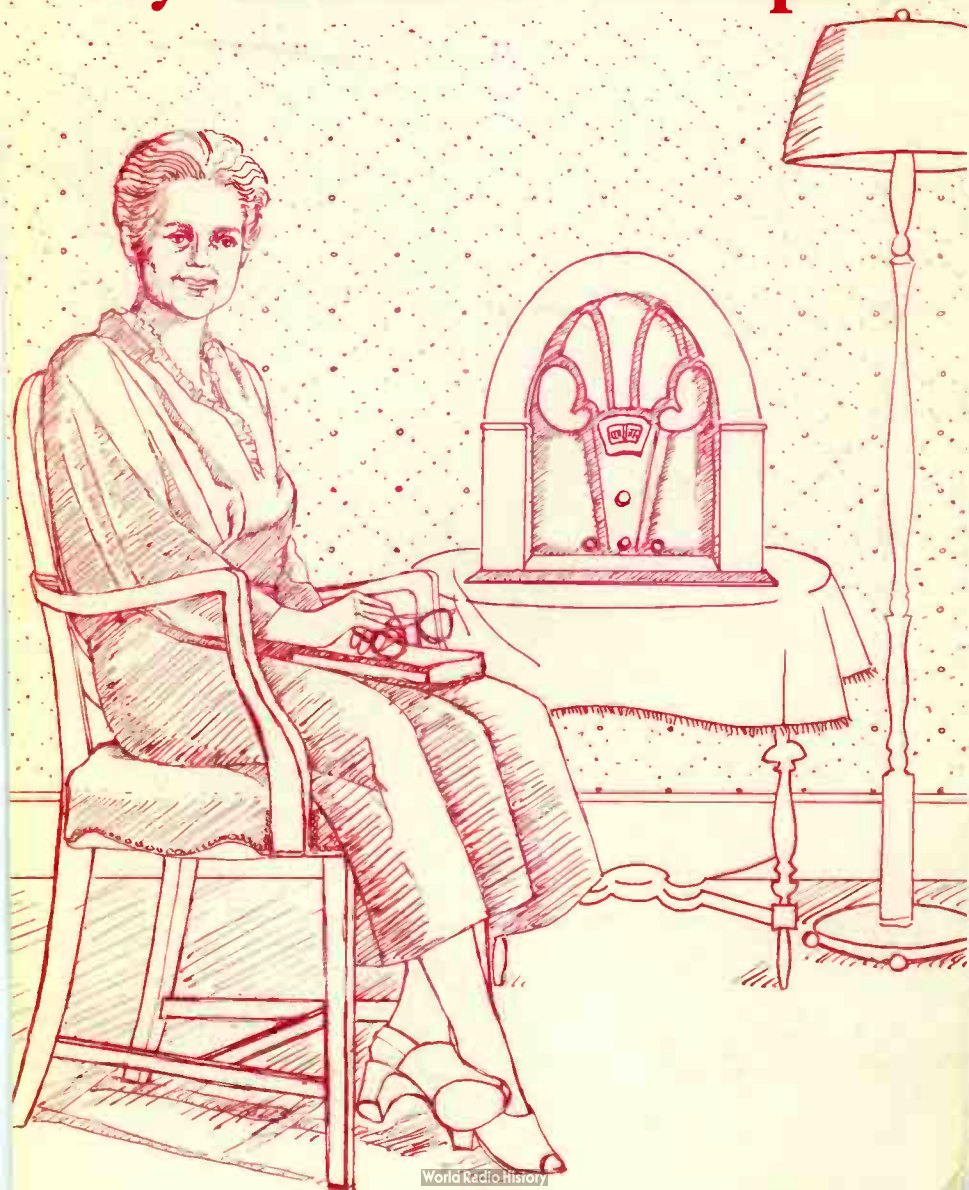
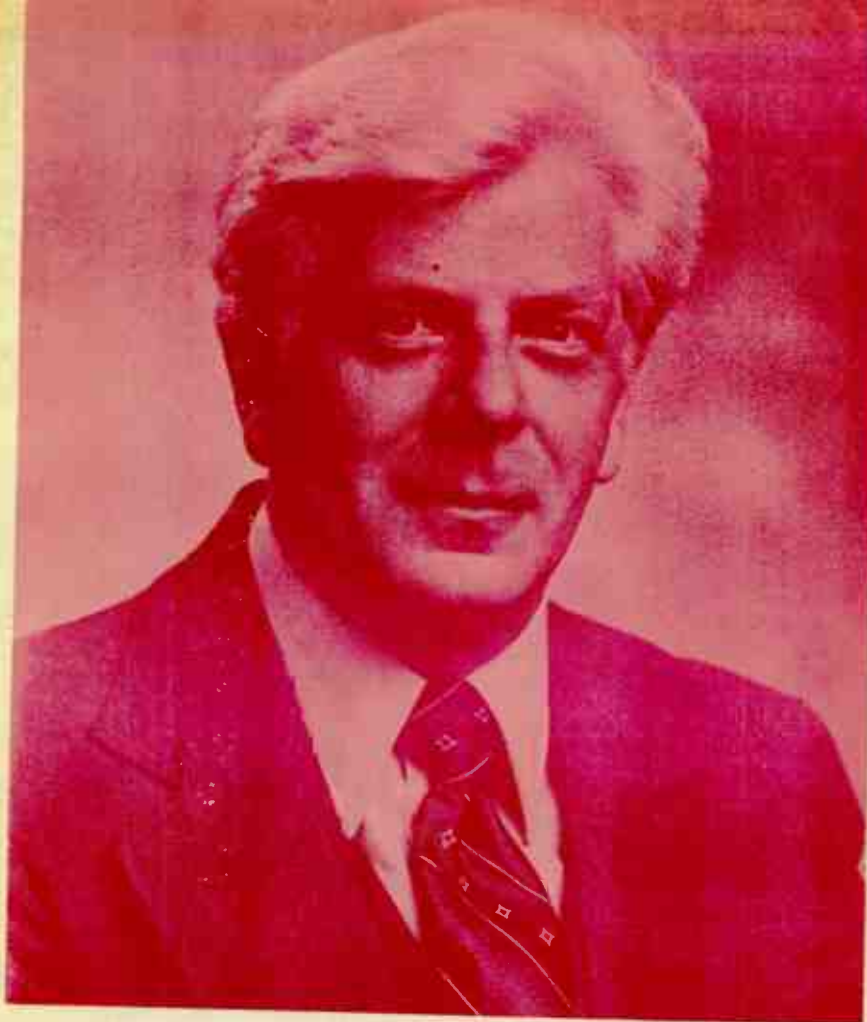


MA PERKINS, LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE AND HEIGH YO, SILVER!

by Charles K. Stumpf





Charles K. Stumpf is no stranger to the world of entertainment. He is an accomplished actor who has been seen in hundreds of theatre productions across the country. His television credits include **Misterogers Neighborhood** and he also plying the leading role in **The Butler Did It** on HBO. In the syndicated radio series **Willow Crossing** he is heard as kindly 'Sheriff Ed Hobbs.' Stumpf has written dozens of feature articles on old time radio for nostalgia publications. He has also authored two additional books on old time radio: **From Static to Stereo** and **Heavenly Days - the story of Fibber McGee and Molly**, both forthcoming from WOY Publications in the near future. He is the recipient of the 1981 Allen Rockford Memorial Award, presented by the Friends of Old Time Radio.

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**MA PERKINS,
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE
AND HEIGH YO, SILVER!**

Charles
H. Stamp



Virginia Payne in character make-up for her starring role as **Ma Perkins**. Miss Payne was able to employ just right amount of tremolo in her versatile voice to convince listeners at home that she was the pious old pussy-cat, she portrayed.

**MA PERKINS,
LITTLE ORPHAN
ANNIE AND HEIGH
YO, SILVER!**

by

Charles K. Stumpf

**The World of Yesterday
Route 3, Box 263-H
Waynesville, NC 28786**

Dedicated to all of the men and women
of the broadcasting industry, whose
voices shall echo eternally through
the expansive ether.
Thanks for many hours of listening
pleasure.

All photographs used in this book
are from the collection of the author,
Charles K. Stumpf.

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**MA PERKINS,
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE
AND HEIGH YO, SILVER!**



Crooner RUDY VALLEE began the first major network variety hour for NBC on October 24, 1929. Vallee introduced many new talents to the airwaves. In 1940 famed actor John Barrymore became a regular member of the Vallee show.

THIS IS STATION W-C-K-S BROADCASTING *LIVE* . . .

Among the most cherished Christmas gifts I ever received was a "Radio Sound Effects Kit" which Santa brought me when I was nine or ten. After being unpacked and assembled the kit consisted of a cardboard table, on which were mounted three musical chimes. (I adopted the call letters WCKS, the latter three being my own initials.) There was a miniature mallet for striking the chimes; a small hinged wooden flap which made realistic sounds of a door opening and being closed; a block of wood with four spikes protruding, which when drawn across a piece of glass gave a genuine "squeaking door" effect; a heavy balloon filled with buckshot, which when shaken vigorously was supposed to sound like thunder (or so the instruction booklet said); a small bagfull of rice (uncooked), which when poured into a metal pie pan simulated falling rain; a wooden whistle for train whistle effects (the most realistic sounding and by far my favorite—I tried to work it into all of my "broadcasts"); two metal castors which were attached to a small bar—when this contraption was rotated on a section of fluted metal it gave the "clickety clickety click" sound of a train's wheels.

There was another whistle for "bird calls;" this one was made of metal, shaped like a bird and painted blue (of course). It had to be slightly filled with water to achieve the proper trilling effect. There was also a gadget that "MOO-ed" like a cow (a very small cow, that is) and a metal cricket (the kind we use to have at Halloween) and two halves of what looked like a hard-rubber tennis ball. When these were clapped against one's thighs—or wherever—it gave the sound effect of hoof-beats.



Irene Wicker, THE SINGING LADY, was first heard nationally on NBC on January 11, 1932. She sang songs and told stories for children. In addition to narrating the stories, she played all the roles as well. Both male and female. Sponsored by Kellogg's cereals.

Also packed inside the kit was a wire bristle brush and several other strange objects whose use the instruction booklet failed to mention, so I used them to whatever advantage opportunity presented.

Along with the kit came a set of "Real Radio Scripts" for use in home broadcasts. These leaned heavily on sound effects but were very lean on plot. A sample went like this:

JACK: Hello, Jane.

JANE: Oh, hello, Jack.

JACK: Listen. (SOUND: BIRD CALL)

Is that a bird I hear?

JANE: (SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE at a distance)

It sounds more like a train to me, Jack.

JACK: (SOUND: TRAIN WHISTLE nearer) You're right, Jane. It *is* a train!

JANE: (SOUND: THUNDER) Oh, dear. That sounds like thunder.

JACK: Yes, Jane and it's starting to rain.

(SOUND: RAIN FALLING more THUNDER)

JANE: I better get on my horse and go on home. Good-bye, Jack. (SOUND: HOOF BEATS—build and fade)

JACK: Good-bye Jane! (SOUND: COW MOOING) Come along, Bossy. I better put you in the barn.

(SOUNDS: COW MOOS — THUNDER — RAIN — COWBELL TINKLES — THUNDER RAIN — fade)

I promptly threw the scripts away and proceeded to write some of my own. Being an aspiring young actor, I played most of the parts, often holding a four-way conversation with myself. My best vocal characterization I called "the old timer" I used him as the central character for all of my scripts.

One of my favorite games whenever I had a captive audi-



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE began as an on-the-air serial on April 6, 1931. The role was played for most of its run through 1943 by Shirley Bell. The sponsor, of course, was Ovaltine chocolate flavored drink.

ence was to do a "remote (wireless) broadcast" from the garage to the front porch. This was accomplished by running a garden hose out of the garage window, around the house and up onto the porch. By inserting large funnels into both open ends of the hose, I had a "mike" on one end and a "loud speaker" on the other.

After some experimentation I found my "live dramas" did not hold up very well over the hose hook-up on WCKS—so I resorted to broadcasting programs of recorded music. Thus I became a dee-jay that sounded very much like the old timer. I played musical requests for the listeners out there "in front porch land" I occasionally interrupted the music for a commercial announcement. One day I interrupted a musical request one time too often and was rewarded with a generous spurt of water—right through my microphone! (I had forgotten about the water faucet near the front porch steps) Dee-jays please take note.

My birthdate went down in history books—"Black Tuesday," October 29, 1929—the day the stock market collapsed. I shared this same birthday with two special favorites of mine, Fanny Brice and Bela Lugosi (which perhaps accounts for my disposition—a cross between Baby Snooks and Dracula).

My mother's timing was perfect. It brought me into the world just in time for the golden age of radio. I was weaned by MA PERKINS; toilet trained by JUST PLAIN BILL; learned to talk to the dulcet tones of STELLA DALLAS; cut my first teeth on THE ROMANCE OF HELEN TRENT; and took my first steps towards the old high-legged Victor radio and MY GAL SUNDAY.



Soprano JESSICA DRAGONETTE dubbed "Queen of the Airways" once drew 66 million listeners each week. In early days she was heard as 'Vivian, the Coca Cola Girl.' She was also remembered for her programs of light opera.

II

SAGA OF THE SUDS

What is a soap opera? Possibly James Thurber came up with the best answer in a series of articles which appeared in the *New Yorker* magazine, entitled "Soapland," in which he defined it thusly: "A soap opera is a kind of a sandwich, whose recipe is simple enough, although it took years to compound. Between thick slices of advertising, spread twelve minutes of dialogue, add predicament, villainy, and female suffering in equal measure. Throw in a dash of nobility. Sprinkle with tears. Season with organ music. Cover with a rich announcer sauce and serve five times a week . . ." Max Wylie dubbed the daily dramas "Washday Weepers" in an article in *Harper's*, November, 1942.

Before we begin our trek through the hallowed Halls of Reminiscence, let's first recall some of the people responsible for bringing us the sudsy sagas.

The "Sol Hurok" of soap opera was Frank Hummert. Along with his wife Anne, he was the first big-time packager of serials. The pair bought as much as \$9 million worth of air time annually during the 30's. These prodigious purveyors of daily dramas had as many as twenty different shows going on the air in the same week. The busy (and wealthy) pair produced such perennial favorites as **THE ROMANCE OF HELEN TRENT** (for 27 years), **JUST PLAIN BILL** (25 years), **STELLA DALLAS**, **OUR GAL SUNDAY**, **AMANDA OF HONEYMOON HILL**, **BACKSTAGE WIFE**, **JOHN'S OTHER WIFE** and many more. Hummert died at the age of 79 on March 12, 1966.

One of radio's most prolific writers was Miss Elaine Car-



DON McNEILL began his **BREAKFAST CLUB** show on June 23, 1933. The show dispensed folksy humor. Among the cast regulars were Fran Allison as 'Aunt Fanny', Sam Cowling, Patsy Lee, Nancy Martin and Jack Owens.

rington who is remembered as "the woman who originated soap opera." She wrote more than 12,000 scripts for the anguished daily dramas. Her career began in 1932 when she went to work for NBC. In 1935 she created a serial entitled RED ADAMS. When the Beech-Nut Gum Co. decided to sponsor the show the title was changed to RED DAVIS, in order not to conflict with a rival gum company. The series starred a young actor named Burgess Meredith. Betty Wragge was heard as his sister, Peggy and Marion Barney was his mother. After a while the title was again changed. This time around it was called FOREVER YOUNG. Yet another title change made it PEPPER YOUNG'S FAMILY Mason Adams took over the role of Pepper while Miss Wragge continued as Peggy. Once when she was in a Broadway production, her role was written out of the script for nearly two years until she was able to return.

Miss Carrington was a native New Yorker. At one time she wrote the continuing scripts for three different serials, each airing five times weekly—or more than 38,000 words a week. To accomplish this staggering feat she took to her bed and dictated into a machine. One of her most popular shows was WHEN A GIRL MARRIES (the tender, human story of young married love, dedicated daily to everyone who had ever been in love). Another of her shows was ROSEMARY, which debuted in 1944.

Miss Carrington died at the age of 66 on May 4, 1958.

Another of radio's busiest script writers was Irna Phillips. She began her career as an actress-writer in 1930 and was heard playing three different roles on TODAY'S CHILDREN (Katherine Norton, Kay Crane and Mother Morgan). She was also heard on BRIGHTER DAY.

Among her most popular series were: TODAY'S CHILDREN, ROAD TO LIFE, THE GUIDING LIGHT, THE RIGHT TO HAPPINESS, YOUNG DR. MALONE, THE BRIGHTER DAY, WOMAN IN WHITE and LONELY WOMEN.

For television soap opera viewers she penned AS THE



Lovely Barbara Jo Allen once starred on dramatic programs but after the versatile actress introduced her zany character 'VERA VAGUE', she was forever after typecast as a comedienne. She had a long time association with Bob Hope.

WORLD TURNS and for the 1967 TV season she wrote the daily serialization of **LOVE IS A MANY SPLENDORED THING**.

One of the first continuing dramas heard on the air was **THE STOLEN HUSBAND** produced by the Hummerts in 1931. It was based on a newspaper serial of the same title by Robert Hardy Andrews, who in later years contributed much of his writings to radio.

For the first few broadcasts of **THE STOLEN HUSBAND**, all of the roles were played by one actor. The strain proved to be too much for the poor fellow and he collapsed at the microphone. For the next daily episode, a full cast was assembled. Included among the players were Jim and Marian Jordan, later known to listeners as **FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY**. The Jordans had been involved in broadcasting back as far as 1925 in a series called **THE SMITH FAMILY**.

On September 19, 1932 a group of actors huddled around the microphone in CBS Studio No. 5 in New York City. After Hal Brown had played a few strains of "Polly Wolly Doodle" on his guitar and harmonica, the actors began their dialogue. Another opera was born—**JUST PLAIN BILL**.

Just plain Bill Davidson was the story of a barber in the small town of Hartville. Arthur Hughes was starred. His lovely daughter Nancy was played by Ruth Russell and later by Toni Darnay. Her husband, Kerry Donovan was played by James Meighan. The voice for their tiny son, Wiki, was supplied by actresses Madeleine Pierce or Sarah Fussell. The show's closing theme music was "Darling Nellie Gray." It left the air in October, 1955.

(THE RISE OF) THE GOLDBERGS debuted on November 20, 1929. The show helped to cheer the nation during the depression years. It was the story of an average Jewish family who lived on Tremont Avenue in the Bronx. Gertrude Berg not only wrote the scripts but was starred as Molly as well. She called "Yoo Hoo, is anybody?" out of her tenement window. Her husband, Jake was played at times by James Waters, Philip Loeb and Robert H. Harris. Daughter Rosalie



LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL, a continuing 'soap opera', was "an inspiring message of faith drawn from life." Members of the cast included John Holbrook, Alice Reinheart ("Chichi"), Ron Rawson, Oliver Barber and Ralph Locke (Papa David Solomon). The show was commonly known as "LCBB" and "Elsie Beebee."

by Roslyn Silber and later, Arlene McQuade. Larry Robinson was heard as son, Sammy. Yiddish comedy favorite Menasha Skulnik created the role of lovable Uncle David in 1929 and continued in the role for 19 years with four years out for war service.

Initially the program was heard only once weekly. After the first four broadcasts Mrs. Berg missed a show because of a sore throat and 11,000 listeners wrote in demanding her return. Sponsorship followed and the program gained ten million loyal fans. It remained on the air until 1950.

Mrs. Berg authored and starred in a Broadway show about the Goldbergs entitled *Me and Molly*. It enjoyed a two year run; the radio show was not heard during the run of the play. A television series was started on January 17, 1949, and there was also a motion picture about the Goldbergs in 1951 simply titled *Molly*.

At one time the famous singer, Mme. Ernestine Schumann-Heink asked Mrs. Berg if she could appear on the show. The gracious author wrote in a special part for her and the singer made three appearances on the program.

In addition to the Goldbergs, Mrs. Berg also wrote two other radio serials, KATE HOPKINS and HOUSE OF GLASS. She was heard on the latter as Bessie Glass in 1935. Mrs. Berg died at the age of sixty six on September 14, 1966.

MYRT AND MARGE was a serial about backstage life. It began on November 2, 1931. Myrt was a chorus girl in *Hayfield's Pleasures*, a show appearing in a little New York theater. When Marge Arnold, a country-kissed and dewy-eyed sixteen-year-old joined the chorus, older and wiser Myrt took the girl under her protective wing. Myrt was played by Myrtle Vail and Marge by her real life daughter, Donna Damerel Fick. The public was unaware of the relationship until Miss Fick died on February 15, 1941. Listeners sympathized and actress Helen Mack took over the role.

As the story line developed Myrt married the show's producer, wealthy Francis Hayfield (played by Karl Way and later by Ed Begley). When Hayfield died she inherited



JUST PLAIN BILL was played by Broadway veteran Arthur Hughes who was first heard on the air on **The Collier Hour** in 1929.

the theater and stepped out of the chorus to become a full fledged star. She promptly elevated Marge to the same status. Eventually they left the theater to venture to Hollywood. Later Marge married a handsome young District Attorney, Jack Arnold (played by Vinton Hayworth) and they had a child, Midge. When the D.A. met an untimely death at the hands of gangsters, trusty old Myrt was there to see that Marge held up bravely.

Sometime later Marge was hoodwinked into a second marriage to a ne'er-do-well named Clinton Merrill (much against Myrt's good advice). When Merrill was murdered, suspicion fell on the much put-upon Marge, and it was only through the loyal efforts of Myrt, Clarence Tiffinguffer, a costume designer (played by Ray Hedge); and a talkative newspaper columnist Bill Boyle (Arthur Elmer) that Marge was finally cleared.

At another point in the plot, Myrt became blind—but trusty Marge was there to give her a helping hand (for a change). The show's musical signature theme was aptly "Poor Butterfly."

In 1935 the stars of Myrt and Marge toured the country in vaudeville appearances. They also appeared in a feature length motion picture based on the serial.

SALLY OF THE TALKIES was the continuing story of a young Iowa girl trying to make good in motion pictures. The show's pretty blonde star was Marjorie Hannon who was heard as Sally Madison.

PAINTED DREAMS evolved from an earlier serial titled SUE AND IRENE which starred Irna Phillips and Ireene Wicker. Miss Phillips wrote the first scripts for the show and appeared in three roles including kindly old Mother Monahan. The writing chores were later taken over by Bess Flynn and Kay Chase. Miss Flynn was also heard for a time as Mother Monahan, as was Constance Crowder. Others in the cast were Alice Hill as Alice Stuart; Sarajane Wells as Melody Collier; Frank Dane as Bill Riley and young Dick Holland as Karl Becker. Little Mary Killen was heard as Lynn. The show was



Genial announcer **HARRY VON ZELL** had long time association with comedians Burns and Allen, and Eddie Cantor, as well as many other shows. He once introduced President Hoover as "Hoobert Heever."

produced by Frank Hummert and its musical theme was "I'm Yours."

Paul Rhymer came up with the idea for a serial about "the couple who lived in the little house, halfway up the next block" VIC AND SADE. The show made its debut from Chicago on June 29, 1932. Vic Gook was played by Art Van Harvey and his better half Sade by Bernardine Flynn. Their son, Rush was portrayed at times by young actors David Whitehouse, Billy Idelson and Sid Koss. The kooky Gooks had many friends they often talked about, but who were never heard on the air, such as Ruthie Stembottom, Jake Gumpox, Smelly Clark, Blue-Tooth Johnson, Mr. Buller, Ishigan Fishigan of Sishigan, Michigan and the identical twins Robert and Slobbert Hink. One character who did appear was Uncle Fletcher, played by Clarence Hartzell. His favorite hangout was the Bright Kentucky Hotel. The show's musical theme was "Chanson Bohemienne."

The "mother" of all soap opera, MA PERKINS (Oxydol's own), first aired from Cincinnati on December 4, 1933. Speaking for Ma in 7,065 daily episodes was actress Virginia Payne. Although she was a lovely young blonde actress when she began the role, Miss Payne was able to employ just the right amount of tremolo in her versatile voice to convince listeners at home that she was the pious old pussy cat she portrayed.

Ma's son-in-law Willy Fitz was played by Murray Forbes, and her partner in the Rushville Center Lumber Yard, Shuffle Shober, was played by Charles Egelston. Kay Campbell was daughter Evie. Another daughter, Faye, was played at times by Rita Ascot, Marjorie Hannan, Cheer Brentson and Margaret Draper.

The program was created by Robert Hardy Andrews and was written by Orrin Tovrov, Lester Huntley and Natalie Johnson. It was heard for the last time November 25, 1960.

For many years AUNT JENNY told her REAL LIFE STORIES about the folks in fictional "Littleton, U.S.A." Edith Spencer was the first actress to be heard as lovable Aunt Jenny. In later years Agnes Young took over the role.



Harry Einstein gained radio fame as 'Parkyakarkus.' The comedian spoke in a thick Greek accent. He made his network debut with Eddie Cantor in 1932. In 1945 he had his own show, **Meet Me at Parky's**.

The program debuted on January 18, 1937. Announcer Danny Seymour always had time to stop and chat. Henry Boyd did the chirping for Aunt Jenny's canary "Dicky," while organist Elsie Thompson played the musical theme, "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms."

REAL STORIES FROM REAL LIFE debuted in July, 1944, and was heard five times weekly, originating from New York. Each episode was complete in itself with a central character telling a tale in a series of flashbacks.

ROSES AND DRUMS was a serial about Civil War days heard over NBC in 1935. Featured in the cast were DeWolf Hopper, Elizabeth Love, Helen Kimm, Helen Claire and real-life sisters Margaret and Patricia Minnigerode.

STELLA DALLAS, a "three-handkerchief weeper" was first heard on October 25, 1937 with Anne Elstner starred as the perennially self-sacrificing mother. Her daughter Laurel (Lolly baby) was played by both Joy Hathaway and Vivian Smolen. The announcers for the program were Jimmy Wallington and Frank Gallop. The program opened with: "We give you now, Stella Dallas, a continuation on the air, of the true-to-life story of mother love and sacrifice, in which Stella Dallas saw her own beloved daughter Laurel marry into wealth and society, and realizing the differences in their tastes and worlds, went out of Laurel's life. These episodes in the later life of Stella Dallas are based on the famous novel of that name by Olive Higgins Prouty, and are written by Frank and Anne Hummert . . ."

Seamy Stella worked as a seamstress in a little shop on Beacon Street. Lolly's socialite husband, Dick Grosvenor, was played by Macdonald Carey, Spencer Bentley, George Lambert, Jim Backus and Michael Fitzmaurice. Stella had a confidante in the person of Minnie Grady played by Grace Valentine. Her pal Ed Munn (played by Arthur Vinton) was also from the wrong side of the tracks.

Self-sacrificing Stella tried not to meddle in Lolly's life but she kept finding herself involved in strange situations. Like the time a fake Sheik (Rahshed, who was impersonating



Chorus girl Portland Hoffman became Mrs. Fred Allen in 1928. Four years later she was his squeaky-voiced co-star on the radio. She got her unusual first name from the city in which she was born — Portland, Oregon.

his twin brother, Sheik Ahmead) stole an Egyptian mummy from the home of the very wealthy and equally snobbish Mrs. Grosvenor (Lolly's mother-in-law no less). Stella nearly went to jail before the mystery was solved.

On another occasion Lolly was abducted by another bad sheik and Stella came to her rescue in a submarine. The show's musical theme was aptly titled: "How Can I Leave You?"

Prior to appearing in the role of Stella, Miss Elstner had been heard as the heroine "Crackers" on MOONSHINE AND HONEYSUCKLE. She was also heard as Martha Booth on TROUBLE HOUSE. The actress is now retired and as Mrs. John Mathews she operates a restaurant at Lambertsville, New Jersey.

Other mothers of the air waves were Margaret Hillias who had the starring role in the serial MANHATTAN MOTHER. The title role of Kay Fairchild in STEP MOTHER was played at times by Sunda Love, Janet Logan and Charlotte Manson. The show asked the question: "Can a stepmother successfully raise another woman's children?"

DOC BARCLAY'S DAUGHTERS starred Bennett Kilpack with Elizabeth Reller, Mildred Rollin and Vivian Smolen as the siblings Connie, Mimi and Marge.

