

**HUMAN APPEAL**  
**IN**  
**BROADCAST ADVERTISING**

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**THE STORY OF CHESEBROUGH'S**  
**"REAL FOLKS"**

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**NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.**

HUMAN APPEAL  
IN  
BROADCAST ADVERTISING:  
OR,

*The Story of the REAL FOLKS of THOMPkins CORNERS.*

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Now for the First Time written down, it being a Brief but  
Intimate account of an unique N B C BROADCAST  
ADVERTISING Program;

*And VVherein* is Truthfully related the divers & fundry  
means employed to impart an unusual fense of  
REALITY to this quaint feature of the AIR,

*And how* a FITTING BACKGROUND was thus created for a  
group of Simple, Homely Requisites made by the  
CHESEBROUGH MANUFACTURING CO.,  
and which are called: "VASELINE" PRODUCTS.

*Together* with an Informal Discourse concerning the Program's  
merit as an outstanding illustration of one of the  
VARIED uses & SEVERAL purposes to which  
N B C BROADCAST ADVERTISING  
lends itself, viz: HUMAN APPEAL

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*To VVhich Are Also Added Original Cuts*

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*Imprinted at NEW YORK:*  
*for the* NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, INC.  
711 FIFTH AVENUE & also

BOSTON, WASHINGTON, CLEVELAND, CHICAGO, DENVER, SAN FRANCISCO

ANNO DOM: 1931

410-9878-2-1-30

NOTICE: Our Trade Mark Vaseline is Registered in U.S. Patent Office and throughout the World

## CHESEBROUGH MANUFACTURING CO.

(Consolidated)

Branch Offices  
London, England  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
Montreal, Canada  
Cable Address  
Vaseline New York  
All codes

No 17 STATE STREET

CLIFFORD W. McQUE, President  
ROBERT B. GILL, Vice President  
THOMAS J. DOBBINS, Secretary  
FREDERICK H. WILLIAMS, Treasurer

Address all communications to the Company

NEW YORK

October  
10  
1930

National Broadcasting Company  
711 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

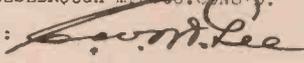
The fact that we have renewed our "Real Folks" contract for a third season, probably expresses our attitude toward radio as an advertising medium better than any published statement we might make.

When we first decided to try radio broadcasting to advertise "Vaseline" Products, it was quite frankly an experiment. While it is not possible even now to talk in terms of actual sales statistics, we do feel that this program has done a real job for the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company and its products.

Our mail proves that "Real Folks" has won us countless friends; that it has made the name "Chesebrough" more familiar and popular with the public than ever before; that it has stimulated new and lively interest in an old household product; that it has created new users and new uses for "Vaseline" Preparations.

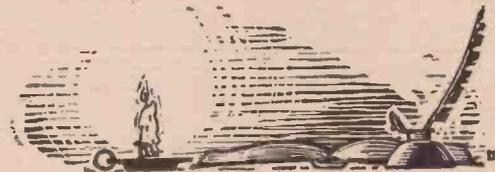
Very truly yours,

CHESEBROUGH MFG. CO. CONS'D.

By:   
President.

All Sales and Contracts are Subject to Strikes, Accidents or other causes beyond our control

"... program has done a real job for Chesebrough ..."



## CHAPTER I

*Thompkins Corners*

**T**HERE'S a stretch of mighty pretty country up in the Hudson River Valley between Poughkeepsie and Albany. If you know these parts at all, you get to thinking they are still touched with the sleepy sorcery of old Rip Van Winkle. This is old country—rich in simple traditions and old-fashioned prejudices.

The rolling green foothills here have a kind of soft, leafy plumpness about them; a staid, settled air that comes with the peace of age. Some of them slump idly and contentedly down to the river's lapping side. Peaceful, complacent things, like the first buxom Dutch wives who came here many years ago.

Since then, a lot of drowsy little villages have nestled in the shaded folds or on the rounded slopes of these hills. Others have fringed the river's edge for generations.

You get an occasional glimpse of them—some unfolded bit of their languid charm caught like a still-life between moving rifts through the trees.

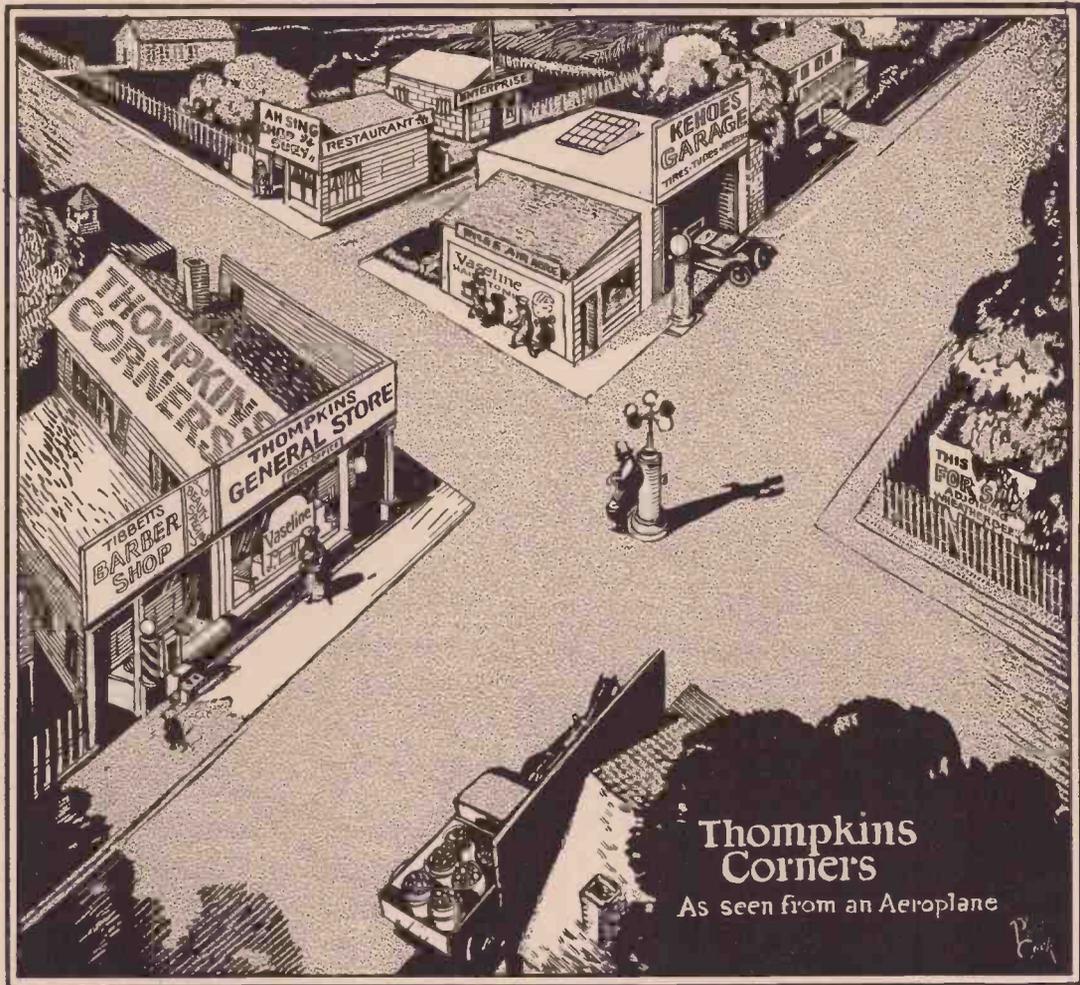
One of these little villages concerns us. Its name is Thompkins Corners. At any rate, that's what we'll call it. Whether there actually is a village here by that name or not, makes little difference. All we know is that Thompkins Corners is supposed to be up here in this neighborhood somewhere. That's the impression you get from the talk you hear over your radio. And that's why we've bothered about all the description. We're trying to get the complete picture over to

