote for and/or directed many of the Golden Age's most significant series: *Big Town*, *Calling All Cars*, *The Columbia Workshop*, *The CBS Radio Workshop*, *Doorway to Life*, *Escape*, *The Man Behind the Gun*, *Pursuit*, and *Suspense*. He was the recipient of two Peabody Awards when they were the ultimate award for anyone in the Radio industry.

In 1961, he joined the Voice of America, the civilian overseas broadcast agency for the United States government. During his 15 years at VOA, he directed and produced documentaries for which he received four additional Peabody Awards.

*Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* was Robson's second tour at producing and directing a radio Western. From mid-1946 through early 1948 held those positions on the series *Hawk Larabee* later known as *Hawk Durango*.

### **Sam Buffington - Short Career and a Tragic End**

While *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* was his only known radio credit, Sam Buffington was quite busy. In his less than four year career in Hollywood, Buffington appeared in 39 TV Series (68 episodes) and 9 Motion Pictures. Over half of his television appearances were on Westerns such as *Laramie*, *Maverick*, *Bat Masterson*, *Gunsmoke*, *Black Saddle*, *Wanted: Dead or Alive*, *Zane Grey Theater*, *Sugarfoot*, *Tombstone Territory*, *Tales of Wells Fargo*, and *Cheyenne*. He had the featured role as Chief John Richards in the TV series *Whispering Smith* which did not air until after his death.

With his impressive, commanding voice, he could be a leading man on radio. (Imagine if he had the opportunity to appear on the radio version of *Gunsmoke*, playing some strong-willed character against William Conrad's Matt Dillon. Now there would have been some impressive scenes.) With his less than imposing physical appearance he was a character actor on television and in motion pictures.

On May 15, 1960 Sam Buffington committed suicide over financial worries.

He was 28 years old.

### **EPISODE OPENING:**

The opening lines were narration by Slaughter letting you know immediately that he was a man to be reckoned with and up to any challenge that might come his way. "Slaughter's my name, Luke Slaughter. Cattle's my business. It's a tough business. It's big business. I've got a big stake in it and there's no man west of the Rio Grande big enough to take it from me."

Immediately following Slaughter's no nonsense opening, the announcer followed with, "Civil War cavalry man turned Arizona cattleman. Across the territory from Yuma to Fort Defiance, from Flagstaff to the Huachucas, and below the border through Chihuahua and Sonora, his name was respected, or feared, depending on which side of the law you were on. Man of vision, man of legend, Luke Slaughter of Tombstone."

### **CAST AND CREW:**

#### **CAST:**

##### **Series Leads:**

Luke Slaughter: Sam Buffington.

Wichita Bagby: Junius Mathews.

##### **Guest Cast:**

In order of descending frequency of guest appearances: Sam Edwards, Norm Alden, Vic Perrin, Barney Phillips, Larry Dobkin, Jack Moyles, Chester (Chet) Stratton, Charles Seel, Don Diamond, Norma Jean Nilsson, Lillian Buyeff, Karl (Carl) Swenson, Ben Wright, Eddie Marr, Peter Leeds, Jack Kruschen, Jean Carson, Joe DeSantis, Jim McCallion, John McIntyre, Howard McNear, Joseph Kearns, Ed Jerome, Dick Le Grande, Frank Gerstle, Tony Barrett, Bill Quinn, Louis Van Rooten, Sydna Scott, Dee Tatum, Jack Edwards, Bob Easton, Irene Tedrow, Herb Vigran, and Lou Merrill.

NOTE: Joe DeSantis and Karl (Carl) Swenson, two mainstays of East Coast Radio had moved West; DeSantis in 1956 and Swenson in 1958. Both had come for the television and film possibilities, but also lent their voices to many West Coast "Theatre of the Mind" productions.

#### **CREW:**

**Director:** William N. Robson.

**Producers:** William N. Robson and Lucian Davis.

**Writers:** Editorial Supervision: Tom Hanley. Writers: Allen Botzer, Don Clark, Tom Hanley, Thomas Houghton, Paul Pierce, William N. Robson, Robert Stanley, and Fran Van Hartesveldt. Adaptations: William N. Robson.

**Announcers:** Bud Sewall (Primary Announcer) and George Walsh.

**Music:** Wilbur Hatch - Main Theme. Episodic Music - Wilbur Hatch, Amerigo Marino, and Joel Davis.

**Sound:** Primary: Bill James and Tom Hanley. Others including Gus Bayz, Frank Paris, and Gordon Mason.

**SPONSORS:**

*Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* was a sustaining series for most of its run. The episode broadcast on 04/20/1958 was partially sponsored by Chrysler Corporation. The episode broadcast on 05/04/1958 was partially sponsored by O'Brien's Paints.

**LOG:**

**Lack of Consecutive Episode Numbers:**

As nearly half of the scripts had no episode numbers, no consecutive episode numbers are included in this broadcast log.

**Episodes in Circulation:**

All episodes of *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* 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. When ever possible, Broadcast Dates and Air Times have been verified using Secondary Sources.

<b>East Coast Broadcast Time</b>		<b>West Coast Broadcast Time</b>	
02/23/1958 – 06/15/1958	2:05 PM	02/23/1958 – 03/23/1958	12:05 PM
		03/30/1958	3:05 PM
		04/13/1958 – 04/27/1958	3:30 PM
		05/04/1958	5:05 PM
		05/11/1958 – 06/15/1958	3:30 PM

**Alternate Episode Titles:**

Alternate Episode Titles are listed in a san serif font after the episode titles on the scripts.

