

NOSTALGIA DIGEST ^{AND} RADIO GUIDE



KAY KYSER

And Here's the Cinnamon Bear!

Searching for the Silver Star since 1937!

The exciting adventures of Judy and Jimmy Barton as they search for the silver star for the top of their Christmas tree.

They meet Paddy O'Cinnamon, the Cinnamon Bear, who tells them that the star has been stolen by the Crazy Quilt Dragon, and has escaped with it to Maybe Land. If the kids are ever to see the silver star again, they must go after the dragon.

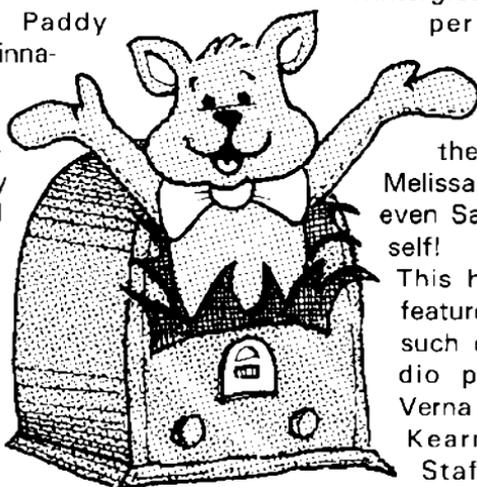
The Cinnamon Bear teaches them to "de-grow" and they shrink so they can go through a crack in the wall to the world of make-believe. The quest takes them through the land

of ink-blotter soldiers, across the Root Beer Ocean, and into confrontations with such characters as the

Wintergreen Witch, Snapper Snick the Crocodile, Captain Tin Top, Fe Fo the Giant, Queen Melissa, Jack Frost and even Santa Claus himself!

This holiday classic features the talents of such outstanding radio performers as Verna Felton, Joseph Kearns, Hanley Stafford, Howard McNear, Elvia

Allman, Elliott Lewis, Lou Merrill, Frank Nelson, Cy Kendall, Gale Gordon, Martha Wentworth, Bud Heistand, and Lindsay McCarrie.



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CHUCK SCHADEN'S NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

BOOK TWENTY-FIVE

CHAPTER ONE

DECEMBER 1998/JANUARY 1999

Hello, Out There in Radioland!



We're heading towards the year 2000 like a Radio Flyer sled speeding down a neighborhood hill on a snowy winter day.

As we approach the millennium we might reflect upon how lucky we are to have lived in the 20th Century. After all, it's the 20th Century that gave us Radio! It gave us what we lovingly call *Old Time Radio*. So we're going to celebrate!

We're going to celebrate **Old Time Radio in the 20th Century**.

For the next sixteen months -- from January 1999 thru April, 2000 -- we're going to present on our *Those Were The Days* program *milestone* broadcasts, *significant* programs and *representative* shows from the "Golden Age" of radio in the 20th Century.

We're talking, roughly, about the thirty year period from 1930 until 1960. That's the "Golden Age" we've been mostly concerned with on our broadcasts and in this *Nostalgia Digest*.

Listeners who tune in will hear all the great entertainment shows -- sometimes the first broadcast of a series; sometimes the final broadcast; sometimes classic broadcasts. You'll hear news reports, special events, seasonal shows, musical shows, dramatic shows, documentaries. You'll hear a great cross-section of radio-as-it-was in the heyday we love and admire so much. In other words, you'll hear more of what we have been broadcasting on *Those Were The Days* since our series began in 1970. But we're going to put it all in perspective and gently talk about what it means to us and to the 20th Century.

And we're going to draw from our archives to share again with listeners many of the conversations we have had over the past three decades with the people who made old time radio what it was: the performers, the writers, the producers, the directors.

We hope you'll join us for another visit with Edgar Bergen and Jim Jordan. We'll chat about the *Jack Benny Program* with Jack Benny and Dennis Day. We'll explore *The Great Gildersleeve* with Hal Peary, Willard Waterman, Lillian Randolph, Shirley Mitchell and Mary Lee Robb. We'll talk about *The Shadow* with Bret Morrison; *The Aldrich Family* with Ezra Stone; *Mr. District Attorney* with Jay Jostyn. We'll chat with announcers Ken Carpenter, Harry Von Zell and Don Wilson. We'll reminisce with writers Norman Corwin, Carlton E. Morse and Arch Oboler. We'll hear from Agnes Moorehead, Mercedes McCambridge, Don Ameche and Elliott Lewis.

So we hope you'll join us on the air --and in the pages of this magazine-- as we countdown to the year 2000 and then countdown again to our 30th Anniversary broadcast of *Those Were The Days* on the last Saturday of April of the new century.

It's going to be quite a journey. Don't miss it if you can!

--Chuck Schaden

RADIO'S MOST ELUSIVE STAR

BY RICHARD W. O'DONNELL

One minute he was Kay Kyser, the celebrated "Old Professor" of show business. Everybody knew him.

The next, he was gone. It was as though he had evaporated, or never really existed at all. But he did. The last three decades of his remarkable life were spent away from the spotlight doing other productive and rewarding work.

Kay Kyser was a big time star. He was a band leader, and a smash hit when his *Kollege of Musical Knowledge* went on the air in 1938. He was also the first band leader who became a major star in the movies, and he brought his entire band with him. Later, he was a television favorite.

And then, all of a sudden, he announced his retirement during the early fifties, when he was only in his forties.

To appreciate the story of Kay Kyser, one must realize, even though he achieved great success during the big band era, he yearned to live out his life in his native North Carolina.

James King Kern Kyser was born on June 18, 1906. He had so many *Ks* in his name, friends started calling him Kay, and the nickname stuck.

When he was only twenty, he formed his own band while attending the University of North Carolina. This was quite an achievement when you realize Kyser did not play a musical instrument; nor did he

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KAY KYSER

ever play one. His success with the band was based on the fact he was a born leader, and ran a happy ship.

For almost a decade, "Kay Kyser and his Orchestra" survived by playing college functions. Then, in the mid-thirties, the group hit the big time and started playing at major hotels. For four years the band did radio remotes, but never attracted any attention.

Success came in 1938 when Kyser came up with a radio show known as *The Kollege of Musical Knowledge*. It was a fun-loving quiz show during which contestants from the studio audience had a chance to win prizes by answering questions about

KAY KYSER'S KOLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE



SULLY MASON, EDDIE SHEA, KAY KYSER, HARRY BABBITT, ISH KABIBELE

PHOTOGRIST

popular songs of the day. The show was on the Mutual network briefly, before it became a smash hit in the ratings when it moved over to NBC and was sponsored on Wednesday nights by Lucky Strike Cigarettes.

Kyser became a major star in a hurry. He would delight his studio audience by coming on stage wearing a cap and gown. After all, he was "The Old Professor." And members of his band wore beanies and campus-style sweaters with letters on them.

"Evenin' folks," he'd greet his listeners in a charming southern drawl. "how ya' all?"

And that was the start of one of the most successful shows in radio history. Kyser had a ready wit, and questions would be asked. Mostly they were on the humorous, often silly side. The band would get into the act by playing musical questions. In between the questions and the commercials, the musicians would also play popular songs, both old and new.

And what a band it was! Ginny Simms, the female vocalist, went on to become a

great favorite with servicemen everywhere during the World War II years. Harry Babbitt, Sully Mason and Mike Douglas (who hit it big on TV years later) were the male singers. For a while the King Sisters (who also became TV stars) were with Kyser. And "Ish Kabibble," sort of an early Jerry Lewis, became a household name by sing-



GREGORY PECK and KAY KYSER

PHOTOFEET

RADIO'S KAY KYSER

ing novelty songs. Kabibble's real name was Merwyn A. Bogue. It is interesting to note that most of the original Kyser band stayed with him during all the years of the group's long life.

On June 7, 1944 Kyser married Georgia Carroll, one of the most famous and beautiful fashion models in the nation. She appeared with the band on the air for a while, but gave up her modeling career.

Then came the movies. And Kyser wasn't just another orchestra leader fronting his band while the hero and heroine solved their problems. Kyser, a natural comic, was the star of the show. His comedy sense was great, and band members played their roles too.

Starting in 1939, when he signed on with RKO, "The Old Professor" made a picture a year. In order, they included *That's Right, You're Wrong, You'll Find Out, My Favorite Spy, Around the World, Swing Fever, and Carolina Blues*.

Then Kay Kyser stopped making movies and never returned to them. There was a war on and he took his band to military posts all around the world. It has been



estimated he did more shows from camps, bases, and hospitals than even Bob Hope. In all, he performed more than 550 of these shows.

When the war ended, Kyser limited himself to his radio shows and brief theatrical tours. He had been doing the radio show and was making movies whenever he was not playing the military posts.

He remained on the air, with high ratings, until 1949. By then television had arrived and during the 1950s, Kyser brought his *Kollege of Musical Knowledge*

to daytime TV and it, too, earned high ratings. He probably could have stayed with the show on TV for any number of years but, much to everybody's surprise, he announced he was retiring from show business. And so he did.

Tennessee Ernie Ford tried his hand at presiding over the *Kollege* on TV but, without Kyser, the



"YOU'LL FIND OUT" (1940)
DENNIS O'KEEFE, KAY KYSER, BORIS KARLOFF

show did not last for long.

When Kay quit show business, he and wife Georgia moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina where they raised their three daughters, Kimberly, Carroll and Amanda.

And Kyser, "The Old Professor" of yesteryear who had been in show business for more than a quarter of a century, started a new life.

"When Kay retired from show business," recalled Georgia Carroll Kyser in a recent interview, "he told me he was never going back to it again. He told me he wanted to do something different, to lead a conventional life. And I must say, he kept his word."

In his home state, the retired radio and TV star did public service work for the state. "He helped to get the state's 'good health program' established. He was quite involved in that. And he worked on other state projects."

During the late sixties and early seventies, Kyser spent five years working in Boston for the Christian Science Church. "He commuted every week from North Carolina," said Georgia. "He'd be home on weekends and for important holidays and anniversaries, of course, but he spent most of his time up in Massachusetts, where he was in charge of the church's radio and TV department."

By then the entertainer was known as James Kyser. He was often approached for interviews by the media, but never granted one.



"AROUND THE WORLD"
(1943) KAY KYSER, ISH
KABIBBLE

PHOTOEST

After his Boston years, he returned home to North Carolina where he worked on the development of the state's PBS program for a number of years.

"My husband never went before the cameras or did any radio work," said his widow. "He worked behind the scenes and he enjoyed what he was doing."

She added: "My husband wanted a different life. When he quit show business, he quit completely. He never regretted the move."

Of late, it should be noted, there has been a revival of interest in Kay Kyser because the American Movie Classics cable channel has played some of his movies. And there is talk there will be a documentary about the radio star.

He may have left show business, but the memories of his famous Wednesday night show still linger. It was one of radio's most popular programs and may well have been the most popular quiz show ever on the airwaves. ■

NOTE— Tune in TWTD January 2 and 16 to hear broadcasts of Kay Kyser's College of Musical Knowledge.

FROM HAWTHORNE TO HARD-SELL

Radio Advertising and How It Got That Way

BY ELIZABETH MC LEOD

Broadcast advertising. We take it for granted as the foundation of the American system of radio and television.

Imagine a time, however, when the very notion of a broadcast advertisement was enough to send editorial writers into hysteria — enough to draw the ringing condemnation of politicians, pundits and preachers.

Such was the climate seventy-six years ago.

Such was the response when the American Telephone and Telegraph Company — dear old Ma Bell herself — kicked off a marketing revolution.

It happened in New York City. At 5:15 in the afternoon of August 28, 1922, a man known to history only as “Mr. Blackwell” spoke into a Western Electric microphone in a makeshift radio studio on Walker Street in Manhattan, and delivered a ten minute talk focusing on nineteenth-century novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne. Routine stuff for radio in 1922 — an era when stations would put on anything that would fill a few minutes.

But this talk was just a little different. It focused on Hawthorne’s views of what constituted “a good home”— a home “removed from the congested part of the city, right at the boundaries of God’s great outdoors.” And those words had inspired a



brand-new cooperative apartment complex — Hawthorne Court, far away from the congestion of the city in Jackson Heights, Queens. And perhaps this little talk might inspire the listening audience to find out more about these new apartments.

The Queensborough Corporation certainly hoped so. They had just paid a hundred dollars for the privilege of presenting Mr. Blackwell. And in doing so, they had become America’s first paying radio advertiser. It wasn’t an accident. Or a sudden innovation. It was, instead, the result of careful, deliberate planning on the part of AT&T — planning which placed the Telephone Company squarely on the cutting edge of the emerging broadcasting industry.