ARNOLD GRIMM'S DAUGHTER found an actor named Don Merrifield playing Mr. Grimm (a Merri-field playing grim?). His daughter Constance was played at times by Margarete Shanna, Betty Lou Gerson and Luise Barclay.

Another popular daily drama of the 30's was TODAY'S CHILDREN written by Irna Phillips who was also heard in no less than three roles on the show. Ireene Wicker was starred as Eileen Moran while Helen Kane (the Boop Boop a Doop girl) was heard as Kathryn Carter. The story concerned the German-born Schultz family who came to America to live. Mama, Papa and daughter Bertha were played by Virginia Payne (also heard as Ma Perkins) Murray Forbes (Willie Fitz on the same show) and Patricia Dunlap. The show's theme was "Aphrodite."



Fred Allen and the regulars of 'Allen's Alley': Kenny Delmar as Senator Claghor, Minerva Pious as Mrs. Nussbaum, Peter Donald as Ajax Cassidy and Parker Fennelly as Titus Moody.

BACHELOR'S CHILDREN was written by Bess Flynn. It was considered to be the most representative script on the way of life of an average American family. In 1941 it received the Movie-Radio Guide Award as radio's best daytime serial.

Central character Dr. Bob Graham was played by Hugh Studebaker for the show's duration except during a three month illness when Art Kohl took over. Ruth Ann Graham was played by Marjorie Hannan and Laurette Filbrandt. Alice Goodkin was heard as Dottie and also supplied the coos and cries for the infant twins. John Hodiak was heard as Davie Lane and also played the role of an ex-convict named Dorch. Olan Soule and Patricia Dunlap were featured as Sam and Janet Ryder. The show's theme was "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life."

ONE MAN'S FAMILY was the first serial to originate from San Francisco. It first went out over several west coast stations on Friday, April 29, 1932. A few weeks later it joined the NBC western network—and went on the national NBC network on May 17, 1933. It was broadcast for half an hour once each week through June 4, 1950 when it began a daily, Monday through Friday, fifteen minute program.

The story of the prolific Barbour family was headed by father Henry Barbour. (J. Anthony Smythe played the role for all of the show's twenty-seven-year run. He died at the age of 80 on March 20, 1966.) Mother Fanny Barbour was played through July, 1955, by Minetta Allen and then by Mary Adams till the end of the series. It is rumored that the actors portraying the senior Barbours did not get along very well and therefore were seldom heard in scenes together on the air.

In the regular series the roles of their numerous offspring was changed many times. Those best remembered in the roles of sons "Paul" (Michael Raffetto, Russell Thorson took over the role in 1955) "Clifford" was played by Barton Yarborough and "Jack" by Page Gilman. Bernice Berwin was daughter Hazel and Kathleen Wilson was Claudia. There was even a third generation of Barbours. The first grand-child was



Alan Reed, a familiar voice in radio, was heard on early Fred Allen broadcasts as the 'poet of Allen's Alley — Falstaff Openshaw.'

"Penny" played by Anne Whitfield for fourteen years. In 1936 Ann Shelley and Richard Svihus were heard as little Joan and Pinkie.

The program was created and written by Carlton E. Morse and dedicated to "the mothers and fathers of the younger generation and their bewildering offspring." The original theme music (1932-41) was titled "Destiny Waltz," and later a new theme, "Patricia," was adopted. The show was the longest running serial drama in American radio history and was heard for the last time on May 8, 1959 (Chapter 30 of Book No. 134).

THE OLD HOMESTEAD was heard on NBC, Mon.-Wed.-Fri. at 5:45 p.m. in 1937. It was the radio adaptation of the famous American play of the '90s by Denman Thompson. Edith Spencer was heard as Aunt Tildy and Thomas Coffin Cook as Joshua.

HOME SWEET HOME was "the dramatic struggle of Fred and Lucy Kent and their son for a home sweet home of their own." The program featured Cecil Secrest and Harriet MacGibbon as the Kents, with Billy Halop as their son Dick.

GRANDMA TRAVELS starred Hazel Dopheide. The program was sponsored by Sears, Roebuck and Co.

MARIE, THE LITTLE FRENCH PRINCESS was the first daytime soap opera to be broadcast nationally. It told the tale of a princess who ran away from her homeland in order to become a commoner. Ruth Yorke was starred and James Meighan was heard as her romantic interest, Richard.

BACKSTAGE WIFE was "the story of an Iowa stenographer who married a Broadway matinee idol, Larry Nobel." Mary Noble, truly the noblest of wives, was played by Lucy Gilman, Vivian Fridell and Claire Niessen. Miss Niessen, the last of the "Mary Nobles" died of cancer in 1965. Matinee idol Larry was played by Ken Griffin, James Meighan and Guy Sorel. Ethel Owen was heard as Lady Clara, Larry's socialite mother. The show's theme was "The Rose of Tralee."

DAN HARDING'S WIFE was heard over NBC in 1936 starring Isabel Randolph as Rhoda Harding, a widow. (There



FRED ALLEN began his long radio career on the **Linit Bath Club Revue** over CBS on October 23, 1932. Two years later, he launched his famous **Town Hall Tonight** broadcasts, which lasted until 1949.

was no Dan Harding in the cast.) It was the story of a woman's struggle to guide the lives of her two teenage offspring (Donna and Dean, played by Loretta Poynton and Merrill Fugit).

Miss Randolph began her radio career in Chicago in 1932. She will be remembered for her characterization of the snob-bish Mrs. Uppington on the FIBER MCGEE & MOLLY show. She was also heard as Grace Ferguson on NBC's WELCOME VALLEY.

JOHN'S OTHER WIFE was written by Bill Sweets and produced by the Hummerts. It was the story of John Perry, owner of a store. The "other wife" referred to in the title was his pretty secretary. The original John was actor Hanley Stafford but he was dropped from the role on the grounds that he was unable to project a "fatherly image." Oddly enough he later became known as radio's famous long-suffering "Daddy" to Fanny Brice's Baby Snooks. Other actors who followed him as John were Matt Crowley, Luis Van Rooten, Richard Kollmar, William Post, Jr. and Joseph Curtin.

Elizabeth Perry was played by Adele Ronson and Erin O'Brien-Moore. The theme music was "The Sweetest Story Ever Told" which was sung and whistled by Stanley Davis, whilst he strummed his guitar.

THE SECOND MRS. BURTON featured Claire Niessen, Patsy Campbell and Teri Keane as Terry, the second Mrs. Burton. While the first Mrs. Burton was played by Evelyn Varden and Ethel Owen. The first Mrs. Burton was in reality, the second Mrs. Burton's mother-in-law! Poor Dwight Weist had to stand all the confusion as Stan Burton.

YOUNG WIDDER BROWN was played by Florence Freeman. Ellen Brown, widowed mother of two young children, Janie and Mark, (played by Marilyn Erskine and Tommy Donnelly) ran a tea room in Simpsonville. Romantic interest was supplied in large doses by Dr. Anthony Loring (Ned Wever), an intern at the local hospital. The series debuted in 1937. Its musical theme was "In the Gloaming" and George Ansbros was the announcer.



Eddie Cantor began his own weekly radio series for NBC on September 13, 1931. He is seen here with his young singing protege, Deanna Durbin.

Along about 1954 Dr. Loring was tricked into a marriage with vampish Millicent. Poor broken-hearted Ellen drowned her sorrow in tea and then went out and got herself engaged to Michael Forsythe. It was actions such as these that set the tongue of local gossip Maria Hawkins awagging. The rumor-spreading Maria was played at times by Agnes Young, (also heard on her own daily show as kindly old Aunt Jenny) Lorene Scott and Alice Yourman.

The "town gossip" was a favorite type of character in several serials. In fact some of them had their own series.

CLARA, LU & EM was the story of three gossips. The program ran as both a Monday through Friday daytime serial and was also heard as an evening show over NBC beginning June 26, 1936. Louise Starkey played Clara, Isabel Carothers was heard as the flippant widow, Lu, and Helen King made up the third member of the talkative trio, as Em. The roles were later taken over by Fran Harris, Dorothy Day and Harriet Allyn. Ted Fio Rito and his orchestra supplied the musical background for the chatter. Another show of similar format was JUST NEIGHBORS (originally titled The Three Flats). It featured another trio of catty chatters: Betty Caine, Helen Behmiller and Cathryn Card.

Other favorite radio gossips have been Fran Allison as AUNT FANNY on the Breakfast Club; COUSIN MINNIE PEARL (real name Sarah Ophelia Colley Cannon) with her news from Grinder's Switch heard on The Grand Ole Opry.

NBC debuted a new serial on January 4, 1937 entitled FOLLOW THE MOON. It featured Elsie Hitz as Jean Page and Nick Dawson as Clay Bannister.

AMANDA OF HONEYMOON HILL was "the story of love and marriage in America's romantic South. The story of Amanda and Edward Leighton . . ." Written by Elizabeth Todd, the show was produced by the Hummerts. Amanda's real given name was "Charity Amanda Dyke" the role was played by Joy Hathaway. Her husband Edward was portrayed by Boyd Crawford, George Lambert and Staats Cotsworth.



Minerva Pious as 'Mrs. Nussbaum' was one of the long-time favorites on Fred Allen's show. She always complained about her husband, Pierre.

OUR GAL SUNDAY was "the story of an orphan girl named Sunday, from the little mining town of Silver Creek, Colorado, who in young womanhood married England's richest, most handsome nobleman, Lord Henry Brinthrope . . ." The story asked the question: "Can this girl from a mining town in the west find happiness as the wife of a wealthy and titled Englishman?" The setting was Lord Brinthrope's manor "Black Swan Hall" in the state of Virginia. Sunday was played by Dorothy Lowell and later, by Vivian Smolen. Lord Henry by Karl Swenson and Allistair Duncan. The show debuted in 1936. Its musical theme: "Red River Valley." It was heard for the last time on Jan. 2, 1959.

RICH MAN'S DARLING was a serial drama featuring Peggy Allenby and Karl Swenson as Peggy and Packy O'Farrell.

LINDA'S FIRST LOVE was the story of a pretty young girl who worked in a large department store, as played by Arline Blackburn. Linda was in love with a rich society playboy whose mother kept trying to break up the romance (naturally).

Lovely Helen Shields was the star of another serial called I LOVE LINDA DALE.

THE ROMANCE OF HELEN TRENT told of the troubles of a Hollywood gown designer. Virginia Clark created the role. When the show moved from Chicago to New York in 1944, Julie Stevens became the new Helen. Her fiance, Gil Whitney was played by Marvin Miller. Introduced by announcer Fielden Farrington . . . "The real life drama of Helen Trent, who, when life mocks her, breaks her hopes, dashes her against the rocks of despair, fights back bravely, successfully, to prove what so many women long to prove in their own lives, that *romance can begin at thirty-five!*" The show's theme was "Juanita" hummed by Stanley Davis and Lawrence Salerno. The program was heard for the last time on June 24, 1960.

THE STRANGE ROMANCE OF EVELYN WINTERS was really the story of playwright Gary Bennett, who "sud-



JACK BENNY began his comedy show in 1932. Although he was selected as the Best Radio Comedian of 1934, he was fired by his sponsor. Two years later he was fired again because his sponsor did not think he was funny. Time has proved how wrong they were.

denly and unexpectedly finds himself the guardian of lovely Evelyn Winters . . ." Toni Darnay starred as lovely Evelyn and Gary was played by both Karl Weber and Martin Blaine. The show's theme: "Sweetheart."

SECOND HUSBAND started out as a night-time drama but later became a day-time entry. Stage actress Helen Menken was heard as Brenda Cummings and Joseph Curtin was Grant Cummings (the second husband) Miss Menken turned to radio work after she suffered facial paralysis. She died of a heart attack while attending a party at the Lambs Club in New York on March 27, 1966.

THOSE WE LOVE started as a summer replacement for the Eddie Cantor show in 1939. It was received with much audience approval and continued for several seasons as a nighttime soap opera. Cast was headed by Nan Grey as Kathy Marshall with Richard Cromwell as her twin brother, Kit. The senior Mr. Marshall was portrayed by Francis X. Bushman. Donald Woods was heard as Dr. Leslie Foster. Anne Todd was Amy and Alma Kruger was heard as Aunt Emily Mayfield. Virginia Sale supplied some laughs as the cook, Martha Newbury. Lee Millar supplied the barking for the family pet dog, Rags.

HILLTOP HOUSE was a serial "dedicated to the women of America. The story of a woman who must choose between love and the career of raising other women's children." The locale was Hilltop House Orphanage at Glendale. The central character was Bess Johnson, the kindly young supervisor of the orphanage. The role was played by an actress also named Bess Johnson (coincidence?). She was reportedly the highest paid actress in radio at the time.

Gallant Bess struggled valiantly to keep the institution off the rocks financially and to ward off meddlers who would wreck her gallant cause. Frank Klabber, head of the board at the home (the role was played by Jay Jostyn) wanted to run Hilltop House without dear Bess. So did his fiancee, Thelma Gidley (Irene Hubbard). But members of the staff, such as Dr. Clark (Spencer Bentley) and even the cook, Tulip



Jack Benny's wife was named Sadie Marks in real life. She was cast as "Mary Livingstone of Plainfield, New Jersey" on an early show, as a young female fan 'crashing the show to read poetry on the air.' The part clicked and MARY LIVINGSTONE became a Benny show regular.

(Played by Gee Gee James) and one of the little ones, "Tiny Tim" (played by Ronald Liss—with a lisp?) all needed Bess. Several of the staff even got romantically involved with the motherly matron—Steve Cortland (Joseph Curtin) and Dr. Clark and even wealthy explorer Capt. John Barry (David Gothard).

The show was written by "Adelaide Marston" which was the pen name for writers Addy Richton and Lynn Stone. The show's theme was aptly Brahms' "Lullaby."

In March of 1941 the title of the show was changed to **THE STORY OF BESS JOHNSON** and the central character (still played by actress Johnson) moved from the orphanage to become superintendent of a boarding school. Later the **HILLTOP HOUSE** title was resumed and the locale switched back to the orphanage this time with a new supervisor Julie Paterno, played by Jan Miner. She, too, struggled valiantly for the good of the home and the little ones who needed her. After much self-sacrifice, the now widowed Julie finally gave in to her own feelings and married old beau, Reed Nixon. Miss Miner won the 1952-53 Radio-TV Mirror Award as Favorite Radio Daytime Serial Actress for the role.

THE STORY OF MARY MARLIN debuted on January 1, 1935, and was the story of a woman appointed lady Senator to fill her husband's vacant seat. Her husband Joe was believed killed in a plane crash in Siberia, but in reality (make-believe reality, that is) he had suffered only severe head injuries and loss of memory. For years he ambled aimlessly around Asia known only as "Mister X." After years of relentless searching, Mary finally found her Joe on the episode of September 11, 1944.

The show was first broadcast from Chicago with Joan Blaine in the title role. Later the show moved to New York and Anne Seymour assumed the role (1937) playing it for many years. The role was later passed along to Betty Lou Gerson, Muriel Kirkland, Eloise Kummer and Linda Carlon. Robert Griffin was the steadfast Joe. The series was created and written by Jane Cruisinberry. The musical theme heard



After stints as a salesman, singer and sportcaster, **DON WILSON** became Jack Benny's announcer in 1934. He was a bulky six-foot-two, 200-pounds with a booming voice. He did much more than announce the show.

daily was "Clair de Lune," played by pianist Joe Kahn. The announcers were Nelson Case and John Tillman.

WE LOVE AND LEARN began under the title AS THE TWIG IS BENT. The locale was a small dress shop. Frank Lovejoy was heard as Bill Peters and Joan Banks played Andrea Reynolds. Jose Ferrer was heard as the minister. The show was written and produced by Don Becker who also composed the original theme music played by organist Herschel Leucke.

In 1955 the locale was changed to a beauty parlor in Harlem and the title switched to THE STORY OF RUBY VALENTINE with an all Negro cast headed by Ruby Dee. Others heard were Juanita Hall, Viola Dean and Earl Hyman. Another earlier Negro soap opera had been HERE COMES TOMORROW.

PORTIA FACES LIFE was "a story reflecting the courage, spirit and integrity of American women everywhere." Portia Blake was a lady lawyer, widowed when her husband Richard was killed in an auto accident. Plucky Portia took over their law firm. Soon she fell in love with a young writer, Walter Manning, who later became the editor of the local newspaper. To complicate matters, Walter's brother Christopher fell in love with Portia. Walter, out of guilt feelings, married snobbish Arline Harrison (played by Joan Banks) after she was injured in an auto accident in which he was driving. Later, Portia and Walter both freed themselves of other romantical involvements and finally wed. But theirs was not an easy life. Poor Walter was a frequent victim of false murder charges and amnesia.

Portia was played by Lucille Wall and Walter by Myron McCormick and later by Bartlett Robinson. The show was written by Mona Kent and Hector Chevigny.

Radio also had another "Portia"—one Portia Brent who was the central character in the serial drama entitled BRENT-HOUSE. The show featured Georgia Backus.

LIFE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL dealt with the folks around the Slightly-Used Book Shop. Its heroine was Carole Conrad,



Singer **KENNY BAKER** was signed on as a regular of the **Jack Benny Show** in 1935. He often engaged in scatterbrained patter. One of his standard phrases on the show was “Yes — please.”

know affectionately as "Chichi." The role was created by Alice Reinhart and was later played by Teri Keane. Kindly old Papa David Solomon was portrayed by Ralph Locke, while Carl Eastman was heard as Toby.

The show opened with "John Ruskin wrote this: 'Whenever money is the principal object of life it is both got ill and spent ill and does harm in both getting and spending. But when getting and spending happiness is our aim—Life Can Be Beautiful!'" Billed as "an inspiring message of faith, drawn from life and written by Carl Bixby and Don Becker," the show was known fondly to the trade as "Elsie Beebe" and "L.C.B.B."

BRAVE TOMORROW was "the story of love and courage" and was written by Ruth Knight. Jeanette Dowling and Raymond Edward Johnson were featured as Louise and Hal Lambert.

AGAINST THE STORM debuted in 1939. This well-written drama was the work of Sandra Michael. It dealt with the Nazi occupation of Denmark during the years 1939-42. After the war ended, the story line changed. Among the central characters were Christy Allen Cameron as played by Gertrude Warner and Claudia Morgan, and Philip Cameron played by Arnold Moss and Alexander Scourby. The opening: "Against the storm, keep thy head bowed, for the greatest storm the world has ever known, came to an end one sunny morning . . ."

THANKS FOR TOMORROW was a serial about a blind pianist (played by Mary Jane Higby). Peter Capell was heard in the cast, as well as Edgar Stehli who played a Chinese houseboy. Paul Taubman served as pianist. The show was written by Leroy Bailey.

The sweet sound of chimes introduced **BIG SISTER** each day as the announcer said: "Yes, there's the clock in Glen Falls' town hall, telling us it's time for Rinso's story of **BIG SISTER** . . ." The lead role of Ruth Evans Wayne was played for CBS in 1936 by Alice Frost. Other actresses who followed in the role were Nancy Marshall, Marjorie Anderson, Mercedes McCambridge and Grace Matthews. Ruth's "little sis-



Sam Hearn was a regular on the early Jack Benny shows. As 'Schlepperman' he had two famous entrance lines: "Hello, stranger!" and "Jake sent me." 'Schlepperman,' alias Hearn, was also heard on the **Glamour Manor Show**.

ter" Sue Evans Miller was played at times by Haila Stoddard, Dorothy McGuire, Peggy Conklin and Fran Carlon. Dr. John Wayne was played by Martin Gabel, Paul McGrath and Staats Cotsworth. Arlene Francis was heard as Lola Mitchell and Richard Widmark was Eric Ramsey. The show's musical theme was "Valse Blurette," played by organist Richard Leibert. Jim Ameche was the announcer.

Michael West, one of the characters heard on Big Sister, became the central character of a new serial BRIGHT HORIZON, which debuted in August, 1941, with Joe Julian heard as West. The role was later taken over by Richard Kollmar. Alice Frost was heard in her role of Ruth Wayne on the initial broadcast to help establish the story line. The show was written by John M. Young, Stuart Hawkins and Kathleen Norris. Marjorie Anderson was the lady announcer for the program.

VALIANT LADY was "the story of a brave woman and her brilliant, but unstable husband—the story of her struggle to keep his feet planted firmly on the pathway to success . . ." Joan Barrett-Hargrave-Scott was born on the wrong side of town. She married a promising young doctor, Truman "Tubby" Scott. After he suffered an accident leaving a blood clot on his brain, he seemed to forget medical ethics and ideals and was possessed only by the desire for money and position. A gambler friend, Jack Eastman had ideas about using Scott's prestige to further his own nefarious enterprises. The young doctor's association with Eastman and his alarming conduct worried Joan but through it all she remained a devoted wife, determined to stay with her husband and try to right the wrong he had done.

Heard over NBC the role of valiant Joan was played by both Joan Blaine and Joan Banks and later by Florence Freeman; her father, Jim Barrett was portrayed by Richard Gordon, Bill Johnstone, Gene Leonard and Bill Adams; Tubby Scott by Charles Carroll, Bartlett Robinson and Martin Blaine. Ralph Bell was heard as gambler Eastman. The show's theme music was "Estrellita."

Poor Carolyn Kramer was a woman whom happiness



FANNY BRICE introduced her famous 'Baby Snooks' character to radio audiences on February 29, 1936. Listeners clamored for more — and she continued until her death in May, 1951. She is still remembered fondly.

seemed to elude most of the time, but as the announcer said at the opening of the show, "Happiness is the sum total of many things, of health, security, friends and loved ones. But most important is a desire to be happy and the will to help others find their RIGHT TO HAPPINESS . . ." Claudia Morgan, actress daughter of Ralph Morgan and niece of actor Frank Morgan, was heard as plucky Carolyn. Her former husband, Dwight Kramer was played by David Gothard. The romantic interest was supplied by John Larkin as Miles Nelson. The show was written by Irna Phillips and John M. Young. Sponsored for many years by Ivory Soap, it left the air on December 31, 1957.

THE GUIDING LIGHT told the story of the Reverend Dr. John Ruthledge, a kindly minister who showed people how to live a good life through patience and understanding. The good Rev. was played by Arthur Peterson. Raymond Edward Johnson was heard as a character known only as "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere." The show's theme was "Aphrodite."

THE LIFE OF MARY SOTHERN starred Linda Carlon, Minabelle Abbott and Betty Caine in the title role. Its musical theme was "Just a Little Love, a Little Kiss."

BETTY AND BOB was an early serial written by Leonard Bercovici. The story of a young couple who owned a crusading newspaper, *The Trumpet*, Betty was played at times by Elizabeth Reller, Beatrice Churchill, Alice Hill, Arlene Francis, Edith Davis and Mercedes McCambridge. Bob (editor Drake) was played by Don Ameche, Les Tremayne, Spencer Bently, Carl Frank, J. Anthony Hughes and Van Heflin. Veteran movie actor Francis X. Bushman was heard as Peter Standish. The show's theme was "Salut d'Amour."

THE CARTERS OF ELM STREET was "the story of a second wife and her fight for happiness" and "the story of one mother's struggle to find happiness for those she loves." Featured in the cast were Vic Smith and Virginia Payne as the parents of youngsters Ginger Jones, Billy Rose and Ann Russell.

THE COUPLE NEXT DOOR was heard over the Mutual



Funnyman JOE PENNER began his weekly comedy program for CBS on October 8, 1933. One of his most famous expressions was 'Wanna buy a duck?' His duck was named 'Goo-Goo' and Mel Blanc supplied the quacking voice.

network featuring Olan Soule and Elinor Harriot. Later the show moved from Chicago to New York and Harold Vermilyea and Lillian Gish took over.

WHEN A GIRL MARRIES was "the tender, human story of young married love—dedicated to everyone who has ever been in love." The serial debuted over CBS on May 29, 1939. The script was created by Elaine Carrington but Leroy Bailey took over the writing chores during the 40's. The young newlywed, Joan Field Davis, was first played on the air by Noel Mills. After six months she left the show and Mary Jane Higby was heard as Joan for the next eighteen years. Harry Davis was played by John Raby, Robert Haag, Whitfield Connor and Lyle Sudrow. Mother Davis, a very nice mother-in-law, was played by Marion Barney. Lillie, the maid, was Georgia Burke and young Sammy Davis was portrayed by actress Dolores Gillen. Others in the cast were Joan Tetzels as Sylvia Field (Joan's sister), Jeannette Dowling as Irma Cameron and young Anne Francis as Kathy Cameron.

The Davis family lived on a farm in Beechwood near the city of Stanwood. Several unshady characters showed up from time to time. One was Betty MacDonald (as played by Eunice Hill and Helene Dumas) who managed to do at least one good deed when she sacrificed her life to save young Sammy from the path of a truck. A few episodes later a cousin of hers bearing an uncanny resemblance and the name Betty Scholfield loomed up on the horizon. The new Betty was played by Gertrude Warner and she got herself murdered by yet another unsavory character named Robert Nobel. The show's musical theme was "Cadman's, At Dawning" and later switched to "Drigo's Serenade." It was among the most durable of the daily dramas.

The central character on THE ROAD OF LIFE was Dr. Jim Brent who was constantly being paged by a nasal voice droning, "Dr. Brent—Surgery! Dr. Brent—Surgery!" The paging voice was that of Jeanette Dowling and (days when she was off-duty) by Angel Casey.

Jim Brent, M.D. never lost his high ideals of service to the medical profession. His brilliant work as an intern at City



BOB (Thanks for the Memory) HOPE began his long air run for Pepsodent Toothpaste on September 27, 1938 on NBC. Cast of regulars included Jerry Colonna and Skinny Ennis.

Hospital brought him the post of surgical assistant to the Chief of Staff, Dr. Parsons. Jim's career suffered a temporary setback, however, when he was accidentally shot in the hand during a quarrel with his brother. Thinking the injury was permanent, Jim was beside himself and fled to Pine Cone Ridge. But there he met kindly Dr. Thompson and Sylvia Bertram who were instrumental in curing his obsession that he would never operate again. Eventually he returned to City Hospital and became successor to Dr. Parsons. Among Jim's many admirers were pretty Mary Holt and Carol Evans, both of whom he came close to marrying.

Dr. Brent was played by actors Ken Griffin, Matt Crowley, Don MacLaughlin, David Ellis and Howard Teichmann. Mr. Teichmann was also among the writers of the show, along with Irna Phillips, William Morwood and John M. Young. The show's theme music was the First Movement of Tschai-kovsky's 6th Symphony, "Pathetique."

YOUNG DR. MALONE was the story of Dr. Jerry Malone who worked at Three Oaks Medical Center. Alan Bunce was the first actor to be heard in the title role. He was followed by Carl Frank and Charles Irving. In 1947 Sandy Becker took over the role and was heard until the show left the air on Nov. 25, 1960. Heard over CBS the show was written by Julian Funt, David Driscoll and Charles Gussman.

Soap opera also had a very famous lady of medicine, JOYCE JORDAN (Girl Interne). She practiced medicine in the fictional town of Preston. Dr. Jordan was played by Ruth Johnson, Ann Shepherd, Betty Winkler, Elspeth Eric and Gertrude Warner. The show's title was changed to JOYCE JORDAN, M.D., in 1942.

Other lady doctors were heard over the air waves. DR. KATE starred Cornelia Burdick as Dr. Kate Allen, while KATE HOPKINS, ANGEL OF MERCY starred Margaret MacDonald. This serial was written by Gertrude Berg. Selena Royle doled out pills over the ether as the star of HILDA HOPE, M.D., and Sunda Love was heard playing Clara Barton on JUNIOR NURSE CORPS.

To boost its waning popularity in 1958, radio soap operas



A wacky pair of man-hungry spinsters **BRENDA AND COBINA** joined the Bob Hope program in 1939. 'Brenda' was played by Eliva Allman, and 'Cobina' by Blanche Stuart. A similar character 'Vera Vague' was played by Barbara Jo Allen.

tried adding big name stars to its casts. Madeleine Carroll came out of retirement to star in **THE AFFAIRS OF DR. GENTRY** for NBC. Even super star Bette Davis went the soap opera trail in **WHISPERING STREETS**. She later left the show and her role was assumed by Cathy Lewis.