you as we have it, and as lots of others have gotten it. We'll show you why, later on.

Maybe our Thompkins Corners exists only in our minds, but even that can be mighty real at times. Anyway, we're after an idea of a genuine country town—a setting, so to speak, and here we have a real one for our purpose. That's all that matters right now.

Thompkins Corners! There's a name for you! Something definitely possessive, with a naive pride in it. Nothing vague or smart about it, like the fancy names of a lot of those new upstart "sections." Maybe some city folks who have had a smattering of "book learnin'" would call it a "hick" town, with a bit of disdainfully significant emphasis on the "hick" part. But you can't always be so sure. There's often a lot of good, honest shrewdness and frankness of purpose to be found in a place like Thompkins Corners. They have plenty of time up here to think things over. And sometimes, you can gather bits of pretty sound advice and mighty practical philosophy from their talk.

Thompkins Corners has worn well. You fancy it to be just about the same place that saw a handful of volunteers off for Bull Run and Harper's Ferry. Sometimes, on long lazy summer afternoons, it seems as if those quiet shaded streets where stately elms arch overhead, still echo the dry beat of drums and the measured shuffle of feet in a dusty road. Those were great days! There are many here who tell about them yet, as if it all happened only last week. Memories lingering



Thompkins  
Corners  
As seen from an Aeroplane

*Thompkins Corners*



ger, and time doesn't thin out in a place like this.

But we were speaking of changes. . . . New-fangled ideas don't catch on quickly in Thompkins Corners, unless they're pretty good. The older folks around here are quite satisfied with the way things have been going, and there aren't enough young ones about yet to make any real difference. Which is all right too, when you stop to think of it. Because you keep the old-fashioned charm and rural air about the place—something you can't always get so easily.

Of course, there have been a couple of changes, most of them for the better, in a way. But these have come about mainly from accidental opportunity or desired necessity.

There's the new state road, for instance; a wide cement affair that hurries through the "heart-of-the-active-business-section" of Thompkins Corners, on its way to Albany. You get a pretty good idea of this part of the town from the airplane picture we've put in here. Some photograph company came up from New York one afternoon, two years ago this July. They gave the "Enterprise," the local newspaper here, a copy which was printed in an early edition. They also gave us permission to reprint it, so you could get a better idea of Thompkins Corners. You can make out the different places very well, too. There's Matt Thompkins' store on the corner, next to Fred Tibbett's barber shop. And across the way to

the right is Kehoe's garage. Then there's the new traffic light, a wonder for mechanical performance, and down the street a bit is Ah Sing Wong's Chop Suey Parlor, Thompkins Corners' new "Chinatown," as Mrs. Templeton Jones calls it.

You can't see any of the "residential" section in this picture. It's too bad, too, because that part of the village is pretty fine. Most of the roads are tree-lined on both sides, bordered by shaded unpaved walks. The restful old frame "mansions" and quaint colonial homesteads still stand back behind hedgerows and white-washed fences. The colorful disorder of old-fashioned gardens spreads out around their doorsteps.

The U. S. Postmaster General asked Matt Thompkins to paint the name of the village on the roof of his store, so air mail pilots could tell what place they were going over.

Speaking of another change . . . It seems Bill Perkins, the station-master, has taken on an important air lately. The main lines of one of the large railroads skirt the village limits. Now, it's the town's boast that the road has lately seen fit to stop both a morning and an evening local train at Thompkins Corners. As Mrs. Templeton Jones put it: "Thompkins Corners is 'arriving'! It was a subtle recognition on the part of the railroad, of Thompkins Corners' increasing importance as a point of interest. Cultural contacts with more metropolitan influences and tastes are thereby further enhanced." We guess that's all right, too!



*The Rival Music Groups of Thompkins Corners*



## CHAPTER II

*The Real Folks of Thompkins Corners*

IF you don't happen to know it, Mrs. Templeton Jones is the "arbiter elegantiarum"—if you please—around this town. She's the final authority on polite usage and cultural things—when there's a need for them—besides being social editor for the "Enterprise." She comes by these gifts naturally because she's the wealthiest widow in town, lives in the best house with "all conveniences and modern improvements," and has traveled "extensively."

And since we've started talking about the folks here, you might just as well know the rest of them.

There are about four hundred and seventeen of us all told. They're all pretty real folks, too. Most everybody hereabouts knows about everybody else. Mrs. Stevens always saw to that! But now it's her official job since she's been made news reporter for the "Enterprise."

Matt Thompkins is about the leading citizen and nearly the whole works in Thompkins Corners. He's the Mayor, and has been—for nine terms! In fact, he's the only "official" mayor the village ever had. Besides having a hand in most of the civic activities, he is Editor of the "Thompkins Corners Enterprise," leads the town band, runs the general store, and is the Postmaster. Matt finds time to handle all the jobs to everybody's satisfaction. Great scout!

Martha Thompkins is Matt's "better half." She has something to say too, most

times. But she's all right. She means well!