ORIGINS

The notion of advertising on the radio wasn’t new. Over the previous decade there had been a number of “barter” advertisers on the various experimental stations, such as Charles Herrold’s “SJM” in San Jose, California and Lee DeForest’s 2XG in New York. Often a music store or a phonograph company would donate records to be played over the air by these catch-as-catch-can broadcasters, in exchange for a plug. But these weren’t paid advertisements in the true sense of the word — no money changed hands, and the companies involved were in it simply for the goodwill. The infant medium was a long way from being a significant element of anyone’s promotional budget. As long as radio was the province of inventors, hobbyists, and basement tinkerers, it was unlikely to go

Elizabeth McLeod is a radio journalist and broadcast historian who lives in Rockland, Maine. She has specialized in the documentation of early 1930s radio for more than 20 years, and is currently co-writer of the CBS Radio Network program Sound-Bytes.

much further with the "commercial" idea.

Matters began to change with the involvement of businessmen in broadcasting. From industrial giants like the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Corporation to the proprietors of small-town stores, business concerns saw in radio more than just its potential for entertainment. But it took AT&T to fully exploit radio's commercial possibilities.

The telephone company already held a technological edge in the new industry: its Western Electric subsidiary held crucial patents for the manufacture of transmitters, microphones, and other necessary broadcasting equipment. But even more important, AT&T maintained a nationwide web of long-distance lines — just the sort of system that would be needed if radio stations were ever to be interconnected into nation-spanning networks. The company had operated experimental stations in 1919-20, and felt ready to take its involvement in radio to the next level.

In January of 1922, AT&T announced that it had received a permit for the construction of a new radio station in New York. But it wouldn't be just another station — the initial press release made that very clear.

"The American Telephone and Telegraph Company will provide no program of its own, but provide the channels thru which anyone with whom it makes a contract can send out their own programs...There have been many requests for such a service, not only from newspapers and entertainment agencies but also from department stores and a great variety of business houses who wish to utilize this means of distribution."

Two simple sentences — but they defined the entire future course of the American broadcasting industry.

WBAY TO WEAF

American Telephone and Telegraph be-

gan its new radio venture on the afternoon of July 25, 1922, with the first program from its new station WBAY, with studios located in the AT&T Long Lines building at 24 Walker Street in Manhattan. The first broadcast was low-key — phonograph records and station announcements. It wasn't until the following week — August 3rd, to be precise — that WBAY gave its first nighttime broadcast, including a brief explanation of the "toll broadcasting" concept by Long Lines Commercial Department manager George W. Peck. But there were still no paying advertisers — and, as it turned out, WBAY would never have any.

The signals from the WBAY transmitter proved weaker than expected, and on August 16th, the station's operations were transferred to the Western Electric company's West Street transmitter — with the call sign WEAF. A wire line linked the new transmitter with the Walker Street studio, and there was a notable improvement in the signal quality. The station was now poised to make history.

TIME FOR SALE

The Queensborough Corporation's commercial broadcast on the 28th finally got the ball rolling on "toll broadcasting," but it didn't exactly open a floodgate. There were no additional advertisers for nearly a month. Queensborough had contracted for a series of talks — and the client was very pleased with the results, attributing several thousand dollars in sales to the campaign. Word of mouth led other advertisers, finally, to take a chance on the new medium. On September 21st, the American Express Company and the Tidewater Oil Company presented talks containing indirect advertising messages. But that was all. After two months of "toll broadcasting," WEAF's books revealed total receipts of just \$550, with only three hours worth of air time having been sold. Clearly, dry talks on dull

RADIO ADVERTISING

subjects weren't going to do the job — but neither the AT&T nor the listening audience would have accepted direct, hard-sell methods. It was becoming apparent, even this early, that radio advertising would have to be entertaining if it was to be successful.

Additional advertisers came on board during late 1922 and early 1923, several enticed by the William H. Rankin Advertising Agency, which had experimented with radio by sponsoring a talk on December 30th, and was pleased with the response. Most of the clients followed the precedent set by the first sponsors, and presented simple, indirect messages. One of these was the Gimbel Brothers Department Store.

Gimbels followed its arch-rival Macy's onto the WEAF air by a few weeks — and wanted a program that would set it apart from its competitor. After a few experiments, Gimbels emerged in March of 1923 as the sponsor of a dance orchestra program — the first sponsored entertainment feature on the air. There were no commercials as such — only a simple opening and closing announcement that the music was being presented thru the courtesy of Gimbels.

The following month, Browning King and Company, a clothing firm, took the next major step. On April 25th, the Browning King Dance Orchestra went on the air, under the direction of Anna C. Byrnes. Like the earlier Gimbels program, no direct advertising was permitted — not even a mention of what business Browning King was in. But the company's name was attached to the orchestra — which had been contracted to broadcast exclusively for Browning King, and no other firm. For the first time, entertainers and a sponsor would be formally linked. With this development,

radio advertising had begun to assume the shape that it would retain for the rest of the 1920s.

BACKLASH!

Meanwhile, the print-advertising establishment was wary of the new medium. The trade journal "Printer's Ink" led the chorus of naysayers in its February 8, 1923 issue. An editorial entitled "Radio An Objectionable Advertising Medium" fired a warning shot:

"Station WEAF has built up its reputation on the fine quality of its programmes. Radio fans who tune in on this station are accustomed to get high-class entertainment. If they are obliged to listen to some advertiser exploit its wares, they will very properly resent it, even though the talk may be delivered under the guise of a matter of public interest, or even of public welfare. An audience that has been wheedled into listening to a selfish message will naturally be offended. Its ill-will would be directed not only against the company that delivered the story, but also against the advertiser who chooses to talk shop at such an inopportune time."

After working itself into a righteous froth, the magazine got to the real point: the print industry's fear of broadcast competition. And then, a bit of saber-rattling:

"Much of radio's popularity is due to the way the newspapers have been playing it up. In many cases, they are devoting whole pages and in some cases entire sections to radio developments...It is certain that the newspapers will not continue to give the radio interests all of this generous cooperation if the broadcasters themselves are going to enter into advertising competition with the newspapers."

Strong words — and remarkable when one considers that up to that point only one station in the entire country had ventured into the advertising business. But radio was

an exploding industry — and sooner or later the question would have to be addressed. How would radio support itself? Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover anticipated that question during December 1922, with further words of warning:

“It is inconceivable that we should allow so great a possibility for service, for news, for entertainment, for education, and for vital commercial purposes, to be drowned in advertising chatter.”

But even Hoover was unable to offer a workable alternative to advertiser-supported broadcasting, at a time when the industry was passing out of its infancy — and into a rowdy adolescence.

AND ONWARD...

For three years, AT&T was the only broadcasting organization in the US allowed to sell radio time — control of key transmitter patents by Western Electric enabled the company to maintain complete control over how the equipment was used. Even so, wildcat broadcasters found ways to evade those restrictions, and in 1925, following a lengthy legal wrangle, AT&T agreed to revise its licensing policy. From that point forward, all licensed purchasers of Western Electric transmitters would be authorized to use the equipment for “toll broadcasting.” The final barrier had fallen. Commercial radio had arrived to stay.

The latter half of the 1920s brought the art of radio advertising to new heights and lows. While AT&T continued to stress dignified, indirect advertising, other broadcasters weren't so delicate. Flim-flam men of all kinds infested the airwaves, like the Kansas-based medical charlatan John R. Brinkley — whose incessant promotion of his “goat-gland” implant surgery for men lacking in a certain vigor blanketed much of the middle west.

Such tasteless excess gave ammunition to those who continued to criticise the very

concept of broadcast advertising — and made reputable broadcasters all the more cautious. When AT&T sold its broadcasting operations to RCA in 1926 — leading to the formation of the National Broadcasting Company — a conservative policy on advertising remained in effect. Direct sales messages would be allowed only during the daytime hours — while evening programs had to continue the indirect approach. It wasn't until late 1929 that full-frontal advertising was allowed on NBC's nighttime schedule.

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Even though radio advertising had become an entrenched part of the industry, there were still misgivings about it, continuing into the early 1930s. Finally, in 1932, Congress ordered the Federal Radio Commission to investigate the role of advertising in the medium — and whether commercial radio licensees were truly acting in the public interest. The resulting report removed any doubt as to the future course of American broadcasting — concluding that radio could not survive without the support of advertisers. Like it or not, broadcast advertising had become a fact of life.

And in the decades to come, it would sink ever deeper into the American consciousness.

“Pepsi Cola Hits The Spot — Twelve Full Ounces, That's A Lot!”

“Beeeeeeeeeeee-OH!”

“I'm Chiquita Banana, and I'm here to say...”

“See The U-S-A! In Your Chev-ro-let!”

“Roach-Prufe — spelled its own way — P-R-U-F-E!”

And, the good and the bad — the clever and the crass

For better or for worse...

It all goes back to Nathaniel Hawthorne.

And an apartment house in Queens. ■

Fascinating Rhythms

BY CLAIR SCHULZ

When was the last time you walked out of a movie theater humming a song from the movie you had just seen? I asked a friend that question not long ago and after he came up dry he said he would mull it over and get back to me. He later rather sheepishly confessed that it last happened when the "Gonna Fly Now" theme from *Rocky* was running through his head... over twenty years ago.

Undoubtedly many moviegoers today would also have to search the cran- nies of their cran- iums for memo- rable film tunes. If they were born after about 1970, they may not even realize that there was a time when motion pictures often left audi- ences singing in the aisles. Examining the Academy Award nominees for Best Ori- ginal Song since the inception of that cat- egor y in 1934 reveals that the Holly wood which once could hit the high notes is in danger of losing its voice completely.

Clair Schulz, a free-lance writer from Trevor, Wisconsin, is a regular contributor.

The influence of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musicals was considerable in the early years of the award. "The Continental" from *The Gay Divorcee* copped the

first Oscar, besting "The Carioca" from *Flying Down to Rio*. Two years later *Swing Time*'s "The Way You Look Tonight" edged out Cole Porter's "I've Got You Under My Skin." In 1935 and 1936 songs from *Top Hat* and *Shall We Dance* had to settle for runner-up, but it could be argued that Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek" and George and Ira Gershwin's "They Can't Take



That Away from Me" have stood the test of time better than the winners, "Lullaby of Broadway" and "Sweet Leilani."

But there can be no quibbling over the choices for the next three years. When Bob Hope and Shirley Ross sang "Thanks for the Memory" in *The Big Broadcast of 1938*, all other songs in that film and others released that year paled in comparison. Cinema reached a high-water mark in 1939, a year any melody would have to go

"Over the Rainbow" to beat out what became Judy Garland's signature song. In 1940 people left movie houses after seeing *Pinocchio* in a euphoric mood, convinced that their dreams would come true if they wished upon a star.

The competition intensified during the war years. In fact, a case could be made for the assertion that some of the best music for the movies was written from 1941 to 1945. Whether the reason for this was

"adversity produces greatness" or the popularity of musicals or composers concentrating on boasting morale or just coincidence is a matter of conjecture. Just the number of songs nominated each year would give credence to the belief that these five years represent a peak period for movie melodies. Nine songs were in the hunt for best song in 1941, ten in both 1942 and 1943, twelve in 1944, and a never-equalled fourteen in 1945.

Giving the award to the Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein tune "The Last Time I Saw Paris" in 1941 seems fair, although "Blues in the Night," "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and the bouncy, topical "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B" are still toe-tappable today. There is also no valid reason to contest the selection of the perennial favorite "White Christmas" which

snowed under the likes of "It Seems I've Heard That Song Before" and "I Got a Gal in Kalamazoo" in 1942.

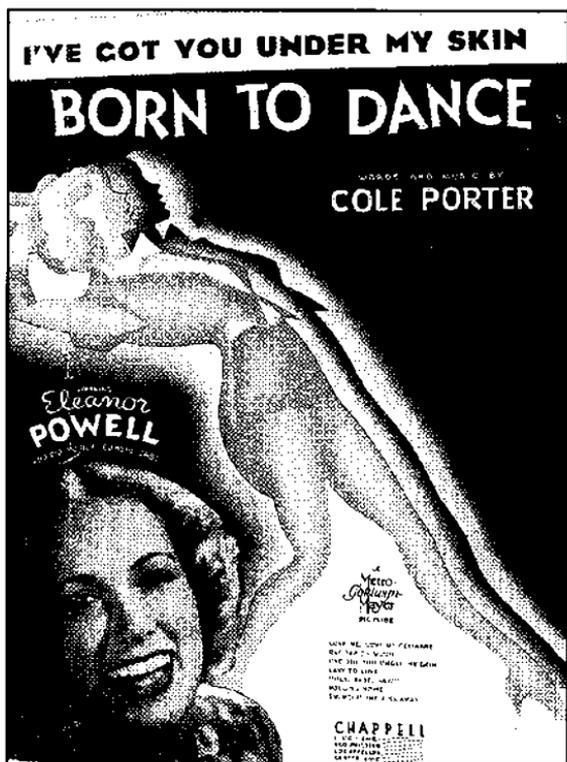
Just as "White Christmas" is inextricably connected with Bing Crosby so "You'll Never Know," the winner the following year, became attached to the star of *Hello Frisco, Hello*, Alice Faye, who needed every ounce of her charm to counteract the force of "That Old Black Magic" from *Star Spangled Rhythm*.