GIRL ALONE started as a sustaining feature with Betty Winkler in the role of Patricia Rogers, a beautiful young heiress who repudiated her fortune for a newspaper career. The show went on the NBC Red network beginning July 13, 1936, sponsored by Kellogg's of Battle Creek. Pat Murphy was heard as Jim "Scoop" Curtis and Ted Maxwell was Leo Warner. Joan Winters portrayed lovable Mrs. Alice Ames Warner (Amesie).

A night-time soap opera was **DEAR JOHN** heard initially over the NBC network (WJZ-Blue) on September 15, 1941 and continuing through May 31, 1942 on Sunday evenings at 9:30 p.m. On August 16, 1942 it switched to CBS and was heard Friday evenings at 7:15 p.m. and remained in that time spot through December 26, 1942. In 1944 the title of the show was changed to **WOMAN FROM NOWHERE**. Irene Rich was heard as Faith Chandler and Ray Montgomery was Noel Chandler. Earlier Miss Rich had been on the air in the serial drama **GLORIOUS ONE** as Judith Bradley. She also had her own series of **IRENE RICH DRAMAS** heard on NBC in 1933.

PRETTY KITTY KELLY starred Arline Blackburn. Others in the cast were Clayton "Bud" Collyer and Barlett Robinson. Matt Crowley was the show's narrator and the theme music was aptly "The Kerry Dance."

KITTY FOYLE was also given air serialization starring Julie Stevens with Bud Collyer as her leading man.

In yet another serial titled **KITTY KEENE** the title character was portrayed by Beverly Younger and Fran Carlon. And speaking of Kittys we musn't forget Miss Kitty of **GUN-SMOKE**.

LORA LAWTON was the story of a young woman from the midwest who moved to Washington, D.C., to become the



Jim and Marion Jordan lost their own identities to the radio characters they played, FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY. Seen here with writer Don Quinn and members of their radio cast; Bill Thompson, Hal Peary, Isobel Randolph, Harlow Wilcox and Billy Mills, the bandleader.

housekeeper for one of the country's greatest shipbuilders, Pete Carver. Carver was also one of the most eligible and sought-after bachelors. Lora had had an early marriage to Harley Lawton and their life together had been quite miserable. He lost his life in a plane crash only a few hours after demanding that Lora give him a divorce. Lora's unhappy past kept her from accepting Carver's proposal of marriage. His sister, Gail, was played by Charita Bauer and his devoted confidential secretary, May Case, by Ethel Wilson. Fran Carlon was heard as the beautiful and wealthy socialite Helene Hudson; she had schemes for becoming Mrs. Peter Carver, but to no avail. Joan Tompkins was the first to portray Lora; Jan Miner followed her in the role. Carver was played by dashing James Meighan and Ned Wever. The show was conceived, written and produced by the Hummerts.

THIS IS NORA DRAKE was "a modern story—seen through the window of a woman's heart." Charlotte Holland, Joan Tompkins and Mary Jane Higby took turns playing Nora.

MAUDIE'S DAIRY debuted on CBS on August 13, 1941. The series concerned the students at Sullivan High School. Mary Mason was heard as Maudie. Later the role was played by Charita Bauer. The late Robert Walker was featured as Davy Dillan and pretty Caryl Smith was heard as Polly. At one point in the continuing drama, much suspense prevailed when Maudie's Diary was stolen.

A WOMAN OF AMERICA was a drama series which began using a Western locale. Anne Seymour was featured as Prudence Dane. During the course of its long air run, the entire story line was altered. In the new version Prudence became the lady editor of a modern day newspaper and was played by Florence Freeman. Miss Freeman was later heard as the star of **WENDY WARREN AND THE NEWS**, a unique serial which incorporated current news as part of the daily script. Douglas Edwards was heard as the newscaster.

A WOMAN OF COURAGE starred Alice Frost as Martha Jackson, a very long-suffering heroine. The role was later played by Selena Royle and Esther Ralston. Joan Tetzl was



Actor Gene Carroll played both leading roles on the **Jake and Lena** comedy program. In 1947 he played 'Lena, the maid' on the **Fibber McGee and Molly Show**.

heard as Lucy Jackson and Constance Collier as Miss Pemberton. Others in the cast were young Larry Robinson, Enid Markey, Fred Behrens, Horace Braham and Al Hecht.

Still other ladies heard daily were Harriet Allyn as the central character on IN CARE OF AGGIE HORN. Vicki Vola was heard as BRENDA CURTIS in the serial of that name. She was assisted by Hugh Marlowe as her husband, Jim, and Agnes Moorehead as the mother-in-law.

Ruth Yorke played the title role on JANE ARDEN while Gale Page starred as HOLLY SLOAN on the program of that name.

MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH was portrayed on the airwaves by Betty Garde and later by Eva Condon. Mr. Wiggs was Robert Strauss. Their son Billy was Andy Donnelly. Mr. Bob was played by Frank Provo and Miss Hazy was both Agnes Young and Alice Frost.

HOUSEBOAT HANNAH had Henrietta Tedro in the title role (also played at times by Doris Rich) with Norman Gottschalk as her salty husband, Dan O'Leary.

Heading the list of male do-gooders was DAVID HARUM. The "story that has thrilled America for generations. The true to life story of David Harum, the kindly little country philosopher who makes life worth living by helping those who need help, and by outwitting those who are too clever in scheming in helping themselves . . ." The program was produced by the Hummerts. Actors heard in the leading role were Wilmer Walter, Craig McDonnell and Cameron Prud'homme. Aunt Polly was played by Charne Allen and Eva Condon. Susan Price Wells was played by Peggy Allenby, Gertrude Warner and Joan Tompkins. The show's musical theme was "Sunbonnet Sue," hummed by Stanley Davis to his own guitar accompaniment.

SCATTERGOOD BAINES was played on the air by Jess Pugh and Wendell Holmes and featured John Hearne as Hippocrates Brown and Dink Trout as Pliny Pickett.

CHAPLAIN JIM was a World War II serial based on actual battle experiences. John Lund was starred.

Another World War II drama was HEARTS IN HAR-



Isabel Randolph played snotty 'Mrs. Abigail Uppington' on the **Fibber McGee and Molly** program.

MONY which featured Jone Allison as Penny, a volunteer entertainer in a U.S.O. club. When the script called for Penny to sing, vocalist Anne Marlowe would step to the microphone.

Remember when the announcer used to say . . . "And now smile awhile with **LORENZO JONES** and his wife Belle. (Then the familiar strains of "Funiculi-Funicula" would be heard.) We all know couples like lovable, impractical Lorenzo Jones and his devoted wife Belle. Lorenzo's inventions have made him a character to the town, but not to Belle who loves him. Their struggle for security is anybody's story, but somehow with Lorenzo it seems to have more smiles than tears."

Once when poor Lorenzo fell victim of amnesia the show took on a serious overtone. Lorenzo was a mechanic at Jim Baker's garage. Belle worked in a beauty parlor. Lorenzo was played by Karl Swenson and Belle by Lucille Wall. Art Carney was heard as Angus. The program was written by Theodore and Mathilde Ferro.

FRONT PAGE FARRELL dealt with the adventures of an ace newspaper reporter and his pretty wife. It starred Staats Cotsworth and Florence Williams, as his wife and aide, Sally. The show's theme was "You and I Know," played by organist Rosa Rio.

Another attraction of the soap operas were the "give-away" and "free Premiums" (for box tops of various products of the sponsors). In the spring of 1937 the David Harum program offered a free packet of flower seeds to loyal listeners who would write in and request same. At the time the program was sponsored by Bab-O Cleaner. The offer was greeted with much favorable response and so it was repeated each spring thereafter, through 1942.

In April of 1942, another character on the David Harum series, Aunt Polly, offered "Aunt Polly's Remembrance Book" containing twenty-eight pages and it came complete with an assortment of twelve different greeting cards to be sent to loved ones. The nominal fee for this lovely "free premium" was only twenty-five cents and a label from the sponsor's product.



Versatile Bill Thompson played several characters on the **Fibber McGee and Molly Show**. He was heard as The Old Timer, Horatio Boomer and Wallace Wimple, among others.

Other characters in serials began to offer "free gifts." Helen Trent offered a "Friendship Locket" while Stella Dallas promised to send a "Beautiful Lapel pin." Aunt Jenny spoke of free cookbooks, and so it went.

The whole "give-away idea started back in 1921 when orchestra leader Vincent Lopez offered a free autographed photo of himself to everyone who wrote to him in care of station WJZ. Lopez was well known for his many broadcasts from the Pennsylvania Grill in New York City. The response to his offer was overwhelming.

The kids, too, came in for their share of "free gifts" (for a box top and a quarter). Tom Mix offered his "Straight-Shooting" listeners a series of rings, most of which glowed in the dark! Little Orphan Annie gave away Ovaltine Shaker Mugs and a whole series of badges with secret decoder devices. Captain Midnight offered his young fans a magical "Code-o-graph." The Green Hornet and Sky King both offered gimmick rings to their fans. Jack Armstrong boasted of a free pedometer which registered how far you had to walk to and from school. Tom Mix once offered his listeners a wooden model of his very own gun. Not to be outdone, The Lone Ranger offered his following a free belt that would not only hold up your pants—but also glowed in the dark!!!

In 1938 there were seventy seven soap operas to be heard weekdays, Monday through Friday. By 1951 the number had dwindled to twenty six to be heard for thirty-two and one half hours, weekly.

The week of November 23, 1960 is infamous in the annals of soap opera history. In that one week, all seven of the last remaining daily dramas heard on CBS were terminated. The air waves were literally flooded with suds and sobs.

Good or bad, the soap operas had an enormous following. Probably no other form of radio entertainment has been more popular, more scorned and more enduring.



Listeners could never really be sure who they were listening to. Radio was full of surprises. For instance, the voice of BEULAH, a black maid who first worked for Fibber McGee and later had a show of her own — really belonged to actor Marlin Hurt.

III

MUSIC IN THE AIR

Possibly the first man to send music out over the magical air waves of radio was Mr. Lee DeForest of New York. In 1908, from his experimental station he sent out the voice of Oscar Hammerstein's dramatic soprano, Mme. Mazarin. Later that same year he also broadcast the Immortal Caruso's voice from onstage at the Metropolitan Opera House singing his role in *Cavaleria Rusticana*. Moving to the west coast, DeForest opened the first radio station in the world and broadcast daily programs from the California Theater in San Francisco. He died on June 30, 1961.

Another radio pioneer was Dr. Frank Conrad of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1916 his small experimental station was licensed as number 8XK. Shortly after the United States entered World War I all amateur licenses were canceled. The ban was lifted on October 1, 1919 and Conrad resumed his broadcasts. On October 17 of that year, he placed his microphone before a phonograph and substituted music for the routine news reports and baseball scores. He broadcast for two hours each Wednesday and Saturday evening. When he had exhausted his supply of available recordings, his program was supplemented with live vocal and instrumental talent. Conrad's two young sons, Crawford and Francis acted as radio's original masters of ceremonies. His modest little station 8XK developed into station KDKA and modern broadcasting was underway.

KDKA was the first station to be licensed by the Dept. of Commerce. It received its license on October 27, 1920. On November 2 the first regularly scheduled broadcast went out.

A talented young lady by the name of Vaughn deLeath



GEORGE BURNS and **GRACIE ALLEN** began their regular weekly comedy program for CBS on February 15, 1932 — and continued on the air for the next eighteen years. Gracie retired in 1958 and passed away in 1964.

was the first woman to sing over "legitimate" radio. The song she chose for the occasion was "Old Folks at Home." She is credited with creating the style of singing known as "crooning." She was known as "The Radio Girl" and was heard frequently over NBC in the early '20's.

One of the first musical aggregations to broadcast live music were THE ORIGINAL COON-SANDERS NIGHT HAWKS. The group featured Carleton Coon on drums, Joe Sanders at the piano; Sanders also did the arranging for the group. Others heard were Elmer Crebs, Rex Downing, Bob Pope, Joe Richelson, Harold Theill, Russ Stout, Floyd Estep and John Theill. Heard as early as 1921 in broadcasts from the Muehlebach Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, the band broke up after Mr. Coon died in 1932.

As early as 1925 THE GOLD DUST TWINS broadcast over WEAJ in New York, WJAR in Providence, WEEI in Boston, WCAE in Pittsburgh, WGR in Buffalo, WFIL in Philadelphia, WWJ in Detroit and WCC in Davenport. "Goldy" was tenor Harvey Hindermeier, born in Pennsylvania but grown up in New York. He enjoyed a singing career including Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. He won a scholarship to the Metropolitan Opera House and sang several leading roles for them. He also appeared on the legitimate stage with Mrs. Fiske in "Nellie of New Orleans." After completing a coast to coast concert tour he temporarily abandoned his musical career to help dig the Panama canal.

"Dusty" was bass Earle Tuckerman. Born at Watertown, New York where he started out as a train dispatcher on the N.Y. Central R.R. He, too, drifted into concert work. The pair was chosen to represent the Gold Dust Soap Powder Co. on the air. They always appeared in black-face makeup, doing minstrel songs and spirituals. Among their most requested numbers were "Kemo, Kimo" and "Dandy Jim of Carolina."

In 1923 THE A & P GYPSIES began broadcasting for the food store chain. They were heard each Monday for a full hour. The musicians, all Russian born, had been playing in a Russian cafe in the U.S. until it burned down. They wan-



LUM AND ABNER (Chester Lauck and Norris Goff) were the proprietors of the 'Jot Em Down' store in Pine Ridge, Arkansas. They were first heard over a local station on April 26, 1931 and soon graduated to the national network.

dered into a radio studio to audition and a representative of the food store chain happened to be visiting. He promptly selected them to represent the company over the air.

The leader of the group was Harry Horlick. Born in Kiev of a musically talented family, at an early age he displayed a distinct talent for the violin. Young Harry remained in his native land when his family left for the U.S. at the start of World War I. He served in the Russian Army and was captured by the Bolsheviki and assigned to play symphonies for them. After a year and a half of captive concerts, he escaped, and with the help of the American Consul, he succeeded in communicating with his family and they arranged for him to join them in the U.S.

Originally the Gypsies consisted of six members with George Davidoff at the piano and Alexander Bordnowski at the organ. In 1926 a seventh gypsy joined the group to fill in at the two-manual organ.

The Gypsies were always introduced to the strains of Two Guitars, as the announcer would say:

“ . . . These bewitching strains of Two Guitars now come from out of the East to lure you from your homes which are linked with WEAJ, New York, WCAE, Pittsburgh and WJAR, Providence—to lure you into a fairy land of dreams. Electric, gas and candle lights now become useless, for with the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. Gypsies, you will wander in dancing sunlight and shimmering moonlight. The company engages the use of the facilities of these stations each week to take you through green valleys, wooded hillsides, on jeweled lakes, over sea and mountains—and we ask you, mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, the well and the sick, old and young, to dance, sing or make love in the spirit and as the music leads you. . . .”

The equally over-worded sign off went like this:

“ . . . The time for rude awakening has come. I wonder



THE PEPSODENT HOUR was first aired on March 19, 1928 and featured Charles Correll and 'Andy Brown' and Freeman Gosden as 'Amos Jones.' The pair operated the 'Fresh Air Taxi Company' and became favorites of millions as **AMOS AND ANDY**.

how many of you have seen the peaceful meadows, the shadowy woods, the ocean billows; have scented the spicy pines or dreamed of loves gone by, or that great love to come; as the Great A & P Tea Co. Gypsies played? If you have dreamed dreams, or had your heart lifted, we hope you will let the Gypsies share your pleasure, by sending a little note, or a card which is available at any of the familiar red front A & P stores. The Gypsies are leaving us now; going back into the peaceful world from which we have them come each week. The dying strains of the Two Guitars will be their adieu to you, and when they have faded away, a week will pass. Then at nine, next Monday, this same mystic melody will summon you to another hour of dreams . . .”

Tenor Frank Parker was often guest vocalist with the group. Announcers for the program were Ed Thorgersen and Milton Cross.

Another favorite musical group of the time were THE CLICQUOT CLUB ESKIMOS which featured the music of banjoist orchestra leader, Harry Reser who composed the show's theme “The Clicquot March.” Other members of the group were Raymond Knight, Merle Johnston, Jimmy Brierly and Everett Clary.

THE GREAT SINCLAIR MINSTRELS were heard over the NBC network in 1935. The program was written by Gene Arnold who also served as “Mistah Inter-loca-tah” Gus Van sometimes was heard as the Interlocutor. The Minstrel Men were Bill Childs, Cliff Soubier and Fritz Clark. Malcom Claire was featured as the comic, Spareribs. The singing quartet consisted of Pat Patterson, Art Janes, Al Rice and Fritz Meissner. The group were known as “The Maple City Four” when they appeared on other shows.

John Goldsworthy was the veddy, veddy British emcee “Bertie Gadsby” on the NBC PICADILLY MUSIC HALL heard each Tuesday from 11 p.m. to midnight during 1937.

One of the best musical and all-around entertainment



EASY ACES "Radio's laugh novelty" began in 1930 in Kansas City. It was first heard on CBS network in October of 1931. The show was written by Goodman Ace who starred with his wife, Jane. It was a popular favorite through 1949.

programs was KRAFT MUSIC HALL which debuted on NBC in 1934. As host, Al Jolson not only sang, but also acted in short dramatizations of the classics (including Shakespeare). Paul Whiteman conducted the orchestra and others appearing were Deems Taylor, Johnny Mercer and singer-pianist, Ramona (Davies).

In 1936 crooner Bing Crosby took over as host of K.M.H. Don Wilson was the announcer and Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra were featured for the first year. During Bing's ten year reign on the show he developed a free and breezy comic ad-libbing style (ably abetted by the excellent scripts supplied by Carroll Carroll). Comedians Victor Borge and Bob (Bazooka) Burns both served long terms as Bing's sidekick in wisecracking. Many top female vocalists shared the microphone with "Groaner" Crosby; those heard most frequently were Connee Boswell, Mary Martin and Peggy Lee. John Scott Trotter took over the baton and Ken Carpenter handled the commercials while balancing his end of the comic patter teeter-totter.

In 1946 Crosby left the show because the powers that be would not permit him to pre-record programs. In 1947 the original host, Al Jolson, returned to the show. He was aided by Oscar Levant and a host of top guest stars.

WENDELL HALL, "The Red Headed Music Maker," was a highly popular entertainer heard over the air in 1922. He strummed his ukulele and sang many of his own compositions such as "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'."

As early as January 1925 BEN BERNIE, The Old Maestro, and his Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra were broadcasting live from New York City. They used "Lonesome Old Town" as an opening musical theme. Bernie would present a comedy monologue which included at least one insult to Walter Winchell. (The two carried on an on-the-air feud for many years.) Vocals were provided by Little Jackie Heller, Mary Small and Buddy Clark. Actress Agnes Moorehead was sometimes featured in comedy sketches. Comedians Fuzzy Knight and Lew Lehr were also heard on the show. Bernie



Edgar Bergen and his wooden-sidekick Charlie McCarthy began their famous series on May 9, 1937. W. C. Fields was a cast regular and carried on a longtime feud with Charlie. Fields called him 'a woodpecker's lunch.'

and his musicians were sometimes billed as "Buoyant Ben Bernie and His Blue Ribbon Orchestra." Bernie was the composer of several hit songs including "Who's Your Little Whoosis?" "Sweet Georgia Brown." His famous sign-off went like this: "Au revoir, pleasant dreams. Think of us when requesting your themes. Until next Tuesday, when, possibly you may all tune in again. Keep the Old Maestro always in your schemes. Yowzah, yowzah, yowzah . . ." Bernie died on October 20, 1943.

The popular music quiz program, **SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW MUSIC** began on July 4, 1938 with its creator, Ted Cott acting as emcee. Leonard Lieblich was the judge.

Ken Gillum and Duke Atterbury were billed as **THE TWO DAFFODILS** in programs of songs and corny stories. The show was syndicated by the Continental Broadcasting Corp. in the early 30's.

Soprano **JESSICA DRAGONETTE** was dubbed "Queen of the Airwaves" by sixty-six million radio fans who listened each week to her renditions of light opera, fairy tales, one act plays and scenes from Shakespeare. She established the longest record for broadcasting of any singer in the world. Jessica made her debut when NBC was just one month old. After her first few shows she was signed to a five year contract and was heard as "Vivian, the Coca Cola Girl." The half hour show was heard weekly on which she sang seven solos, or duets. The format was a continuing serial. At a moment of high suspense the audience would be left waiting for the next weekly installment. It told of the adventures of two hearty fellows named Jimmie and Freddie who accompanied Vivian in her travels around the country.

Three months after her radio debut, she inaugurated the new Philco series, an hourly program of light operettas called **THEATRE MEMORIES**. The program ran for two and a half years, through December 1929. She next joined the **CITIES SERVICE SHOW** on January 3, 1930, and remained with them for seven years, doing more than six hundred broadcasts before a studio audience of 1,500.



JIMMY DURANTE and **GARRY MOORE** first appeared together on the **Camel Caravan** program in 1943 — and began their co-starring comedy show on March 25, 1943. The partnership lasted thru 1947 when Moore struck out on his own.

In January 1937, Miss Dragonette switched over to CBS for the PALMOLIVE BEAUTY BOX series. She missed the first broadcast of the show due to illness. Lanny Ross was called in to pinch hit for her.

In January, 1946, Cities Service presented its "1,001 Night on the Air" which was a special anniversary program. Jessica was heard singing "Indian Love Call" and a duet of "People Will Say We're in Love" with Leonard Stokes.

She was also heard on the SATURDAY NIGHT SERENADE program for four and one half years. She received the "Most Popular Singer of the Air Award" from Radio Guide Magazine on eight different occasions.

Jessica was born in Calcutta, India, on a Valentine's day. She was named Jessica Valentina. Early in her career she was cast as the voice of the angel in Max Reinhardt's production of *The Miracle*, a religious spectacle that played at the Century Theatre in New York in 1924.

It is recorded that some 15,000 fans in Minneapolis once braved a blizzard and taxi strike to hear her sing. Once when she had a disagreement with one of her sponsors and threatened to leave the show, her loyal fans threatened to boycott radio until she returned. She published her autobiography "Faith is a Song—the Odyssey of an American Artist" in 1951. She is also the author of a second book, "Your Voice and You" published in 1967. She now resides in New York.

"The Singing Sweethearts" of the air were FRANK CRUMIT AND JULIA SANDERSON. They were married in 1927 and after a career on the stage they ventured into radio in 1929. Their very popular musical show BATTLE OF THE SEXES began in 1930 over CBS and continued through the fall of 1936. After a brief retirement period, the pair returned to the air for NBC in 1938. In July 1943 they again switched to WABC.

In addition to their Battle of the Sexes show they were also heard on weekday afternoons.

Crumit was one of the first stars of the recording field. He played the ukulele and his records were all big sellers.



A familiar sound on Tuesday nights was “Henry. Henry Aldrich!” And the cracked voice reply “Coming, Mother!” Ezra Stone played Henry to perfection, his parents were played by Katherine Raht and House Jameson, and his pal, Homer Brown, by Jackie Kelk. The show began on July 2, 1939.

His recordings of "A Gay Caballero" and "Abdul, Abulbul Amir" sold over 4,000,000 copies. He wrote the song "Sweet Lady" in 1921 and he and Miss Sanderson used it as their musical signature. It is estimated they performed it more than 16,000 times.

They were heard together on the air for the last time on September 4, 1943. Mr. Crumit's last song was "It's So Peaceful in the Country." He died of a heart attack early the next morning. Miss Sanderson could not carry on alone and their show was replaced by Irene Beasley.

Miss Sanderson did return to the air on December 2, 1943, on a half-hour musical show entitled LET'S BE CHARMING, along with the piano-organ team of Jack Shilkert and Johnny Gart and a trio consisting of Guy Bonham, Wamp Carlson and Dwight Latham. Pat Barnes was the emcee. After a few months she went into permanent retirement.

The first broadcast of THE FLEISCHMAN HOUR featuring RUDY VALLEE and his Connecticut Yankees was aired over NBC one Thursday evening in October, 1929, broadcast from the organ loft of the Paramount Theatre in New York City. Graham McNamee did the announcer work and read the commercials for the yeast company. The program was broadcast regularly for 520 consecutive weeks through October, 1939.

Vallee opened each show saying: "Heigh ho, everybody!" He sang the show's theme "My Time Is Your Time." In 1932 a new format for the show found it retitled PALACE THEATER OF THE AIR and featured new performers and top names in show business. The new format also called for a "dramatic spot," light or serious. Some of the names who appeared on the show were Fred and Adele Astaire, Fanny Brice in her "Baby Snooks" character, Carmen Miranda, Eddie Cantor, Bob Hope, Milton Berle, Red Skelton, Bob Burns, Joe Penner; Ezra Stone began his "Henry Aldrich" sketches on the Vallee show. Popular vocalists heard frequently were the Mills Brothers, Alice Faye, Frances Langford and Dorothy Lamour.



JOAN DAVIS started in radio with Rudy Vallee on the **Sealtest Village Store** show in 1941. In 1945 she had her own program, **Joanie's Tea Room** on CBS. Shown here with her young daughter, Beverly Wills, who also had a career in radio.

Vallee's next show was **THE SEALTEST VILLAGE STORE** which began in March of 1940. Heard with him were Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom and comedienne Joan Davis. John Barrymore joined the cast in September of that year. The show ran through June, 1942.

In 1945 Vallee was joined by comedian Pinky Lee on **THE DRENE SHOW** which also featured musicians Les Paul and Mel Torme. Later Xavier Cugat and Billie Burke became permanent members of the cast. Monty Woolley was also heard frequently. In 1947 Lee and Vallee were joined by Don Ameche and various female guest stars.

KATE SMITH made her radio debut on her 22nd birthday May 1, 1931. Her first selections on the air included "By the River St. Marie," "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone," "Dream a Little Dream of Me," and "I Surrender Dear." One month later she was moved into the prime time spot of 7 p.m. In September of 1931 she signed with the La Palina Cigar Co. to do four weekly broadcasts. The series ran through September 17, 1933. In 1938 she began the **KATE SMITH SPEAKS** noontime show heard weekdays with Ted Collins. She is credited with introducing many top figures to the airwaves. Acts such as Abbott and Costello first appeared on her program. In 1940 she was asked to sing "God Bless America" by the composer Irving Berlin. The song became closely associated with her, as did her theme song, "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain."

Born in Greenville, Virginia, Kate began her career on the stage. She danced a zesty charleston in *Honeymoon Lane* in 1926. In 1930 she danced again with Bert Lahr in *Flying High*. During one of her Broadway appearances Ted Collins went backstage and introduced himself as a talent scout for Columbia records. He became her manager and lifelong friend.

It is estimated that Kate has recorded some 2,260 songs and has performed on more than 15,572 radio shows. She made her television bow in September, 1950, and racked up more than 1,280 hours of telecasts of her own show, plus many guest appearances. In 1933 she made a film for Paramount entitled *Hello Everybody*.



Harold Peary created the role of 'Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve.' He was first heard on the Fibber McGee and Molly program in 1937. He grew so popular he gained his own show **THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE** on August 31, 1941 on NBC, radio's first 'spin-off' series.

ARTHUR TRACY is better known as THE STREET SINGER. He was a top favorite during the early '30's. His theme, "Marta, Rambling Rose of the Wildwood." His recordings sold more than thirteen million copies.

When his popularity waned in the United States he went to England and established himself as one of the most popular singers of all time. He recorded some six hundred songs there and even starred in more than a dozen British films. World War II brought him back to the U.S. He now resides in New York City.

The DR. WEST CELEBRITY NIGHT program debuted on NBC on February 22, 1936, starring popular vocalist Ethel Shutta and her orchestra leader husband, George Olsen. Guest stars were featured. It was broadcast Saturday evenings at 10:30 p.m.

WAYNE KING (The Waltz King) began broadcasting THE LADY ESTHER SERENADE program in 1931. Actress Bess Johnson supplied the speaking voice for Lady Esther; when she left the show announcer Ken Roberts took over the delivery of the commercials for the beauty products.