Then there's Charlie Kehoe. He runs the garage on the state road. Charlie found the transition from horse shoes to Ford parts "all to the good."

Judge Whipple metes out justice now and then around the town, mostly to traffic violators, and once in a while, a tramp.

Mrs. Watts keeps the local boarding house—transients accommodated. Grandpa and Grandma Overbrook are the "oldest inhabitants." They always remember when . . .

Fred Tibbett has the barber shop. He calls it his "Tonsorial Parlor." He's the "beautician" in this town—for the women-folks, particularly!

Elmer Thompkins is Matt's young nephew. Matt's been like a father to the boy. Sneed is Elmer's buddy. Between the two of them, they keep things stepping around here. Good boys, just the same.

Gus Oleson, Tony, and Ah Sing Wong make up the "foreign element." Mrs. Templeton Jones says they "lend a continental touch." Maybe so. Anyway, they're all right.

These are most all the folks you're likely to meet up with here. You'll come across them at band rehearsals, (that band—you can't miss it!) church festivals, amateur theatricals, town celebrations, social gatherings, and at Matt's store. There's always something doing in the way of social activities. Great place—Thompkins Corners!

## CHAPTER III

*What Thompkins Corners and Its Real Folks Mean*

NOW that we've taken up considerable time and space in trying to give you a picture of Thompkins Corners and some of its real folks, we guess you're wondering what it's all about, and how come?

Well, we promised further back to tell you why. So here's the whole story in a nutshell—just as we got it.

Up to about two years ago, Thompkins Corners was what you might call "unheralded and unsung"—just one of those little villages we told you about up in this valley. You certainly couldn't say it was well-known. The folks here just went along easy and quiet-like, leading clean, simple, modest lives. Nothing very exciting about it all. None of us men-folks had ever gotten very far in the way of politics or science and such things—outside the county. On the other hand, you'd see lots of smart fellows in other places bringing fame or notoriety overnight to their home towns, through different stunts they had done—like flying across oceans, and becoming Presidents, and so on.

All in all, Thompkins Corners was just a typical American village—and still is, for that matter. Many of you folks can look back to kid days in a small town just like it. Anyway, the real folks of Thompkins Corners never thought for a minute their old home town would become famous simply because it *was*—just typical.

But that's just what happened! And Thompkins Corners and its real folks came into a kind of glory all their own.

For being just natural, Thompkins Corners was picked out as the scene or background, as you might say, for an N B C Broadcast Advertising campaign put on by the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company, sole makers of those well-known "Vaseline" Products. That's how it all came about.

Now, we'll go back to the National Broadcasting Company's place, and let the folks back there tell you the rest of the story in their own way.

## CHAPTER IV

*An NBC Broadcast Advertising Program*

THE program is called: "The Real Folks of Thompkins Corners." Through a series of dramatized incidents that follow in sequence and divulge the intimate lives of

these quaint homely people—their rustic romances and tiny tragedies, their small talk and local gossip, and their innocent pleasures—the enthusiastic interest of nearly half the nation

nation has been focused on the doings in Thompkins Corners.

This program is real! It touches analogous sympathies, drawing an almost universal response from all classes in sophisticated cities and rural villages alike. Its characterizations are genuine and understandable. It recreates the naive simplicity of a life whose fundamentals are very near to many of us, and whose bucolic charm is brought into our own lives with an almost graphic delineation—through sound alone!

The "Real Folks of Thompkins Corners" are at once, a living reality and a superb illusion. As you hear them, you find it difficult to believe that these people are merely imaginative personalities; fanciful characters given life and interpretation through a realistic continuity and the dramatic portrayal of actors who speak their roles.

You are not conscious of "listening in" on this program. You "overhear" it! with the half-guilty feeling of being an eavesdropper. For the "Real Folks" never seem to be aware of your silent presence. They never speak to you directly. They go about their business with an unsuspecting innocence that tends to heighten the sense of

reality. You find yourself right in their midst!

Throughout this clever indirect dialogue, mention of some use for "Vaseline" Products is adroitly introduced at the most natural moments. So subtly is this done, that you are never offended. Nor are you ever piqued by the thought that an ingenuous attempt has been made to "sell" you while off your guard.

The "Real Folks" themselves are the bearers of the advertiser's message. For example, Matt will tell how he spreads a little "Vaseline" Jelly over his face before shaving. Or Martha will advise Elmer to put some "Vaseline" on that sore toe of his.

From time to time, and in the course of their conversation, other members of the cast suggest new and unusual uses for "Vaseline" Preparations. But always, these references result naturally from the emergencies that arise among the "Real Folks" themselves, and which are likely to come up in the average home anywhere, any time.

In this way, the advertising message is given credence and force through indirect suggestions. The only direct reference to "Vaseline" Products is limited to the closing announcement.

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## CHAPTER V

### *The "Thompkins Corners Enterprise"*

THE merchandising of the "Real Folks" program is unmistakably touched with a fitting and facetious kind of genius.

One of the clever, appropriate means em-

ployed to facilitate a direct mail follow-up deserves more than a passing comment. Aside from subsequently proving effective and eminently conclusive in the valuable re-  
results

**THOMPKINS' CORNERS**  
**Enterprise**

VOL. I, NO. 1      THOMPKINS CORNERS—U. S. A.      DECEMBER 3, 1928

**Circulation Statement**

The Enterprise has a larger circulation than any other newspaper within a radius of ten miles.

**MOTTO**

"Wish Makers  
Toward None  
and Charity  
for All"

**Newspaperdom has new ally in Thompkins Corners**

EXTRA SPECIAL LAST MINUTE NEWS!  
**OIL STRIKE!**

MILL RUN CREEK PROVES BONANZA IN DISGUISE!  
 On verge of going to press, Enterprise lands biggest "scoop" of years. Oil gusher discovered in Mill Run Creek! Proprietary tremendous Oil Rush for Thompkins Corners. More news ahead.

**FROM RAGS TO RICHES**

"Still Waters Run Deep" Nets \$29,35 for Orphan Infant.



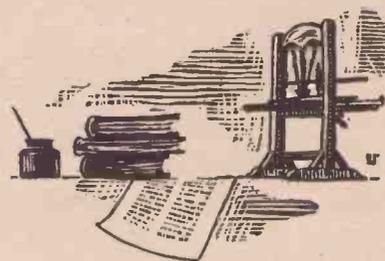
**RAPID URBANIZATION OF THOMPKINS CORNERS**



**Do Your Shopping Early**

As each firm in Thompkins Corners...