When Crosby came back in 1944 "Swinging on a Star" in *Going My Way*, he helped push the Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Burke ditty past the stiff competition of "I'll Walk Along," "Too Much in Love," "The Trolley Song," and the haunting "'Long Ago and Far Away," which can still raise goose bumps half a century later.

In 1945 the team of Richard

Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, who had already made their mark on Broadway, brought their only original film score to the screen in *State Fair* and it took all the talent they could muster for their "It Might as Well Be Spring" to top the likes of "Accentuate the Positive," "Love Letters," "I'll Buy That Dream," "Linda," and "So In Love."

After reaching such heights for several years in a row, it seemed only natural that



FASCINATING RHYTHMS

screen music came down to earth. The next two winners, "On the Atchison, Topoka, and the Santa Fe" and "Zip-A-Dec-Doo-Dah," were likely to stir audiences into singing along with the actors and decidedly outdistanced their challengers for that honor.

Doris Day's beautiful interpretation of "It's Magic" in her first film, *Romance on the High Seas*, certainly surpassed Bob Hope's warbling in *The Paleface*, but the catchy rhythm of Jerry Livingstone's music and easy-to-remember lyrics penned by Ray Evans made "Buttons and Bows" the indomitable tune of 1948. The following year *Neptune's Daughter* gave

birth to "Baby, It's Cold Outside," the perfect duet that became a standard for countless couples from Phil Harris and Alice Faye to Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme.

The 1950s began strong with a banner year in which the lovely "Mona Lisa" edged past the operatic "Be My Love," the playful nonsense of *Cinderella's* "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo," and the clippity-clopping of "Mule Train."

In 1951 Bing showed that he could still ride home a winner. "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening," from *Here Comes*

the Groom, although it certainly helped to have Hoagy Carmichael and Johnny Mercer providing horsepower. The laudable "A Kiss to Build a Dream On" finished out of the money.

Just as Gary Cooper loomed larger than life throughout *High Noon* so do the

pounding, hypnotic chords of Dimitri Tiomkin and Tex Ritter's mournful rendition of "Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling" had the other best song nominees shaking in their boots. Oscar stayed out west for another year when Doris Day as *Calamity Jane* revealed her "Secret Love" in 1953.

By the mid-fifties it became clear that releasing 45 RPM records of

sound tracks enhanced the chances of music makers winning the big prize. Customers buying Doris Day's "Whatever Will Be, Will Be (*Que Sera, Sera*)" in 1956 may have been carried away with the infectious tune to the point where they forgot it came from an Alfred Hitchcock thriller, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*; the more reserved "Friendly Persuasion (Thee I Love)" and Porter's "True Love" could not match the popularity of that song.

Similarly, singles recorded by The Four Aces of "Three Coins in the Fountain" and



"Love is a Many Splendored Thing" helped to escort those themes to the finish line in 1954 and 1955 ahead of notables such as Berlin's "Count Your Blessings," Cahn and Van Heusen's "The Tender Trap," Mercer's "Something's Gotta Give," and two of the most moving compositions of that or any other decade, "Unchained Melody" and Tiomkin's "The High and the Mighty."

1957 marks a watershed in movie music. That Hollywood had shifted its aim toward the younger generation now going to theaters was evidenced in nominees like "April Love" and "Tammy." Bing Crosby had become passé; Frank Sinatra singing "All the Way" in *The Joker is Wild* (and, two years later,

"High Hopes" in *A Hole in the Head*), it was now the pop star delivering the Oscars. Although Lerner and Lowe scored with "Gigi" in 1958, the musical was starting to wobble on its last legs. Instead of hiring people like Berlin, Porter, Berry Comden and Adolph Green to write half a dozen numbers to supplement the plot, producers began seeking songwriting duos like Jimmy Van Heusen and Sammy Cahn, Henry Mancini and Johnny Mercer, and Burt Bacharach and Hal David to supply just one song with a "hook" that hangs around after the picture is over.

There is no denying that those talented teams knew the right buttons to push. Many Sinatra movie tunes bear the Van Heusen-Cahn stamp, including a nominee in 1964 that became one of Frank's most popular numbers on the nightclub circuit, "My Kind of Town." They also were responsible for "The Second Time Around,"

"Pocketful of Miracles," and 1963's best song, "Call Me Irresponsible." Mancini and Mercer won back-to-back Academy Awards in 1961 and 1962 for "Moon River" and "The Days of Wine and Roses." Bacharach and David had more success on the *Billboard* charts than on the screen, but "The Look of Love," "Alfie," and the ubiquitous Os-

car-winner in 1969, "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head," rang the gong in record stores and at box offices.

Of the movies in the last twenty-five years or so one would be hard-pressed to select some which have produced songs likely to be standards in 2020 with the possible exception of "The Way We Were" which by its very nature is a paean to nostalgia. Who, for instance, can sing even one stanza of the winner for best song in 1979, "It Goes Like It Goes," or "Let the River Run" from 1988, when only three pathetic tunes were nominated?



FASCINATING RHYTHMS

The sorry state of contemporary movie music has been graphically shown when the animated films *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King*, and *Pocahontas* not only won the Oscars for best song but also dominated the nominations as well. Yet how many youngsters who have seen these five pictures can carry even one of those limp tunes across a room? Treat these same children to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* from 1937 and they will be heigh-hoing, whistling while they work, and hoping their prince will come.

Long after the partners who each believed

"I've Had the Time of My Life" while *Dirty Dancing* to 1987's winner by default have vanished into trivia books Fred and Ginger will still be whirling through the consciousness of music lovers to the strains of "Night and Day," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "Pick Yourself Up," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," and "A Fine Romance," classic numbers from their films that weren't even nominated for best song.

Of course, the compositions nominated for Best Original Song represent just a fraction of the delightful music that entertained us in those popcorn-scented dream palaces.

From dramas such as *Dark Passage*, *Clash By Night*, *Casablanca*, and *To Have and Have Not* came the incidental bonuses of "Too Marvelous for Words," "I Hear a Rhapsody," "As Time Goes By," and "How Little We Know" and comedies like the Road pictures of Hope and Crosby produced memorable ballads ("Moonlight Becomes You,"

"But Beautiful," "Sunday, Monday or Always") and the pleasing "Personality." The scores of *Oklahoma!*, *Show Boat*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *South Pacific*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Sound of Music*, *The King and I*, *My Fair Lady*, and numerous other musicals certainly made for some enchanted evenings that lifted our spirits so high we left theaters wanting



to climb every mountain or at least the nearest lamppost so we too could be singin' in the rain.

It seems there are very few films being made today that would prompt me to sing their praises let alone praise their singing. The music now permeating sound tracks appears designed by composers to stupefy the senses rather than bewitch the intellect. But those unforgettable melodies and soothing lyrics from years ago that keep floating through my mind...

The memory of all that, no, no. They can't take that away from me. ■

Being in Hot Water Isn't Always Easy

BY GINO LUCCHETTI

People born, say, from the 1960s on have no real idea of how easy everyday life is today compared to the life of those born in the so-called roaring twenties.

They have no idea or comprehension of what a chore it was to accomplish what today is something so easy, so pleasant and so satisfying: Just push or turn a knob and you take care of something that at one time was a real inconvenience, a genuine pain-in-the-neck.

Let me give one quick example of how things went in those unlamented, if not entirely forgotten, "olden days":

When I bought my present residence, I had a larger hot water heater installed than was considered necessary or required for the building's needs. Why? Because I never forgot how in those "golden, olden days," I never once had the opportunity for a soothing, satisfying, lingering hot bath!

I remember as a youngster my mother or dad or a sister having to heat up several kettles of water on the kitchen range to prepare *it* for *my* bath, and when *it* was hot dumping it in the tub. There was no hot water faucet; running water was cold water. And it wasn't because we were especially poor; it's the way many ordinary people took baths. You just never had the chance to simply "luxuriate" in a bath like you might, if you feel so inclined, today.

So it was hop in, wash, rinse, and get out before the bath water turned uncomfortably cold and you turned a beautiful azure blue. Sometimes it might even be necessary to have another one or two kettles-full of water heated and dumped in, even if you dawdled a little in the tub. In

that case you had to be careful not to get scalded as it was unceremoniously dumped in, possibly by a sadistic older sister forced to take care of her pain-in-the-neck young brother.

When we moved to Chicago's middle class West Side in the early thirties, to a "two-flat," things were better, bathwise, but bathing still wasn't "a piece of cake." In winter, household and bath water was heated by special coils in the fire box of your coal-burning furnace, a monster which had to be fed—or stoked—regularly. That meant actually shoveling in coal—yes, by hand—from the pile of coal in the coal bin in the basement. (The coal bin got filled through a little window at sidewalk level, by you, by hand of course, unless you paid to have the coal delivery man do it at so many dollars per ton.)

The furnace had to be "banked" at night and re-fired again in the morning, and from time to time de-clinkered—oh joy! (Getting the clinkers out. That's an altogether old thing that would take a lot of explaining to modern folks. And it might even be too much for them to read about—they might faint.) So, you may have had convenient hot water to some extent, at least in winter; yet, never enough to fill the tub completely before the hot ran out. Hot water was for general purposes and never, but never, it seemed, enough for that luxurious, languorous relaxing bath one dreamed about.

Once the weather changed and the furnace wasn't in use full time, there was the new problem: The warm weather hot water supply problem. Now the little coal-burning hot water heater, also in the basement right next to its big brother, came into play. →→→

Gino Lucchetti of Oak Park, Illinois is a long-time subscriber to our magazine.

This small furnace with its own hot water tank, was used just to heat water when needed. It was ostensibly "coal-burning" but in reality it was also an "anything-burning" furnace. You piled up and saved all sorts of kindling and burnable things next to it to heat water with: wood scraps, old boxes, cartons, tree trimmings, leaves, newspapers, magazines, you name it, if it fit in the small door, smaller than the big furnace, in it went to heat water. And, by the way, there was a pretty good sized tree stump that was a chopping block, and a hand axe so you could hack anything down to size for the water heater.

Are you getting the idea of what an effort it was just to get hot water for a bath? Something everyone takes for granted now as such a simple thing.

But wait.

Then came Saturday night, bath night. (Yes, there were Saturday night baths up to the early and mid-thirties. You had to be ready for early Sunday morning Mass.) But remember, other people in the family, including my older sister and her family on the second floor, needed baths. But to take care of one for yourself, you unobtusively and quietly—almost surreptitiously and secretly—fired up that little furnace, anxiously feeling the overhead reserve tank from time to time to make sure it had plenty for your eagerly anticipated bath. When there was enough, you'd casually wander upstairs and slip into the bathroom, run that precious hot water in, and start your hot bath. Ahhhh.

But whoa!! — by now someone else in the building discovered that there was hot water and just as you began to enjoy that welcomed hot water, somebody started using it and suddenly that was the end of your hot water. It would run out and ice-cold water would be coming in! Then it was a race to finish your bath before what water you were in turned cold, and another

attempt at a leisurely hot bath got shot down.

I don't ever, ever, ever recall taking a bath in which there was enough hot water from beginning to end, a series of traumas that shaped my resolve to never run out of hot water for my bath. Then there was invariably somebody pounding on the door and hollaring not to use up all the hot water. "There are other people in the family that want to take a bath, too, you know!" Drat!

This was the scenario until after World War II when we got oil heat installed which also provided hot water, and which was at least somewhat automatic. But still there was never enough to be assured you could fill the tub to the brim and lie in it and be sure that when it cooled a bit you could replenish the tub with more hot. When gas heating came, maybe the physical effort to have hot water eased up, but even then it seemed not always enough.

I can't say how many times back then in those "good old days" (Hah!) that I vowed that whatever the cost, whatever the effort required, whatever the sacrifice, when I grew up I would never, ever again run out of hot bath water. By the grace of God, since I could afford it, I've never had the problem nor have I regretted the cost.

Just recently when my old water heater gave up its soul I immediately ordered another with excess capacity to be installed, ASAP! Hang the cost!

It came and was installed and I personally set the water heat high enough to boil an egg, if I felt like it, and personally administered Extreme Unction to the old heater without a twinge of regret of its cost after three decades of fulfilling my request for hot water on demand. I felt it was one of the true bargains in my life for its faithful, unstinting service to its grateful master.

The old heater is dead! Long live the new heater! ■

REMEMBERING WINTER WALKS

BY C. MACKEY

It's that school bus. I see it picking up youngsters in the morning and taking them a mile down the road to school, and it triggers memories. In my day, we walked to school. Rain, cold, or shine, we walked. Now, don't get me wrong; I'm not criticizing the younger generation, quite the contrary. I think today's kids miss a lot by not walking between home and school—yes, even in winter.

There's just nothing like waking on the morning of a big snow and knowing that a bright, clean world is patiently waiting to be explored. On days like that it never took me long to hop out of bed even though I realized that my ultimate destination was a school-room and Mrs. Boomker, or someone like her.

I'd throw on some clothes, race to the kitchen, and gobble hot oatmeal as quickly as I could. My momentum came to an abrupt halt when I saw my mom in the doorway with a no-nonsense expression on her face. To ensure I was dressed properly for the cold, wet weather, she'd wrap me in woolens from head to toe. Pants, jacket, mittens, and mufflers were all made of this scratchy but warm fabric. According to most moms, two mufflers were necessary: one tied around the neck and the other, across the mouth and nose.