**Audition Show**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Show Title</b>
02/18/1958	Duel on the Trail
	NOTE: Some different supporting actors appeared in the audition than appeared in the first broadcast episode. Also there were extensive dialog changes between the two versions of the script.

<b>Broadcast Date</b>	<b>Episode Title</b>
02/23/1958	Duel on the Trail
03/02/1958	Tracks Out of Tombstone
03/09/1958	Yancy's Pride Yancey's Pride
03/16/1958	Page's Progress
03/23/1958	The Homesteaders Homesteaders
03/30/1958	Aaron Holcomb Story
04/13/1958	Wagontrain Wagon Train
04/20/1958	The Henry Fell Story Chief Margano Henry Fell Story
04/27/1958	Death Watch
05/04/1958	Worth Its Salt
05/11/1958	Heritage
05/18/1958	Drive to Fort Huachuca Drive To Ft Huachuca
05/25/1958	The Outlaw Kid Outlaw Kid
06/01/1958	Cattle Drive
06/08/1958	Big Business Big Business
06/15/1958	June Bride

## **SOURCES CONSULTED:**

### **Radio Broadcasts:**

*Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* available shows.

### **Scripts and Other Related Documentation:**

Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters Collections

Special Collections Department

Grant R. Brimhall Library

Thousand Oaks, CA

### **Books:**

Berard, Jeanette M. and Englund, Klaudia. *Radio Series Scripts, 1930–2001: A Catalog of the American Radio Archives Collection*. Jefferson, NC, McFarland, 2006.

Cox, Jim. *Radio Crime Fighters*. Jefferson, NC, McFarland, 2002.

Dunning, John. *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio*. New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Erwin, Allen A. *The Southwest of John Horton Slaughter 1841-1922, Pioneer Cattleman and Trail-driver of Texas, the Pecos, and Arizona and Sheriff of Tombstone*. The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1965. Glendale, CA.

French, Jack and Siegel, David S. Editors. *Radio Rides the Range: A Reference Guide to Western Drama on the Air, 1929-1967*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013. Jefferson, North Carolina, and London.

Hickerson, Jay. *The New Ultimate History of Network Radio Programming and Guide to All Circulating Shows*. Various editions and supplements 2001–2012, Hamden, CT.

Los Angeles AFTRA. *AFTRA Guide 1954 Edition*. Los Angeles, CA. American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, 1954.

MacDonald, J. Fred. *Don't Touch That Dial: Radio Programming in American Life from 1920 to 1960*. Chicago, IL, Nelson-Hall Inc, 1979.

Mackenzie, Harry. *The Directory of the Armed Forces Radio Service Series*. Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 1999.

### **Newspapers and Periodicals:**

*Los Angeles Times*.

Daily Radio Programming Listings 1958.

*Lowell Sun* (Massachusetts)

Article May 16, 1960. "TV Actor Ends Life in Gas Filled Room."

*New York Times*.

Daily Radio Programming Listings 1958.

*The Bridgeport Telegram* (Connecticut).

Daily Radio Programming Listings 1958.

Article February 22, 1958 "New Sunday Show." A brief overview of the series.

*The Long Beach Press Telegram* (California).

Daily Radio Programming Listings 1958.

*Pasadena Independent, Star-News* (California).

Daily Radio programming listings 1958.

"Sunday on Radio," March 02, 1958." A brief overview of the series and plot of current episode.

*Pasadena Star-News* (California).

Article May 16, 1960. "L.A. News Roundup." Brief article on death of Sam Buffington.

### **Internet:**

[Audio Classics Archive Radio Broadcast Logs](#)

*Luke Slaughter Of Tombstone* 1988; Last Updated: 04/27/15

<http://www.audio-classics.com>

[Births/Deaths Milwaukee Area Radio Enthusiasts \(MARE\)](#)

<http://mareotr.org/birthsdeaths.html>

[Cochise County Sheriff's Office Legacy Project](#)

John H Slaughter 1887-1890

Territorial Lawman: Sheriff John Slaughter

<https://www.cochise.az.gov>

The Evolution of Services Territorial Times

<https://www.cochise.az.gov>

DesertUSA

John Slaughter Civil War Veteran - Texas Ranger - Sheriff

<http://www.desertusa.com>

Down These Mean Streets

<http://downthesemeanstreetspodcast.tumblr.com>

Handbook of Texas Online

Amanda Oren, "Slaughter, John Horton."

<http://www.tshaonline.orgk>

The Humongous Old-Time Radio Database Search Engine

<http://www.old-time.com/humongousdb/index.php>

Jerry Haendiges Vintage Radio Logs

*Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* – July 1, 2007; Updated October 20, 2008

<http://www.otrsite.com>

Legends of America

Old West Legends Texas John Slaughter - Taming Arizona

<http://www.legendsofamerica.com>

RadioGOLDINdex

<http://www.radiogoldindex.com/>

### **Broadcast Logs:**

Wright, Stewart, *Frontier Gentleman* Series Log, last update October, 2015.

Salomonson, Terry G. G. *The Western Logs*. Howell, MI, 1998.

### **Death Record:**

California Department of Health Services Office of Health Information and Research vital Statistics Section.

Samuel Buffington

### **VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

This broadcast log would not have been possible without the assistance of:

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Thousand Oaks, CA

For their assistance during my research.

and

Jerry Haendiges

The Vintage Radio Place

<http://www.otrsite.com>

Jerry provided me with the audition episode of *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone* that was not previously known to be in circulation.