*The Editorial Voice of Thompkins Corners*



sults obtained, what other merchandising tie-in could have been more in keeping with the spirit of this delightful presentation or have further heightened its realism than a typical country newspaper which was offered to the radio audience for the asking?

Created for the occasion, and issued now and then, you could hardly imagine a more faithful replica of a real small-town weekly in the traditional manner. A glance at a copy of the first issue pictured here, should convince you of its authentic rendering.

This issue, dated December 3, 1928, was printed on regular news stock, and set up in Caslon—where in doubt—and the old familiar Cheltenham, condensed or otherwise. The four page "sheet" bore the auspicious legend: "Thompkins Corners Enterprise" across the top of the front page. The last word of the title was proclaimed and accented with a proud flourish of "Old English." Editorial policy was succinctly expressed as part of the standing head, in the boxed motto: "With Malice Toward None and Charity for All." In the opposite upper left-hand corner, another box contained the rather qualified statement: "The Enterprise has a larger city circulation than any other metropolitan paper within a radius of ten (10) miles." [A.B.C., *please copy!*]

The editorial contents were suggestive of a genuine village paper. Characteristic local news was augmented by abbreviated syndicate items of the outside world. Coarse-screen halftones of prominent figures among the "Real Folks" and mats of display advertising were scattered in unaesthetic disarray throughout the reading matter. The display ads were, for the most part, regular ads for "Vaseline" Products, running on national

schedule in actual publications. On this count alone, the "Enterprise" represented preferred-position, hand-picked circulation of current "Vaseline" product-advertising.

There were the usual social notes, legal and sales notices, classified ads, a Lost and Found column, and domestic hints—which, of course, suggested among other things, new and varied uses for "Vaseline" Preparations. The whole paper was cleverly written in a veiled, pseudo-serious vein, imparting a dry subtle humor.

It was a splendid job—even to the typographical errors! Others must have thought so too, for no less than twenty thousand requests for this particular edition were received. Among these were counted many from prominent advertising men, editors and printers.

The next issue appeared under date of March 4, 1929. The radio receivers of the nation were tuned in on that day to the inauguration of President Hoover. Consequently, the "Real Folks" program that same night was appropriately built around the inauguration of Matt Thompkins as Mayor of Thompkins Corners—for the ninth successive time! The entire program was a portrayal of the attendant ceremonies. At the close, a special "election edition" of the "Enterprise" was announced and distributed. Pictures and incidents in the life of the popular Mayor occupied the front page, after the fashion of most political campaigns.

On July 1, 1929, a special "ladies edition" was published, devoted almost entirely to the women folks of Thompkins Corners, and ostensibly gotten up by them. It was incidentally used to announce the "signing off" of the program for an eight weeks vacation.

This



This was plausibly indicated with headline announcements and news items about the vacation plans of different members of the "Real Folks."

The fourth and last issue to date was a "surprise edition," published by the boys, Sneed and Elmer, on January 27, 1930. Mrs. Templeton Jones secretly lent her erudition and financial backing to the venture. The planning and ultimate accomplishment of

this edition by the boys formed the theme of the program broadcast that night. Nearly a quarter of a million listeners wrote for this edition!

These periodic issues of the "Thompkins Corners Enterprise" have proved to be merchandising tie-ins that served a two-fold purpose. The conclusions drawn from the results obtained are considered in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Other Merchandising Tie-ins*

AN early attempt (before the advent of the "Enterprise") to obtain a definite listener reaction to the "Real Folks" programs, was the offer of a picture of the cast—the "Real Folks" themselves!

Here again, an amiable genius seemed to lend a hand toward an unusually appropriate treatment of a rather conventional practice in the way of a merchandising tie-in. For human interest was aroused, and attention was cleverly directed to this offer through a realistic gesture that bears a brief retelling.

A particular program was devoted entirely to the amusing incident of a group photograph of the "Real Folks," taken at the home of Mrs. Templeton Jones. A photographer was brought from Poughkeepsie especially for the occasion.

You can well imagine the giggling and squirming that went on; the shifting to more advantageous positions or flattering poses, and the last minute adjustments to

dress and expression that harrassed the photographer. And finally, the tenseness just before the flash, and the resulting disorder of relief that ensued. It was a grand evening! At the close of the program, the announcement was made, offering a copy of the photograph to any member of the radio audience making the request. More than 10,000 listeners could not contain their curiosity, and wrote for copies of the picture which had caused all the fuss in Mrs. Jones' drawing room.

The "Real Folks" program has been further merchandised through display ads in newspapers and magazines. The copy, in these instances, has been written around the broadcast feature, giving the ads an added "news" interest of real value. Members of the "Real Folks" cast have been pictured "off stage," with their personal comments concerning the varied merits of "Vaseline" Preparations. It has been a pleasing and unusual form of "testimonial" advertising,  
 serving

## On the Air Next Monday Night



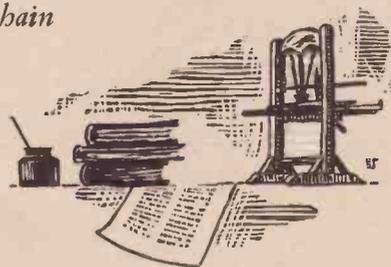
(Left) MATT THOMPKINS, MAYOR OF THE VILLAGE AND PROPRIETOR OF THE GENERAL STORE, THE SCENE OF "REAL FOLKS" SKETCHES. AT THE RIGHT, AUNT MARTHY THOMPKINS, WHO SHARES HONORS WITH MATT.

These "real folks" and their doings are known by ear to the millions of radio listeners who tune in every Monday night on the "Real Folks" program sponsored by the Chesebrough Mfg. Co., Cons'd. makers of famous "Vaseline" Preparations. To the left above is Matt Thompkins, mayor of the village and proprietor of the general store, the scene of "Real Folks" sketches. At the right, Aunt Marthy Thompkins, who shares honors with Matt.

9:40 P. M. Eastern Standard Time:  
 WJZ, New York • WBZA, Boston • WRZ, Springfield • WHAM, Rochester • KDKA, Pittsburgh • WJR, Detroit • WLV, Cincinnati • CKLW, Toronto

8:40 P. M. Central Standard Time:  
 KYW, Chicago • KWK, St. Louis • WRIN, Kansas City  
 NBC NETWORK

*The "Real Folks" Cast — A Store Display Prepared  
At The Request of A Leading Drug Chain*



-serving the dual role of product advertising and broadcast tie-in.