Goulashes completed the standard garb, and they were as ugly as the name implies. Everyone, boys as well as girls, wore the same kind: high, black rubber boots with several rectangular, silver buckles that fastened in front. They did keep our feet dry and warm on most days; and on others, our moms had the foresight to insist on a second pair of socks, wool of course. These were removed at school and dried in time for the walk home.

Finally out of the house, I would race to the home of my best friend Chris. Now, strange as this may sound, kids in my day never rang doorbells or knocked on doors. When seeking a pal, they would stand in the front or backyard of their playmate's residence and "call for" him or her. I mean just that. We would yell out our friend's name as loudly as we could and as often as necessary until someone inside the house heard and answered our summons. Today, that practice probably sounds rather peculiar and inefficient, and

* answered our summons. Today, that practice probably sounds rather peculiar and inefficient, and

REMEMBERING WINTER WALKS

I'd be the first to admit that our shouts weren't always heard. But never—and I mean never—did anyone approach the doorway itself. Anyway, Chris was usually listening for me so it was never a problem; and together we'd invade the chilly, white world.

Chris and I usually started to school earlier on snowy days for it was crucial to be the first ones to trample through the newly fallen snow. Our normal winter route was a straight line. We'd cut through yards, down alleys, and along an occasional sidewalk, shuffling our feet and carving uninterrupted paths in our wake. Along the way, we'd pause often, look back, and admire our long, magnificent trail; we felt very important.

When it was cold enough, every breath we made turned to steam; and we'd find short twigs and pretend we were smoking cigarettes. We found this fascinating for some reason and would puff and puff for long periods of time. I remember Chris could actually blow smoke rings—at least, his best friends identified them as perfect circles—and we loved to watch these “rings” evaporate into the air.

Halfhearted pushes toward snowbanks or icy patches were exchanged along the way; serious shoves were saved for the trip home. No one wanted to get wet going to school, or drop their lunch or books. We needn't have worried, however; our moms had carefully packaged us in wool and our belongings in brown paper bags.

Sometimes the snow was so high that we had to walk down the center of the street. Plowing and salting weren't as widespread or as prompt back then. Traffic was lighter too, but we still felt quite daring trotting down the middle of the road. Some of the kids would take this opportunity to grab the rear bumper of cars and allow them-

selves to be pulled for a daring ride. Dads lectured endlessly against this conduct and outright forbade it, but the practice continued. I always suspected that our fathers' intimate familiarity with the subject came from first-hand experience, but I never said so.

An important task on the way to school was noting the whereabouts of icicles and carefully monitoring their growth. The trick was to allow them to grow as long as possible before the melting process began and then break them off at their base. We loved sucking and crunching the smooth, cool sticks of ice. Freezer compartments in refrigerators and ice cubes weren't around so we relied on icicles in winter and chips from the iceman in summer. Mothers never approved of either habit, which was probably why we enjoyed them so much.

Our moms always seemed to know that we'd be late coming home on a first-snow day. There were lots of things to do. Pushes and shoves were in earnest now, and more than once we'd find ourselves floundering in a pile of snow or sliding on our backsides over the ice.

There was no fear of being hurt or becoming wet; we were so bundled that it was impossible!

For reasons parents never understood, we rarely had homework those nights so there wasn't any need to lug books home. Our hands were free, therefore, to make snowmen, angels, forts, and best of all, snowballs.

Some of the older boys threw them at cars, girls, or grown-ups. They tried to pick out someone who they didn't think could catch them and were usually pretty successful at choosing targets.

Once, however, we saw Chris' big brother strike a man in the chest. The man, younger than we first guessed, chased him up one alley and down the other gaining

on him little by little. Chris' brother finally escaped by hiding in a neighbor's garage. When it was safe, he proudly returned to resume his perilous activity. Before he could finish his animated explanation of his narrow escape, to the amazement of all of us, that same young man suddenly appeared. He grabbed my friend's brother and almost drowned him in a pile of snow. That was the end of snowball ambushes for all of us for awhile.

Another favorite diversion on the way home was a stop at Aunty Florence's. She lived exactly halfway between home and school and always had a smile, hot Ovaltine, and homemade cookies for us. When she knew we were coming, she'd time the cookies so they came out of the oven as we walked in her door. Warm chocolate chip cookies—I can almost taste them now. Remarkably, we never seemed to feel the cold or the need for warmth unless we knew Aunty Florence was definitely home.

The next-best practice was to pause in the doorway of the bakery, though we couldn't do it too many times in one week. We'd stand in the entranceway pretending to shiver from the weather. In reality, we were absorbed in the heavenly smells from the shop. Before long, out would come the baker with a donut or cookie "... for energy," he would say.

Yep! I feel real sorry for today's youngsters, trapped on those big, crowded, noisy, heated school buses. They sure miss out on the freedom and fun of cold, snowy weather.

Heated, hmmm—actually, that doesn't sound so bad to me. Or, is it just age talkin'?

C. Mackey, a graphics designer from Flossmoor, Illinois is a goulash-wearing veteran of romps in the snow, hot Ovaltine and homemade cookies.

A Night to Remember

It was Sunday, December 26, 1948. After fifteen years, Jack Benny was about to do his last radio program on NBC.



He had decided to switch to CBS after considering an attractive, tax-advantageous offer from CBS. His first CBS show would be the following week, on January 2, 1949.

This was good news for Jack, but not for NBC which would be left with a giant-size hole to fill in their Sunday night schedule.

Benny would have his same (6 p.m. Central) time slot on CBS so NBC would be faced with scheduling something opposite one of the biggest ratings-getters in all of radio. Furthermore, December 26th would be Edgar Bergen's last show for Chase and Sanborn and last show on NBC. (He, too, would move to CBS, but not until October 2, 1949.)

NBC did some program shuffling and here's their Sunday night (Central time) schedules, before and after:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1948

- 5:00 Catholic Hour
- 5:30 Ozzie and Harriet
- 6:00 Jack Benny
- 6:30 Phil Harris-Alice Faye
- 7:00 Charlie McCarthy
- 7:30 Fred Allen
- 8:00 Manhattan Merry-Go-Round
- 8:30 Album of Familiar Music
- 9:00 Take It or Leave It
- 9:30 Horace Heidt Talent Hunt

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1949

- 5:00 Catholic Hour
- 5:30 Ozzie and Harriet
- 6:00 Horace Heidt Talent Hunt
- 6:30 Phil Harris-Alice Faye
- 7:00 Fred Allen
- 7:30 NBC Theatre
- 8:00 Manhattan Merry-Go-Round
- 8:30 Album of Familiar Music
- 9:00 Take It or Leave It
- 9:30 Who Said That?

Tune in to Those Were The Days December 26 to hear much of NBC's schedule from that night to remember in 1948.

Chuck Schaden's
THOSE WERE THE DAYS
WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 P.M.
DECEMBER 1998

PLEASE NOTE: The numerals following each program listing for *Those Were The Days* represents the length of time for each particular show: (28:50) means the program will run 28 minutes and 50 seconds. This may be of help to those who tape the programs for their own collection.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5th
RADIO TO PLAN YOUR
CHRISTMAS LIST BY

RED SKELTON SHOW (12-17-46) The Skelton Scrapbook of Satire presents "Department Stores" with Willy Lump-Lump, Clem Kadiddlehopper, and Junior, the Mean Little Kid. Cast features GeGe Pearson, Anita Ellis, Verna Felton, Pat McGeehan, Wonderful Smith, David Forrester and the orchestra, Rod O'Connor. Raleigh Cigarettes, NBC. (27:35)

ELGIN CHRISTMAS PARTY (12-25-44) A Christmas Day radio extravaganza starring Don Ameche as host of this third annual two hour holiday special for servicemen and women around the world (via short wave) and all the folks at home. An all-star show with Ginny Simms, Bob Hope, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Bing Crosby, Carmen Miranda, Jack Benny, Vera Vague, the Army Air Force's "Swing Wing," Charioteers, concert violinist Joseph Szigeti, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Les Paul and his Trio, Louis Silvers and the orchestra and chorus. Elgin Watch Company, CBS. (24:44; 27:48; 26:51; 37:15)

DRAGNET (12-22-53) Jack Webb stars as Detective Sgt. Joe Friday with Ben Alexander

as Officer Frank Smith in the program's traditional Christmas story. The statue of the infant Jesus is missing from the Nativity Scene at the Mission Church. Friday and Smith investigate. NBC. (26:33)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12th
RADIO TO ADDRESS
CHRISTMAS CARDS BY

THE LONE WOLF (1949) "The Golden Santa" stars Walter Coy as Michael Lanyard, the Lone Wolf. A pretty young thing, who has lost her gold statue of Santa Claus, asks Lanyard for help. The trail to the Santa is marked by murder. Sustaining, MBS. (25:53)

LIFE OF RILEY (12-17-44) William Bendix stars as Chester A. Riley who, a week before the holiday, gets a gift marked "Do not open until Christmas." Paula Winslowe as Peg, Conrad Binyon as Junior, John Brown as Digger. American Meat Institute, NBC. (29:27)

RED RYDER (12-23-48) "From out of the West comes America's famous fighting cowboy." Red Ryder is surprised when Little Beaver says he wants money for Christmas. Brooke Temple is Red, Johnny McGovern is Bever. Langendorf Bread, MBS. (24:49)

DUFFY'S TAVERN (12-24-48) "A Christmas Visitor" stars Ed Gardner as Archie, manager of Duffy's Tavern, "where the elite meet to eat." In a warmhearted departure from the usual comedy situation, Archie is unhappy that he's not getting a Christmas bonus. A stranger, played by Jeff Chandler, takes him for a walk and shows Archie the real meaning of Christmas. Bristol Myers, NBC. (29:00)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-18-46) Leroy wants a motor scooter for Christmas but Uncle Throckmorton doesn't want him to have one. Harold Peary as Gildy, Walter Tetley as Leroy. Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Louise Erickson as Marjorie. Richard LeGrand as Peavy. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:24)

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THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH (12-24-45)

This is Charles Dickens' other Christmas story (written in 1845, two years after "A Christmas Carol"). It looks like a dismal Christmas for poor toy maker Caleb Plummer and his blind daughter Mary when Caleb's stern employer refuses a salary advance and demands a full day's work on Christmas. Everette Clarke narrates. Produced in Chicago, featuring music by Joseph Gallichio and the NBC Chicago orchestra. Sustaining, NBC. (24:18)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19th RADIO TO WRAP, BAKE AND DECORATE BY

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-25-46) Gildy invites friends to his home for a party on Christmas Day. Harold Peary stars. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:08)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (12-21-48) Jim and Marian Jordon star as the McGees of Wistful Vista with Gale Gordon, Bill Thompson, Arthur Q. Brian, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. McGee gets a Christmas card signed "Love, Elizabeth" but he doesn't know who Elizabeth is! *This program is preceded by the last few minutes of the Bob Hope Show, same date, with Hope mentioning he'll be in Berlin for Christmas to entertain the troops of the Berlin Airlift.* Johnson's Wax, NBC. (31:50)

CAMPBELL PLAYHOUSE (12-23-38) "A Christmas Carol" starring Orson Welles as narrator and Ebenezer Scrooge in the fourth annual presentation of Charles Dickens' holiday classic. Once again, the miserly old skinflint learns the true meaning of Christmas. Cast features Joseph Cotten, Ray Collins, Hiram Sherman, Frank Readick, Alice Frost, Arthur Anderson, Bernard Herrmann and the orchestra. Ernest Chapel announces. Campbell Soup, CBS. (32:47; 27:12)

BOB HOPE SHOW (12-28-48) "By transcription," it's Bob's Christmas Day show from Berlin as presented to the troops of the Berlin Airlift. Guests are General Jimmy Doolittle, songwriter Irving Berlin, actress Jinx Falkenberg, singers Bill Farrell and Jane Harvey, comedienne Irene Ryan. Irving Berlin sings "Operation Vittles," a special song he wrote for the Airlift. Swan Soap, NBC. (29:28)

SUSPENSE (12-22-57) "Dog Star" starring Evelyn Rudi as a little girl who wants a dog for Christmas and who receives one in an unexpected way. AFRS rebroadcast. (18:37)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26th THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS ON NBC FIFTY YEARS AGO

NBC NEWS (12-26-48) Robert Trout reports that the Berlin Airlift is six months old today. Pillsbury, NBC. (4:56)

LIVING, 1948 (12-26-48) "The Little Girl Who Had Everything." Ben Grauer narrates a post-Christmas fable about a family living in a castle and the events that take place on "Private Island." Sustaining, NBC. (24:41)

ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET (12-26-48) Ozzie remembers when he and his brother believed their father when he said it would snow. Ozzie and Harriet Nelson star with John Brown, Janet Waldo, Joe Kearns, Tommy Bernard, Henry Blair. International Silver Co., NBC. (28:55)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-26-48) After 15 years, it's Jack's last show on NBC; next week he moves to CBS. Jack introduces Don Wilson as the outstanding announcer of 1948. Cast features Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Mel Blanc, Elliott Lewis, Gertrude and Mable. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (27:40)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE PROGRAM (12-26-48) On the day after Christmas Phil is upset that he didn't get a Christmas gift from Rexall. Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley, Walter Tetley as Julius Abbruzzo, Gale Gordon as Mr. Scott, the sponsor. Rexall, NBC. (28:22)

CHARLIE MC CARTHY SHOW (12-26-48) On the last show for Chase and Sanborn and NBC, Edgar Bergen traces highlights in his career, beginning with his first radio appearance on the Rudy Vallee Show and the feuds between Charlie McCarthy, W. C. Fields and Fred Allen. Cast features Mortimer Snerd, Pat Patrick, Don Ameche and Marsha Hunt as The Bickersons, announcer Ken Carpenter. Chase and Sanborn, NBC. (28:14)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (12-26-48) Fred and Portland Hoffa walk down Main Street and ask the question, "What was the worst snow storm you've ever seen?" Answers by Kenny Delmar as Boris, the Russian; Parker Fennelly as Titus Moody; Minerva Pious as Mrs. Nussbaum; Peter Donald as Ajax Cassidy. Comedian Doc Rockwell is guest and in a courtroom sketch, Fred is the judge, Rockwell the lawyer in a murder case. Five DeMarco Sisters, Al Goodman and the orchestra. Ford Motor Co., NBC/CBC. (27:45)

For some comments about this significant day in radio history, see the article on page 19.