In 1936 "Waltz King" King enjoyed the unique distinction of having his music go out over three major networks. On Sunday evenings at 6:30 he broadcast over the Mutual network. On Monday evenings from 10:00 to 10:30 p.m. he broadcast over the coast to coast hookup of CBS. Every Tuesday and Wednesday evening his music went out over the NBC network. King's first name was really Harold. He composed his theme song, "The Waltz You Saved For Me."

A former vaudeville performer, Harry Frankel, won radio fame as SINGIN' SAM, singing the praises of Barbasol Shaving Cream.

Phil Spitalny and his HOUR OF CHARM featured an all-girl orchestra. Russian born he came to the U.S. on a cattle boat in 1920. His orchestra bowed at the Capitol Theatre in New York in 1934. He married Evelyn (Kay) who used to play her "magic violin" on his show. Now retired, they reside in Florida.



Cast of **THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE**: Lurene Tuttle as Marjorie, Lillian Randolph as the maid, Birdie, Hal Peary as Gildersleeve and Walter Tetley as his nephew, Leroy.

THE VOICE OF FIRESTONE program debuted on NBC on December 28, 1928. The announcer was Alois Havrilla and later Hugh James. Howard Barlow conducted the orchestra. The theme music was "If I Could Tell You," written by Mrs. Idabelle Firestone.

JACK SMITH, the man with the "smile in his voice," began his nightly quarter hour show on August 19, 1945, from New York. The show later moved to the west coast and was heard regularly for eight years.

In the mid 30's an original radio operetta was broadcast on Friday evenings at 10:30 over the WABC, Columbia network. The show featured baritone Milton Watson in the title role of CAPTAIN FLYNN O'FLYNN, a 17th Century soldier of fortune.

THE CHESTERFIELD SUPPER CLUB featured the talents of singers such as Perry Como, Don Cornell, Kay Starr, Jo Stafford and the Pied Pipers. Orchestras who supplied the music were led by Ted Steele, Sammy Kaye, Mitchell Ayres, Glenn Miller and Lloyd Schaefer. Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians were also heard. The announcing was handled by Paul Douglas and Martin Block.

Martin Block will be remembered as "the dean of disc jockies." He was musical host on the MAKE BELIEVE BALLROOM, the first commercially successful, all "recorded" music program. He began broadcasting over WNEW in New York in 1935. When his boss instructed him to stretch news bulletins during the Lindbergh kidnap trail, Block padded air time by playing recordings and making friendly patter. He moved the show to ABC in 1954.

Block was born in Los Angeles on February 3, 1903. He was a composer of several hit songs, including the immortal "Flat Foot Floogie (with the Floy Floy)." He continued his radio show until shortly before his death at the age of 64 in September, 1967.

AL JARVIS had created his MAKE BELIEVE BALLROOM radio show in 1932. He specialized in interviewing the top musicians on the air and also played recordings. The



Jean Hersholt starred as **DR. CHRISTIAN**. The series premiered on CBS on November 7, 1937.

show was the first to have its own musical theme song. Jarvis passed away in May, 1970.

ARTHUR GODFREY started in radio on WFBR in Baltimore, in April, 1930. He switched to NBC in November of that same year. In 1951 he was at work before radio microphones and television cameras no less than eight hours each week. His ARTHUR GODFREY TIME morning show was heard five days a week for one hour each day. The ARTHUR GODFREY'S TALENT SCOUTS show was broadcast on radio and telecast Monday evenings for a half hour. In addition, his ARTHUR GODFREY AND HIS FRIENDS debuted on CBS-TV evenings, on January 12, 1949 and was seen every Wednesday for one hour.

In 1953 he was still going strong with his FRIENDS radio show. The cast of regulars included Frank Parker and Marion Marlowe (who sang love duets), Jeanette Davis, Bill Lawrence, Julius LaRosa (who lost his humility and his job), and pretty little LuAnn Simms. Tony Marvin did the announcing and Archie Bleyer's orchestra provided the music. The show's theme music was "Seems Like Old Times."

Others who appeared on the Godfrey shows were Haleloke (Hawaiian singer and dancer), The McGuire Sisters (Dorothy, Phyllis and Christine), The Mariners (James Lewis, Martin Karl, Thomas Lockard and Nathaniel Dickerson), and a lady barbershop quartet, the Chordettes (Dottie Schwartz, Jinny Osborn, Janet Erlet and Carol Hagerdorn). Pat Boone was also a featured singer on the show for a time. Young Boone had gone to New York to appear on the Major Bowes Amateur Hour show. He auditioned for the Godfrey Talent Scouts, went on that show and won first place.

YOUR HIT PARADE featured all of the top songs and singers of the day. The program was first aired on April 20, 1935. Lennie Hayton conducted the orchestra and the vocals were handled by Gogo DeLys, Johnny Hauser, Charles Carlisle and Kay Thompson.

During its many years of broadcasting, some of the featured singers included Buddy Clark (1936-38), Georgia Gibbs



DR. CHRISTIAN's pretty and efficient secretary, 'Judy Price,' was played by Rosemary DeCamp.

(1937-38), Lanny Ross (1938-39), Bea Wain (1939-44), Barry Wood (1939), Wee Bonnie Baker (1940), Joan Edwards (1941-43-47), Frank Sinatra (1943-44-47-49), Andy Russell (1946-47), Dinah Shore (1947), and Ginny Simms (1947).

The show was aired for the last time on January 9, 1953. When a replacement was needed for Frank Sinatra in 1945, the unlikely choice of Lawrence Tibbett was made. However, Mr. Tibbett was well accepted by the audience and he remained with the show for a full season.

The television version of Your Hit Parade debuted in July, 1950, with Dorothy Collins and Snooky Lanson.

In 1940 the GAY NINETIES REVUE featured singer-comedienne Beatrice Kay, Billy M. Greene, soprano Genevieve Rowe, Ray Block's orchestra, and the singing Four Clubmen. Joe Howard was the emcee. The program was heard at 9:30 on Saturday evenings.

Broadcasts of THE METROPOLITAN OPERA ON THE AIR began on Christmas day 1931 with Humperdinck's "Hansel and Gretel." Milton Cross has been "the voice of the opera" and stage action guide for more than seven hundred performances.

The oldest remaining program on the air today is opera of a different kind—THE GRAND OLE OPRY. Program debuted on November 28, 1925 over WSM Nashville, Tenn. Sole performer on first show was eighty year old fiddler, Uncle Jimmy Thompson. George D. Hay "The Solemn Old Judge" was the host.

THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE first aired over WLS Chicago on April 12, 1924. In 1933 Alka-Seltzer sponsored the first of nearly 700 Saturday night BARN DANCE shows carried over NBC. Featuring Lulu Belle & Scotty, The Hoosier Hot Shots, Eddie Peabody, Pat Buttram, The Dinning Sisters and others. Joe Kelly was the emcee.



The Old Maestro, BEN BERNIE (center), and all the lads were heard over the airwaves as early as 1923. Bernie's trademark phrases were: "Yowsah, yowsha, yowsha," "Au revoir" and his traditional closing, "Pleasant dreams."

IV

THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER

Radio's first comedy program was aired on August 22, 1923, when the Happiness Candy company sponsored THE HAPPINESS BOYS (Billy Jones and Ernie Hare). The pair broadcast from a small studio with an audience so that the sound of laughter would be heard by listeners. Thus began a new era in broadcasting. Stage comedian Ed Wynn was also an early broadcaster who insisted on having an audience in the studio. He even wore special make-up and costumes for his broadcasts.

The radio career of the Happiness Boys ended on March 9, 1929, when Ernie Hare died. For a short time his daughter Marilyn sang duets with Mr. Jones. He died on November 23, 1940.

Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll first met in 1919 and formed a vaudeville act which they called "Sam 'N Henry." The act was broadcast from Chicago in 1926 on the "Fair Minstrels," a musical program sponsored by the Fair Department Store. The pair later switched the name of their act to AMOS 'N ANDY.

The Pepsodent Hour was first aired on March 19, 1928. Correll played the role of "Andy" Brown while Gosden was heard as both "Amos" Jones and "The Kingfish," George Stevens. Elinor Harriot played the part of Ruby Taylor, the girl Amos courted and wed. Listeners at home waited anxiously as Amos and Ruby expected their first child in 1936. A contest was conducted to name the baby.

The Kingfish was the head of the Mystic Knights of the Sea. His wife, Sapphire, was played by Ernestine Wade.



HOLLYWOOD HOTEL was the first major network radio show to come from the west coast. It premiered on October 5, 1934 over CBS and ran until 1938.

Others in the cast were Madeline Lee as Genevieve Blue, Eddie Green as Stonewall (the lawyer). The theme music heard at the start of each program, for more than 10,000 broadcasts, was "The Perfect Song" composed by Joseph Carl Breil.

EDDIE CANTOR was an established vaudeville performer when he made his radio debut on the Rudy Vallee Show in February, 1931. He launched his own comedy show the following September. During many years of broadcasting he introduced several singing protégés: Bobby Breen, Deanna Durbin, Dinah Shore (1941) and Eddie Fisher. Cookie Fairchild conducted the orchestra.

Bert Gordon was heard as the Mad Russian who always asked "How do you do?" Dave Rubinoff was also featured. He played his violin but his lines were spoken by actors Lionel Stander or Teddy Bergman (later known as Alan Reed). Harry Von Zell was the announcer. The show's theme was "I'd Like to Spend One Hour With You."

Cantor was born Ed Iskowitz in New York City in 1892. He married Ida Tobias in 1914. They had five daughters: Marjorie, Janet, Natalie, Edna and Marilyn. The girls were often the butt of many jokes. It was Eddie who suggested the "March of Dimes" idea to President F. D. Roosevelt. His daughter Marjorie died of cancer in 1959. Ida passed away in 1962, and Eddie followed on October 10, 1964.

GEORGE BURNS AND GRACIE ALLEN made their first broadcast overseas for the BBC in 1930 after touring with a vaudeville dancing team in the United States. They made their American debut in radio over CBS in 1932 on the Robert Burns Panatela program. The show was a half hour of comedy and music with Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. Later they had their own program. The theme music heard on their show was entitled "Love Nest." Harry Von Zell and Jimmy Wallington were the announcers. Mel Blanc was heard frequently as the happy (?) postman. Gracie retired in 1958 and passed away in 1964.

FRED ALLEN made his radio debut on the Linit Bath Club Revue on October 23, 1932, over CBS. The show enjoyed



Dick Powell gained radio fame as the host of **Hollywood Hotel** in 1934. On April 24, 1949 he returned to the air to star in **Richard Diamond, Private Detective**.

a twenty-six week run. His next show was called *The Salad Bowl Revue* (sponsored by Hellman's Mayonnaise company). A feature on this series were the *Question Box* and *Etiquette Department*, in which Allen answered questions and offered advice. He next starred on the *Sal Hepatica Revue* which was a half-hour program. It was expanded to a full hour and re-named *The Hour of Smiles*. The show's theme was "Smiles," which was played by the *Ipana Troubadours*. Undergoing another change of format his *Town Hall Tonight* series was next. Features were the *Town Hall News* and *Professor Quigly*, the world's greatest escape artist.

Allen began a long-running radio feud with Jack Benny when a young violinist, *Stewart Canin*, appeared on his show and played "*Flight of the Bumblebee*." Allen complimented the boy and said that if Benny was listening and had heard the tyke's rendition, he should "hang his head in symphonic shame, and pluck the horsehair out of his bow and return them to the tail of the stallion from which they had been taken . . ."

On Benny's next broadcast, he insulted Allen in return and the feud was on. At one time a highly publicized boxing match between the pair was scheduled to take place in the ballroom of the *Pierre Hotel*—and broadcast live on Benny's radio program on March 14, 1937. The two comedians appeared in a motion picture entitled *Love Thy Neighbor* (1940).

Other popular features on the *Town Hall Tonight* series were the satires about a Chinese detective named *One Long Pan*. Also "*The People You Didn't Expect to Meet*" feature, which brought real people with unusual occupations to the microphone, such as a sausage stuffer and "the last *Hurdy-Gurdy* player in *Manhattan*." The *Mighty Allen Art Players* were also heard.

"*Allen's Alley*" was begun on December 12, 1942. Some of the first characters heard were "*Senator Bloat*" played by *Jack Smart*, "*John Doe, average man*" played by *John Brown*, *Socrates Mulligan* played by *Charlie Cantor* and *Falstaf*



KATE SMITH made her radio debut on her 22nd birthday on May 1, 1931. She began her **KATE SMITH SPEAKS** daily broadcasts in 1938. It is estimated she performed more than 15,500 radio programs and recorded 2,260 songs.

Openshaw, the Bowery Bard played by Alan Reed. After three years of experimentation with characters, a set of permanent tenants moved into Allen's Alley. They were Senator Beauregard Claghorn (Kenny Delmar), Titus Moody (Parker Fennelly), Ajax Cassidy (Petter Donald) and Mrs. Nussbaum (Minerva Pious). Mrs. Nussbaum, the former Pansy Schwartz, complained of her problems with her lazy husband "Pierre." Miss Pious was also heard as Blossom Rappaport, Boots Mallory and Chuckles Rafferty. Allen's real-life wife, Portland Hoffa, opened the show by calling, "Mr. Al-len!!!"

On June 28, 1942, Allen's radio show was cut to a half hour. After eight years, thirty nine weeks each year, the program was heard for the last time on June 26, 1949, with Jack Benny as guest. In 1948 Allen's chief competition was the radio quiz Stop the Music. He offered a cash award of \$5,000 to any listener who was contacted by the rival show while listening to his show.

On television Allen sat in frequently on the panel of What's My Line? His letters to cronies and critics are classics of dry humor. He died of a heart attack at the age of sixty one on March 17, 1956.

JACK BENNY's first air appearance was made on May 2, 1932. It wasn't long before he had a show of his own. His real-life wife, Mary Livingston, was heard as his air girl friend. She worked at May Department Store and often spoke of her sister "Babe" and read letters from her mother. Eddie "Rochester" Anderson drove the famous Maxwell (with sound effects supplied by Mel Blanc). On early broadcasts, Benny was often visited by a big bear named "Carmichael." Others featured were Benny Rubin and Sam Hearn as Schleppeyman with his familiar greeting of "Hello Stranger!" Artie Auerbach was heard as Mr. Kitzel, a hot dog vender who served "pickle in the middle and the mustard on top?" Bea Benaderet and Sara Berner portrayed two daffy switchboard operators, Gertrude Gearshift and Mabel Flapsaddle. Frank Nelson plagued poor Jack with his line "Ye-e-e-sss?" Guitarist Frankie Remley of the Phil Harris band became the butt



Seen here is radio's musical favorites, handsome tenor, Morton (Carolina Moon) Downey and the three lovely Pickens sisters. In 1939 this musical foursome was heard on the **Evening in Paris** program over NBC, Monday nights at 8:30 p.m.

of many of Benny's gags. On the air Remley's lines were read by Elliott Lewis.

Through the years, the orchestras of Don Bester, Carl Hoff, Peter Van Steeden and Phil Harris supplied the music for vocalists Frank Parker, Kenny Baker, Dennis Day and the Sportsmen.

Jack attempted on-the-air solos on his violin of "Love in Bloom" and "Etude No. 1" (a violin exercise by Kreutzer). His money, which he kept in a vault in the cellar, and his age were the butt of many jokes. He remained "39" through 1948 when at last he had an "on the air birthday" and finally became "forty." Benny entered television in October, 1949, and had a regular weekly series through 1956.

Jim and Marian Jordan lay legitimate claim to having created a forerunner of soap opera with their "Smith Family" series heard in 1925. A year later they were being billed as "The O'Henry Twins." They guested on Don McNeill's Breakfast Club.

The Jordans lost their own identity completely when they launched their famed program FIBBER McGEE & MOLLY on April 16, 1935. The McGees lived at 79 Wistful Vista where Fibber's closet erupted more voraciously than Mt. Vesuvius. They were visited by characters such as the snobbish Mrs. Uppington played by Isabel Randolph. Marlin Hurt was heard as their maid. Nick Depopolous had a preposterous Greek accent, and Wallace Wimpole complained about his big, old wife "Sweetie Face." Both parts were played by Bill Thompson. He was also heard as "The Old Timer" who invariably squelched Fibber's fantastic tales by saying "That ain't the way I hear-ed it, Johnny!" Gale Gordon was the pompous Mayor LaTrivia, and Arthur Q. Bryan was heard as Doc Gamble. Hal Peary was first heard in 1937 as Fibber's little chum. Later he introduced his famous characterization of Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve. Molly changed her versatile voice to be heard as the little pixie, Teeny, who queried McGee "Whatcha doin', huh mister, whatcha doin'?" She died at the age of sixty-two on April 7, 1961.



Bandleader KAY KYSER'S KOLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE premiered in 1938. One of his best remembered expressions was "That's Right — You're **WRONG!**" One of his cohorts was funnyman Merwyn A. Bogue who was known as 'Ish Kabibble.'

The show was sponsored for many years by the Johnson Wax company. Harlow Wilcox was the announcer and Billy Mills orchestra supplied the music for the singing King's Men (Ken Darby, Jon Dodson, Bud Linn and Rad Robinson).

Actor-writer-comedian Goodman Ace and his real life wife Jane (Sherwood) were known as radio's EASY ACES.

The show was born on the spot in 1930 when Jane visited her husband at the studio where he was broadcasting and ad-libbed a fifteen minute show. She was an immediate comedy sensation. Their show ran regularly through 1944 when it left the air. The Aces returned in 1948 to resume broadcasting for CBS. This time around the show was called "Mr. Ace and Jane." The show's theme was "Manhattan Serenade." During the years 1951-52 "Jane Ace, Disc Jockey" was heard with Goodman as a permanent guest.

Fanny Brice introduced her terrible tot characterization of BABY SNOOKS to radio listeners on The Ziegfeld Follies of the Air show in the early '30's. Later the sketch was heard on The Maxwell House Coffee Time, The Palmolive Beauty Box Theater and The Good News of 1940 program. Jack Arthur was the first actor to play the role of her harassed Daddy. Alan Reed followed as the maligned parent and finally Hanley Stafford took over the part when the regular radio series began in 1944. The cast of regulars included Lalive Brownell and Arlene Harris as Mommie Higgins. Baby brother "Robespierre" was portrayed by actress Leone Ledoux and Phoebe was played by Sara Berner. The orchestra was conducted by Carmen Dragon and the show's theme was "Rock-A-Bye, Baby." Announcers were Ken Roberts and Harlow Wilcox. Writers David Freedman and Phil Rapp are acknowledged with creating much of the Baby Snooks character. Miss Brice passed away on May 29, 1951.

LUM AND ABNER (Chester Lauck and Norris Goff) were the proprietors of the "Jot 'Em Down Store" in Pine Ridge, Arkansas. First heard over a local station on April 26, 1931, a few broadcasts later they went on the national network and continued through 1954. Lauck played the roles



KAY KYSER'S KOLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE featured many popular vocalists including Mike Douglas and Ginny Simms. Harry Babbitt, shown here, supplied many types of vocals, including novelty tunes like "Three Little Fishes."

of Lum Edwards, Grandpappy Spears, Snake Hogan and Cedric Wahunt. Goff was heard as Abner Peabody, Dick Huddleston, Doc Miller and Squire Skimp. Zasu Pitts was a regular member of the cast for a while.

UNCLE EZRA was first heard over WLS on May 14, 1934. The fictitious little radio station "E-Z-R-A" was known as "the powerful five-watter in the friendly city of Rosedale." The program developed a large following of loyal listeners in a short time. It was heard for fifteen minutes three times each week. The Hoosier Hot Shots presented their musical antics while Uncle Ezra (Pat Barrett) would sing or attempt to dance, but his knees would usually buckle. A continuing story line was woven into the format. At one time the plot concerned a baby girl who was abandoned in the hallway of Station EZRA. A contest was staged to name the baby and eventually she was given the name of "Toots."

"Ezra P. Waters—the old Jumping Jenny Wren" was played by Pat Barrett. His wife Nora was heard as "Cecilia." The program was heard until April 1939. Mr. Barrett passed away in 1961.

Hal Peary was first heard on the Fibber McGee and Molly show in 1937 as "Fibber's little chum." He later originated his characterization of Throckmorton P. (for Peary) Gildersleeve on this same show. He began his own series, THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE, for NBC on August 31, 1941. Ten years later he switched to CBS for the HAL PEARY SHOW (or HONEST HAROLD, THE HOME MAKER) which ran for one year.

When Peary left the Gildersleeve show, an actor with a very similar sounding voice, Willard Waterman, took over. Waterman was starred in a television series (39 episodes) in 1956.

Gildersleeve was the Water Commissioner of Summerfield. His nephew LeRoy was played by Walter Tetley. Niece Marjorie by Lurene Tuttle and later by Marylee Robb. Lillian Randolph was heard as their laughing maid, Birdie. Earle Ross was Judge Hooker, Arthur Q. Bryan was Floyd the



PAUL WHITEMAN'S orchestra was one of the first large orchestras to broadcast. He remained active in radio for many years. In the early 1950's he had a disc jockey program heard over ABC.

barber and Richard LeGrand was Peavey, the druggist who always used to say "Oh, I wouldn't say *that*."

Gildy and his pals had a club which they called "The Jolly Boys." They usually ended their meetings with a singing session. The Jolly Boys kept trying to marry Gildy off to the southern belle, the tantalizing Leila Ransom as played by Shirley Mitchell.

Peary's real name was Harold Jose Pereira da Faria. He was born at San Leandro, California of Portuguese-Flemish ancestry. He made his debut at the age of thirteen, billed as "The Oakland Tribune Boy Caruso." RKO Studios turned out a series of five Gildersleeve films between 1942 and 1944.

The phone at DUFFY'S TAVERN was always answered by the flat-voiced Archie (Ed Gardner) saying: "Hello, Duffy's Tavern where the elite meet to eat . . . Archie the manager speakin' . . . Duffy ain't here . . . Oh, hello, *Duffy!*"

Gardner was the writer, director, producer of a radio program from New York in 1939 which was called "This is New York." When he was unable to cast the right actor in the role of the English-language-murdering "Archie," he decided to play the role himself. The series failed, but he retained the Archie character and wrote a new show around him—Duffy's Tavern. The show had an initial air run of thirteen weeks and was then dropped because of lack of a sponsor. The program was revived in March 1941 and gained great popularity.

Gardner's real-life wife, actress Shirley Booth, was the first "Miss Duffy," the boss's man-hungry daughter. Miss Booth played the role for five years. When she left a long series of replacements followed, including Florence Halop, Florence Robinson, Sandra Gould, Gloria Erlanger, Pauline Drake, Ann Thomas and Hazel Shermet (who was the 15th Miss Duffy). The role was considered one of the least coveted in radio.

Other characters who frequented the fictional tavern were Eddie Green as Eddie the waiter, and Charlie Cantor as the dense Finnegan.

Many taverns around the country were re-named in honor of Duffy. The show's theme was "When Irish Eyes are Smil-



TONY WONS SCRAPBOOK program combined poetry, philosophy and humor. He was first heard in 1930. Wons' catch-phrase was "Are ya listenin?" The program was highly popular through 1941.

ing." It left the air in 1951. Mr. Gardner died on August 17, 1963.

Speaking of telephones, **PHONE AGAIN, FINNEGAN** was heard in 1946 starring comedian Stuart Erwin as the zany manager of an apartment building. This was during the time of the housing shortage.

ETHEL AND ALBERT (Arbuckle) were the happiest couple in Sandy Harbor. The show was written by Peg Lynch who also played Ethel. The show was first aired over station **KATE** in Albert Lea, Minnesota. It went on the ABC network in 1944. Actor Richard Widmark played Albert for the first six months and then Alan Bunce took over. The only other voice heard in the cast was the cooing of "Baby Suzy" supplied by Madeleine Pierce.

Peg Lynch and Alan Bunce were later starred in another daily serial entitled **THE COUPLE NEXT DOOR**. The program left the air on November 25, 1960. Mr. Bunce died on April 27, 1965.

AL PEARCE was heard as a low-pressure salesman, Elmer Blurt. He always muttered to himself as he knocked on a door, "Nobody's at home, I hope, I hope, I hope." Other zanies featured on Pearce's radio show were Mabel Todd and Morey Amsterdam. Harry Stewart did his comic Swedish characterization of Yogi Yorgeson, Kitty O'Neil was heard as the Laughing Lady and Arlene Harris was the Human Chatterbox who carried on marathon telephone conversation with her girl friend, Maizie. Bill Comstock was featured as "Tizzie Lish" who gave out comic recipes. Monroe Upton was heard as Lord Bilgewater.

Tuesday evening at 9:30 in 1940, listeners could tune in to **UNCLE WALTER'S DOG HOUSE** program which featured Tom Wallace as Uncle Walt, with vocalist Virginia Verrill, Bob Strange and his weird orchestra and the Dog House Chorus.

One of the first comedy programs was **THE CUCKOO HOUR** written and produced by Raymond Knight, who also was heard as Ambrose J. Weems. Adelina Thomason was Mrs.



PHIL BAKER, an accomplished accordionist and comedian, was first heard as **THE ARMOUR JESTER** on March 17, 1933. After a long career on the air, in 1951 he became the emcee of the **TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT** quiz program.

George T. Pennyfeather. Singers Jack Arthur and Mary McCoy were also featured. The program debuted on January 1, 1930, and continued through 1938. Knight gave up the show to work as a writer. He created the serial **HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY** which starred John Raby and Joan Banks.

JOE PENNER was born Josef Pinter in Hungary. He won great favor on American radio with his comedy. Some of his most popular comedy lines were: "Ya wanna buy a duck?" "Don't ever do that!" and "Ooooh, you nasty man!" His theme song was "When the Pussywillow Whispers to the Catnip." He died on January 10, 1941.

"Baron Munchhausen" always asked "Vas you der, Sharlie?" **JACK PEARL** played the Baron and was a great favorite during the 30's.

PARK-YA-KARKUS was a very dense Greek comedy character played by Harry Einstein and first heard on Eddie Cantor's show in 1936. In 1952 Einstein had his own NBC show titled *Meet Me at Parky's*. Minerva Pious was heard as Mrs. Parkyakarkus. Parky had a sister with the unlikely name of Shak-ya-karus—the role was played by Elaine Arden. Sheldon Leonard was heard as Orville Sharp whose catchphrase was "Am I corr-eck-itt?"

CLIFF ARQUETTE endeared himself to millions as Charlie Weaver, reading letters from his mama back in Mt. Idy, with news of Elsie Crack, Leonard Box, Wallace Swine, Grandma Ogg and other folks at Snyder's Swamp. Arquette will also be remembered for his early comedy characterization of "Mrs. Wilson" heard on the *Glamour Manor* show and on the Dick Haymes program. He holds the unique record of appearing on thirteen different radio programs in a single day.

LAUGH WITH KEN MURRAY was heard on Wednesday at 8 p.m. in 1936 over CBS. A half-hour show featuring Russ Morgan and his orchestra with vocals by Phil Reagan. Aiding Murray with the comedy was a new comedienne named Eve Arden. Tony Labriolla was featured as "Oswald" whose catchline was "Oh-h-h, hey-h-h!" The show debuted in 1932.

BOB BURNS, *The Arkansas Traveler*, made his radio



Barbara Luddy and Les Tremayne were the co-stars of **THE FIRST NIGHTER** program in 1937. The show debuted on NBC on December 4, 1930 with plays from the imaginary 'Little Theatre Off Times Square.'

debut on the Rudy Vallee show. In 1936 he joined Bing Crosby on the Kraft Music Hall and was featured as second banana for five years. Later he had his own show featuring Ann Thomas as Sharon O'Shaughnessy. Burns often played his own musical invention which he called his "Bazooka."

Funnymen Russell Pratt and Ransom Sherman were heard as THE TWO DOCTORS. After their program, Laugh Clinic, had been on the air for six weeks, listeners were so convulsed, they clamoured for more. The show was extended to a full hour of mostly ad-libbed loony dialogue, heard over the WABC-Columbia network during the mid '30's.

Sam Lee and Al Shaw were masters of "double talk" featured on the CBS DOUBLE EVERYTHING. Also heard were vocal duo, The Bailey Sisters. Sutton and Bliss on twin pianos, singers Paul Small and Jack Brooks, the Grenadiers Double Quartet and Carl Hohengarten's orchestra.