For a time, Chesebrough issued no display matter, yet the programs themselves fired the imagination of dealers, to the extent that they made up their own tie-in displays. There were instances where dealers went so far as to cut out pictures from the "Enterprise" for such use. Then a nationally known chain of drug stores voluntarily requested two hundred and fifty window displays featuring "Real Folks," for use in their stores. This resulted in 14,000 of these same displays being placed in drug stores throughout the territory covered by Chesebrough's NBC network.

The Sibley, Lindsay & Curr Company, one of the leading department stores in Rochester, New York, recently devoted an entire corner-window display to "Real Folks," pictures of which are shown here. Not only did this progressive store adequately dramatize the program, and visualize Matt's store as you would imagine it to be, but it voluntarily gave an added sales impetus to the active good-will created by the "Real Folks." The letter from this store's Display Manager is self-explanatory, and incidentally, would seem to substantiate the thought submitted in a later chapter—that an NBC Broadcast Advertising program such as "Real Folks," can create a definite mental picture entirely through the medium of the ear.

Another mailing piece used as tie-in material by the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company, took the form of a private mailing card, bearing on one side, a photograph of Matt Thompkins. On the reverse side, in the space, "For Correspondence only," a message to the radio audience from Matt Thompkins read:

*Howdy Folks:*

*Please to meet you! One of the summer folks snapped this photo of me in the store. Martha's nose is out of joint 'cause she ain't in it, but she jest called out from the kitchen and said, "Send 'em my love." Hope you'll be with us Monday nite. Stop by the store enny time you're passin' and we'll swap yarns.*

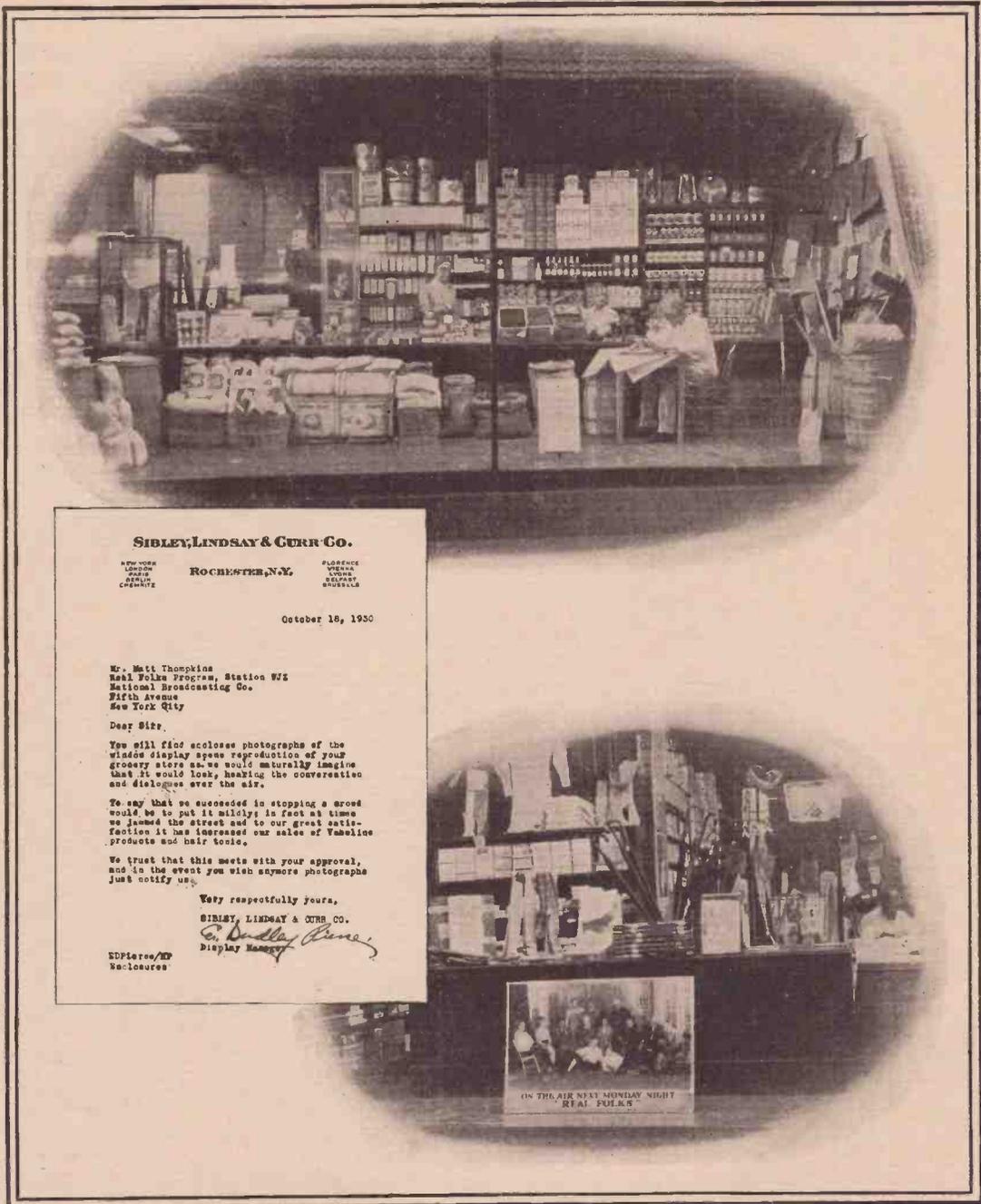
*Sin*

MATT THOMPKINS

For the purpose of mailing such tie-in material as pictures of the cast and editions of the "Enterprise" that were at various times offered on the air, Chesebrough was fortunate in locating a real Thompkins Corners—a little town just north of Peekskill in Putnam county, New York. On one occasion, the rural post office in this real Thompkins Corners was actually the medium through which this tie-in material reached the listening public. In fact, its use was abandoned only when it was found quite impractical—merely to secure an appropriate post mark—to send such large quantities of mail through a post office accustomed to serving a population of only four hundred and seventeen!

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CHAPTER



**SIBLEY, LINDSAY & CURR CO.**

NEW YORK  
LONDON  
PARIS  
BERLIN  
CHICAGO

ROCHESTER, N.Y.