OLD TIME
RADIO

IN THE
20
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CENTURY

Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM

JANUARY 1999

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2nd

LIGHTS OUT (4-13-43) "The Archer" presented by Arch Oboler. A girl, about to be killed, is rescued by a ghost with a bow and arrow. Ironized Yeast, CBS. (30:00)

KAY KYSER'S COLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE (10-31-45) The "old professor" himself in a broadcast from Chicago before patients at Vaughn General Hospital. Georgia Carroll, Ish-Kabibble, Sully Mason put the contestants through their paces. AFRS rebroadcast. (30:18)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (8-5-76) Radio producer-

director **Arch Oboler** talks about his career in a conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded in Mr. Oboler's Studio City, California home. He died in 1987 at the age of 78. (20:30; 22:24)

LIGHTS OUT (4-6-38) "Cat Wife" starring Boris Karloff in Arch Oboler's classic story of a man whose wife turns into a human-sized cat. Sustaining, NBC. (28:40)



ARCH OBOLER

HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (3-24-49) "Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal" starring Richard Conte in a biographical story about the western hero. James Hilton hosts. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29:30)

RECOLLECTIONS AT THIRTY (6-11-56) First program in a 33-part series marking the 30th anniversary of the National Broadcasting Company. Host Ed Herlihy presents audio clips of Graham MacNamee describing the arrival of Charles Lindbergh in Washington following his flight from New York to Paris; Cliquot Club Eskimos; Joe White, the Silver-Masked Tenor; George Olsen and the orchestra. Sustaining, NBC. (21:38)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9th

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (6-22-36) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, in charge of the Wistful Vista Employment Agency. Cast includes Hugh Studebaker, Bill Thompson, Isabel Randolph, Harlow Wilcox, Ted Weems and the orchestra with singer Perry Como and whistler Elmo Tanner. Johnson's Wax, NBC BLUE. (29:20)

RECOLLECTIONS AT THIRTY (6-20-56) Program 2 of 33. Ed Herlihy looks back at NBC's history to recall a 1934 Radio City Party; Clara, Lu and Em; Fred Allen and Don McNeill; the 1934 Baer-Carnera fight; Information Please. Fred Collins announces. Sustaining, NBC. (25:23)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (7-3-73) **Jim Jordan**, who starred as "Fibber McGee" from 1935-1959, reminisces about his radio days in a conversation with Chuck Schaden recorded in Mr. Jordan's home in Beverly Hills, California. He died in 1988 at the age of 91. (21:47; 15:14; 27:15)



JIM
JORDAN

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (3-5-40) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees of Wistful Vista. When Molly gets the dictionary from the hall closet, she is hit by an avalanche! *This is the first time the famous closet gag was used!* Cast features Hal Peary, Isabel Randolph, Bill Thompson, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (29:05)

MOUNTAIN THEATER (1942) Music and fun in the morning with the Prairie Ramblers: Chick Hurt, Jack Taylor, Salty Holmes, Alan Crockett. Jack Stillwell announces. Sketch: "Seven Keys to Bald Plate." Dr. Caldwell's Laxative, WLS, Chicago. (11:10) *Read Wayne Daniel's article about the Prairie Ramblers on page 34.*

PASSING PARADE (1942) Storyteller John

Nesbitt presents "the procession of rich men, poor men, beggar men, thieves... the Passing Parade." Stories about a hero, a queen and a doctor: Sgt. Alvin C. York, Cleopatra, Dr. Crippen. Nesbitt's California Orange Drink, Syndicated. (14:20)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16th

THE SHADOW (5-16-48) "The Giant of Madras" starring Bret Morrison as Lamont Cranston, "wealthy young man about town" with Grace Matthews as his "constant friend and companion," the lovely Margo Lane. Traveling on a train, Lamont and Margo meet a man carrying a valuable diamond. Soon the man is fatally wounded and the gem is missing. Andre Baruch announces. MBS. (23:40)

CAVALCADE OF AMERICA (12-5-38) "Knut Rockne" is the subject as Gabriel Heatter introduces this show devoted to the legendary Notre Dame football coach whose career began in Chicago's Logan Square community. Donald Voorhees and the orchestra. DuPont, CBS. (28:43)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (12-13-73) Actor **Bret Morrison**, who portrayed "The Shadow" (Lemont Cranston) on radio in 1943 and 1944 and from 1945-1954, recalls his broadcast career in a conversation with Chuck Schaden in Mr. Morrison's Hollywood home. He died in 1978 at the age of 66. (35:23)



THE SHADOW (2-8-48) "The Thing in the Cage" starring Bret Morrison as Lamont Cranston with Grace Matthews as the lovely Margo Lane. A fearsome caged beast kills on command of its master. Cranston, using hypnotic powers learned in the Orient, becomes The Shadow at the appropriate moment. Andre Baruch announces. Blue Coal, MBS. (27:54)

RECOLLECTIONS AT THIRTY (6-27-56) Program 3 of 33. Audio clips from NBC's 30 year broadcast history. NBC Minstrels; Easy Aces; Shell Chateau with Al Jolson and Maxie Rosenbloom; Original Amateur Hour with Major Edward Bowes; actor Leslie Howard; Rosa Ponselle. Ed Herlihy hosts. Sustaining, NBC. (23:57)

KAY KYSER'S COLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE (12-5-45) The "old professor" and the gang broadcasting from the U.S. Naval Sta-

tion at Corpus Christi, Texas. Featured are Michael Douglas, Georgia Carroll, Ish-Kabibble. Includes a quiz segment on radio themes. AFRS rebroadcast. (30:00)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23rd RADIO ON RADIO — Part 1

FRED ALLEN SHOW (5-26-46) Last show of Fred's 1945-46 season with guest Jack Benny and regulars Portland Hoffa, Kenny Delmar (Senator Claghorn), Alan Reed (Falstaff Openshaw), Minerva Pious (Mrs. Nussbaum), Parker Fennelly (Titus Moody). Allen's Alley question: Do you have trouble sleeping? Fred tells Jack Benny about his new radio show, a giveaway program, "King for a Day." Jack sneaks on the show as a contestant. Tenderleaf Tea, Blue Bonnet Margarine, NBC. (28:58)

NBC'S 25th ANNIVERSARY (1951) Celebrating a quarter-century of programming on the National Broadcasting Company, Jim and Marian Jordan star as Fibber McGee and Molly in a hour-long retrospective of sounds. Fibber tinkers with an old radio to bring in some classic sounds from the past: the first NBC network show in 1946; Coon-Sanders Orchestra; Lawrence Tibbett; Ruth Etting; Joe Penner; Rudy Vallee; Ben Bernie; Eddie Cantor; W.C. Fields with Bergen and McCarthy; Jessica Dragonette; Bing Crosby; Jimmy Durante; Bob Hope; Tallulah Bankhead; Al Jolson; Groucho Marx; Major Bowes. Sustaining, NBC. (31:10; 30:23)

LIGHTS OUT (7-13-46) "The Coffin in Studio B" by Wyllis Cooper. In a radio studio, the cast and production team prepare a "Lights Out" program for broadcast. One of a series of summer revivals of the best shows in the series, produced in Chicago for network broadcast. Cast includes Bob Murphy, Sherman Marks, Don Gallagher, Jack Bivans, Charles Eggleston. George Stone announces. Sustaining, NBC. (28:47)

BING CROSBY SHOW (2-14-51) Metropolitan Opera star Dorothy Kirsten joins Bing in a spoof of daytime radio soap operas: "A Soap Opera at the Met." Ken Carpenter, Jud Conlon's Rhythmairs, John Scott Trotter and the orchestra. Chesterfield Cigarettes, NBC. (27:00)

JOAN DAVIS SHOW (1947) Joan is in her Tea Room, excited about the "Cinderella for a Day" radio broadcast. Cast includes Wally Brown, Verna Felton, Pat McGeehan, Ben Gage, Eddie Marr, Jack Meacham and the orchestra. AFRS rebroadcast. (20:17)



Chuck Schaden's

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

WNIB-WNIZ • FM 97 • SATURDAY 1 - 5 PM

JANUARY 1999

SATURDAY, JANUARY 30th -- RADIO ON RADIO — Part 2

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (4-14-48) Harold Peary stars as Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, the Water Commissioner, who is invited to talk about the Summerfield Water Department on the radio. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30:12)

DENNIS DAY SHOW (1949) Dennis takes a job selling radios. Bea Benaderet, John Brown, Dink Trout. AFRS rebroadcast. (28:10)

THE WHISTLER (9-8-46) "Brief Pause for Murder" stars Fahey Flynn as a radio announcer who plots to kill his wife. Cast features Beverly Younger, Ken Griffin, and Everette Clarke as "the Whistler." Meister Brau Beer, WBBM Chicago. (28:25)

VILLAGE STORE (5-27-48) Jack Carson stars

with Eve Arden, Verna Felton, Dave Willock, Eileen Woods, the Starlighters, Frank DeVol and the orchestra, announcer Hy Averbach. Jack wants to become a partner in a radio station. Sealtest/Kraft, NBC. (28:37)

ADVENTURES OF MAISIE (1949) Ann Southern stars as Maisie Revere, who meets a Sultan and escapes death by telling him the story of a radio soap opera. Syndicated. (28:00)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (1-7-47) Fibber has a new radio and when he hears a news-cast about some escaped criminals, he decides to defend himself. Jim and Marian Jordan star with Bill Thompson, Arthur Q. Brian, Gale Gordon. Jim Backus, Harlow Wilcox, King's Men, Billy Mills and the orchestra. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (30:00)

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REMEMBER WHEN-- Host Don Corey's "nostalgia fest" with the emphasis on old time radio variety shows, plus show tunes and interviews. *WAIT, 850 AM, Saturday, 9 am-12 noon.*

WHEN RADIO WAS-- Carl Amari hosts a weekend edition of the popular series featuring old time radio broadcasts and interviews. *WMAQ, 670 AM, Saturday and Sunday, 10pm-midnight.*

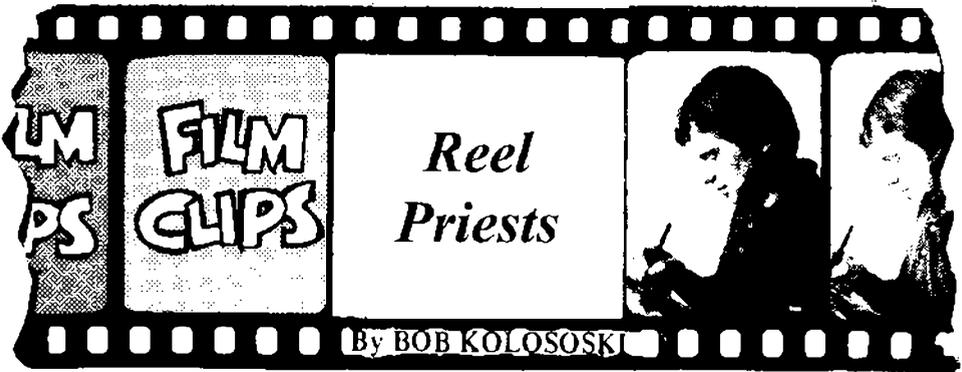
(CBS RADIO) MYSTERY THEATRE-- Producer Himan Brown hosts reruns of his 1974 -1982 mystery series. *WMAQ, 670 AM, Saturday night at Midnight until 5 am Sunday.*

IMAGINATION THEATRE-- This series is heard occasionally on *Those Were The Days* in Chicago, but is broadcast weekly in many other cities across the country. For the station in your area, call Tim McDonald at TransMedia Productions at 1-800-229-7234. For a list of stations carrying the program and an **episode guide**, the Internet address is: tmedia@aimnet.com