TIM (Ryan) and IRENE (Noblette) began their radio careers on NBC on the CAREFREE CARNIVAL program, along with singer Hal Gordon. They were also heard with Joe Cook on the CIRCUS NIGHT show. In 1936 they were the summer replacement for Jack Benny on Sunday evenings. The team appeared on most of the top variety shows and for a while had their own program on Mutual along with Teddy Bergman (Alan Reed) as Uncle Happy. In later years Irene (Ryan) was heard on the Jack Carson and Bob Hope shows. In 1962 she was one of the stars of the CBS-TV Beverly Hillbillies (as Granny).

SENATOR FRANKENSTEIN FISHFACE & PROF. WILBERT G. FIBBSBOTTLE (Elmore Vincent and Don Johnson) were featured on Design for Listening show over NBC, Sundays at 4:30 p.m. in 1935.

COL. LEMUEL HAYSEEDUEL Q. STOOPNAGLE & BUDD (F. Chase Taylor and Wilbur Hulick) were heard Sundays at 5:30 p.m. over NBC in 1936. Budd also portrayed the zany "Miss Phoebe B. Beebe." The pair were sometimes known as Hezie & Newton. In 1936 they were the stars of the summer replacement show for Fred Allen.

During the early 40's BOB HOPE reigned supreme over



Olan Soule was kept busy on the airwaves. He began as Barbara Luddy's co-star on **THE FIRST NIGHTER** program in 1943 and continued through the program's end in 1949.

the airwaves. His broadcasts for armed forces all over the country earned him the spot of "Number One Comedian" for the years 1942, 43, 44 and 45. He was aided by Professor Jerry Colonna ("Who's Yehudi?"), Frances Langford and "John L. C. Sivoney" as played by Frankie Fontaine. The orchestras of Skinny Ennis and Les Brown provided the music for guest vocalists like Judy Garland, Gloria Jean and Dorothy Lamour. Trudy Erwin was the voice for the singing commercial about "Poor Miriam (who) neglected using Irium." (Wonder where the yellow went?) The show's sign-off theme was "Thanks For the Memory." The announcer was Wendell Niles.

Attractive Barbara Jo Allen played the homely scatter-brained, man-hunting VERA VAGUE heard frequently with Bob Hope. She first worked as a dramatic actress on Carleton E. Morse's "The Witch of Endor" on which she played the title role. She also was heard on One Man's Family and sometimes played one of Jack Benny's girl-friends, Barbara Whitney.

Another pair of man-hungry old maid characters heard with Hope were BRENDA AND COBINA (Elvia Allman and Blanche Stuart; 1939). Their names were patterned after socialite debutantes Brenda Frazier and Cobina Wright, Jr. The pair called themselves "Brenda LaFrenzy" and "Cobina Fright."

Joan Davis ran the SEALTEST VILLAGE STORE along with Rudy Vallee and Jack Haley. Bert Lahr was a frequent guest. Verna Felton was heard as Blossom Blimp. Miss Davis started in radio with Vallee in 1941. She will be remembered on television for her zany series I Married Joan. She died of a heart attack on May 22, 1961.

JUDY CANOVA made some early air appearances with her sister Anne and brother, Zeke. She had her own program in the mid's 40's featuring Mel Blanc as Pedro, Ruby Dandridge as the maid, Geranium, Sheldon Leonard as her boy friend, Joe Crunchmiller. Also featured were Joseph Kearns, Hans Conreid, Verna Felton, Gale Gordon and Ruth Perrott.



JIMMY WALLINGTON was the announcer on the Eddie Cantor program in 1936. He was also heard on many other shows including **TEX-ACO STAR THEATRE**.

A comedy highlight were the "Maw & Paw" hillbilly skits. Howard Petrie and Vern Smith, were the announcers.

JIMMY DURANTE had his first regular weekly show in 1933. In 1943 he substituted one evening for an ailing Lou Costello on a broadcast with Garry Moore. For the next four years Moore and Durante were a Friday night feature on WABC with Roy Bargy's orchestra, vocalist Georgia (Her Nibbs) Gibbs and comedian Hope Emerson. It was on the Moore-Durante show that his famous sign-off, "Good night, Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are," was first used. Mrs. Calabash is believed to have been a pet name used for Durante's late wife, Jeanne Olsen, whom he wed in 1916. She died in 1943.

Durante was active in radio through 1950 when he entered television. His comedy partner, Lou Clayton is credited with coining the famous nickname "Schnozzola" which Jimmy copyrighted on October 31, 1933 (Registration No. 307,-558). At one time he had his famous nose insured by Lloyds of London for \$100,000.

He wrote such songs as "Inka Dinka Doo," "Umbriago," "You Gotta Start Off Each Day With a Song," "I'm Jimmy That Well Dressed Man," "I Know Darn Well I Can Do Without Broadway-But Can Broadway Do Without Me?," "I Got a Million of Em," and "Hot Cha Cha!"

Also heard on the Durante-Moore show was a comedian named Candy Candido whose catch phrase was "I'm feeling mighty low." He would begin in an amazingly high-pitched falsetto and then switch to a deep guttural voice.

GARRY MOORE began his radio career as a writer and actor on WBAL in Baltimore in 1935. He remained at the station through 1938. In 1939 he had his own weekday program CLUB MATINEE on NBC from Chicago. It was on this show that his long association with Durward Kirby began. One of the features of the show was the out-of-tune orchestra that played such familiar selections as "The William Tell Overture" off beat. Ransom Sherman and Johnny Johnston were heard on the show. It ran through 1943 when



ALICE FROST began her radio career in 1933 and was heard on such popular series as **BIG SISTER**, **MERCURY THEATRE ON THE AIR** and **WOMAN OF COURAGE**. Her best remembered role was 'Pam' on the comedy/mystery series **MR. AND MRS. NORTH**.

Moore teamed up with Durante. Next he was the emcee on the Take It Or Leave It quiz. In 1950 he started his daytime television program and became the moderator on the I've Got a Secret Show on TV in 1953.

RED SKELTON made his radio debut in a guest spot with Rudy Vallee in August 1937. He began his own show, Red Skelton's Scrapbook of Satire in 1942. It was here that he introduced his characterizations of Clem Kadiddlehopper, Deadeye, Willy Lump-Lump, J. Newton Numbskull and Bolivar Shagnasty. Also there was Junior, the mean little kid who chortled with glee: "If I dood it, I gets a whippin'—I dood it anyway!" Junior's Grandma was played by Verna Felton. Others featured were Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard, Lurene Tuttle, Gee Gee Pearson, Marlin Hurt and Shirley Mitchell. David Rose's orchestra supplied the music. Announcers were Rod O'Conner and Pat McGeehan. Skelton entered television in 1951.

Philip Rapp created THE BICKERSONS, a snarling husband and wife who were featured in frequent skits on the Chase and Sanborn Hour. John was played by Don Ameche and Blanche by Frances Langford, and at times, by Marsha Hunt. A then unknown Danny Thomas was sometimes heard as John's brother, Amos.

BLONDIE based on the comic strip by Chic Young debuted on the air in 1939. The show opened with announcer Bill Goodwin saying: "Uh-uh-uh . . . Don't touch that dial! It's time for . . ." And then Arthur Lake, as Dagwood would wail . . . "B-l-o-o-n-d-i-e!!!"

Penny Singleton is the actress most closely associated with the title role. When she left the series in March of 1949, Anne Rutherford took over. Patricia Van Cleve (Mrs. Arthur Lake) was also heard in the role.

The Bumsteads lived on Shadylane Avenue. Dagwood's boss, Mr. Dithers was played by Hanley Stafford with Alvia Allman as his wife, Cora. The neighbor, Herb Woodley was played by Frank Nelson and Mary Jane Croft was his wife, Harriet. Baby Dumpling was first portrayed by actress Leone



BETTY AND BOB, one of the first soap operas of the air, premiered on NBC on October 10, 1932. Early stars of the series were Don Ameche and Beatrice Churchill.

Ledoux, but as the character grew up to become "Alexander" young actors Larry Sims, Jeffrey Silver and Tommy Cook took over. Cookie was played by Marlene Ames, Joan Rae and Norma Jean Nilsson.

A night time continuing comedy-drama show was ABIE'S IRISH ROSE, based on the play by Anne Nichols. It told of the woes of a young Jewish boy who married an Irish colleen—but there was much more laughter than tears. Abie was played at times by Richard Bond, Sydney Smith, Richard Coogan and Clayton "Bud" Collyer. Rosemary, his bride, was played by Betty Winkler, Mercedes McCambridge, Julie Stevens and Marion Shockley. Solomon Levy was played by Alfred White and Alan Reed. Mr. Cohen was played by Menasha Skulnik and Anna Appel was heard as his wife. Patrick Joseph Murphy was played by William Fay and Walter Kinsella. The secretary, Casey, was played by Ann Thomas. Complications galore arose with the birth of twins. Voices for the babies were supplied by actress Dolores Gillen. The announcer for the series was Howard Petrie and the musical theme was "My Wild Irish Rose." The series debuted on Jan. 24, 1942.

THE LIFE OF RILEY series began in 1944 with Lionel Stander as Chester A. Riley ("What a revoltin' development this is!") and Grace Coppin as his wife, Peg. The roles were taken over by William Bendix and Paula Winslowe. Their children, Junior and Babs were played at times by Jackie Grimes, Scotty Beckett, Conrad Binyon, Tommy Cook, Peggy Conklin, Sharon Douglas and Barbara Eiler. The friendly undertaker, Digger O'Dell was portrayed by John Brown ("I got to be shovelin' off!") Waldo Binny was played by Dink Trout, while Charlie Cantor was heard as Uncle Buckley and Hans Conreid as Uncle Baxter.

When Riley was brought to television, Jackie Gleason was the first actor to play the leading role. Later Bendix took over. A movie version was made with Bendix and Rosemary DeCamp as his wife. Mr. Bendix died of pneumonia on December 14, 1964.



MA PERKINS was played by an attractive young actress, Virginia Payne, when the show first went on the air on December 4, 1933. She appeared in 7,065 daily episodes during the next 27 years. The show left the air on November 25, 1960.

LIFE WITH LUIGI was a comedy series about the trials and tribulations of an Italian immigrant. J. Carrol Naish was starred with Alan Reed as his friend Pasquale. Jody Gilbert was the very plump Rosa who had her eye on Luigi. The immigrant took English lessons from kindly Miss Spaulding (played by Mary Shipp).

MY FRIEND IRMA, a dimwit secretary, was played on CBS in 1947 by champion of all dumb blondes, Marie Wilson. The series was created and directed by Cy Howard. It began as a low-budget sustaining program, but soon found a sponsor. Irma's roommate, Jane Stacy, was played by Cathy Lewis and later by Joan Banks. Alan Reed was Irma's boss, Mr. Clyde, and Jane's socialite boy friend, Richard Rhineland, was played by Leif Erickson. Irma's boy friend, Al, was portrayed by John Brown. The girls' landlady, Mrs. O'Reilly, was played by Gloria Gordon, mother of actor Gale Gordon. Bea Benaderet was heard as Amber Lipscomb. A movie version in 1949 starred Miss Wilson with Diana Lynn as her roommate.

Two early comedy shows had similar names, **JOE AND MABEL TURP** which starred Jackson Beck and Patsy Campbell, and just plain **JOE AND MABEL** which starred Ted deCorsia and Ann Thomas.

OUR MISS BROOKS starred Eve Arden in 1948. Connie Brooks taught English at Madison High School where the long suffering principal, Mr. Conklin, was played by Gale Gordon. Dick Crenna was the very dense Walter Denton and Gloria McMillan was heard as Harriet Conklin. Jeff Chandler played Mr. Boynton, the bashful biology teacher. Jane Morgan was heard as Mrs. Davis, the landlady, and she had a cat named Minerva. The television series began in 1952 with Miss Arden and Robert Rockwell as Mr. Boynton.

In 1951 **MY FAVORITE HUSBAND** starred Lucille Ball as Liz Cooper. Her husband, George, was played in the initial show by Lee Bowman and then Richard Denning took over the role. Bea Benaderet was the nosey neighbor, Mrs. Atterbury. The series eventually evolved into TV's *I Love Lucy*.



Actress Bess Johnson played a character by the same name in the soap opera **HILLTOP HOUSE**. In March of 1941 the title of the show was changed to **THE STORY OF BESS JOHNSON**, with Miss Johnson continuing in the leading role.

THE ALDRICH FAMILY was first heard as a comedy skit on the Rudy Vallee show. Later it was featured on the Kate Smith program. In September 1938 it became a regular series of its own. Ezra Stone who had played the role of Henry in the stage hit, *What a Life*, repeated the role for radio. When he entered the armed service during World War II, actor Norman Tokar took over. Others who played the role were Raymond Ives, Dickie Jones and Bobby Ellis. Mr. (Sam) Aldrich was first played by Clyde Fillmore and later House Jameson. Mrs. (Alice) Aldrich was played by both Lea Penman and Katharine Raht. Sister Mary was Betty Field, Jone Allison, Mary Mason, Charita Bauer, Mary Shipp, Mary Rolfe and Ann Lincoln. Henry's pal, Homer Brown was Jackie Kelk. Mr. Brown was played by Howard Smith and Ed Begley and Mrs. Brown by Agnes Moorehead. Judith Abbott was heard as Agnes Lawson and Ethel Wilson was Aunt Harriet. Henry's girl friend was named Kathleen Anderson.

Another popular family series was **THAT BREWSTER BOY** starring Dick York as Joey Brewster, with Hugh Studebaker and Constance Crowder as his parents. Patricia Dunlap was his sister Mary, and Jane Webb played his girl friend, Minerva.

Among other family situation comedies were **MEET CORLISS ARCHER**, which starred Janet Waldo. The series was based on the stage hit, *Kiss and Tell*. **A DATE WITH JUDY** starred Dellie Ellie, Louise Erickson and Ann Gillis. Judy's boy friend, Oogie Pringle was played by Harry Harvey and Dick Crenna. **FATHER KNOWS BEST** began as a radio series starring Robert Young with June Whitley as his wife and Rhoda Williams, Ted Donaldson and Norma Jean Nilsson as their offspring.

MY LITTLE MARGIE with Gale Storm and Charles Farrell and **DECEMBER BRIDE** starring Spring Byington both started as radio shows before going into television.

BOB AND RAY will be remembered as great satirists. Bob Elliott played characters ranging from Wally Bellew, the remote location interviewer; Tex Blaisdell, cowboy and west-



YOUNG WIDDER BROWN came to NBC on September 26, 1938. It was billed as 'the dramatic story of a very human mother's duty to her children, in conflict with the dictates of her heart.' The show starred Florence Freeman.

ern entertainer; and Steve Bosco, sportscaster (usually a little bit under the weather). His sidekick, Ray Goulding, played Mary Magoon who gave out recipes and Biff Burns, another newscaster who displayed an egotistical ignorance. Bob and Ray satirized soap operas such as "Mary Backstage, Noble Wife" and "One Feller's Family." In the latter, Ray played Mother Butcher who usually wound up exasperatedly telling Father Butcher (Bob) to "shut up and stop mumbling, you senile old man." They also portrayed Claude and Clyde on the Gourmet Club. Their sign-off was "Write if you get work . . . and hang by your thumbs."

Ann Sothern starred on the air as MAISIE, the Brooklyn blonde with a heart of gold. The show debuted on CBS on Thursday, July 12, 1945. John Brown was heard as her boss, Mr. Dorsey, and Wally Maher was her boy friend, Mike.

THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET began on CBS in 1944. The Nelsons' sons, David and Ricky were portrayed by Tommy Bernard and Henry Blair. However, in 1949, their real life sons began to play themselves. The series went into television on ABC in the fall of 1952.

PHIL HARRIS AND ALICE FAYE starred on the Fitch Bandwagon show. In the family situation comedy series, their daughters Alice and Phyllis were played by Jeanine Roose and Anne Whitfield. Walter Tetley was heard as the grocery boy, Julius Abbruzio, and Arthur Q. Bryan was Waymond Wadcliffe.



Wendy Drew was the second actress to play the leading role in the soap opera **YOUNG WIDDER BROWN**. New Wever co-starred as 'Anthony Lorrington.'

THEATRE OF THE IMAGINATION

(When the radio dial opened the door to live drama)

Radio presented a "theatre in the living room." In the listener's mind's eye were seen productions more lavish than the motion picture or television screens could ever reflect.

Radio's first full-hour dramatic series was entitled *THE TRUE STORY HOUR WITH MARY AND BOB*. The show debuted on CBS in January of 1928. By the following October it ranked second in popularity only to Roxy's Gang. It ran for four and a half years. Mary was played by Nora Stirling and Bob by William Brenton, Cecil Secrest and David Ross. The show was written and directed by Bill Sweets. The announcers were Ted Husing and Paul Douglas.

In the fall of 1928 NBC presented *REAL FOLKS*, a drama series. Tom Brown was one of the child stars heard on the program. It was sponsored by Chesebrough Mfg. Co. A newspaper entitled "Thompkins' Corners Enterprise" was put out to create interest in the program.

THE FIRST NIGHTER began in 1929, originating in Chicago but later moving to Hollywood. It was said to be broadcast from "the Little Theatre off Times Square." The show's host, the "genial first nighter," was played at times by Charles P. Hughes, Bret Morrison, Marvin Miller, Don Briggs and Rye Billsbury. The first co-stars were Don Ameche and June Meredith, 1929-36. Betty Lou Gerson replaced Miss Meredith in 1936. Later that year a new set of co-stars took over—Barbara Luddy and Les Tremayne. In 1943 Olan Soule replaced Mr. Tremayne. Miss Luddy remained with the show until it left the air in 1953. The show's musical theme was



PORTIA FACES LIFE was a soap opera about a lady lawyer. The show debuted on CBS on October 7, 1940. Actress Lucille Wall starred in this story 'reflecting the courage, spirit and integrity of American women everywhere.'

"Neapolitan Nights." At intermission an usher would call: "Smoking in the downstairs and outer lobby, only, please!" The show was sponsored for many years by Campana Italian Balm, a beauty aide.

Kay Van Riper was the author, director and star of a series called *ENGLISH CORONETS*. The series was recorded in the studios of KFWB in Los Angeles and distributed for air play around the country. Others featured in the cast were: Hanley Stafford, Gale Gordon, Mary Jane Higby and True Boardman.

Another early "recorded" drama series was *DON HANCOCK* which starred True Boardman. Others heard in the cast were Mary Jane Higby, Barbara Luddy, Gale Gordon and John Gibson.

A unique serial drama-with-music debuted over NBC in 1932. Titled *SETH PARKER*, the show was created and written by Philips H. Lord (who later gave us *Gangbusters*, *Mr. District Attorney* and several other crime-war dramas). Heard every Sunday night, the setting for the home-spun folksy stories was the fictional town of Jonesport, Maine. Lord played the title role. His real life wife, Sophia M. Lord, was heard as Lizzie Peters. Ma Parker was played by actresses, Effie Palmer and Barbara Bruce. The music on the show was mostly hymn singing. The accompanist was Polly Robertson. A Hollywood movie was made of the popular series; it was titled *Way Back Home*.

In 1936, to gain publicity for the radio show, Mr. Lord attempted a voyage from New York to the South Pacific in a three mastered schooner. The small craft was caught in a tropical storm en route to Samoa, and fortunately the H.M.S. *Australia* came to the rescue.

Lord was the first successful independent producer in radio. Among his popular early series were *THE COUNTRY DOCTOR*, *WOMAN IN LOVE* and *SKY BLAZERS* (true aviation stories).

Another highly popular dramatic show was *GRAND HOTEL*. It featured the talents of Anne Seymour, Betty Winkler,



PORTIA FACES LIFE. The radio cast gathered around the microphone: Esther Ralston, Donald Briggs and Lucille Wall, as Portia.

Don Ameche, Barbara Luddy, Olan Soule, Jim Ameche and Raymond Edward Johnson.

THE CAVALCADE OF AMERICA debuted on the air on Wednesday, October 9, 1935, at 8 p.m. It was a half hour program sponsored by DuPont and presented dramatizations of events in American history. Bud Collyer was the announcer and Donald Voorhes conducted the orchestra. Rosa Rio was heard at the organ.

THE MERCURY THEATER was founded for CBS in 1938 by the then twenty-three year old author, artist, director, manager, and actor, Orson Welles. The show employed young hopefuls such as Vincent Price, Joseph Cotten, Agnes Moorehead, Everett Sloane, Ray Collins, Martin Gabel, George Coulouris, Elliott Reid, Alice Frost, Whitford Kane and Ruth Ford.

Its best remembered broadcast took place on Halloween eve, October 30, 1938 (Sunday 8-9 p.m. EST over WABC and CBS). It was a dramatization of H. G. Wells "War of the World." The program began as a routine broadcast of live music with an announcer saying, "From the Meridan Room of the Park Plaza in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra." The voice of a second announcer (Dan Seymour) cut in with "Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin. At twenty minutes before 8 o'clock Central Time, Professor Farrell of Mt. Jennings Observatory, Chicago, reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars."

After several more "bulletins" came the shocking report that a giant meteor had landed near Princeton, New Jersey, killing 1,500 people. Later came yet another shocking bulletin stating that it had not been a meteor, but a huge metal cylinder containing Martians armed with death rays! Mass hysteria seized thousands of radio listeners.

Before the program ended, the CBS switchboards were swamped with frantic calls from listeners who believed the attack was real. Special announcements to the effect that it



VIC AND SADE, “radio’s homefolks who lived in the little house halfway up in the next block,” was first heard on NBC on June 29, 1932. It was written and created by Paul Rhymer. “Victor Gook” was played by Art Van Harvey.

was only a "play" had to be continued all evening before the nation quieted down. CBS and the FCC received hundreds of complaints about the incident and the FCC advised broadcasters to avoid any repetition of the incident. Simulated news broadcasts were to be avoided. All in all, it was a memorable Halloween prank!

THE COLUMBIA WORKSHOP heard over CBS was a workshop for unknown actors appearing in the works of mostly new writers. Among the production personnel were Orson Welles, William Robson, Max Wylie, Douglas Coulter and Davidson Taylor. Scripts were by William Saroyan, Archibald MacLeish, Dorothy Parker, Norman Corwin and many others. One of the most memorial broadcasts on this series was aired on March 7, 1940, entitled "My Client Curly." It was a fantasy about a dancing caterpillar. The script was by Norman Corwin and Lucille Fletcher. The play was repeated four weeks later by popular demand.

A later dramatic series on CBS was *TWENTY-SIX BY CORWIN* which debuted on Sunday, May 4, 1941, at 6 p.m. Corwin was the author for the shows used in this workshop series.

A popular daytime favorite was *GRAND CENTRAL STATION* heard on NBC in 1940. The program opened with the sound of train effects as a voice announced: "As a bullet seeks its target, shining rails in every part of our great country are aimed at Grand Central Station, heart of the nation's greatest city. Drawn by the magnetic force, the fantastic metropolis, day and night, great trains rush toward the Hudson River, sweep down its eastern bank for 140 miles, flash briefly past the long red row of tenement houses south of 125th Street, dive with a roar into the two and a half mile tunnel which burrows beneath the glitter and swank of Park Avenue and then . . . (Sound: of escaping steam) . . . Grand Central Station! Crossroads of a million private lives!"

Jack Arthur was the narrator and the program used the talents of performers such as Hume Cronyn, Nancy Coleman, Arnold Moss, Jim Ameche and Mercedes MacCambridge. It left the air in 1954.



“Sade Gook” liked to meet her friend Ruthie Stembottom at the Little Tiny Petite Pheasant Feather Tearoom. Uncle Fletcher’s favorite hangout was the Bright Kentucky Hotel. There were lots of zany doings Monday through Friday on the **VIC AND SADE** program.

By the use of the airwaves *THE COURT OF MISSING HEIRS* tried to locate missing heirs to fortunes, large and small. The emcee of the show was Jim Waters and Rosa Rio was heard at the organ.

Another program which attempted to locate persons was *MR. KEEN, TRACER OF LOST PERSONS*. It was on the air during the years 1938-55. The title role was played by Philip Clarke and Bennett Kilpatrick. Mr. Keen's secretary and aide, Miss Ellis, was played by Irene Hubbard. Jim Kelly was heard as Mike Clancy. The show's theme was aptly titled "Somewhere I'll Find You."

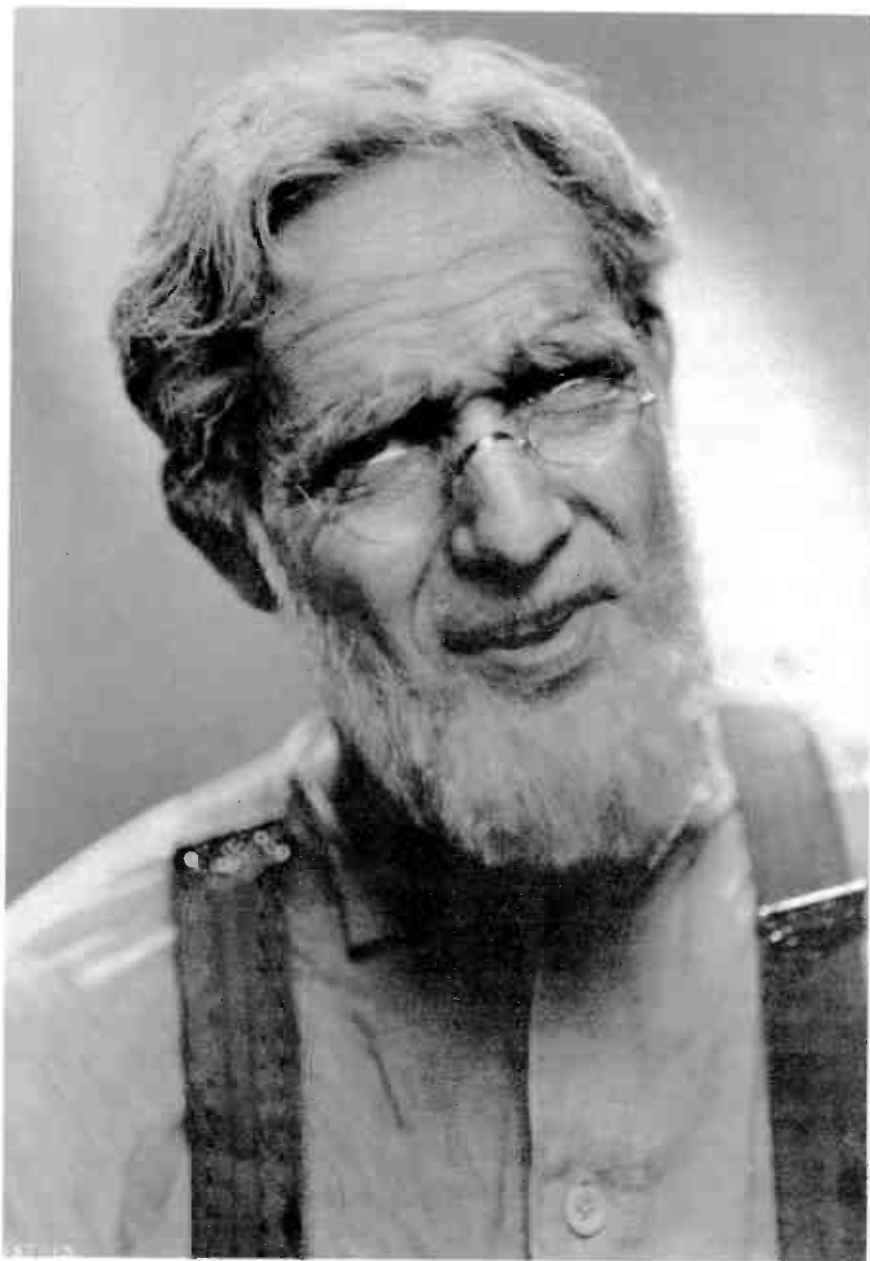
Kindly *DR. CHRISTIAN* was first heard on CBS on November 7, 1937 sponsored by Chesebrough-Pond's, Inc. Veteran actor Jean Hersholt played Dr. Christian. His nurse, Judy Price, was played at times by Lurene Tuttle, Helen Claire and last, but by no means least, Rosemary DeCamp. The series began as a half-hour program on Sunday afternoons from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. for a period of twenty-five weeks. Beginning October, 1938, it moved to Tuesday evenings at 10 to 10:30 p.m. and effective October, 1941, it again moved to the 8:30 to 9:00 p.m. slot and remained there for the duration of its run. Theme music: "Rainbow on the River."