FLORENCE  
VIENNA  
LONDON  
BRUSSELS

October 18, 1930

Mr. Matt Thompson  
Real Folks Program, Station WJZ  
National Broadcasting Co.  
Fifth Avenue  
New York City

Dear Sirs,

You will find enclosed photographs of the window display space reproduction of your grocery store as we would naturally imagine that it would look, hearing the conversation and dialogue over the air.

To say that we succeeded in stopping a crowd would be to put it mildly; in fact at times we jammed the street and to our great satisfaction it has increased our sales of Vaseline products and hair tonic.

We trust that this meets with your approval, and in the event you wish anymore photographs just notify us.

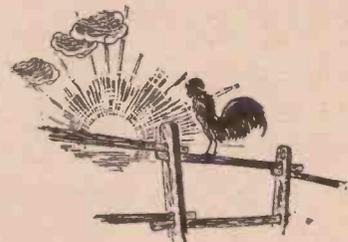
Very respectfully yours,

SIBLEY, LINDSAY & CURR CO.

*C. Dudley Bunn*  
Display Manager

EP:rcm/MP  
No-enclosures

"... window display... jammed the street and... increased our sales of 'Vaseline'..."



## CHAPTER VII

*Interpreting an Advertised Product*

"VASELINE" is more than a registered trade-mark name. Like Kodak and Uneda, it has become a descriptive term, synonymous with a distinct type of product. You are unlikely to associate it with anything else, whether it be in the form of "white Vaseline" or "yellow Vaseline," "Vaseline" Camphor Ice, "Vaseline" Eucalyptol Jelly or "Vaseline" Borated Jelly.

It is known to millions in the same way. There are few of us who have not used "Vaseline," and fewer who have not heard of it. It has practically become a "staple" preparation.

The sale of "Vaseline" is limited to no class, sex, age, season or territory. Its many and varied uses have secured for it an almost general acceptance in an enormously broad market. "Vaseline" is a universal product if ever there was one!

There is nothing "smart" or "elegant" about "Vaseline" Products. They are not scented specialties, but simple, inexpensive and highly effective preparations within the reach of everyone. "Vaseline" has been a good old-fashioned standby in most homes for generations. It is used by the entire family for innumerable everyday needs. It meets a hundred and one requirements, from that of a first aid in case of emergency, to that of a simple toilet and beauty preparation. Today, "Vaseline" may still be found with more costly and exclusive toilet requisites on the shelves of many homes.

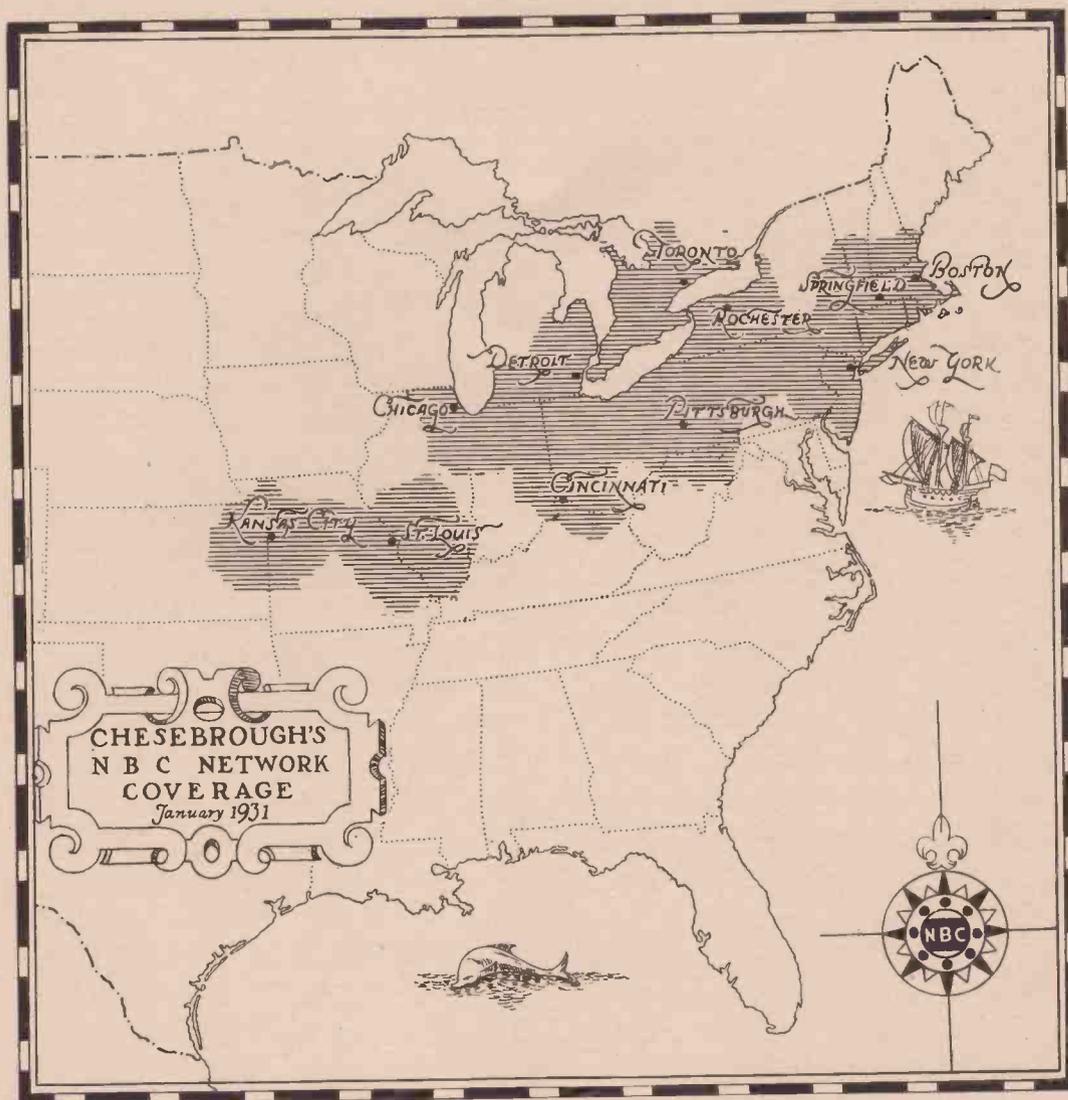
Back in 1928, when the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company decided to supple-

ment their printed advertising with an NBC Broadcast Advertising campaign, it was generally conceded that sales and distribution were about as substantial and extensive as might be desired. There were few, if any, markets remaining untapped. A steady, level sales curve over a period of years seemed to indicate that a "retentive" stage had been reached.