"When Radio Was" -- WMAQ-AM 670

Monday thru Friday Midnight to 1 a.m. Host Stan Freberg

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
December, 1998 Schedule				
	1 Burns & Allen Pt 2 Mysterious Traveler	2 Candy Metson Archie Andrews Pt 1	3 Archie Andrews Pt 2 Broadway Is My Beat	4 The Shadow Johnny Dollar Pt 1 of 5
7 Damon Runyon Theatre Aldrich Family Pt 1	8 Aldrich Family Pt 2 Mr. President	9 This Is My Best Duffy's Tavern Pt 1	10 Duffy's Tavern Pt 2 Escape	11 Suspense Johnny Dollar Pt 2 of 5
14 Gunsmoke Burns & Allen Pt 1	15 Burns & Allen Pt 2 CBS Radio Workshop	16 Crime Photographer Fibber McGee Pt 1	17 Fibber McGee Pt 2 Father Knows Best	18 The Falcon Johnny Dollar Pt 3 of 5
21 Grand Central Station Life of Riley Pt 1	22 Life of Riley Pt 2 Let George Do It	23 Dragnet Jack Benny Pt 1	24 Jack Benny Pt 2 Directors Playhouse	25 Greatest Story Johnny Dollar Pt 4 of 5
28 Dark Fantasy Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	29 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 Richard Diamond	30 The Whistler Charlie McCarthy Pt 1	31 Charlie McCarthy Pt 2 Lone Ranger	
January, 1999 Schedule				
<p style="text-align: center;">OUT OF AREA LISTENERS PLEASE NOTE</p> <p>If WMAQ Chicago is out of your reception area, "When Radio Was" is heard on a great many other stations throughout the country. For a complete station listing, plus more detailed program information, and a steady audio stream on the Internet, visit www.radiospirits.com</p>				1 Suspense Johnny Dollar Pt 5 of 5
4 Philip Marlowe Burns & Allen Pt 1	5 Burns & Allen Pt 2 Have Gun, Will Travel	6 Boston Blackie Father Knows Best Pt 1	7 Father Knows Best Pt 2 Tales of Texas Rangers	8 The Shadow Superman
11 Black Museum Great Gildersleeve Pt 1	12 Great Gildersleeve Pt 2 The Falcon	13 Lone Ranger Fred Allen Pt 1	14 Fred Allen Pt 2 Box Thirteen	15 Suspense Superman
18 Dragnet Lum and Abner Pt 1	19 Lum and Abner Pt 2 Lights Out	20 Gunsmoke Jack Benny Pt 1	21 Jack Benny Pt 2 Escape	22 The Shadow Superman
25 Third Man Fibber McGee Pt 1	26 Fibber McGee Pt 2 The Whistler	27 Nick Carter Life of Riley Pt 1	28 Life of Riley Pt 2 Frontier Gentleman	29 Suspense Superman



By BOB KOLOSOSKI

Many Catholic baby boomers have favorite stories about going to a Catholic grammar school. Most stories involve the discipline commanded by the nuns or priests who ran the schools.

My story is about a movie.

Our school, St. Marks, was in a poor Chicago neighborhood and our church was in the basement of the school. Across the alley was the priest's house and next to that house was a gravel-based school yard and a small plain building. The building had an all-purpose room that was used for

school parent meetings, indoor recess on cold or rainy days, and, occasionally, a place where the nuns would show movies to the pupils.

In my nine years at St. Marks, I remember seeing just five movies. Students were treated to movies only when the whole class was exceptionally good. I was in a class that contained four boys destined to spend their adulthood behind prison bars. At least, that's what several nuns told those boys over and over again. So movie treats for my class were looked upon as miracles or mistakes made by substitute nuns filling in for nuns recovering from nervous breakdowns.

When I was in the fourth grade, as Christmas approached, our nun decided we could be treated to a viewing of *Going My Way* starring the dean of movie priests, Bing Crosby.

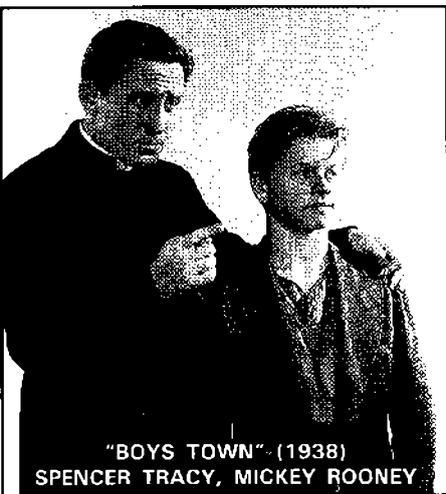
Since all of our nuns were Irish and this was a film about Irish priests, my pals and I ruled out the miracle angle.

The day before Christmas vacation was to begin our class was herded over to the annex building and told to sit quietly on the floor while the janitor put up an old movie screen and then snapped the film reel onto the ancient projector. The clackity sound of the projector faded as the Paramount mountain appeared on the screen and we all settled back to a wonderful Christmas treat.



"GOING MY WAY" (1944)
BING CROSBY

PHOTO:FEET



"BOYS TOWN" (1938)
SPENCER TRACY, MICKEY ROONEY



"SAN FRANCISCO" (1936)
SPENCER TRACY, CLARK GABLE

PHOTOFEST

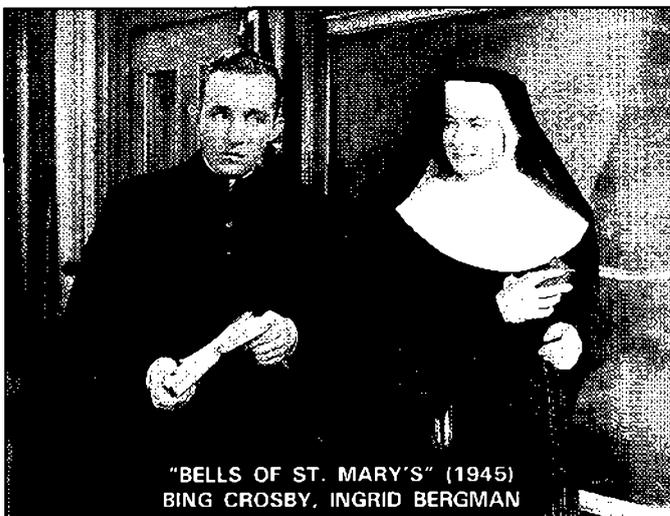
This was the first time I saw *Going My Way* and to this day it is one of my favorite movies.

And even though Bing Crosby was great as Father O'Malley, I feel that Spencer Tracy's Father Flanagan was better. *Boys Town* was another film I loved and watched on TV every time it was scheduled. Tracy played the founder of Boys Town with such quiet compassion that I felt he should have been granted sainthood along with the Best Actor Oscar for 1938.

Tracy had played a priest before his saintly performance as Father Flanagan. In 1936 he played Father Mullin in *San Francisco*. Mullin's best friend was a gambler named Blackie Norton, played with ease by Clark Gable. The beautiful Jeanette MacDonald was the damsel they both desired. Father Mullin desired to save her soul and Blackie desired something less noble. The earthquake of 1906

nearly sent all three to meet St. Peter, but at the final scene they are all well and Blackie has sworn off his wicked ways.

Tracy's performance was great, but he had to play second fiddle to Gable and the character of Father Mullin was given a minimum of screen time. As Father Flanagan, Tracy had to work twice as hard because his co-star was Mickey Rooney, the best scene-stealer in the business. And when MGM made *Men of Boys Town* (1941) the sequel to *Boys Town*, Rooney had become the number one box office



"BELLS OF ST. MARY'S" (1945)
BING CROSBY, INGRID BERGMAN

PHOTOFEST

REEL PRIESTS

draw in the world. Again Tracy's character had to take a back seat to the main character and his performance wasn't as powerful as in the original film which contains Tracy's best priestly performance.

Bing Crosby's fine work in *Going My Way* was repeated in the 1945 sequel *The Bells of St. Mary's*.

Ingrid Bergman co-starred as a nun trying to save the parish school. In many ways Bing was more convincing as a priest in this film than in the original. He and Bergman were perfectly cast as two individuals trying to reach the same goal, each with different strategies.

Father O'Mally was a perfect character for Bing and he seemed so comfortable wearing a priest's collar that when he was approached to play a priest again in 1959's *Say One For Me* he couldn't say no. The film, which co-starred Debbie Reynolds



"ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES" (1938)
JAMES CAGNEY, PAT O'BRIEN

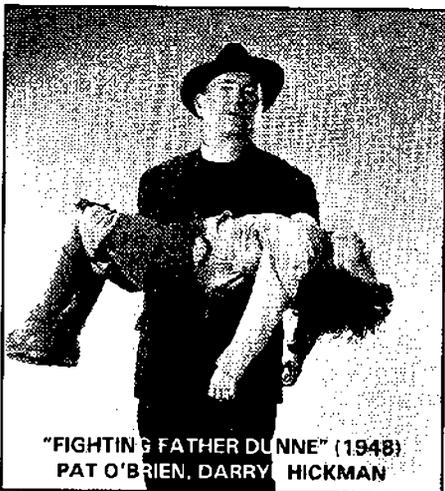
PHOTOFILES™

and Robert Wagner, lacked all of the charm of Bing's other priestly films and forced him out of the cinematic priesthood.

Tracy's Father Flanagan had to save Mickey Rooney and Crosby's Father O'Malley had to save parish buildings, but Pat O'Brien's Father Connelly had to try to save Jimmy Cagney and all the Dead End Kids in one movie. The film was *Angels with Dirty Faces* and O'Brien was up to the task. Father Connelly was a kid from the wrong side of the tracks who chose religion over crime while his friend Rocky gave in to worldly temptations.

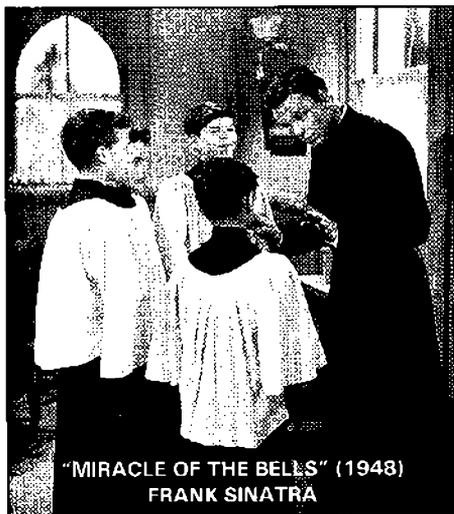
I always loved O'Brien in this film because he looked very much like an Irish priest we had in my old parish and because most of my buddies were pale imitations of the Dead End Kids. O'Brien was a good actor and he excelled in the role of Father Connelly.

Pat O'Brien put on the collar again in the 1948 film *Fighting Father Dunne*, about a priest who opened a home for orphaned boys. It was well made but so close in content to *Boys Town* that it drew a lot of unfair comparison to the Tracy film. As he did in *Angels with Dirty Faces*, O'Brien understated his performance but wasn't as

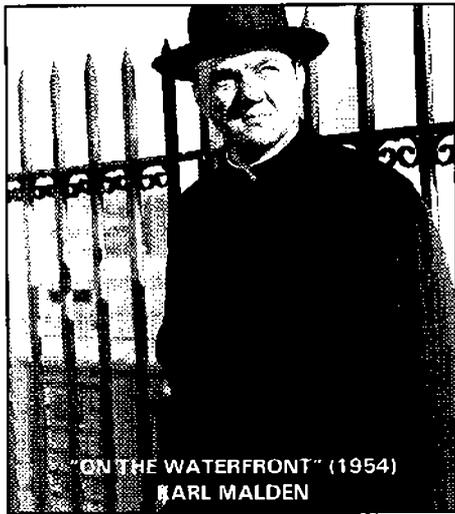


"FIGHTING FATHER DUNNE" (1948)
PAT O'BRIEN, DARRYL HICKMAN

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"MIRACLE OF THE BELLS" (1948)
FRANK SINATRA



"ON THE WATERFRONT" (1954)
KARL MALDEN

PHOTOBEST

convincing as his first venture into movie priesthood.

Sometimes the casting of a star to play a priest just doesn't work and the public responds by not buying tickets to the film.

In 1948 *Miracle of the Bells* featured Frank Sinatra as a young priest in a poor parish. The story, about a movie starlet who dies while making her "big breakthrough" film, was badly written and directed. Casting Sinatra was also a huge mistake because he had only been in a few films and they were all musicals. He was not convincing in a dramatic role and he lacked the warmth Crosby and Tracy had

brought to their films. Sinatra made a poor priest and he never tried playing a man of God again.

Others have succeeded as film priests.

Character actor Alan Hale was so natural playing a priest in *God is My Co-Pilot* that it was hard to remember him buffooning through dozens of Warner Brothers movies.