The program conducted a yearly contest for original scripts by amateur writers. The show was produced by Dorothy McCann and directed by John Wilkenson. Art Gilmore was the announcer. The last broadcast was aired on Jan. 6, 1954. Mr. Hersholt died on June 1, 1956.

MAYOR OF THE TOWN was heard on NBC in 1942. It was a comedy-drama series starring Lionel Barrymore. His housekeeper, Marilly, was played by Agnes Moorehead.

On Christmas Day 1935 at 5 p.m. Mr. Barrymore was heard as Scrooge in Charles Dickens classic Christmas Carol on CBS. He was contracted to repeat the portrayal for the next five years. It became a holiday tradition. Mr. Barrymore died on November 15, 1954.

STAGE DOOR CANTEEN went on the air as a weekly broadcast over CBS on July 30, 1942. It was broadcast live



SETH PARKER was an unique drama-with-music that debuted over NBC in 1932. Created and written by Philips H. Lord, the show also starred him in the title role. Mr. Lord also created many other notable radio programs, including **GANG BUSTERS**.

before an audience of service men. Bert Lytell was the emcee. Heard on the first broadcast were Helen Hayes, Irving Berlin, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Barry Wood, Lt. Robert Montgomery and the Raymond Paige orchestra.

Phillips H. Lord was the producer-director of *GANG BUSTERS*. The program opened with a series of sound effects simulating a prison break: The sound of marching feet, machine gun fire and then a siren's wail: "Calling the police! Calling the G-men! Calling all Americans to war on the underworld!"

The announcer would next say: "Gangbusters! With the co-operation of leading law enforcement officials of the United States, Gangbusters presents facts in the relentless war of the police on the underworld . . . Authentic case histories that show the never-ending activity of the police in their work of protecting our citizens."

Narrators for the program were Mr. Lord, Col H. Norman Schwarzkopt and John C. Hilley. The "Chief Investigator" was portrayed by Lewis J. Valentine. At the close of each broadcast, descriptions of the most wanted criminals were aired. Many arrests were made on information supplied by listeners.

Mr. Lord also created the *MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY* program which was first heard on April 4, 1940, on the NBC Red network. Sponsored by Bristol-Myers, it ran through 1952. The program opened with announcer Ed Herlihy (or Fred Uttal) saying: "Mr. District Attorney, champion of the people, defender of truth, guardian of our fundamental rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness . . ."

Then the voice of the D.A. would be heard saying: "And it shall be my duty as District Attorney, not only to prosecute to the limit of the law, all persons accused of crimes perpetrated within this county, but to defend with equal vigor, the rights and privileges of all its citizens . . ."

The D.A. was portrayed by Dwight Weist, Raymond Edward Johnson and Jay Jostyn. His very capable secretary, Miss Miller was played by Vicki Vola and Len Doyle was



CLARA, LU AND EM was an early low-key comic soap opera which began in 1931 and maintained some popularity through 1942. The series featured Louise Starkey (Clara), Isabel Carothers (Lu) and Helen King (Em). After Miss Carothers' death, she was replaced by Harriett Allyn.

heard as Harrington. The show was produced by Edward Byron.

In 1937 *BIG TOWN* debuted from the west coast. It was the story of Steve Wilson, crusading editor of the Illustrated Press. His girl Friday, Lorelei Kilbourne, was the Society Editor of the paper but usually wound up aiding Steve in his adventures. Wilson was played by Edward G. Robinson and Lorelei by Claire Trevor. Later Walter Greaza and Ona Munson took over the roles. In 1943 the series was revived on the air with Edward Pawley and Fran Carlon.

THE BIG STORY dramatized stories of newspaper reporters. At the conclusion of the program the actual reporter was introduced on the air. The narrator for the show was Robert Sloane. The show was seen on television beginning in 1950 with Ben Grauer as host.

CITY DESK was a dramatic series about an ace newspaper reporter. It debuted on CBS on Thursday, January 2, 1941, starring Chester Stratton as Jack Winters and Gertrude Warner as Linda Webster.

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR was the last continuing radio drama carried on a network in 1962. Playing the leading role at various times were: Charles Russell, Edmond O'Brien, John Lund, Bob Bailey, Bob Readick and Mandel Kramer. The program always ended with Johnny itemizing his expenses, then signing off: "Yours truly, Johnny Dollar."

In 1952 the evening radio dramatic programs boasted many big names in their casts. Humphrey Bogart and his actress wife, Lauren Bacall, were heard in *BOLD VENTURE* for NBC; Orson Welles starred in *THE LIVES OF HARRY LIME* for ABC. On the same network, the glamorous Marlene Dietrich was heard on *CAFE ISTANBUL*. Even swash buckling Errol Flynn was the star of *THE MODERN ADVENTURES OF CASANOVA*. Mercedes McCambridge was heard on ABC's *DEFENSE ATTORNEY*.

The theater's "first lady," Helen Hayes, took to the air in 1935 and was heard on *THE HELEN HAYES THEATRE*



Actress Clair Niessen took over the role of **MARY NOBEL** and was heard through the show's end. Her co-star was James Meighan as 'matinee idol, Larry Noble.'

program over NBC. She was also heard in the continuing drama *BAMBI* heard each Monday evening at 8:00 P.M. on NBC. In 1935 she was starred in another evening serial *THE NEW PENNY* as Penelope Edwards, guardian for foundling babies. The program was written by actress Edith Meiser and was heard on the NBC network.

A unique program was *DEADLINE DRAMA*. The show featured a regular cast including Irene Wicker (The Singing Lady), Frank Lovejoy, Joan Banks and Bob White. Listeners were invited to submit a twenty word "situation" and the cast was given two minutes to improvise a "drama." All dialogue on the show was ad-libbed.

WINGS OF DESTINY starred Carlton KaDell and later John Hodiak as daring pilot Steve Benton. Betty Arnold played Peggy Banning and Henry Hunter was heard as the mechanic, Brooklyn. Contests were run in conjunction with the program and participants were eligible to win an airplane!

An unique dramatic series heard over NBC in 1935 was *TONY AND GUS* which was created and written by George Frame Brown who played Gus, a Swede. Tony was played by opera star Mario Chamlee. It was broadcast Monday through Fridays at 7:15 p.m. with a repeat broadcast at 11.15 p.m.

MYSTERY IN THE AIR made its air debut on Thursday, July 5, 1945 at 7 p.m. Stephen Courtleigh was heard as detective, Stonewall Scott. Joan Vitez was Dr. Alison, Ed Jerome as Dr. Dietrich and Geoffrey Bryant as Tex.



BACKSTAGE WIFE premiered on the Mutual network on August 5, 1935. The first actress to portray 'Mary Nobel' was the lovely Vivian Fridell, seen here in a coy pose.

VI

HOLLYWOOD ON THE AIR

"Lux presents Hollywood" became a regular weekly phrase to radio listeners. It introduced adaptations of motion pictures which oftentimes starred actors in their original roles. The program was first broadcast over NBC from New York on October 14, 1934. Guest stars were Miriam Hopkins and John Boles in *Seventh Heaven*. The host for the show was director Cecil B. DeMille. The announcer was Mel Ruick and the show was produced and directed by Frank Woodruff. When he gave up the directorial duties, Fred MacKaye took over.

The program moved to Hollywood on June 1, 1936. The first broadcast from the west coast co-starred Clark Gable and Marlene Dietrich in *The Legionaire and the Lady*. It was broadcast from the CBS Playhouse on Vine Street in Hollywood before a studio audience of eleven hundred. DeMille left the show as host on January 22, 1945 because of a union dispute. William Keighley took over and continued until September 8, 1952 when Mr. Irving Cummings became the new host. LUX RADIO THEATRE remained a favorite for more than twenty years. It was heard for the last time on June 7, 1955 with Walter Pidgeon starring in *Edward, My Son*.

Some of the memorable broadcasts heard were: *Stella Dallas* with Barbara Stanwyck and John Boles; *Disraeli* with George Arliss and his wife, Florence; *Poppy* with W.C. Fields; *Seventh Heaven* with Jean Arthur and Don Ameche; *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (the character of Dopey spoke no lines, but was represented on the air by a ringing bell); *Cardinal Richelieu* with George Arliss; *It Happened One*



Elaine Carrington, one of radio's most prolific writers of soap operas, wrote more than 12,000 scripts. Seen seated here with members of cast of **ROSEMARY**. Standing behind Miss Carrington are Jackie Kelk and Marion Barney.

Night with the original stars, Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert; Life of Emile Zola with Paul Muni and Leslie Howard; The Champ with Wallace Beery; Rebecca with Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh; Wizard of Oz with Judy Garland; Seventh Heaven with Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell; and Gloria Swanson in Sunset Boulevard.

In 1940 THE SCREEN GUILD PLAYERS featured Hollywood stars in half-hour adaptations of screenplays. Roger Pryor was the emcee and Oscar Bradley conducted the studio orchestra. The program was sponsored at times by Gulf and Lady Esther Face Cream. Stars donated their services to benefit the Motion Picture Relief Fund.

Some of the stars and stories heard in 1940 were Destry Rides Again with Paulette Goddard and James Stewart; Red Dust with Clark Gable and Ann Sothorn; Private Lives with Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh; Shop Around the Corner with James Stewart and Margaret Sullivan; Desire with Marlene Dietrich and Fred MacMurray; and Alergic to Ladies starring Errol Flynn(?).

STARS OVER HOLLYWOOD was first broadcast over CBS in 1941. It featured top stars in half-hour dramatizations of original scripts usually written especially for the guest appearing.

U.S. Steel sponsored THE THEATRE GUILD ON THE AIR which premiered on September 9, 1945 over ABC. Announcer Norman Brokenshire introduced the stars and plays. The opening show was Wings Over Europe starring Burgess Meredith. During its first season on the air it presented such outstanding plays as Ah, Wilderness with Walter Huston; Little Women with Katherine Hepburn; and Mary of Scotland with Helen Hayes. During its eight years of broadcasts, some of the memorable plays presented included: Our Town with Dorothy McGuire (a later repeat of the play starred young Elizabeth Taylor in March 1950); The Old Maid with Judith Anderson; The Man Who Came to Dinner with Fred Allen; Ethan Frome with Shirley Booth and Raymond Massey; The Glass Menagerie with Helen Hayes and Montgomery



Irna Phillips was another of radio's most prolific writers. She began her radio career in 1930 by playing three roles on **TODAY'S CHILDREN**. She wrote **ROAD TO LIFE, RIGHT TO HAPPINESS, THE GUIDING LIGHT** and many others.

Clift; *Oliver Twist* with Basil Rathbone and Boris Karloff; *Florence Nightingale* with Katherine Cornell; *Lady in the Dark* with Gertrude Lawrence. The final broadcast was aired on June 7, 1953, when Basil Rathbone and Maurice Evans were starred in *Julius Caesar*.

LOUELLA PARSONS began her radio show in February of 1931. It was a quarter hour program with ten minutes of Hollywood "exclusives" and an on-the-air interview with a guest star. The remaining five minutes was divided between music by Raymond Paige and his orchestra and commercials for the sponsor, the Sunkist Orange Co.

Louella's first air guest was Wallace Beery. During her first thirteen week series, guests included Constance Bennett, Norma Shearer, Ruth Chatterton, Marie Dressler and Marlene Dietrich. Most of the stars made their radio debuts on Louella's show.

Miss Parsons next program followed a similar format and was sponsored by the Charis Company of Philadelphia, a corset manufacturer. To avoid the use of the word "corset" on the air, the product was referred to as "a device for avoiding abdominal bulge." It was on this show that the first "movie preview" on the air was heard with Norma Shearer and Herbert Marshall appearing in scenes from their forthcoming film, *Riptide*. The listeners clamored for more.

HOLLYWOOD HOTEL followed. This was a weekly hour long show on CBS, sponsored by Campbell's Soups. Miss Parsons continued to give her Hollywood news and exclusives and Raymond Paige provided music for vocalists such as Frances Langford, Ann Jamison and Igor Gorin. The program featured stars in radio dramatizations of their films. Most of the top stars were eager to appear.

One regular cast member was Duane Thompson who was heard as the telephone operator. Another baby-voiced actress, Marilyn Stuart, was always heard uttering the same line "Mama, that man's here again."

The first host on *Hollywood Hotel* was Dick Powell (1935). Later Fred MacMurray, Herbert Marshall and William Powell



STELLA DALLAS, a long-time favorite soap opera, starred Anne Elstner, seen here (center front) with Vivian Smolen, Jane Houston, Bert Cowlan, Helen Claire and Stanley Warren . . . 'true-to-life story of mother love and sacrifice.'

served as hosts. The show was produced by Bill Bacher and the theme music was "Blue Moon." It ran for four years. Following this Louella was next heard on the HOLLYWOOD PREMIERE program for thirty weeks, following much the same pattern.

Following the success of Hollywood Hotel someone came up with the idea of starring screen idol Mary Pickford in her own radio show, PARTIES AT PICKFAIR. The show was broadcast from Miss Pickford's mansion, Pickfair, built for her by Douglas Fairbanks. The format of her show simulated a party at Pickfair with many guest stars. A real-life butler was to be heard as himself. The idea backfired and at the last minute an actor had to take over the role. A cast of "extras" were heard as party guests; these included Bret Morrison, Ted Osborne, Lu Merrill and Mary Jane Higby. The first real guest star was Edward Everett Horton. The program was sponsored by an organization of the ice companies of America to oppose the manufacturing of electric "ice boxes."

Hollywood news columnist HEDDA HOPPER had a weekly radio show from 1939 through 1951. Miss Hopper had been an actress in early films. She died at the age of seventy-five on February 1, 1966. She is remembered for her outlandish hats.

Louella Parsons' HOLLYWOOD HIGHLIGHTS was heard for many years and appeared in the Hearst publications. Her long-time assistant was a former actress, Dorothy Manners. In 1962 Miss Parsons was forced to retire by ill health and Miss Manners continued to write the column sharing the byline. On December 1, 1965, she took over the column under her own name.

In 1936 ELSA SCHALLERT presented star interviews and previews of their latest film releases on her radio program which was aired on Friday evenings over NBC at 10:45.

JIMMY FIDLER'S HOLLYWOOD NEWS debuted on Tuesday evening March 3, 1942. Reporter Fidler took a strong position either for or against certain stars and films.



JUST PLAIN BILL, the barber of Hartville, “the story of a man who might be living right next door to you.” The serial starred Arthur Hughes. Also seen are Ruth Russell and Ara Gerald. The program debuted on CBS on September 19, 1932.

One of his weekly features was "An open letter to . . ." which he read over the air.

Other Hollywood reporters who had their own radio programs were George Fisher and Sheila Graham.

In 1948 NBC had a program heard on Sundays entitled LET'S TALK HOLLYWOOD. The show featured George Murphy and Eddie Bracken who played host to visiting leading Hollywood columnists and stars.

The voice of child star SHIRLEY TEMPLE was heard for the first time over the Mutual network in a special broadcast from the premiere of her early film, *Wee Willie Winkie*. Her first words on the air: "Hello. I'm so excited, I hardly know which way to turn! I think this is the biggest day I ever had in my whole life. . . . First, I got promoted into the fourth grade . . . and I got my report card . . . and now I'm having this great big party . . . and I'm so excited! . . . well, I guess I better go now. Goodnight."

On Christmas eve, 1939, she made her first appearance on a regular broadcast when she sang a duet of "Silent Night" with Nelson Eddy on the Gulf Screen Guild program. During the month of December, 1941, she had her very own radio show, SHIRLEY TEMPLE TIME and was heard in four weekly programs with guests, Warner Baxter (Dec. 5), Robert Young (Dec. 12), Lionel Barrymore (Dec. 19), and Humphrey Bogart (Dec. 26).

Beginning May 8, 1948, Shirley was heard over CBS in the JUNIOR MISS comedy series. She starred as Judy Graves, with Gale Gordon and Sarah Selby as her parents, K. T. Stevens as her snooty older sister, Lois and Beverly Wills (daughter of comedian Joan Davis) as her girl friend, Fuffy Adams. Myra Marsh was heard as Hilda the maid.



Arlene Francis who had been heard on many radio dramas became the emcee of one of the earliest cash giveaway shows on the air, **WHAT'S MY NAME?** The program was heard on the Mutual network in 1938.

VII

DARING DETECTIVES AND MYSTERIOUS MURDERS

The show opened with a lonely train whistle shrieking in the night as a voice announced; "*I LOVE A MYSTERY.*" The program debuted on January 16, 1939 as a fifteen-minute show, Monday through Friday over NBC from the west coast. The series next became a once-a-week program heard for a half-hour on Monday evenings. Later it moved to CBS and went back to the Monday through Friday schedule and continued through December 31, 1944.

The cast featured Michael Raffetto as Jack Packard of the analytical brain; Barton Yarborough as Doc Long, adept at picking locks and Walter Patterson as Reggie York known for his great strength. The trio had survived a bombing in Shanghai and roamed the world over solving crimes. They were assisted by their pretty and daring secretary Gerry Booker played by Gloria Blondell.

In 1949, after being off the air for five years, the show was revived on the Mutual Network in New York as a daily program. Actors Yarborough and Patterson had both met untimely deaths so a new cast was assembled. Russell Thorson was heard as Jack and Jim Boles as Doc; a young actor by the name of Tony Randall auditioned for the role of Doc but was cast as the Englishman, Reggie York. Mercedes McCambridge was heard in most of the female roles, sometimes playing as many as three roles on the same show.

The series was created and written by Carlton E. Morse who also authored *One Man's Family*. There were thirty eight serial stories heard in the series. Two of the most memorable being: *The Temple of Vampires* and *The Thing That Cries*



Stage actress Helen Menkin was the star of the radio serial **SECOND HUSBAND**. She turned to radio work after she suffered facial paralysis. The program was heard on NBC beginning in 1937.

in the Night. The program's musical theme was "Valse Triste" by Sibelius.

Lamont Cranston, better known as *THE SHADOW* made his first appearance on a program for Street and Smith's Detective Story Magazine. The first actor to portray the Shadow was James LaCurto. He gave up the role after a few weeks. Others who followed him were Frank Readick and Robert Hardy Andrews who played the role til 1937. Orson Welles was heard as Lamont from 1937 through 1939 with Agnes Moorehead playing the lovely Margo Lane. Next actor Bill Johnstone took over the part through 1944 with Marjorie Anderson playing Margo.

Bret Morrison became the Shadow in 1944 and played it through to the end with Gertrude Warner as Margo. Alan Reed was heard as Moe "Shrevie" Shrevnitz, the talkative cabbie. Police commissioner Weston was played at times by Dwight Weist, Arthur Vinton, Kenny Delmar, Santos Ortega, James La Curto (the same actor who was the first Shadow) and Ted deCorsia.

Cranston had learned a strange and mysterious secret . . . the hypnotic power to cloud men's minds so they could not see him . . . "Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow knows! Heh-heh-ho-ho-ha-ha! The weed of crime bears bitter fruit. Crime does not pay! Heh-heh-ho-ho-ha-ha."

Lamont's companion, the lovely Margo Lane, was the only person knowing to whom the voice of the invisible Shadow belonged. The show's musical theme was "Spinning Wheel" by Saint-Saens. Announcers for the show were Andre Baruch, Carl Caruso, Sandy Becker and Ken Roberts. The voice of sponsor "Blue Coal's Distinguished Heating Expert" was John Barclay.

In 1962 Charles Michaelson distributed old recorded programs of the Shadow to several radio stations for replay. WGN in Chicago was the first to re-broadcast the old transcriptions. Other stations across the country were quick to follow suit. Other revived series included Sherlock Holmes,



Actress Joan Blaine became one of the first real stars of radio, one of the first to receive billing. She starred in the highly melodramatic soap opera **VALIANT LADY**. It premiered on CBS on March 7, 1938 — soon moved to NBC.

The Green Hornet, The Third Man, Weird Castle and The Lone Ranger.

THE GREEN HORNET was created by Fran Striker and George W. Trendle. Britt Reid, a descendant of John Reid (The Lone Ranger) was the publisher of The Daily Sentinel, aided by Kato, who drove the Black Beauty to the strains of Rimsky-Korsakov's Flight of the Bumblebee. The program debuted from Detroit in 1936.

The first actor to play The Hornet was Al Hodge (1936-43) Hodge was later known to TV fans as Captain Video. Donovan Faust played the role for a while in 1943 and Bob Hall took over until 1946. Jack McCarthy played the Hornet from 1946 through 1952. Kato was played by Raymond Hayashi, Rolland Parker and Mickey Tolan. Actor John Todd (also radio's Tonto) was heard as the old Dan Reid, nephew of The Lone Ranger and father of playboy Brit. Lee Allman was heard as Leonore Case, Reid's gal Friday.

A radio serial based on the comic strip detective with the square jaw, *DICK TRACY*, featured Ned Wever, Matt Crowley and Barry Thomson in the title role at various times. Junior was played by Andy Donnelly and Jackie Kelk, and Pat Patton by Walter Kinsella. Tracy's sweetheart (and later wife) Tess Trueheart was played by Helen Lewis. The series was based on famous comic strip by Chester Gould.

SHERLOCK HOLMES, the ace sleuth of the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle stories, was first portrayed on the air by actor Richard Gordon. Other actors who followed in the role were Louis Hector, Tom Conway, Ben Wright, John Stanley and the best remembered, Basil Rathbone. His friend, Dr. Watson, was played at times by Leigh Lovel, Eric Snowden, Alfred Shirley, Ian Martin and Nigel Bruce. "Moriarty" was played by Louis Hector. Holmes was frequently heard to say: "It's elementary, my dear Watson." Mr. Bruce passed away in 1953, and Mr. Rathbone died on July 21, 1967.

Dashiell Hammett was responsible for two unique detective heroes, both *THE THIN MAN* and *THE FAT MAN*. In the former, the central characters were Nick and Nora



One of the finest dramatic programs on the air was **GRAND CENTRAL STATION**. It began in 1937. This photo shows the control booth. Actors at the microphone are **Bill Johnstone and Hugh Marlowe, Roger DeKoven and Gloria Stokowski**.

Charles. Somehow Nick seemed to be known as "The Thin Man" although originally the name referred to a murder victim. Nick and Nora were played by Lester Damon and Claudia Morgan. At times the voice of Nick belonged to actors Les Tremayne, Joseph Curtin and David Gothard.

J. Scott Smart portrayed "The Fat Man—Brad Runyon" Mr. Smart was perfectly cast, as he tipped the scales at two hundred and fifty pounds.

Another mystery-solving couple were *MR. AND MRS. NORTH* first aired in 1943. Joseph Curtin was heard as Jerry and Alice Frost as his wife, Pam. The show's theme was "The Way You Look Tonight."

One of the first mystery dramas on the air was "*Richard Rogue*" which starred Dick Powell. Later he was heard as "*Richard Diamond, Private Detective.*" Powell died of cancer on January 2, 1963.

Cunning Chinese detective *CHARLIE CHAN* was portrayed on the air by actors Walter Connolly, Ed Begley and Santos Ortega. Leon Janney was heard as Number One Son.

CHANDU THE MAGICIAN was a show written for both adults and children. The program was aired for a quarter of an hour, weekdays, for nearly fifteen years and was based on material created by Harry A. Earnshaw and produced by Cyril Armbrister. It was sponsored by White King Granulated Soap. The main character was Frank Chandler, played at times by Jason Robards, Sr., Gayne Whitman, Howard Hoffman and Tom Collins. Chandu had picked up the ancient art of the occult from a Hindu yogi and used his supernatural powers to combat evil. His brother had mysteriously disappeared. Together with his sister-in-law and niece and nephew, all of whom had a natural knack for getting into trouble, they went to Egypt to search for clues for the missing man. There they found much mystery, murder and magic both "white" (good) and "black" (bad).

THE ADVENTURES OF LEONIDAS WITHERALL was a series heard in 1943 about a college professor who bore an uncanny resemblance to Shakespeare and had an equally



MYRT AND MARGE was a serial about backstage life. It began on November 2, 1931. The show was written by Myrtle Vail, who also played the role of 'Myrt', a chorus girl in a show called 'Hayfield's Pleasures.'

uncanny ability to solve murders. Walter Hampden was starred and Agnes Moorhead was heard in the cast.

THE ADVENTURES OF THE FALCON debuted on Tuesday, July 3, 1945, with James Meighan in the title role of the Falcon (Mike Waring). The first episode found Mike involved with a Nazi spy and murder ring. His girl friends were played by Marion Shockley and Mitzi Gould.

NICK CARTER, MASTER DETECTIVE starred Lon Clark. In 1945 **CHICK CARTER—BOY DETECTIVE** (supposedly the adopted son of ace sleuth Nick Carter) was heard over the Mutual network. Chick was played by Billy Lipton and Leon Janney.

MICHAEL SHAYNE, PRIVATE EYE was written by Brett Halliday. The character first appeared in the book, "Dividend on Death" in 1939. 20th Century Fox made a series of seven films starring Lloyd Nolan as Shayne before it became a radio serial. On the air, Jeff Chandler was heard in the leading role, debuting on July 15, 1948.

ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADE was intended as a spoof on all of the other hard-boiled private eye shows. It debuted on September 29, 1946, starring Howard Duff. Lurene Tuttle was heard as his hard working secretary, Effie. The program was based on characters created by Dashiell Hammett and produced and directed by William Spier.

CASEY, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER worked for The Morning Express. He usually stopped off at the Blue Note Bar for a few drinks. Staats Cotsworth played Casey. Ethelbert, the bartender was played by John Gibson and Casey's girl friend, Ann Williams, was played at times by Alice Reinheart, Betty Furness, Jone Allison, Lesley Woods or Jan Miner.

One very busy and versatile actor was heard over the airwaves as seven different criminologists: Charlie Chan, Nero Wolfe, Perry Mason, Bulldog Drummond, Inspector Queen, Commissioner Weston and Hannibal Cobb (The Public Defender). His name—Santos Ortega.

Tops among the suspense shows was **INNER SANCTUM**



The role of 'Marge' on **MYRT AND MARGE** was played by Donna Damerel who was the real life daughter of actress/writer Myrtle 'Myrt' Vail. The relationship was kept secret until the death of Miss Damerel, after which the role was played by Helen Mack (shown here).

which was originally titled "The Squeaking Door." The show made its debut on January 7, 1941. The eerie host, Raymond, was portrayed by Raymond Edward Johnson, Paul McGrath and House Jameson.

SUSPENSE with tales "well calculated to keep you in suspense" was the top radio chiller in 1942. It featured Joseph Kearns as the mysterious sounding host, The Man in Black. The narrator was Paul Frees. Directed mostly by William Spier it left the air on September 30, 1963.

A Sunday afternoon chiller was *QUIET PLEASE* on ABC, narrated by Ernest Chapel. The program was written, directed and produced by Wyllis Cooper. Along with Arch Oboler, Mr. Cooper also created and wrote another eerie series *LIGHTS OUT*, heard over NBC in 1936.

McGARRY AND HIS MOUSE was a comedy detective series about a bumbling detective and his female sidekick, Kitty Archer (the Mouse), based on magazine stories by Matt Taylor. At times the leading roles were played by Roger Pryor, Wendell Corey, Ted deCorsia, Shirley Mitchell, Peggy Conklin and Patsy Campbell.

A beautiful detective (female, that is) in the person of *CANDY MATSON-YUKON 2-8209* joined the radio crime fighters. The show originated in San Francisco and was heard over NBC in 1950.

"Mystery . . . Intrigue . . . Adventure . . . Romance . . ." These words introduced *BOLD VENTURE* starring Humphrey Bogart as Slate Shannon, owner of a hotel in Havana. Shannon got himself involved in all kinds of intrigue along with his beautiful sidekick "Sailor" played by Lauren Bacall.

Among the eerie series was *THE WITCH'S TALE* which was written and hosted by Alonzo Dean Cole. Old Nancy, the witch, was portrayed most realistically by Adelaide Fitz-Allen. She was radio's oldest actress at the time. She died of pneumonia in the spring of 1935 and a much younger portrayer of witches, Miriam Wolfe, took over.

