



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

Bookshelf

Pioneer Mikes – A History of Radio and TV in Oregon

[December 2009] Sometimes history can be boring beyond belief – a series of names and dates of the long since passed-on.

On the other hand, without an appreciation and study of history, it often is impossible to fully understand the why's and how's of events, industries, or society as a whole. For those who now manage a radio station's audio chain with little more than a microphone and a computer, learning about the days before cartridge machines – or even tape recording itself – provides a window to the people of the time and the emphasis they placed on broadcasting.

FROM OREGON TO THE WORLD

Far from being a backwater in the Northwest, Oregon radio contributed a number of major stars in the industry to regional and local stations owners, entrepreneurs, and air personalities that often fed the major markets up and down the West Coast.

In Ron Kramer's new book, the Executive Director of Jefferson Public Radio/JPR Foundation in Ashland, Oregon undertakes to chronicle the history of broadcasting in Oregon. *Pioneer Mikes – A History of Radio and Television in Oregon* is a very good read. Not only does he cover the statistics and report on the backgrounds of the stations, their owners, and their staffs, but he offers a number of anecdotes that capture the essence of the people who were industry pioneers in more than one way.

Did you know that Chet Huntley and Mel Blanc were among those who got their start in Oregon broadcasting? Or that the first UHF TV station was set up in Portland? And then there were folks like Harry Read.

REAL INDIVIDUALS

There are certainly more than a few broadcasters – from all parts of the nation - who could be labeled “colorful.” In his book, which took eight years to complete, Kramer tells many of their stories, using more than 300 pictures to give a fascinating look at Oregon broadcasting history.

Among the stories, the tale of Harry Read has to be a favorite. Unhappy with utility monopolies, Read became famous for inventing ways to avoid them. For some years, he is said to have done remotes by stringing wire through the city's sewer system. And how many stations would organize an electric company to compete with the local utility?

More information on *Pioneer Mikes – A History of Radio and Television in Oregon* by Ronald Kramer is available at the book's website: www.pioneermikes.org A Table of Contents, Index, and ordering information is available on the site.

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