Karl Malden was excellent as a priest in *On the Waterfront*, supported in his efforts by Marlon Brando, Rod Steiger, Eva Marie Saint and directed by Elia Kazan. Malden's priest was surrounded by political corruption and crooked union bosses and a sense

that even a priest wasn't safe if he said the wrong thing at the wrong time.

The raw emotions of all the characters made it a compelling film, winning the Best Picture Academy Award in 1954. Malden was nominated for Best Supporting Actor, but did not win.

Malden did give a fine performance in the 1953 Alfred Hitchcock film



"GOD IS MY CO-PILOT" (1945)
DENNIS MORGAN, ALAN HALE

PHOTOBEST

REEL PRIESTS

I Confess, but Montgomery Clift was the star and his character was a priest with a huge problem. Clift plays a young priest who hears the confession of a murderer. Clift, the priest, knows the murderer and knew the murdered man, but cannot tell anyone what he knows because of the sanctity of the confessional. The priest is tortured by what he knows and is pursued by the police as a suspect in the killing. Hitchcock's familiar "wrong man" theme is used brilliantly in the film and Clift was perfectly cast as the priest with a problem.

The power of confession has been the salvation and downfall of many men and in the film *True Confessions* Robert DiNero plays a priest with a terrible secret he cannot confess to anyone. Robert Duvall plays the priest's brother who is a homicide detective on a murder case that leads to high

"I CONFESS" (1953)
MONTGOMERY CLIFT

church officials. DiNero as a priest was an interesting bit of casting that paid off. He and Duvall are among the very best actors in Hollywood and each gave rich performances in a run-of-the-mill murder mystery.

Portraying a priest in Hollywood can be rewarding and it can be inspirational to the viewing public.

One of the most inspirational films about a priest is *Keys of the Kingdom* produced in 1944. The star was a very young Gregory Peck in only his second film, playing a young Scottish priest who is sent to a hard life in China. His parish consists of impoverished farmers and years of civil war rips his congregation apart. The very basic concept of Christianity is challenged every day and Peck's priest must meet that challenge.

Bing Crosby may have won the Academy Award in 1944 for *Going My Way*, but in my mind Gregory Peck was surely the best film priest that year. ■

"KEYS OF THE KINGDOM" (1944)
VINCENT PRICE, GREGORY PECK

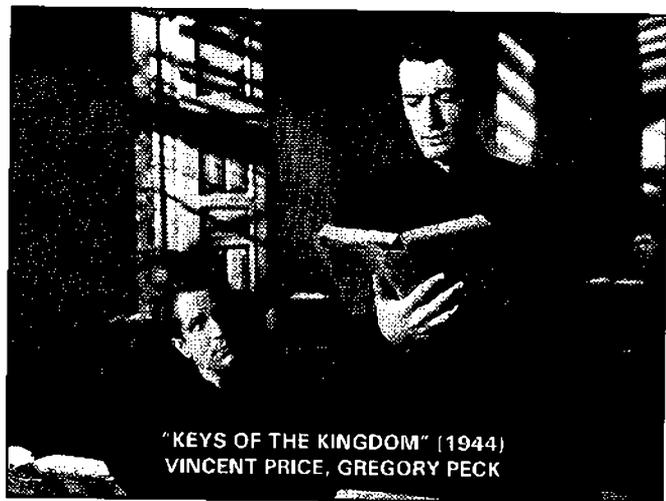


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The Prairie Ramblers Country Music Pioneers

BY WAYNE W. DANIEL

In 1933 *Billboard* magazine called Chicago's WLS the acknowledged leader in the field of hillbilly entertainment.

The station's premiere showcase for rural music and comedy was the National Barn Dance which made its debut on WLS on April 19, 1924.



During its thirty-six-year tenure on WLS, this regular Saturday night shindig served as a career launching pad for the likes of Gene Autry, Smiley Burnette, Rex Allen, Pat Buttram, Eddie Dean, George Gobel, and Red Foley who achieved fame in movies, records, and network television. Many other members of the "Old Hayloft" cast who remained in Chicago gained national recognition as featured performers on the Barn Dance and other WLS programs.

One of the most popular and enduring of these acts was the Prairie Ramblers. During their long stint at WLS the Ramblers earned a reputation of being one of the most influential of the early string bands, perfecting a musical style that evolved into today's modern country sound.

The original Prairie Ramblers, Tex

Wayne W. Daniel of Chamblee, Georgia, is a retired college professor and a country music historian. He is the author of Pickin' on Peachtree, A History of Country Music in Atlanta, Georgia, published by the University of Illinois Press.

Atchison, Salty Holmes, Chick Hurt, and Jack Taylor, were all native Kentuckians. After brief individual pursuits of careers in various show business ventures, the four-some pooled their talents in 1928 to form a group they called the Kentucky Ramblers. With Tex on fiddle, Salty playing guitar and harmonica, chick doubling on banjo and mandolin, Jack providing rhythm on the string bass, and all four of them alternately singing lead and harmony, they went on the air at WOC in Davenport, Iowa.

Their repertoire consisted of folk songs, gospel tunes, and the then current commercial hillbilly music, much of which they had learned while growing up in the rural south.

As their popularity increased, the Kentucky Ramblers attracted the attention of WLS management, and in 1932 they were invited to Chicago to join the musical staff of the Prairie Farmer Station. Desiring a less parochial name for their newest act, officials at WLS rechristened the group the Prairie Ramblers.

As part of their makeover, band members traded in the costumes of their Kentucky Ramblers days — bib overalls, chambray work shirts, red bandanas, and conservative footwear — for white shirts, white dress pants, neckties, and black and white oxfords.

The refurbished Prairie Ramblers were assigned a slot on the Saturday night Barn Dance where, according to a contemporary trade paper, they formed the backbone of the show. They were also given a regular weekday program on which they were



paired with a female vocalist named Dixie Mason, a pop artist who had previously sung with dance bands in Chicago-area night spots.

Shelby David "Tex" Atchison was born in Rosine, Kentucky, on February 5, 1912. The son of a fiddler, Tex began playing the instrument when he was eight years old. After breaking his right wrist while in high school, Tex, impatient to get on with his music, taught himself to bow the fiddle with his left hand. "That's how come I'm a left-handed fiddle player," he once said.

Before joining forces with the other Prairie Ramblers, Tex worked in a band that played both old-time country music and Dixieland jazz. His pre-WOC radio experience included work at WGBF in Evansville, Indiana. On March 6, 1934, Tex married Dolly Good, one-half of the Girls of the Golden West, a sister act that had joined the WLS roster in the spring



of 1933.

To add variety to their stage and radio shows, most early professional country music acts of the day featured a comedian.

For the Prairie Ramblers this role was filled by Floyd "Salty" Holmes. Salty was born in Glasgow, Kentucky, on March 6,

1910, and grew up in a family of musicians who sang mountain ballads and sacred songs to the accompaniment of string instruments. At the age of fourteen, Salty, bitten by the show-biz bug, ran away from home to join a stock company. Over the next several years he worked in minstrel shows, stock companies, and vaudeville acts. In addition to harmonica and guitar, Salty frequently treated audiences to tunes played on a cider jug. As part of his comedy act with the Prairie Ramblers he danced with a life-size rag doll he called Sara Nade.

Charles "Chick" Hurt, who sang baritone

PRAIRIE RAMBLERS

and tenor in addition to playing banjo, mandolin, and mandola with the Prairie Ramblers, was born May 11, 1905, at Willowshade, Kentucky.

Chick's earliest musical experiences were with his father, and they had a novel way of entertaining their neighbors. "We had a microphone in our house 'way back before radio was ever thought of,'" Chick once recalled. "That was when I was a little fella and used to play a guitar and my father was an old-time fiddler. About twenty-two families down home ... had those new-fangled telephone contraptions, and we had all four-party lines on a switchboard in our house.

"Some one of the neighbors would give us a ring on the call bell and ask Dad and me to play for them, and pretty soon all the neighbors would be listening in. We'd stand in by the telephone and play for hours."

Chick's first public performances were as a member of a trio that also included his brother and sister. Prior to formation of the Kentucky Ramblers, he performed in a jazz band and made radio appearances with a group called the Hawaiian Serenaders of

Kewanee (Illinois) on WHBF in Rock Island.

Born December 7, 1905, at Summer Shade, Kentucky, Jack Taylor, bass player, lead singer, and sometime emcee for the Prairie Ramblers, grew up on a farm. Between chores he learned to play guitar and sing the traditional folk songs of the region. Before teaming up with the Kentucky Ramblers he was heard on WHB in Kansas City, Missouri.

A year after the Prairie Ramblers joined the WLS family, a singer/fiddler/yodeler/guitar player from Arkansas by the name of Patsy Montana was hired by the station as a replacement for Dixie Mason who had been reassigned as a soloist on her own programs.

Patsy, a veteran of the west coast country/western music scene, brought to the Prairie Ramblers a western orientation that had a lasting impact on the group. They began wearing western clothes, posed for publicity photos astride rented horses, and added western songs to their previously Appalachian-dominated repertoire. As western music gained in popularity through the proliferation of singing-cowboy movies and the recordings of such groups as the Sons of the Pioneers and Bob Wills and

His Texas Playboys, the Prairie Ramblers became part of the trend, establishing themselves as the resident western act at WLS.

Throughout the 1930's the Prairie Ramblers and Patsy Montana remained one of the best-loved acts on WLS. Listener polls consid-



tently placed them on the station's list of top ten entertainers, and they frequently were voted number one.

They were the featured performers on the popular Smile-a-While program heard at 5:30 in the morning, considered prime time for early-rising midwestern farmers. They were heard again later in the day, and according to the station's public relations department, Patsy and the Ramblers provided listeners with "bright cheerful songs, lots of laughs, and sweet music." On Saturday nights at the Eight Street Theater they shared the stage and microphone with such other National Barn Dance acts as the Maple City Four, the DeZurik Sisters, the Hoosier Hot Shots, Lulu Bell and Scotty, Gracc Wilson, and the Arkansas Wood-chopper.

In addition to their radio work and extensive personal appearances with WLS touring units, the Prairie Ramblers were frequent visitors to commercial recording studios. Over the years they recorded almost 300 songs, including those on which Patsy Montana was the featured vocalist.

The songs that the Prairie Ramblers and Patsy Montana recorded were among those most requested by their radio audiences and included such favorites as "This World Is Not My Home," "Nobody's Darling But Mine," "Maple On the Hill," "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be," "Take Me Back To My Boots and Saddle," and the group's theme song, "Riding Down the Canyon." Patsy's 1935 recording of "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart" became the first million-selling record by a female country/western performer.

At their recording sessions the Prairie Ramblers usually recorded a few songs that were then considered risqué, but which today would be regarded as rather tame. These songs were released under the name The Sweet Violet Boys in order to preserve the wholesome Prairie Rambler image. The Sweet Violet Boys records were for the juke box market and home consumption and, according to Prairie Rambler Rusty Gill, the songs were never sung on the air or on stage. Patsy Montana once recalled that "The boys always made me leave the studio when they recorded their Sweet Violet songs."

Like most musical groups the Prairie Ramblers, over the years, experienced their share of personnel turnover.

For a brief period in 1936, singer/guitarist Ken Houchins replaced Salty Holmes who went to Hollywood to appear in movies. By the early 1940's Tex Atchison and Salty Holmes had left the group permanently to pursue individual careers in music. Their places were filled by a succession of other musicians that included Tommy Watson (fiddle), Alan Crockett (fiddle), Dale "Smokey" Lohman (electric guitar), Bernie Smith (electric guitar), Wade Ray (fiddle), Marge and Charlie



PRAIRIE RAMBLERS

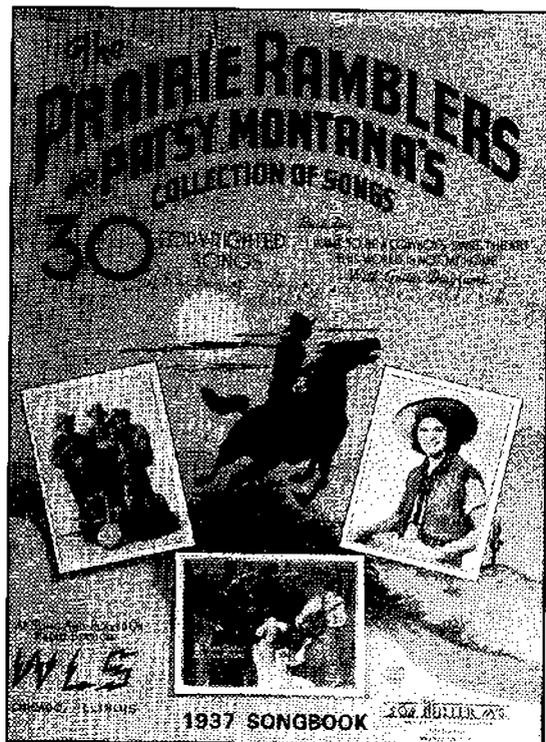
Linville (husband and wife fiddlers), and Wally Moore (fiddle). In 1942 singer/guitarist Rusty Gill, who had been at WLS since 1936, became a member of the Prairie Ramblers. Next to Chick Hurt and Jack

Taylor, he would become the long-est tenured member of the group.