Other tales of weird happenings were heard on *THE SEALED BOOK* (Mutual 1945), *STRANGE DR. WEIRD*



The cast of **LORENZO JONES** does some heavy emoting before the microphone: "Belle" (Lucille Wall), "Nick" (Elliott Reid), "Lorenzo" (Karl Swenson) and "Judy" (Colleen Ward). This 'comic soap opera' debuted on April 26, 1937.

(1945), **THE HAUNTING HOUR**, **THE HERMIT'S CAVE**, **LIGHTS OUT** and **THE UNEXPLAINED**.

HOUSE OF MYSTERY debuted on January 15, 1945 featuring John Griggs as "Roger Elliot—the man of mystery," heard over the Mutual network on Sundays. In the series, children would ask the mystery man to tell them a story, and would also make comments from time to time during the story telling.

Maurice Tarplin supplied the chilling voice for **THE MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER**. Bernard Lenrow served as host of **MYSTERY THEATRE**; later this series was known as **HEARTHSTONE OF THE DEATH SQUAD**.

The classic horror tale of **FRANKENSTEIN** was given radio serialization in 1932. George Edwards was starred.

Many top actors were heard on the mystery and suspense shows. Herbert Marshall starred as **THE MAN CALLED X**. Sydney Greenstreet portrayed **NERO WOLFE** for a time. Vincent Price was heard as **THE SAINT**. Jose Ferrer and later Jackson Beck played **PHILO VANCE**. Gerald Mohr was **PHILIP MARLOWE**. **BOSTON BLACKIE** was played by both Richard Kollmar and Chester Morris. **DAVID HARDING—COUNTERSPY** was portrayed by Don MacLaughlin. Actors taking turns playing **ELLERY QUEEN** were Hugh Marlowe, Larry Dobkin, Carleton Young and Sidney Smith. Karl Swenson (known as Lorenzo Jones) was heard as **MR. CHAMELEON**. **DR. BENJAMIN ORDWAY/THE CRIME DOCTOR** was played at times by Ray Collins, House Jameison, Everett Sloane and John McIntire. Both Bill Froman and Everett Clarke were heard as **THE WHISTLER**.

During the 30's Philips Lord produced a series entitled **G-MEN** based on authentic cases taken from the official files of the Justice Department.



TV host Ed Sullivan is surrounded by a bevy of 'soap opera queens.' Included are 'Ma Perkins,' 'Helen Trent,' 'Our Gal Sunday,' 'Young Widder Brown' and many others. Can you identify them?

VIII

VARIETY

THE EVEREADY HOUR was the first big variety show on radio. It premiered on December 4, 1923 over WEAJ in New York. The program consisted of a concert orchestra, a jazz band and a one act play entitled *The Bungalow* which starred Gene Lockhart, Eva Taylor and Lawrence Grattan.

The Eveready Mixed Quartet opened the program by singing "Long, Long Ago" and then Graham McNamee, the announcer said:

"Nine o'clock is striking here—and 8 o'clock where some of you are listening. Meaning that the Eveready Hour again is beginning its race with sixty minutes as the clock ticks. This is the period for which the National Carbon Co., makers of Eveready batteries, engages the facilities of these ten stations every Tuesday evening for the presentation of its radio program creations."

Paul Stacky was the writer and arranger for the show. The Quartet consisted of Charles Harrison, tenor; Ethyl Hayden, soprano; Rose Bryant, contralto; and Wilfred Glenn, bass. Tom Grisselle was the pianist. Also heard was the Max Jacob's String Quartet and The Two Black Crows. The latter were George Moran and Charles Mack who were also heard on *The Majestic Theater Hour* (1927).

Many of Broadway's top stars made their first air appearances on *The Eveready Hour*. Julia Marlowe, John Drew, Will Rogers, Elsie Janis, Eddie Cantor, Weber and Fields, George Gershwin and even motion picture director, D.W. Griffith was heard.

ROXY'S GANG was the first program to feature variety



Betty Lou Gerson entered radio in 1934 and was kept busy on such programs as: **THE FIRST NIGHTER, GRAND HOTEL, ARNOLD GRIMM'S DAUGHTER, THE ROAD OF LIFE, MIDSTREAM,** and many others.

acts broadcast from the stage of the Capitol Theater in New York City on Sunday evenings. Roxy was Samuel L. Rothafel, and his gang consisted of "Dr. Billy" (William Axt); Betsy Ayres, soprano, known as The Texas Nightingale; Eugene Ormandy (The Blue Blonde) and his violin; cellist Yascha Bunchuk; Wee Willie Robyn, tenor; Evelyn Herbert; Louise Scheerer and Editha Fleischer. The Roxy Male Quartet was composed of George Reardon, John Young, Fred Thomas and Frank Miller.

The show debuted on April 5, 1923. It was the first radio show to broadcast a complete symphony, a complete opera and a complete oratorio. It was also the first to be broadcast from the stage of a theatre. In later years the show was broadcast from the stage of the Roxy Theatre in New York and Radio City Music Hall.

Another early musical variety program was the *DAILEY PASKMAN'S MINSTRELS* aired in 1924 over WGBX in New York. The show presented an old time minstrel entertainment "to bring back to your memory those golden tunes and mirth provoking jokes of minstrel days gone by. Recalling songs and jokes you forgot to remember."

THE MAXWELL HOUSE SHOW BOAT program was first aired in October, 1932. It featured Charles Winninger as Cap'n Henry who claimed to be an ancestor of Patrick Henry. For over two years Winninger rang down the curtain on the weekly Thursday night broadcasts. In 1934 he quit the show to return to the legitimate stage. When he first announced his plans to leave the program, the writers planned to have Captain Henry die. His fans loudly protested the very idea and would not allow it. Instead the character of Captain Henry was married to his sweetheart Nancy (played by Alma Krueger) and they went to live on a farm in the midwest. Winninger dropped by to say hello to his air fans from time to time.

To replace Captain Henry, a new character, George Henry, a brother, was introduced. The role was played by Frank (300 lbs.) McIntire. Irene Hubbard was heard as Aunt



Betty Winkler entered radio in 1933 and was featured on programs such as: **GIRL ALONE, FIBBER McGEE AND MOLLY, LIGHTS OUT, DAN HARDING'S WIFE, DON WINSLOW OF THE NAVY, LONE JOURNEY** and many others.

Maria and Hattie McDaniel as Mammy. Blackface comedians Molasses 'n January were played by Pat Padgett and Pick Malone. They were heard on other programs under the names of Pick and Pat. Muriel Wilson was the singing voice for a character named "Mary Lou" while Rosalie Greene did the speaking. Others featured on the show were Lanny Ross, Jack Haley, Warren Hull, Nadine Connor and the Show Boat Four, consisting of tenors Scrappy Lambert and Randolph Weyant and baritone Leonard Stokes, plus bass, Robert Moody. Muriel Harbater was also featured. The program was originally broadcast from the stage at Radio City in New York, but moved to Hollywood in June of 1937.

At one point the sponsor tired of the show-boat locale and decided that the show-boat would burn up, forcing the troupe to a new "tent-show" locale. Just about this same time, however, another program THE GIBSON FAMILY had pretty much the same idea—so the Show Boat continued to paddle up the river until it was eventually replaced by a variety show, the HOLLYWOOD GOOD NEWS program. This was produced in conjunction with MGM studios and the hosts were Robert Young and James Stewart.

THE GIBSON FAMILY starred Anne Elstner and Bill Adams as the senior Gibsons, with Loretta and Jack Clemens as their offspring, Dot and Bobby.

Another of radios earliest variety programs was THE COLLIER HOUR sponsored by the magazine. A popular segment of the show was the serialization of Fu Manchu. The role of the villain was played by Arthur Hughes (later to become known to radio listeners as kindly Just Plain Bill). A later daily serial version of Fu MANCHU had the title role played by John C. Daly and Harold Huber.

In 1928 French star Maurice Chevalier was hired at the unheard of salary of \$5,000 per week to head the CHASE AND SANBORN HOUR. When he left the show, guest stars such as Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, Bert Lahr and Edgar Bergen took over. Eventually Bergen and his wooden pal, Charlie McCarthy took permanent possession.



Versatile actor Hugh Studebaker played many serious roles on the air. Perhaps best remembered as 'Dr. Bob Graham' on the daily serial **BACHELOR'S CHILDREN**. He also portrayed dense 'Silly Watson' on early Fibber McGee broadcasts.

French charmer, Mme. Fifi D'Orsay was heard on **THE FOLLIES BERGERE OF THE AIR** which debuted on NBC on April 15, 1936. Comedians Eugene and Willie Howard were featured.

PHIL BAKER who had been a vaudeville comedian and accordionist appeared on his own variety show in 1933. He was surrounded by a cast of zanies including Harry McNaughton as his bungling butler, Bottle, and an unbilled heckler known only as "Beetle" (played by Ward Wilson). Other zanies included Artie Auerbach and Mabel Albertson. Agnes Moorehead was sometimes heard as a chronic telephone addict named "Sarah Heartburn." Harry Von Zell was the announcer. Music was supplied by the orchestras of Hal Kemp and Frank Shields. The show ran through 1940.

In 1942 Baker returned to the air as the quizmaster on the **TAKE IT OR LEAVE** show. He died on Dec. 1, 1963.

THE CAMEL CARAVAN was one of the first shows to broadcast from the west coast on a regular basis. Heard over CBS with Al Jolson as the host in 1934. Martha Raye and Sid Silvers were featured.

THE SHELL SHOW was another early variety program. In the spring of 1935 Al Jolson took over as emcee and the title was changed to **SHELL CHATEAU**. The show featured music, comedy and a guest film star in a dramatic sketch. Later emcees included Wallace Beery, Smith Ballew and Edward Everett Horton.

Humorist Irvin Cobb portrayed a kindly old Southern Colonel who was a go-between for sweethearts Lucy Virginia and David Henderson (Dorothy Page and John Mather) on **PADUCAH PLANTATION** which was heard Saturday nights at 10:30 p.m. It debuted Oct. 17, 1936 on NBC.

Major Edward Bowes was heard for the first time over WEAJ in New York in July of 1925, as the leader of **THE CAPITOL GANG** (also known as The Major Bowes Family Hour).

The Major originated **THE ORIGINAL AMATEUR**



THOSE WE LOVE was a popular night-time serial that told the story of the folks in the fictional New England town of Westbridge. Donald Woods was heard as Dr. Leslie Foster and Nan Grey played his romantic interest, Kathy Marshall. The program premiered on January 4, 1938.

HOUR in 1934 and it was first aired over WHN in New York. On March 24, 1935 the show moved to NBC and was sponsored by Chase and Sanborn coffee. Jay C. Flippen continued as the emcee of the WHN version of the show. On September 17, 1936 the show moved again, this time to CBS and was sponsored by the Chrysler Corporation. In later years it was heard over ABC, sponsored by Old Gold Cigarettes.

The good Major spun "The Wheel of Fortune—Around and around she goes, and where she stops, nobody knows . . ." During its years of presenting amateur talent, as many as two hundred special telephone lines were needed to handle calls from voting listeners at home who discovered such young hopefuls as Frank Sinatra, Vera-Ellen, Teresa Brewer, Frankie Fontaine and Sara Berner.

In 1935 Bowes took on an assistant, Ted Mack. When Major Bowes passed away in 1946, Mack continued the show through its long run on television.

As television began to make rapid strides in popularity in 1950, radio put forth one final great effort to recapture some of its audience by presenting the lavish ninety minute variety program, THE BIG SHOW. Tallulah Bankhead was signed to act as hostess and introduce the star studded casts. Guests on the first broadcast on November 4, 1950, were Fred Allen, Jimmy Durante, Jose Ferrer, Paul Lukas, Mindy Carson and Frankie Laine. The program originated in the newly constructed Center Theatre in New York City before an audience of 3,000. It went out over the NBC network on Sunday evenings between 6:30 and 8:00 p.m. Ed Herlihy was the announcer. Goodman Ace turned out the scripts. Meredith Willson conducted the orchestra and wrote the show's musical theme: "May the Good Lord, Bless and Keep You, Til We Meet Again."

To launch its second season in September, 1951, NBC sent The Big Show and Tallulah, along with Fred Allen and Portland Hoffa to London to broadcast from the famed Palladium. Miss Bankhead recited Gene Fowler's poem, "The



Carlton E. Morse gave radio two of its best long running programs: **ONE MAN'S FAMILY**, the longest running serial in radio history which was heard from 1932 thru 1959, and **I LOVE A MYSTERY** (1939-1944).

Jervis Bay." British guest stars included Bea Lillie, Jack Buchanan, George Sanders and singer Vera Lynn. For its next broadcast the show moved on to Paris.

The Big Show with its stellar casts attempted to defy television, but increasingly greater numbers of would-be "listeners" were becoming "tele-viewers" instead . . .

In June, 1955, NBC introduced MONITOR, a new concept in radio with a combination of music, news, interviews, comedy sketches and remote pick-ups. Miss Tedi Thurman, a sexy-voiced weather girl, was dubbed "Miss Monitor." Honey-voiced Lorna Lynn was also featured as "The Melody Gal." Fibber McGee and Molly were heard in featured spots during 1959. Program is still heard weekends with hosts such as Ted Brown, Murray the K, Gene Rayburn, Joe Garagiola, Jim Lowe and the likes of Henry Morgan, Dr. Joyce Brothers and Cindy Adams.



Cast of ONE MAN'S FAMILY — Seated: Mary Adams, J. Anthony Smythe, Carleton E. Morse (writer), Barbara Fuller. Standing: George Pirrone, Russell Thorson, Anne Whitfield, Willian Idelson and Ben Wright.

IX

I HAVE A LADY IN THE BALCONY, DOCTOR . . .

Radio's first quiz show was INFORMATION PLEASE which debuted on May 17, 1938. Clifton Fadiman was moderator. The panel consisted of John Kieran, Oscar Levant, Franklin P. Adams and name guests. Listeners supplied difficult questions and those who managed to stump the panel received a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Some cash awards were also given. The show remained a favorite for fourteen years.

DR. I.Q. began in 1939 featuring Lew Valentine. When he enlisted in armed services at the start of World War II, Jimmy McLain replaced him. In 1946 McLain left the show to join the ministry and Valentine returned. After a few months he again decided to leave, and Stanley Vainrib took over the quizzing duties. Vainrib quit in four months and Valentine took over as "Dr. I.Q." for the remainder of the show's run. There was a children's version of the show which was called "Dr. I.Q., Jr."; it also starred Valentine.

Albert Mitchell, as THE ANSWER MAN, supplied information to many difficult questions submitted by listeners.

Radio's PROFESSOR QUIZ, also known as "Dr. Craig Earle," was in reality Mr. Arthur E. Baird.

Kay Kyser was "The Dean" on THE KOLLEGE OF MUSICAL KNOWLEDGE. The show debuted in March 1938. A popular feature was the "true or false" quiz. If the answer to a question was "true" and the contestant had been incorrect, Kyser would shout, "That's *right*—you're *wrong*!" If the answer was false and the contestant had been correct, he would shout "That's *wrong*—you're *right*!" If there was



I LOVE A MYSTERY starred Michael Raffetto as 'Jack Packard,' Walter Patterson as 'Reggie York' and Barton Yarborough as 'Doc Long.' (Later the roles were taken over by Russell Thorson, Tony Randall and Jim Boles.

no answer from the contestant, Kyser would turn it over to the studio audience by calling, "Students!" He was assisted by Ishkabibble who wore a soulful expression and unusual hair-cut. His real name was Merwyn Bogue. Others featured were: Ginny Simms, Mike Douglas, Harry Babbitt & Trudy Erwin.

Ralph Edwards asked silly questions on the TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES program. If the contestant did not answer in the allotted time, "Beulah" the fog-horn buzzer would sound. Edwards would often shriek "Aren't we devils!" The losing contestant would have to pay the consequence by performing some outlandish stunt. Some nationwide contests such as guessing the identity of Miss Hush (Clara Bow) and The Walking Man (Jack Benny) gained much attention.

QUEEN FOR A DAY was emceed by Jack Bailey. He selected women from the studio audience to explain why they wanted a particular item. Audience applause selected the winner who was then crowned "Queen." The program joined the Mutual network on April 30, 1945.

The country's first "live talent breakfast show" in 1930 was called EARLY BIRDS heard over WPAA at Dallas, Texas. Produced and directed by Jimmie Jeffries who was also heard as a singer and comic. The show launched the careers of Dale Evans, Alice Lon, Harry James and blind whistler, Fred Lowery. Jeffries was known as "Mr. Radio" in Dallas between the years of 1930-40. He died at the age of 70 on October 14, 1970.

Don McNeill became the emcee of a show called PEPPER POT on June 23, 1933. He later changed the name to THE BREAKFAST CLUB. It went on to become one of the longest running shows in radio—thirty-five and one half years. It left the air on December 27, 1968.

The show was always broadcast live from Chicago. Comedian Sam Cowling joined the show in 1938. He presented "fiction and fact from Sam's Almanac." Fran Allison joined the cast in 1939 with her comedy characterization of gossipy Aunt Fanny. Featured vocalists included Jack Owens, the



MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY . . . "Champion of the people, defender of truth, guardian of our fundamental right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Cast: Len Doyle (Harrington), Vicki Vola (Miss Miller) and Mr. D. A. in the person of Jay Jostyn.

“cruising crooner,” who sang to ladies as he wandered through the audience; Johnny Johnston, Johnny Desmond, Clark Dennis, Eugenie Baird, Patsy Lee, Nancy Martin, Ileen Woods. Singing groups were: The Vagabonds, The Cadets, The Three Romeos and The Merry Macs. Orchestras were directed by Walter Blaufuss, Harry Kogen, Rex Maupin, Joe Gallichio and Eddie Ballantine.

Host McNeill asked listeners to join in a “march around the breakfast table” and to join in a moment of silent prayer “each in his own way, each in his own words.”

Giggly and lovable Tom Breneman presided over **BREAKFAST IN HOLLYWOOD**. He delighted his faithful female following by trying on their outlandish hats. To the oldest lady in the audience, he presented an orchid—and to any female listener at home who had reached the age of one hundred. In 1935 he had hosted a program entitled **FEMININE FANCIES**. He remained a top favorite until his sudden death of a heart attack on April 28, 1948.

In 1934 Horace Heidt introduced **TREASURE CHEST**, one of radio’s first “giveaway” programs. Contestants who were celebrating their wedding anniversary competed for prizes. The next year the category was increased to include couples about to be married and the show’s name was changed to “Anniversary Night— with Horace Heidt.”

In 1938 Heidt came up with the idea for **POT O’ GOLD** the first radio show to give away large sums of money as prizes. The Musical Knights supplied the music and the highlight of the show was a long distance phone call giving some lucky listener at home a chance to win a pot of gold. The FCC eventually forced the program off the air.

During 1948 through 1953 Heidt and his crew toured the country giving young hopefuls a first start on his **YOUTH OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM**. The show broadcast from various cities. Featured performers were blind whistler Fred Lowery, and comedian Johnny Stanley (*It’s In the Book*).

Joe Kelly was the quiz-master on **THE QUIZ KIDS** show which was first heard in June, 1940. It began as a summer



Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man — why, **THE SHADOW**, of course. Program first aired in August, 1930. Several actors played 'Lamont Cranston' including Orson Welles. The role was taken over by Bret Morrison in 1944.

replacement for the Alec Templeton show but gained such popularity on its own that it was retained. Each show featured five highly intelligent youngsters who answered questions for Kelly. Each received a \$100 savings bond and the three contestants who scored highest, were invited to return and participate in the quiz the following week. Some of the best remembered Quiz Kids were: Joel Kupperman, Rinny Templeton, Lonnie Lunde, Naomi Cook and Vanessa Brown. All Quiz Kids "graduated" at the age of sixteen and left the show.

Comedian and accordionist Phil Baker was the emcee of the *TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT* quiz show of 1942. It added the phrase of "The \$64 Question" to the American language. Earlier Baker had starred on his own show "The Armour Hour" (1933-40) on which Harry McNaughton was heard as his British butler "Bottle" and Agnes Moorehead played "Mrs. Sarah Heartburn." Baker died on December 1, 1963.

STRIKE IT RICH was emceed by Todd Russell and Warren Hull. The show featured contestants who tried to win prizes because of their personal hardships. The show featured "The Heart Line," a large red heart which lit up when a manufacturer of a desired item or some good samaritan called offering free gifts.

GRAND SLAM had a lovely lady quiz mistress, Irene Beasley. The quiz operated on the principles of a game of bridge. If a studio contestant missed an answer—the prize went to the listener who had submitted the question. Five missed answers in a row was considered a "Grand Slam," for which the winner was given a \$100 Savings Bond.

DOUBLE OR NOTHING was another quiz show emceed at times by Walter Compton, Todd Russell, Walter O'Keefe and John Reed King. Contestants could take the money they had earned for a correct answer—or try to double it. It was heard ten times weekly in 1950.

BEAT THE CLOCK, a quiz show on which contestants had to race the clock with right answers, began on radio in 1949 with Bud Collyer as the quiz master. It was a Goodson/Todman creation.



AGNES MOOREHEAD began on radio in 1925 as a singer. She gained radio immortality for her acclaimed performance of "Sorry, Wrong Number" on **SUSPENSE**. It was repeated eight times by popular demand.

TWENTY QUESTIONS began on radio on February 2, 1946. It starred Fred VanDeventer and his wife Florence Rinard.

A program featuring real people with unusual hobbies was *HOBBY LOBBY* emceed by Dave Elman. In 1959 a television version of the show was attempted with Cliff Arquette (Charlie Weaver) as host.

The incomparable Hildegarde presided over the *BEAT THE BAND* (1943) musical quiz show. Listeners sent in musical questions and the band tried to identify the songs from clues. Prizes of \$25 and a carton of cigarettes were made. If a question "beat the band" the contestant received \$50 and two cartons of cigarettes. Also the boys in the band had to toss a pack of their own cigarettes on an old bass drum. These cigarettes were later sent to boys in the armed services overseas. Hildegarde, who looked and sounded every inch a genuine French chanteuse, was born Hildegarde Loretta Sell in Milwaukee. She always wore arm length gloves while she played the piano. She also carried a lacey handkerchief and tossed real roses to her audience. She was also heard on the Raleigh Room show in 1944.

Groucho Marx was the host of the quiz show *YOU BET YOUR LIFE*. Groucho interviewed contestants and then conducted a comedy quiz. The show also featured "the Secret Word," a simple everyday household word; if the contestant spoke "the secret word" during the course of the interview or quiz, a rather sick looking duck would appear from overhead and the contestant would receive an extra cash award. Groucho often aided the contestants with lowest winnings by asking a ridiculously simple question such as "Who's buried in Grant's tomb?" If correctly answered the contestant was given a prize. George Fenneman assisted Groucho. The show began on radio in 1947. In 1950 it became a night-time, once a week, program on NBC-TV.

PARTY LINE, KDKA's original "telephone" radio program in the United States began on January 1, 1951. Ed and Wendy King answered the studio's phones when listeners



UNCLE DON (Don Carney) was a popular kiddie favorite for many years. He began his program over WOR, New York in September 1928 and continued for nearly 20 years.

called in questions and/or answers. Games such as "the Party Pretzel" were played and prizes awarded.

The first audience stunt show was called *PULL OVER NEIGHBOR*; it was produced by John Guedel. It bowed on the air on June 5, 1938. The very first stunt involved a studio contestant singing "Smiles" while Guedel shoved ice cubes into his mouth. It continued on the air as a West Coast program for four years. Guedel later submitted an audition recording of a re-vamped version of the show to a Chicago advertising agency, seeking a network program. He called the new version "All Aboard" and it was emceed by Art Linkletter. The name was soon changed to *PEOPLE ARE FUNNY* and it went on the air, coast-to-coast in April, 1942. Guedel has been responsible for many other radio and television shows including *You Bet Your Life* and the *Ozzie and Harriet Nelson* show.

In 1932 Parks Johnson began a "man-in-the-street" interview program on KTRH in Houston, Texas. In 1935 it went on the national network with Jerry Belcher assisting. Later Wally Butterworth replaced Belcher and finally Warren Hull took over for Butterworth. The show was known as "Sidewalk Interviews" when it began in 1935, but the name was later changed to *VOX POP*.

WELCOME TRAVELER was emceed by Tommy Bartlett. He interviewed travelers passing through Chicago and invited them to tell human interest stories behind their trips. Celebrities were often interviewed.

IT PAYS TO BE IGNORANT was a comedy type panel Show. In 1944 it was given its own half-hour series. Sitting in on the zany panel were George Shelton, Harry McNaughton and Lulu McConnell. The show was hosted by Tom Howard. Mr. Howard died in 1955 and Miss McConnell, a former stage star, passed away in 1961.

CAN YOU TOP THIS? featured story-telling genius, Peter Donald who told stories submitted by listeners. A panel of three wits: "Senator" Ed Ford, Harry Hershfield and Joe Laurie, Jr. tried to top it with a story of their own on the



Smilin' Ed McConnell was the host of a Saturday kiddies program — **BUSTER BROWN GANG** — with friends like Squeaky the Mouse, Midnight the Cat and Froggy the Gremlin. The program became a top favorite with small fry in 1944.

same subject. Each time they failed to top the listener's story, he won five dollars. The listeners who submitted a story stood a chance to win twenty-five dollars and a recording of Peter Donald telling their story on the air. Laughs were registered on the Can You Top This Laugh-Meter which was a volume control meter connected to audience microphones.

An unusual quiz show was *YOUR MARRIAGE CLUB* which asked questions of married couples. The show, hosted by genial Haven MacQuarrie, traveled across the country. It debuted in New York City on Saturday September 7, 1940. Sponsored by Wonder Bread, the show's musical theme was "The Wedding March" and the password, "I Do." It was last aired from Hollywood on August 7, 1941. Art Gilmore was the announcer. The program showed the finer side of married life and counteracted *The Court of Human Relations*.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES was the title of a show debuting on NBC on July 5, 1936. Miss Allie Lowe Miles and Mr. Sedley Brown offered advice on this "clearing house of domestic problems" program. It was heard Tuesday eves. at 8-8:30 p.m.



TOM MIX RALSTON STRAIGHTSHOOTERS began as a three-times-a-week program on NBC on September 25, 1933. The movie cowboy hero was played at times by Artells Dickson (seen here, far left), Jack Holden, Russell Thorson and Joe 'Curly' Bradley. The show offered many 'free premiums' such as badges, guns and de-coder rings.

X

KIDDIES' KORNER

From the beginning radio tried to include in its programming suitable shows for the entertainment of children.

In 1924 Miss Agnes Leonard, the daughter of a college professor was engaged to broadcast her own compositions for the young listeners. A typical opening of one of her broadcasts went something like this:

All little girlies and all little boys,
If you'll listen a moment or so
 On your radio
I'll sing some songs I know.
I'd like to go to see you, you know
And see all your playthings,
 But, O!
You live too far away.
So just for today,
Listen on your radio.

She broadcast over WJZ and WOR, New York, weekdays at seven, accompanying herself on the ukulele. In the fall of 1924 she was crowned Miss Coney Island in a bathing beauty contest and was soon signed to appear in the Earl Carroll Vanities. However, she would broadcast her program for youngsters whenever time allowed. Her sign-off went thusly:

I know a lady, all dressed in white
She'll come to visit you, maybe tonight!
She flies on rainbow wings,
She brings the nicest things.
As soft lullabies, she sings—
The Dream Angel—Night.



One of radio's longest-running juvenile adventure series was **JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY**. First heard on CBS on July 31, 1933, the role was played by Jim Ameche followed by St. John Terrill, Stanley Harris, Rye Billsbury and Charles Flynn (seen here).

In 1935 children's story teller, "*SPARE RIBS*" was heard daily, except Sunday, over NBC at 8:00 a.m. He was portrayed by Malcolm Claire.

UNCLE REMUS, in the person of Fred L. Jeske, told the beloved tales of Joel Chandler Harris to young listeners.

Milton Cross moderated a panel of children who discussed parents on the program *RAISING YOUR PARENTS*.

