

Lou Merrill:  
Everywhere, and Alongside Everyone who was Someone

By Mike Thomas

Lou Merrill Was born on April Fool's day, 1912, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and passed away April 7, 1963, in Los Angeles. His career spanned four different decades, beginning in the mid-1930s and ending in the early 1960s. He entertained millions of people during this time on the silver screen, in radio, and also on television. Looking at his body of work on the airwaves alone reveals a hard-working professional who perhaps remains unknown or unheard of to the common audience in general. Yet there he was – literally everywhere, and alongside everyone who was someone.

Merrill was a talented journeyman who worked for all the major networks at one time or another. It seemed as though Merrill was a permanent fixture on Cecil B. DeMilles *Lux Radio Theater* from the 1930's and on into the 1940's where he worked with pretty much every big named star in Hollywood at one time or another in literally hundreds of those scripts. *Lux Radio Theater* was a famous and popular show and even considered "the king of the hill" of radio drama for many years and with many a faithful listener. Collectively, the average listener may not have been able to put a name to the "oh so familiar" voice heard so many times before, yet when *The Cinnamon Bear* played it was clear that Santa Claus was none other than Lou Merrill.

His talents were esteemed enough to secure work with famous directors such as Elliott Lewis on *Broadway is my Beat* and arguably his most famous role in *Crime Classics* in the mid-1950's where he became a household name. We cannot overlook his time with the venerable William Spier on *Suspense*. Merrill also spent considerable amounts of time working side by side with Arch Oboler on such well-known shows as *Lights Out*, *Everything for The Boys*, and *Arch Oboler's Plays*. Although a large amount of his credits is in drama, his work expanded to detective shows such as *The Adventures of Sam Spade* and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar* and to parts in long running soap operas such as *The Eternal Light* and even comedy like Don Quinn's *The Halls of Ivy*. Merrill is attributed work to some of the top funnymen in the business including Jack Benny, George Burns, Phil Harris, and even some time with William Bendix in *The Life of Riley*.

The resume and experience compiled in this area of entertainment seems endless by the number of shows he worked on in totality. The versatility he brought to the microphone also includes parts on beloved westerns such as *Luke Slaughter of Tombstone*, *Wild Bill Hickock*, as well as appearances on *The Six Shooter* with Jimmy Stewart. His work also included many more shows not listed in this short bio.

Lou Merrill may not have been as well known or famous to the listening audience at large, but he was a much needed and sought-after seasoned actor within the circle of radio society who could be called upon to work any role thrown his way. Everyone who was someone knew him.