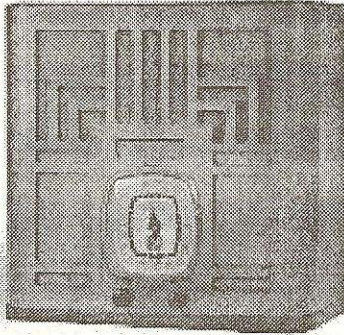


# Lone Ranger "Test Recording"

Arthur F. Adams

...and a  
**FARTY**  
*Hi-Ho Silver...*



While going to college in Chicago in the late 1940's I worked for a surplus electronic store (Junk dealer ) in order to make money to augment my G. I. bill. Working in the surplus business at this time is another story in itself. During this time I met many fascinating people, the source of the following story being one of them. His name escapes me, all I remember is that he was a former recording engineer for radio station WXYZ Detroit. The word "former" stands out for reasons that will be come to light as the story unfolds.

While at WXYZ, George (a name for reference only) was a recording engineer for the Lone Ranger radio show. At this time the Lone Ranger was aired three times a week, first over stations in Chicago and New York as well as Detroit and then on others throughout the country. Typically a show would be written and recorded some six weeks in advance of its scheduled broadcast date to give time for review and distribution to network stations. At this time there were no satellite or microwave links. Telephone lines provided reasonable fidelity for sending radio programs to network stations. For serial programs like the Lone ranger it was important that programs be broadcast at the same local time in the different U. S. time zones. In order to have simultaneous broadcast of programs, shows were recorded on 16" transcription disks which were then sent to the network for broadcast on a specific date and time.

In the case of the Lone Ranger, as with many other radio programs at this time, the show had only one sponsor, not like the multitude of sponsors seen on today's TV programs. As part of the Network contract, a review copy of each program was sent some five weeks in advance of the air date to the sponsor for review and comment. If there were no problems the broadcast discs were sent from WXYZ to the network some two weeks in advance of scheduled air time.

After one particular recording session the announcer mentioned that no comments had ever been received back from the sponsor. It appeared that the review disks were probably being filed away by a mail room clerk or thrown in the trash and that no one ever actually reviewed them. To see if this was the case George suggested that they produce a "test" recording. The Lone Ranger (Brace Beemer) and the announcer went along with the idea. As many will remember the program started out

with a portion of the Overture to Willam Tell by Rossini followed by the announcers introduction, "With a fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty Hi-Yo Silver The Lone Ranger!" On this date on the disk sent to the sponsor the announcer opened the program with, "With a fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a FARTY (full emphasis upon FARTY) Hi-Yo Silver, The Lone Ranger!"

This disc was duly sent on to the sponsor and some four weeks went by without comment. The suspicions of the trio appear to have been confirmed until a panic telephone call was received at WXYZ about a week before this program was to air. It was the sponsor!

What the trio was not aware of was that one of the senior vice presidents of Ralston Purina (the sponsor) was an avid Lone Ranger fan. Upon his direction to the mail room, all Lone Ranger recordings were to sent to his office as soon as they were received. This way he could upstage his friends by knowing in advance what was going to happen on future Lone Ranger shows. As luck would have it, he was on a month long marketing trip when this particular recording reached his office . Upon returning, he gradually caught up on the Lone Ranger's adventures. When he listened to the "test" record he nearly had a stroke! At first he couldn't believe what what he heard. He had several others listen and confirm his fears. At this time broadcasters were very careful about what was aired since bad language could reflect upon the sponsor products. For example it wasn't until the 1960's that a person could even say "damn" over the radio. He could see the futures of Ralston Purina suddenly going down the tube! When he realized that this show was to air in about one week's time and hit the panic switch and phoned WXYZ!

Of course when the record file clerk at WXYZ pulled the master copy it was as pure as the driven snow. It didn't take long, however, to piece together what had happened. The sponsor insisted that someone had to be fired. They couldn't very well fire the Lone Ranger or the announcer since they were too well known, so they zeroed in on poor George, the recording engineer. In this manner he became a "former" recording engineer of WXYZ. George went on to other recording jobs during his career but said that none was as enjoyable as working on the Lone Ranger. It is not clear what happened to the infamous "test" record.