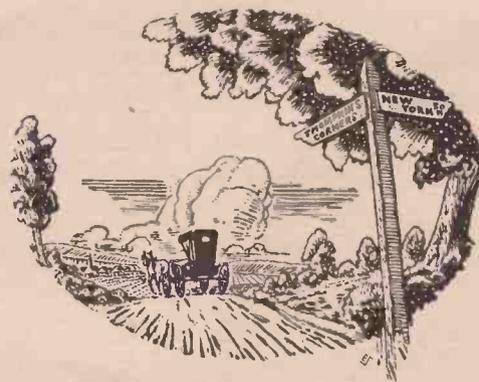
Yet, the progressive astute heads of the Chesebrough organization sensed the possibility of still more juice in the sales orange. They were not content to rest on static sales laurels and a taken-for-granted distribution. They saw an added opportunity in NBC Broadcast Advertising to educate old users—through entertainment—to new uses for "Vaseline" Preparations"; to create a valuable good will association around the products, and to familiarize consumers with the name of Chesebrough in a definite tie-up with "Vaseline." This last was particularly desirable, since the name of the makers was not so well known.

The Chesebrough Manufacturing Company further recognized in NBC Broadcast Advertising, a modern advertising and sales promotional medium with a broad national appeal, active good will value, and flexible possibilities which were admirably suited to their purposes.

Here was a medium of direct word-of-mouth contact, capable of individually addressing—"in person"—consumers of every class throughout a whole nation. By its very nature, the radio had become, even at that time,



"Thompkins Corners, U. S. A."



time, an acceptable adjunct in the lives of millions, and was exerting a powerful influence upon their buying habits. As a free agent of pure diversion alone, Broadcast Advertising was doing a real selling job for a number of NBC clients manufacturing commodities sold through channels similar to "Vaseline" Products.

As we have already intimated in early chapters of this story, the question of how to use NBC Broadcast Advertising to best advantage was cleverly answered, in this instance, by the conception of a broadcast presentation that has since created a fitting background of homely associations for "Vaseline" Products. It has imparted a quaint, simple personality to them, much in keeping with their plain old-fashioned effectiveness. In what more appropriate "atmosphere" could "Vaseline" Products have been introduced? The wide range of responses to the program's rustic charm would seem to indicate that it has successfully reached its mark and accomplished its purposes. An analysis of these responses is made in the next chapter.

The Chesebrough Manufacturing Company contracted to sponsor a thirty-nine

week period of broadcasting which began Monday evening, August 6, 1928, over WJZ and ten associated stations of the National Broadcasting Company. The stations, in the cities represented through this network, reach an estimated audience of over five millions.

After careful consideration, it was agreed that Monday evening was an "at home" night for most folks. The period from 9:30 to 10:00 P. M. was selected as being most suitable for everyone, since few retire before this time, even on a night at home.

We might state freely that Chesebrough's initial contract for NBC Broadcast Advertising was something of an experiment. It was their first venture with this new medium. However, the thirty-nine week period ended all too soon. In view of the gratifying results obtained, an additional period of eight weeks was contracted. Even then, a special "final" broadcast was added later. But before "signing off" for the summer, they signed up for a new fifty-two week contract, to begin September 2, 1929. At this writing, (January 1931) the "Real Folks" are still going strong under a third new contract for fifty-two weeks more!

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## C H A P T E R VIII

### *Testing the "Real Folks" Program*

AN analysis of mail responses to the "Real Folks" program has conclusively shown, among other things, that an NBC Broadcast Advertising campaign is

cumulative in its effect. It will react favorably to the principle of repetition.

McCann - Erickson, Inc., advertising agents for Chesebrough, subjected the "Real Folks"

Folks" program to several tests in order to gauge the feature's reception by the radio audience. The agency's findings were published later in a brochure on Broadcast Advertising. We have taken the liberty to quote the following analysis from its pages:

"The growth of listener interest over a period of time was clearly demonstrated in the case of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company. This client went on the air on August 6, 1928. During the first weeks of the broadcast, only a few hundred sporadic letters came in from the audience.

"On September 24th, eight weeks after the series had started, we made an offer [*group photo of cast*] to the audience to test its interest in the program. This offer brought in over 10,000 replies." [*During the concluding week of September and the month of October, 10,198 letters were sent to the NBC Audience Mail Department alone. A large percentage of these letters mentioned the interest of other members of the family in the photo. This fact pointed to a much greater potential audience than the actual replies indicated.*]

"Ten weeks later, on December 4th, we made a second offer [*first issue of the 'Enterprise'*] to see if listener interest was being retained. This time, the number of replies was almost double the first number." [*No less than 20,000 letters were received, 15,257 of which were addressed 'care of NBC.'*]

"We waited four months, and then on March 4, 1929, tested the audience a third time. [*'Election Edition' of 'Enterprise'*] In response, over 55,000 letters came in during the next few weeks." [*43,755 of these requests were addressed 'care of NBC.' Many asked to become regular 'subscribers' to the 'Enterprise.'*]

"In view of the prevailing opinion that audience interest wanes, and radio recep-

tion is poor during the summer months, we made a fourth offer [*special 'Ladies Edition' of the 'Enterprise'*] to our audience on July 1, 1929. As a result, over 90,000 letters were received—an unprecedented response to a commercial program." [*72,038 of these requests came through the Audience Mail Department of NBC.*]

"Early in 1930—six months later, we made a fifth offer [*'Surprise Edition' of the 'Enterprise'*] to the public. The response to this offer totaled close to a quarter of a million letters! [*250,000 replies to a single announcement!*] This offer brought letters from people who had been listening regularly since the first broadcast eighteen months before, and others who had only just discovered the program a few weeks previous. In a year and a half after the program went on the air, it was still gathering new members of the listening audience."

These various, inexpensive offers to the radio audience not only served as clever merchandising tie-ins and good will interest holders, but as valuable controls in testing the program's effectiveness.

There is a gratifying tendency in current broadcast advertising practice not to overestimate the significance of "applause" letters. However, you might consider the fact that Chesebrough's several offers had no "money value" or practical use. We may reasonably assume that the requests were prompted by a sentimental association and a genuine interest in an enjoyable program. This tremendous mail response was undoubtedly an expression of an appreciative audience.

Commensurate with the increase in the number of letters received, has been the spread in the broad geographical area they represent.

represent. Although only eleven stations have been used, mail has been received from forty-seven states. Replies have come from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in Canada, and as far south as Cuba and Honduras.