Ralph "Rusty" Gill was born June 10, 1919, in St. Louis, Missouri, and grew up in Illinois. Coming from a musical family Rusty began performing professionally at the age of fourteen. He worked on several small radio stations before successfully passing an audition for a solo spot at WLS. "They put me on

the road with some of the National Barn Dance stars to get audience reaction to my act," he recalls. "I was listed on the bill as 'and others.' Lucky for me all of the reports came back in my favor. Because of the favorable response WLS gave me a shot at three Saturday night performances in a row on the National Barn Dance in the fall of 1938."

Thus began Rusty's long-lasting career at WLS which proved to be rewarding, not only professionally, but personally, as well. On September 1, 1940, he married Carolyn DeZurik, one-half of the DeZurik Sisters act that had been a WLS fixture since 1936.



Around 1950 the Prairie Ramblers, at the time consisting of Chick Hurt, Jack Taylor, Rusty Gill, and Wally Moore, left Chicago for a job in radio and television at WLW in Cincinnati, Ohio. There they received top billing on the Midwestern Hayride, a Saturday night barn dance show

carried on the NBC television network. Some two years later they took a job at WHIO-TV in Dayton, Ohio. By then Carolyn DeZurik had become a member of the Prairie Ramblers as featured female vocalist.

In 1954 the Prairie Ramblers and Carolyn DeZurik returned home to Chicago and began work at WBKB (Channel 7), the city's television outlet

for the ABC network.

They appeared daily on an early morning show called Chicago Parade. Local media coverage of the program's debut promised that the Ramblers would "offer 'wake-up' songs from their repertoire of western, popular and jazz tunes." The move to Chicago resulted in another change of costumes. "We dropped our cowboy outfits for dress jackets and string ties," recalls Rusty Gill, so as to be "a little more on the dressy side."

Local accordionist and music arranger Stan Wolowic joined the group at this time, giving the Ramblers, says Rusty, "a more

solid background sound."

The Ramblers found plenty of work in Chicago, and they were soon starring in a show called "Crazy Acres."

According to the local press, they provided viewers with "lots of music and dancing and entertainment (country style, of course)." Rusty says that Crazy Acres was a show where "We could go back to our cowboy outfits and country and western music. We increased our TV audience considerably and felt much better doing the things that we did best."

When, as one writer has put it, the revival of interest in polka music "crystallized in Chicago in the 1950's [and] swept fans and bands across

the land," the Prairie Ramblers seized the opportunity to capitalize on the trend. They added polka songs and tunes to their repertoire and began performing as Stan Wolowic and the Polka Chips with Carolyn DeZurik.

In 1960 Chick Hurt and Jack Taylor dissolved their partnership of thirty-two years during twenty-six of which they were known as the Prairie Ramblers. After the breakup Chick Hurt went into the restaurant business in Broadview, Illinois, and Jack Taylor operated a restaurant in Harvey, Illinois.

Rusty Gill and his wife, Carolyn

DeZurik, joined the cast of ABC-TV's Polka-Go-Round show where they remained until Carolyn retired two years later. Rusty continued in the music business for several more years before he, too, retired.

Chick Hurt died in 1967, and Jack Tay-

lor, along with his wife, was killed in an automobile accident in 1962.

The other two original Prairie Ramblers, Salty Holmes and Tex Atchison, survived a while longer. Salty died January 1, 1970, in Elwood, Indiana.

Tex Atchison, the last of the original group to die, passed away August 4, 1982, in Collinsville, Illinois.

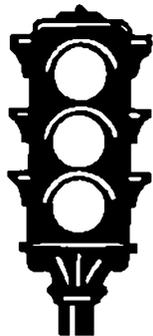
Wally Moore died at his home in Walton, Kentucky, in 1991.

Patsy Montana died at her home in San Jacinto, California, on May 3, 1996, just five months before being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Rusty and Carolyn Gill now make their home in the Chicago area where they keep in contact by telephone and letter with many of their former fans and colleagues. ■

NOTE-- Tune in to Those Were The Days Saturday, January 9 to hear the Prairie Ramblers in a 1942 broadcast of Mountain Theatre on WLS, Chicago.





LOGAN BOULEVARD

BY WAYNE KLATT

As I was growing up I thought everyone lived near Logan Boulevard, but now I know this small stretch of the Northwest Side is Chicago's best-kept secret.

Let me begin and end with the tall stained-glass windows of St. John Berchman's Church.

As a boy, I thought they were the ugliest windows any place of worship ever had. Since everyone I knew came from a blue-collar family, I assumed St. John's couldn't afford anything better. But the large, yellow brick church — now clearly visible from the outbound Kennedy Expressway — is the anchor of Logan Boulevard in more ways than one. Thousands of families might remember the church for its Masses, weddings and baptisms, but my most vivid memory is going down its snow-packed steps in a sled during the winter of 1950.

Early in this century, this was where a few wealthy families settled when Astor Street and North Lake Shore Drive were filled up. Among the residents during my time was one of the Polk brothers (of the former appliance store chain). For many years Cook County Board Commissioner Clayton F. Smith lived in a large white house we thought was a mansion, about a block from the church.

Another well-known resident was Western singer Bob Atcher. Who could forget the guitar-playing singer of the National Barn Dance? A Catholic church might

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seem an odd place to find a country star, but Atcher came in his fringed outfit for noon Mass every Sunday. He held his Stetson hat during the service and then went off to the WGN radio studio. Since I was singing in St. John's pitiful choir, all I saw of Atcher was the bald spot on his head. I still have no idea what his face looked like.

Before the CTA took over all mass transportation in the city, Logan Boulevard enjoyed its own street car. For a nickel you could board it not far from Fullerton and Western avenues, turn around at Logan Square — then a thriving business strip — and come back to where you started.

The neighborhood around the Boulevard originally was Belgian-American, but by the late 1940s it was solidly Polish, just as it became largely Hispanic in the 1950s, after my family moved.

The center of all social life for children was the small Rogers Theater, which charged twenty-five cents for adults and seventeen cents for us kids. The Rogers often offered Western double features on Saturday mornings, a horror double bill on Friday nights, and had Dish Nights every Tuesday, when it played women's movies and gave away free dishes to anyone paying an adult admission.

In former years a few of the residents just off the Boulevard could afford their own coaches. We played in abandoned coach houses and thought they were just long and narrow garages, with the remains of a living quarters in the small upstairs. The neighborhood retains a touch of Europe. At Campbell Avenue and Altgeld Street is a small Russian Orthodox Church built with funds donated by the Czar. Not far away an apartment building along the

Boulevard had a different portion of the "Hail Mary" on each step so that every time you went up or down you, in effect, were saying a prayer, a reverence one might find in French Canada.

The Boulevard was never flashy and now looks rather drab, but real estate developers know its value. In the early 1980s I joined my wife in a Logan Square neighborhood walking tour, after having been away for more than thirty years. Our tour took us to St. John Berchman's church, where fellow visitors studied in awe those tall, ugly windows that had shamed me as a symbol of working-class life. My mind dropped its jaw when our guide boasted that this was one of only two sets of stained glass windows in the city designed by Tiffany & Company.

As my wife and I were leaving the tour we looked at a small house being built a block from the church and I learned it probably would be sold for about a quarter of a million dollars.

So the affluent and the factory workers were still living half a block away from each other and sharing the same church in relative isolation in the midst of the city.

Logan Boulevard is a special place, but I had to leave it to discover the truth. ■

NOSTALGIA DIGEST AND RADIO GUIDE

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Our Readers Write

WE GET LETTERS

DE KALB, IL — Thanks for playing that Sgt. Preston show from May 10, 1955 (on *TWTD* 8-29-98) for us again. That's the show that stars Brace Beemer as Preston. You've probably forgotten, but you broadcast that show once before, back in the 1970s. At that time the station you were on (WLTD) lost power during the show and didn't get it back until the Challenge of the Yukon show was over! For more than twenty years I've been wondering how the show ended and what I would have to do to get my Klondike Land Pouch! What a relief to finally hear the complete show! — **PHIL VANDREY**

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, IL — I record your Saturday shows on VHS tape every week but usually don't get around to listening to them till several weeks later. I recently heard The Last Remote from the Aragon Ballroom, the interview with Tommy Bartlett, and the excerpt from Music Till Dawn (from *TWTD* 4-25-98). I'll tell you a few tears came trickling down after that! Also, from your Bob Hope Month shows (from *TWTD* May, 1998), I must mention how much I enjoyed Ken Alexander's "Thanks for the Memories" poem. It was excellent and I'm sure expresses how we all feel about Bob Hope. Thanks so much for such quality programming. It's hard to find these days. — **JAMES A. MAC KENZIE**

BARRINGTON, IL — Please continue to publish your outstanding *Nostalgia Digest* and *Radio Guide*. I wait for it eagerly every other month. When I get it, I devour it! It's great fun. And yes, twenty-eight years later, I still listen to your wonderful radio programs. Who said that radio died in the late '50s? — **MICHAEL A. LANGER, Ph.D.**

HUNTLEY, IL — I make it a point to be doing my Saturday afternoon projects near a radio, where I can enjoy your show. Congratulations on your 28th anniversary. The show has endured by the way it is presented. I missed your first show on May 2, 1970. I was married that day and couldn't be near a radio. My marriage seems to work as well as your show! — **PAT KRUSH** →→



MORE LETTERS

CHICAGO — While sick in bed last spring, I ran out of reading materials. To solve my problem I retrieved my stack of *Nostalgia Digests* (starting from June-July 1994) and had a grand ol' time paging through each issue and reading or rereading many of the articles. Not only is your radio program a weekly must, but your magazine helped me feel better. Thank you!

—JENNIFER HENDERSON

MIDDLETOWN, NEW JERSEY — My wife and I recently attended a party on Long Island and, by chance, we were seated with a man named Richard Singer who grew up in Brooklyn. During the afternoon, I mentioned my interest in memorabilia from old time radio programs and, as usual, the older persons at the table began to share their memories of old time radio with the other, younger listeners. I described some of the things I have collected over the past 26 years and, when I talked about my treasures from the Lone Ranger program, Mr. Singer smiled and said he had a story to tell us.

He went on to say that in the late '30s, still a very young boy, he was at home one afternoon when the doorbell rang. He ran to the door and almost fainted when he opened it to see, standing on his front porch, one of his favorite heroes, the Lone Ranger, as well as his "faithful Indian companion," Tonto. Both were in full regalia, including the Ranger's two huge, pearl-handled six shooters (loaded, no doubt, with silver bullets) and a feather protruding from the band around Tonto's head. One disappointment, however, there was no sign of the great horse Silver or Tonto's Scout. Instead the duo had arrived in a limo which, at least, was white.

The Masked Man stuck out his hand, needlessly introduced himself and his partner, and asked the startled kid, "Does your family ever use Silvercup Bread?" Richard truthfully replied that it was the only kind of bread his family ever used and, at the Lone Ranger's request, he ran to the kitchen to get the loaf of bread. For his trouble, Richard received a bag which contained twenty-five silver dollars and the

congratulations of his two western heroes.

In a moment they had left the front door, reentered the limo and were on their way, probably to another home where the scene would be repeated and another bag of "silver" offered by Silvercup Bread and the Lone Ranger. Richard couldn't remember if he heard "Hi-yo Silver!!" as they pulled away. —GIL VATTER

NORTH AUGUSTA, SOUTH CAROLINA — I'm a life-long admirer of Bing Crosby so I want to tell you how pleased I am with the article "Bing Crosby—The Radio Years [Oct-Nov '98]". John Sebert compressed a great deal of information in a short space. Congratulations for publishing this article and other Bing stories in the past.

—PETER CAKANIC JR

CRETE, IL — I am a long-time listener to the Saturday shows. Thanks for all the wonderful old and valued memories you have shared with us over the years. A few months ago you were reading all the names of the deceased during the year and you began to cry. So did I. Could a deeper tribute be paid to those who brought us so much pleasure during their lives? I don't think so. Somehow I had a feeling that Red Skelton was your favorite and that he was the hardest for you to say good-bye to. Thanks for all the old memories from radio. You have a personality that makes the whole thing work. Not every announcer could do this. —JOHN JOHNSON

DARIEN, IL — I always enjoy your positive attitude and I find your shows very informative. I am 48 years old and I have never heard all the programs that you play. I always marvel at the quality of the shows. —JOHN AGUZINO

ORLAND PARK, IL — I want to tell you how much my family and I enjoy your *Those Were The Days* program. We hope you continue your fine family entertainment for years to come. Have you thought about plans for the show once you decide (if you decide) to retire? Please tell us either you *will not* retire, or that someone is waiting in the wings. —ERIK R. KUNZ

(ED. NOTE — We have no plans to retire from *Those Were The Days*. Wings? What wings? We don't see any wings!)

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← **BING CROSBY and BARRY FITZGERALD**

are among the Hollywood actors who portrayed Roman Catholic Priests on the motion picture screen. Read Bob Kolososki's article, page 26.

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