

# Schnitzel Me This



We here at Home Video Studio have a pretty cool business. We are in the unique position to have access to a huge storehouse of personal memories because families bring their recorded treasures to us to preserve and protect. And in the process, we get to vicariously experience things of which we may have no personal memory. For example, I had never before heard of or listened to Professor Schnitzel. And yet, I had the opportunity to hear three of his recorded comedy routines that were presented to me on vinyl 45s.

But in researching this name, I came across something very interesting. There were at least two Professor Schnitzels that became popular in America. One operated on the west coast in the 1920s and the other on the east coast during the 50s and 60s. There is no indication that the one was aware of the other's existence.

The first Professor Schnitzel was played by a man named Clarence Coleman in the 1920s. A realtor in San Francisco, Coleman created the character for a radio show in 1927 called Blue Monday Jamboree which aired on KFRC-AM. While CBS eventually picked the show up and syndicated it nationally, Professor Schnitzel was sadly never added to it as a regular character. Over the next few years he would make appearances on other shows up and down the AM dial.

The second Schnitzel made his home in Reading PA. Theodore L. Rickenbach was best known for performing his character in front of live audiences and for producing a series of 45rpm recordings for Butch Records. It is this Professor Schnitzel that I heard yesterday when I transferred those 45s into CDs for my customer.

Both men based their humor by adopting a thick, almost unintelligible Pennsylvania Dutch accent along with a folksy demeanor to tell jokes and make funny observations about life, language and everything Pennsylvania Dutch. Audiences of the day howled.

By the way, the word schnitzel, if you didn't know, comes from the German for "slice" and refers to a dish where a cut of meat is pounded flat, coated with breadcrumbs and fried. Typically made with veal, chicken, beef, turkey or pork. The veal version is known as Wiener Schnitzel.

*Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotapes, audio recordings, photos, negatives, and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).*