The analysis of returns has disclosed a remarkably low cost per inquiry, comparing very favorably indeed with that of other media.

The character of the letters received indicates a high order of intelligence among the "Real Folks" audience. Postmarks show that over fifty percent live in large cities and towns. The replies from men approximately balance those from women—an unusual fact, since Chesebrough's advertising in the past has been directed, as a matter of course, to women.

Quoting again from the agency's monograph on Broadcast Advertising:

"This program has not only gained many new users for 'Vaseline,' but it has extended its uses among old users. It has made millions of good friends for the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company. The characters which it has built up are so real to the audience, and so closely identified with 'Vaseline,' that the product itself has assumed a very real personality. The program has familiarized the public

with the Chesebrough name too, which incidentally, is a difficult one.

"In the first batch of fan mail, only 3.5% of the letters mentioned the sponsor's name, and at that, most of them spelled it wrongly. In the last collection, we estimate that 75% of the letters specifically referred to the sponsor by name, and what's more, in the majority of cases, spelled it correctly."

And again:

"... sales figures showed a substantial increase at the end of the first year after Radio was added to supplement their other advertising media. A large percentage of letters ... stated that the client's products were being used as a direct result of the Radio program. Dealers also wrote that they have noticed an increase in the sales of these products, which they attribute to the company's Broadcast Advertising."

Ten percent of all the druggists in the territory covered by Chesebrough's NBC-WJZ Network over which "Real Folks" is broadcast, wrote voluntary letters commending the broadcast as a sales force.

This program, which started out as an experiment in a new advertising medium, has more than justified itself in positive results. The conclusions to be drawn are obvious.

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## C H A P T E R IX

### *A Further Consideration*

CAN NBC Broadcast Advertising, which is still definitely an auditory medium, conjure a visual sense of reality as effec-

tively as the printed page? Can an image be produced as graphically and as readily in the imagination of a listener as in that of

NEW YORK  
CLEVELAND  
CHICAGO  
DENVER  
SAN FRANCISCO  
LOS ANGELES  
SEATTLE  
MONTREAL  
TORONTO  
WINNIPEG  
VANCOUVER  
LONDON  
PARIS  
FRANKFORT

MCCANN · ERICKSON  
INCORPORATED  
*Advertising*  
285 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

January 9th, 1931.

National Broadcasting Co., Inc.,  
711 Fifth Avenue,  
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen: -

It is not easy to segregate the sales effect of any one advertising medium where a number of mediums are being used concurrently, as in the case of the advertising of the Chesebrough Manufacturing Company for their "Vaseline" Preparations. Nor is it easy to trace specific sales of a product which is already universally used and is distributed through the jobbing trade to a wide variety and number of outlets.

Nevertheless, the Chesebrough "Real Folks" radio program has now passed its 118th weekly performance; the doings of "Real Folks" are a topic of conversation wherever you go; through the program half a million people (these are the letter-writing fans) have learned the name and address of the maker; salesmen and dealers have reported a run on the stores after certain broadcasts; prominent stores have gone to great expense and trouble to build "Real Folks" displays for "Vaseline" Products; orders for goods have come in the mail from dealers after certain broadcasts; above all, a gratifying number of consumers have expressed their thanks and appreciation for the advertising messages -- the hints on how to use the products and for what -- which are contained in the broadcasts.

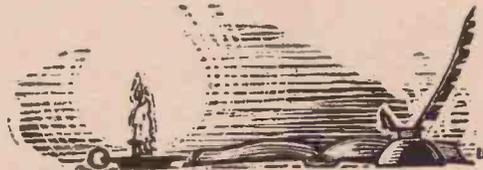
Show me a better record from any advertising medium.

Very truly yours,  
McCANN - ERICKSON, Inc.

By *Dorothy Barstow*

D. Barstow:BB

"... Show me a better record from any advertising medium."



of a reader? Can an NBC Broadcast Advertising program reach the emotional soft spots of the listening audience and galvanize them into an appreciative and enthusiastic response? What has the "Real Folks of Thompkins Corners" program to do with these questions? How do these plain, simple folk present a striking demonstration of the new "radio psychology," and in so doing, further illustrate another one of the flexible possibilities of NBC Broadcast Advertising? Let us consider these questions.

The fact is often significantly stressed that Broadcast Advertising is *only* an auditory medium—that it reaches the ear instead of the eye. The subtle implication suggested is that this qualification is a limitation at times. But is it?

Exponents of the printed page rightfully contend that type and pictures, which must obviously be seen, construct a graphic image that is carried, as such, through the eye to the brain. There the impression registers and reacts upon the emotional centers. These honest champions frequently neglect to mention, however, that this mental process involves a certain amount of concentration, time and effort, no matter how small.

Because of its very nature, a broadcast program such as "Real Folks," requires little conscious effort, either mental or physical on the part of the listener, in order to interpret its message. Moreover, psychologists assure us that no sensory stimulus reaches the brain quicker nor with swifter registry, than sound. That is why commanders still bellow their orders, orators and spellbinders still hold and sway listeners, and music is still a universal language. The printed report of a speech always lacks the

vitality of the actual delivery. The word-of-mouth contact has a forceful conviction all its own.

Even though the printed page is a more lasting record, to be referred to again and again if need be, it can offer no better assurance of being remembered and acted upon than the ephemeral broadcast advertisement. Both are subject to the capacities of the individual minds of readers or listeners. As a matter of fact, the broadcast advertisement has the added attractive advantage of rewarding the listener for his attention, since most programs are either pure entertainment or instructive diversion.

NBC Broadcast Advertising, like thought and sound itself, is abstract in form, but it has definitely become a medium of forceful personality, capable of touching the imagination of the listener and transmitting to his mind a visual sense of reality and delineation. Through new refinements in continuity and dialogue, and the clever inference of effects associated with the specific locale or situation projected by a program, an NBC Broadcast presentation can create, entirely with sound, a graphic realism and a complementary emotional setting that always includes the listener. We might pardonably term this illusion a demonstration of the new "psychology" of radio.

Not only does the "Real Folks" program strikingly illustrate this thought, but to one who has heard the feature, it is an excellent example of the intimate personality of an NBC Broadcast Advertising program.

Hear the "Real Folks" program yourself; visit Thompkins Corners, mingle with the "Real Folks" in person, and share their lives—without leaving your armchair!

CHAPTER