



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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A Map of Countries Visited in "Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen"

Stock#: 68022
Map Maker: Skelly Oil Co.
Date: 1934
Place: n.p.
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 25 x 10.5 inches



Price: \$ 975.00

Description:

The Gold Age of Radio Theater -- The Air Adventures of 16 Year Old Crime Solving Pilot Jimmie Allen

Rare pictorial map of the Pacific printed as a promotional premium for the Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen, theatrical radio production that aired from 1933 to 1937.

Targeted at teens and pre-teens, the map provides a fun historical overview of the regions shown.

Includes a letter on the verso with a letter from Jimmie and details of Ernie's Smith's first transpacific flight from the US to Hawaii by a Civilian pilot in July 1927 (which crash landed on Molokai).

Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen

The Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen was an American radio adventure serial broadcast from 1933 until 1937. The 15-minute syndicated program was created by writers Bob Burt and Bill Moore, from Kansas City, Missouri.

In 1933, Burt was working as a freelance writer, while Moore was working the sports desk of the Kansas City Star and writing occasional scripts for the Star's affiliated radio station WDAF. Both Burt and Moore had been flying aces in World War I. At a party in Kansas City, the two former pilots came up with the idea of a radio series targeted at children and teenagers concerning a 16-year-old pilot and his adventures flying around the world, primarily solving mysteries and crimes and participating in air show races. Burt and Moore then wrote the initial script about Jimmie Allen, a young telegraph messenger at the Airways Station near Kansas City. A gruff man asks him to send a coded telegram. Later Allen is told that a plane carrying a million dollars to a bank is on its way. Allen figures out the plane is to be hijacked, so he joins his pilot friend, Speed Robertson, in a plan to thwart the hijacking. Moore brought the finished pilot script



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to WDAF where station manager Dean Fitzer promptly put the program into production.[2]

During the course of auditions for prospective sponsors, a Kansas City advertising agency man named Russell C. Comer was called in. Comer was impressed with the serial's possibilities and in a short while had it sold to Skelly Oil. WDAF turned its interests in The Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen at this point to Comer, with the understanding that locally the show must go on WDAF exclusively. Comer employed WDAF director John Frank to direct the show, and Frank, over 40 years old at the time, also decided to take the role of 16-year-old Jimmie Allen. Robert Fiske, an experienced veteran of radio, stage and screen, played Jimmie's older pal and mentor, Speed Robertson, who, like Burt and Moore, was a pilot in World War I. Ed Prentiss served as the opening and closing narrator and announcer for the show during its 1930s run.

Soon after the first broadcast, seven more radio stations were added to the Jimmie Allen show's roster, and Skelly Oil found itself involved in one of the great promotions of early radio. A Jimmie Allen Flying Club was created. Applicants received many radio premiums, highly treasured today --- a set of wings, a membership emblem and a "personal letter" from Jimmie Allen. Other giveaways included a Jimmie Allen picture puzzle (a Skelly truck refueling a light airplane), a "secret service whistle" and a Jimmie Allen album. The club newspaper was sent to 600,000 listeners a week, and Jimmie Allen Air Races --- attended by tens of thousands of people --- were held in major Midwest cities where the show was heard. Because of John Frank's age, 16-year-old Murray McLean stepped in when personal appearances of Jimmie Allen were scheduled. Skelly had to hire a special staff just to answer the mail. Flying lessons, model planes and other promotions were part of the mix, available to listeners who displayed their club credentials at their Skelly Oil station.

Comer remained in the background most of the time but kept close check on the serial as it was developed. He never sold the show to a network (which is the main reason why its history has remained so vague). By marketing the show himself (to the Richfield Oil Company on the West Coast and to scores of individual businesses elsewhere), he kept control of it.

Throughout the 1930s, interest was high. Boys were fascinated by the adventures of Jimmie, Speed and their mechanic Flash Lewis. Together they solved mysteries (even murder, unusual for juvenile fare at that time, when Jimmie's passenger Quackenbush died under mysterious circumstances), went on hunts for treasure and raced in air shows around the country. Their enemies were Black Pete and Digger Dawson. A Big Little Book, Jimmie Allen and the Great Air Mail Robbery, was based on the show's earliest scripts by Burt and Moore. The serial was adapted to film with The Sky Parade (1936), a Paramount feature about the post-war adventures of WWI pilots. The film featured some of the cast from the radio show playing different parts.



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The popularity began to wane in 1937 when it was dropped by Skelly Oil. Production ceased, and Comer began focusing his attention on a new Burt and Moore-authored boy-pilot series, Captain Midnight (which featured Jimmie Allen announcer Ed Prentiss as the title character). Repeats of the "Air Adventures of Jimmie Allen" continued to air on radio stations across the country and in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand until 1943.

Rarity

We located a single example, illustrated on line at the Radio Days Theater of the Mind in Sutherlin, Oregon.

Detailed Condition:

Minor discoloration at folds.