A drama for children was the air adventures of *BILLY AND BETTY* (White) as played by Jimmy McCallion and Audrey Egan. The show was sponsored by the Sheffield Farms (Grade A Milk).

Veteran actor Cliff Soubier brought comic strip character *BARNACLE BILL* to life on the airwaves.

UNCLE DON (Carney) started his program for the kiddies over WOR, New York in September 1928. The program continued for nearly twenty years with patter such as "Now today is the birthday of little Willie Smith of Brooklyn, who has not been eating his vegetables the way he should. No, he hasn't. And he ought to. But his mama and papa love him very much just the same and if Willie will look behind the piano, I think he will find a present . . ." During the year 1938-39 the show was carried on the major networks. Uncle Don entertained his audiences with songs like . . . "Hibbidy gits, hass hah, Rainbow ree, sibonia—Skividee, hi-lo-dee, Horney-ka-dote, with an alikazon. Sing this song with your Uncle Don." The program was last aired on February 9, 1949. Mr. Carney died at the age of fifty-eight on January 14, 1954.

BABY ROSE MARIE (Mazetta) began her career as a tot of three with her own radio show in 1927. Her husky voiced rendition of "What Can I Say After I Say I'm Sorry" won her many fans who wouldn't believe that the grown up voice belonged to a tiny little girl. She went on a cross-country tour of theatres to prove she was just a child. On the air she was billed as "radio's first child star."

THE SINGING LADY, Ireene Wicker was a favorite of small fry. Miss Wicker originated the idea for the program in 1930 and wrote the many scripts. She was also heard on another nationally famous program, Ireene Wicker's Music



LULUBELLE AND SCOTTY (Myrtle and Scott Wiseman) were billed as 'The Hayloft Sweethearts' on **THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE** program. The show debuted on the NBC network in 1933. It was a longtime favorite with Saturday night listeners.

Plays. She broadcast for twenty-five years and was also seen on television for a time.

LET'S PRETEND was created and directed by Miss Nila Mack. The show began as *The Adventures of Helen and Mary* with Estelle Levy and Patricia Ryan. In 1934 the title, *Let's Pretend*, was adopted. Heard over CBS for many years the show was unsponsored but during the mid 40's, economic pressures forced it to yield and take a sponsor—*Cream of Wheat*. Among the cast of young performers was Miriam Wolfe, who was heard frequently as a wicked witch, and Marilyn Erskine, usually played the fairy godmother. The show's theme music was "Country Gardens."

Milton Cross was the host of *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR* which featured the talents of youngsters such as Florence and Billy Halop, Walter Tetley, Billy & Bobby Mauch, Ann Blyth and Peter Donald.

Later the program was re-named *COAST TO COAST ON A BUS*. Mr. Cross was heard as *The Conductor* and Madge Tucker who wrote, produced and directed the program was heard as *The Lady Next Door*. Audrey Egan was featured as *Mumsy Pig*.

The show opened with the honking sound of a bus horn . . . next a young voice would enthusiastically announce . . . "The White Rabbit Line . . . Jumps Anywhere, Anytime!" and the cast would join in singing the show's theme, "On the Sunny Side of the Street."

Stan Lee Broza conducted the *HORN AND HARDART CHILDREN'S HOUR* launched over WCAU, Philadelphia in 1927. It was sponsored by the famous "Automat" restaurant chain. The show's musical theme song was "Less Work For Mother." Hosts were Paul Douglas, Ralph Edwards and Ed Herlihy. It ran for thirty-two years, entering the television field in 1947 and left the air in 1959.

Graduates of the Horn and Hardart Children's Hour were featured on *THE LITTLE BETSY ROSS GIRL VARIETY* program. Marion Loveridge was the Betsy Ross Girl. Termit Daniels was billed as "the Panty-Waist Glamour Girl" and her young brother Billy was also heard.



THE HOOSIER HOT SHOTS joined **THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE** program in 1933. The novelty instrumental group was comprised of Gabe Ward, Paul 'Hessie' Trietsch and his famous musical washboard, Gil Taylor and Ken Trietsch.

Six year old Bobby Hookey was billed as "America's Youngest National Network Comedian." He was the star of HOOKEY HALL which featured his "Rocking Horse Rhythm."

SMILIN' ED McCONNELL of radio's BUSTER BROWN'S GANG featured some of his unusual friends: Froggy the Gremlin (Plunk your magic twanger, Froggy) and Squeekie, the Mouse. Program was sponsored by the Buster Brown Shoe Co. It was seen on television during the years 1950-55.

Each Sunday afternoon at 5 P.M. over WJZ (NBC) in 1941 the amazing little *MOYLAN SISTERS*—Peggy Joan aged five and Marianne aged seven were heard. They sang "three part harmony with their astonishing angel voices." The girls had begun broadcasting on a children's hour where they attracted wide attention. Following The Moylan Sisters on Sunday afternoons was another amazing youngster OLIVIO SANTORO who played guitar and yodeled.

BIG JON AND SPARKIE started in radio in 1939, filling in for a late-arriving performer, on a small West Virginia station. Big Jon Arthur stood 6'5" and ad-libbed his own interpretation of The Three Little Pigs in a voice other than his own—crediting the voice to his imaginary friend, Sparkie. Later when he had his own show, it was known as *NO SCHOOL TODAY*, heard on Saturdays. The theme music was "The Teddy Bear's Picnic" played by Gil Hooley and His Leprechaun Marching Band. No School Today originated in Cincinnati in 1948.

Between the years 1921 and 1936, two hundred and two licenses were granted to operate educational radio stations. The FCC created the Federal Radio Education Committee in 1935.

In the early 30's CBS made use of radio's educational potential by broadcasting *THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF THE AIR*. The program was required listening in many classrooms. It featured dramatizations of historical events, current events and scenes were enacted from great literature. The original title of the program was School of the Air of the



UNCLE EZRA was portrayed on the air by Pat Barrett. He was featured on **THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE** program. In 1934, he had his own show **STATION E-Z-R-A** which was known as 'the powerful 5-watter in the friendly town of Rosedale.'

Americas. It was first directed by Knowles Entrikin. A popular segment of the show was a sketch called *The Hamilton Family* which presented geography lessons with the fictional family touring the world. The cast included Gene Leonard as the father, Betty Garde as the mother with John Monks, Ruth Russell, Walter Tetley and Albert Aley as the children. Dr. Lyman Bryson was also heard frequently.

Radio again played a very important role for children when, during the newspaper strike in 1937, Fiorello H. LaGuardia, then Mayor of New York City, came to the aid of the youngsters by reading the comic strips over the air so they would not miss out on the continuing adventures of their favorite cartoon characters.

LAND OF THE LOST was written and produced by Isabel Manning Hewson and directed by Cyril Armbrister. One of the central characters was Red Lantern, a big red talking fish who glowed underwater. The children, Isabel and Billy, used him as their guide on each adventure. Red Lantern was played by Junius Matthews and later, Art Carney. Isabel and Billy were played by Betty Jane Tyler and Ray Ives. (1945).

In addition to the many entertaining and educational programs broadcast for young listeners—there were also many adventure series. During the early days of radio Albert E. Sonn was known to thousands of young listeners as *THE MAN ON THE MOON*. Mr. Sonn died at the age of seventy five on May 22, 1968.

Among the first radio adventure series in 1932 was *BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25th CENTURY*. Young space-boy Buck, made inter-planetary journeys accompanied by wise old Dr. Huer and Wilma. They were constantly being jeopardized by the villainous Black Barney.

The first actor to play Buck was the late Curtis Arnall; others who followed were Matt Crowley, Carl Frank and John Larkin. Edgar Stehli was heard as Dr. Huer and Adele Ronson played Wilma. Both Jack Roseleigh and Joe Granby were heard as Black Barney. Other arch enemies of Buck and his pals were Killer Kane and the villainess, Ardala. The show



Versatile actor and 'animal imitator,' aptly named **BRADLEY BARKER**, did the cry of the timber wolf heard as the audio signature of the **REN-FREW OF THE MOUNTED** drama.

was written and produced by Jack Johnstone who also gave radio the Superman program.

It is reported that the sound effect for Buck's rocket ship in flight was simulated by placing a microphone near a ventilator to pick up the continuous purr of moving air. It gave the young listeners at home the illusion of supersonic motion.

Buck Rogers was sponsored by Cocomalt, a chocolate flavored drink, and offered free premiums such as Planetary Maps and sketches of the characters for sending in "two inches of the strip of tin off a can of Cocomalt."

JACK ARMSTRONG, THE ALL AMERICAN BOY debuted in 1933. He was the leader of his class and captain of his team at Hudson High. (Wave the flag for Hudson High boys! Show them how we stand! Ever shall our team be champions, Known throughout the land!) Jack's best friends were Billy and Betty Fairfield and their Uncle Jim, who was a former captain in the Army Intelligence, the owner of a large aircraft factory and the proud possessor of a giant amphibian airplane called The Silver Albatross.

For thirteen years the program was heard Monday through Friday, for fifteen minutes daily. For a short time there was also a sixth weekly broadcast heard on Saturday of a fictional ball game. In 1948 the format was changed and the show rescheduled to three half hour complete story episodes each week.

Jack was played by young actors St. John Terrell (1933), Jim Ameche (1933-38) Stanley Harris (1938-39) Charles Flynn (1939-43) Michael Rye took over the role for awhile in 1943 and then Charles Flynn returned as Jack and was heard through the end of the series in 1951. Billy Fairfield was played at times by Murray McLean, John Gannan, Roland Butterfield, Milton Guion and Dick York. Betty was played by Scheindel Kalish, Sarajane Wells, Loretta Poynton and Patricia Dunlap. Uncle Jim was James Goss. Coach Hardy of Hudson High was played by Arthur Van Slyke and Olan Soule.

Arch enemy of Jack and his gang was Weissoul, "man of



SARA BERNER got her radio start on **MAJOR BOWES' AMATEUR HOUR**. On Jack Benny's show she was heard as saucy telephone operator, 'Mabel Flapsaddle.' She had her own comedy series, **SARA'S PRIVATE CAPER**.

a hundred faces." He was a master spy with the amazing ability to disguise himself to prevent capture. The character was played by Herb Butterfield.

In 1946 the characters of Betty and Uncle Jim were dropped. A new character, Vic Hardy, director of the S.B.C. (Scientific Bureau of Investigation) was introduced.

The show was sponsored by Wheaties, the Breakfast of Champions. The singing Norsemen (Kenneth Schon, Al Revere, Ed Linstrom, Ted Kline and James Peterson) sang the praises of Wheaties and the show's theme song.

CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT debuted on September 30, 1940 and opened with the sound of an airplane roaring as a steeple clock bonged twelve times, and the announcer called: "Ca-a-ap-tain Mid-d-n-ni-ght!!!" Captain Midnight was in reality one Capt. Albright of the Secret Squadron, also known as Number SS-1. He flew his almost magical plane, the Sky King with his mechanic, Ichabod "Ikky" Mudd. His pals Chuck Ramsey and Joyce Ryan were also members of the Secret Squadron bearing the numbers SS-2 and SS-3. Ikky was SS-4. With the coming of World War II the numbers were changed to SQ-1, SQ-2, etc.

Ample villainy was supplied by Ivan Shark and his wicked daughter, Fury. Another arch enemy was the evil Fang. Boris Aplon was heard as Shark. For a time actress Marilou Newmayer doubled in the roles of the heroic Joyce and the very wicked Fury. These same duties were later handled by Beverly Younger. Ed Prentiss played Captain Midnight, as did Bill Bouchey and Paul Barnes. Sherman Marks was Ikky. Chuck was played at times by Bill Rose, Johnny Coons and Jack Bivens. It is reported that Bivens, in later life, was one of the members of the Air Force crew that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

The program was created by Robert Burt and Wilfred Moore who were also responsible for other shows dealing with aviation: *THE AIR ADVENTURES OF JIMMIE ALLEN* which was popular in the '30's, and later *HOP HARRIGAN* and *SKY KING*.



Hillbilly comedienne JUDY CANOVA began her comedy series on July 6, 1943. Her supporting cast featured Joseph Kearns, Sheldon Leonard, Mel Blanc, Ruby Dandridge and Verna Felton.

SUPERMAN debuted on the air in 1938 with Clayton "Bud" Collyer in the title role. Girl reporter, Lois Lane was played by Joan Alexander. Julian Noa was Editor Perry White of the Daily Planet and Jackie Kelk was the office boy, Jimmy Olson. On the broadcast of March 3, 1945 Superman was joined by the dynamic duo, Batman and Robin! Actors heard in these roles were Stacy Harris, Gary Merrill and Matt Crowley as Batman and Ronald Liss as Robin. The announcer, Jackson Beck, closed each daily episode by saying: "There's sixty seconds of excitement in every minute of tomorrow's episode, so be sure to tune in tomorrow . . ." The show continued through 1952. Collyer died at the age of sixty-one on September 8, 1969.

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE, based on the comic strip by Harold Gray was first heard in January 1931. At the start of the series, each story serial ran for thirteen weeks. Because there was no nation-wide network at the time, two separate casts broadcast from different locations. Shirley Bell was heard as Annie in programs broadcast from Chicago while actress Floy Margaret Hughes was the Annie heard from San Francisco. In 1933 when the nation-wide network system went into effect, the Chicago cast continued in the one daily broadcast.

Daddy Warbucks was played by Henry Saxe, Stanley Andrews and Boris Aplon. Aha, the Chinese cook, was Olan Soule. Shirley Bell played the role of Annie during the years 1930-40. She now resides in the Chicago area and as Mrs. Cole, she is the mother of three grown daughters.

Annie's closest pal was a character named Joe Cornstassle the role was played by Allan Baruck, while Mr. & Mrs. Silo were played by Jerry O'Mera and Henrietta Tedro. Hoyt Allen was heard as Clay Collier, the inventor of the de-coder ring and badges. The announcer was Pierre Andre, who, as Uncle Andy, sang the opening song.

The program was sponsored for many years by Ovaltine. Annie's Radio Secret Society was formed in 1933 and started its give-away policy with a mask of Annie. In 1935 they offered a Secret Code Bodge. In 1937 a Sunburst Membership Pin



VERNA FELTON was a featured actress on many different programs, mainly comedies. She was heard in frequent support of Jack Benny, Dennis Day, Judy Canova and Red Skelton. Her most memorial role was 'Hilda Crocker' on **DECEMBER BRIDE** in 1952 and later on TV.

with a "new de-coding disc and special protecto-perforator for stamping a secret identification mark on letters and code messages to friends" was offered to members who sent in an inner foil seal from a jar of the sponsor's product. In 1938 a Triple-Mystery Ring was offered to Silver Star Members. The ring had a secret compartment and a secret de-coding device. Did you send in a foil seal for a Shaker Mug?

In 1940 Quaker Puffed Wheat Sparkies took over sponsorship and introduced a new character, "Captain Sparks." He was an aviator and became Annie's companion in adventure. Gradually Capt. Sparks took over as the central character and in time Annie disappeared completely.

Edgar Rice Burroughs' famous novel TARZAN became a daily radio drama in 1932 with James Pierce in the title role. Pierce had been a former All-American football center for the University of Indiana and had also appeared in the 1927 movie, "Tarzan and the Golden Lion." He married Burroughs' daughter Joan, who was heard in the radio series as Jane. The show ran periodically for twenty years until 1952.

CHALLENGE OF THE YUKON (perhaps better remembered as "Sgt. Preston of the Yukon") was introduced by George Trendle in the '30's. Paul Sutton was heard as Sgt. William Preston, with narration by Fred Foy. The real "star" of the show was a Husky pup which was played by the WXYZ (Detroit) sound department. Sgt. Preston fought for law and order during the wild gold rush days.

In 1935 NBC presented UNCLE SAM'S FOREST RANGERS every Friday at 1:30 p.m. Harvey Hays was heard as the Forest Ranger, "Jim Robbins." Actor Hays was appointed a real life honorary ranger.

Comic strip favorite SMILIN' JACK was played on the air by Frank Readick.

JOE PALOOKA was brought to life on the air by Teddy Bergman (Alan Reed). The role was also played at times by Norman Gottschalk and Karl Swenson. Frank Readick was heard as Knobby. Elsie Hitz and Mary Jane Higby played Joe's sweetheart (and later wife) Ann Howe.



WALTER TETLEY, famous for his 'brat' roles, started out impersonating Sir Harry Lauder on **THE CHILDREN'S HOUR**. Fred Allen took him to Hollywood. He was best remembered for his roles as Gildersleeve's nephew, Leroy, and the tough delivery boy, Julius, with Phil Harris and Alice Faye.

Carl Ed's comic strip favorite, **HAROLD TEEN** was portrayed by young Charles Flynn (later-day star of Jack Armstrong). Loretta Poynton was Lillums, Bob Jellison was heard as Shadow, Marvin Miller as Bezie Jenks and Jack Spencer as Pop Jenks.

In 1933 at 4:45 p.m. over NBC, young listeners could tune in to **THE WIZARD OF OZ** starring young Nancy Kelly as Dorothy. Parker Fennelly supplied the voice for the Tin Man and Jack Smart was heard as the Cowardly Lion.

In 1942 **SECRET CITY** was a radio serial for children. A sixteen-year-old Negro actor, Oscar Brown, was heard as Lowell Prior while young Franklin Adams portrayed the mayor of the model city. Billy Idelson was heard as Ben Clark.



DUFFY'S TAVERN debuted on CBS on March 1, 1941. The show was created by Ed Gardner who was heard as Archie. A dozen different actresses were heard in the role of dizzy Miss Duffy. Shown here in Ann Thomas.

XI

HEIGH HO, SILVER! . . .

DEATH VALLEY DAYS was created by Ruth Woodman in September, 1930. Mrs. Woodman wrote the first script using text books for reference; later she became an authority on Death Valley folklore and traveled extensively to uncover true tales.

Joseph Bonime wrote the familiar bugle call which opened and closed the show. The narrator was a character known as The Old Ranger. He was portrayed on the air by Tim Daniel Frawley, George Rand, Harry Humphrey, and John MacBryde. Other characters heard were Sheriff Mark Chase played by Robert Haag and Bob Warren; The Old Prospector played by Harvey Hays and Cousin Cassie (Cassandra Drinkwater) who was played by a male, Olyn Landick.

Sponsored by 20-Mule-Team Borax, the first episode told the tale of the discovery of borax. One episode entitled "Cash at Graveside" was the true story of a prospector who bought a big white hearse thinking it was a pleasure vehicle. This program was repeated several times between 1931 and 1941, by listeners' request. In 1944 the show's title was changed to Death Valley Sheriff and the next year it was shortened to The Sheriff. In 1952 a television series was started with Stanley Andrews seen as The Old Ranger.

In 1929 George W. Trendle and John H. King who had been partners in the movie theater business, bought radio station WXYZ in Detroit. In an attempt to create bigger profits for the station, Trendle decided to put on a drama series aimed at the young audience of listeners. The staff dis-



MAJOR BOWES spun the 'wheel of fortune' every week, as he said "Around and around she goes — and where she stops — nobody knows!" **MAJOR BOWES ORIGINAL AMATEUR HOUR** was first heard on station WHN, New York in 1934.

cussed the plan and pooled their ideas. The station had carried an early western drama series called *Warner Lester, Manhunter* written by young Fran Striker. Mr. Striker was selected to write the script for the new show. At the time Brace Beemer was the studio manager. A title for the show was chosen—*THE LONE RANGER*.

In the opening episode The Lone Ranger had a broad sense of humor and rode off chuckling after capturing the outlaws. Revisions were soon made with the masked man losing much of his sense of humor but maintaining his formal speech.

The first regularly scheduled broadcast of The Lone Ranger was heard on January 30, 1933. Jack Deeds played the title role. After the sixth broadcast Mr. Deeds was replaced by a young actor with the name of George Stenius. Mr. Stenius later gained fame as motion picture producer George Seaton. Three months later Brace Beemer took over the role. He quit after a few months to open his own advertising agency. Earle W. Graser was the next to assume the role and continued until his untimely death in an auto accident on April 8, 1941.

After Graser's death Brace Beemer returned to the role of the masked righter of wrongs. In real life Beemer was an expert horseman and sharpshooter. He stood 6' 3" tall. He died of a heart attack at the age of sixty-two in March 1965.

For nearly twenty years the role of Tonto was played by a former Shakespearean actor, John Todd. Todd was sixty years old when he assumed the role. Because the Indian character he portrayed had so few lines to speak, Todd often doubled other voices. Tonto rode a horse named Scout and called his faithful masked friend "Kemo-Sabe."

The Lone Ranger had a nephew, Dan Reid played by James Lipton. Dan rode a horse named Victory. The one woman who knew the identity of the masked rider was one Clarabelle Hornblower. The original band of six rangers were ambushed by the Butch Cavendish gang. Only John Reid, The Lone Ranger, survived. Cavendish was played on the air by Jay Michael.



Announcer **KEN CARPENTER** began his long stint on **THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL** program in 1936. Bing Crosby joined the show on January 2, 1936. In the 1950's Carpenter was the announcer on the **LUX RADIO THEATRE** program.

John Hodiak and Danny Thomas were two of the many young actors who worked in the series. Paul Hughes was heard as the outlaw mastermind Thunder Martin. Elaine Alpert was Clarabelle Hornblower. The old man who used to say to himself "Say, who was that Masked Man, anyway?" was Frank Russell. James Jewell was the first director of the program and he was a perfectionist on sound effects, often mixing several sounds to acquire the effect he wanted.

Among the announcer-narrators of the show were Harold True, Brace Beemer, Harry Golder, Charles Woods, Bob Hite and Fred Foy.

Foy's voice is possibly the best remembered, echoing: "With his faithful Indian companion, Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early western United States. Nowhere in the pages of history can one find a greater champion of justice. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear. From out of the past come the thundering hoofbeats of the great horse, Silver. The Lone Ranger rides again . . ."

The theme music was part of the "William Tell Overture" by Rossini. The last live broadcast, the 2,956th episode, was aired on September 3, 1954. Transcribed programs were re-run for some years.

Western motion picture hero *TOM MIX* was the subject of a radio western adventure series which debuted in 1933. The cowboy star was portrayed on the air by Artells Dickson, Russell Thorson and Jack Holden. In 1943 Joe "Curly" Bradley took over the role. Earlier he had been heard as a character named Pecos. Hal Peary was heard for a time as Sheriff Mike Shaw. Others in the cast were Percy Hemus as The Old Wrangler; Bruno Wick as Lee Loo the Chinese cook; Sidney Ellstrom portrayed Amos Q. Snood who was the Scrooge of Dobie Township where Tom lived on the T-M Bar Ranch with his wonder horse, Tony. A young George Gobel was heard on the show as Jimmy. Sponsored by Ralston, a breakfast food, the show was broadcast from Chicago. The



Hollywood 'Gossip Columnist' HEDDA HOPPER had a successful career as a film actress before she began her gossip show on CBS in 1939. She was heard for a quarter-hour, three times each week thru 1942. She had later programs, as well. Hopper was also famous for her outlandish hats.

musical theme was "When It's Round Up Time in Texas and the Bloom is on the Sage."

SILVER EAGLE, *MOUNTIE* debuted on July 5, 1951. The program was written, produced and directed by James Jewell who was dubbed "The Dean of Adventure Stories." He had been connected with *The Lone Ranger*, *Green Hornet* and *Jack Armstrong*. Heading the cast of *Silver Eagle* was Jim Ameche as Jim West. Also heard were Mike Romano and Jack Lester as Joe Bideaux and John Barclay. Jess Pugh was heard as Inspector Argyle. The character of Doc was played by Clarence Hartzell. Narrators for the show were Ed Prentiss and Bill O'Connor who opened the show with: "The Silver Eagle (sound of a wolf howling and galloping hoofs). A cry of the wild . . . a trail of danger . . . a scarlet rider of the Northwest Mounted, serving justice with the swiftness of an arrow . . . (sound of an arrow—thud!). The Silver Eagle!" The show's musical theme was aptly titled "Winged Messenger." The last broadcast was heard on March 10, 1955.

GUNSMOKE was created for radio in 1952 by Norman Macdonnell and John Meston. Bill Conrad originated the role of U.S. Marshall Mat Dillon. Parley Baer was the first actor to play the role of Dillon's lame side-kick, Chester. Howard McNear was heard as Doc and Georgia Ellis as saloon keeper Miss Kitty.

The television series started in 1955 with James Arness as Dillon, Dennis Weaver as Chester, Milburn Stone as Doc and Amanda Blake as Miss Kitty. When Weaver left the series a new side-kick character named "Festus" was written into the script. Festus was played by Ken Curtiss.

An early children's western adventure series was *BOBBY BENSON'S ADVENTURE*. Sponsored by H-O Oats the locale of the series was the H-Bar-O Ranch. Later the setting was changed to the B-Bar-B Ranch. Young Bobby was played by Richard Wanamaker, Ivan Cury and Billy Halop. The handyman who told tall tales, "Wild Tales by Windy Wales," was played by Don Knotts. The character, Tex Mason was



LOUELLA PARSONS, famed Hollywood 'Gossip Columnist,' tried her first talk show in 1928, but her best remembered series ran on Sunday nights over ABC from 1945 through 1951.

played at times by Herb Rice, Neil O'Malley, Al Hodge, Tex Fletcher and Tex Ritter. A musical and comedy version was also heard featuring the same cast. This show was known as *Songs of the B-Bar-B*.

THE CISCO KID was portrayed on the air by Jackson Beck and Jack Mather. Pancho was played by Louis Sorin, Harry Lang and Mel Blanc.



One of the most famous women's program commentators was MARY MARGARET McBRIDE, who began broadcasting in 1934 over station WOR where she was first known as 'Martha Deane.' Her popular program mixed folksy chatter and interviews.

XII

WOOF! WOOF! TWEET! TWEET! (AMONG OTHER SOUNDS)

GENE CARROLL was an unique actor with an unusual set of voices. He portrayed "Lena" a comedy maid on the early Fibber McGee broadcasts. Later he teamed with **GLENN ROWELL** on the program **JAKE AND LENA**. Carroll portrayed both title roles, a couple who ran a boarding house where Glenn lived and played the piano. The pair's sign on tune was titled "Hello—Hello—Hello."

In early days of broadcasting all sound effects, including animal sounds, were done "live on the air." No pre-recorded sounds were permitted. Actors were often called upon to make their own sound effects. It is said that actress Shirley Bell who played Little Orphan Annie also supplied the voice for her best pal, dog, Sandy. At times when both Annie and Sandy had to be heard together, announcer Pierre Andre would help out by doing Sandy's arfing.

EARL KEEN was an imitator of dog noises and was responsible for canine Lassie's lines on the popular radio series. **DAVID DOLE** was yet another actor who made animal sounds. **LEE MILLAR** was the human heard as "Rags, the dog" on *Those We Love*. **HARRY SWAN** made animal sounds on the *Let's Pretend* children's show.

ANIMAL NEWS CLUB, a children's show, featured Clarence Straight imitating all of the various barnyard family.

Another animal imitator was aptly named actor **BRADLEY BARKER** who did the cry of the timber wolf heard as the audio signature of the Renfrew of the Mounted drama. Mr. Barker's roles on movie soundtracks included the roar of



After Marlin Hurt's death, the role of BEULAH went to another male performer, Bob Corley. In the fall of 1947 the role was finally taken over by an actress, beloved Hattie McDaniel, shown here with actor Hugh Studebaker.

MGM's Leo the Lion and the crow of the Pathe Newsreel rooster.

DONALD BAIN was kept busy making animal sounds over the air. Some of his assignments included making sounds for dogs, pigeons and even mosquitoes. During the 1945-46 Broadway theatre season he was employed to act from the wings—speaking for a cat in *I Remember Mama* and a mule in *A Bell For Adano*.

HENRY BOYD was one of radio's best "bird imitators." He was heard as Aunt Jenny's canary, Dicky and also chirped the Rin-So White, soap commercial.

Sometimes real live birds were heard on the air. In 1935, Sunday mornings at 8:30, NBC presented *THE CHEERIO CANARIES*. With real live canaries Tom, Dick and Harry—along with Jim Baggs they chirped their affection for their fine feathered friend "Blondie" (another canary—with feathers, that is).

THE MASTER RADIO CANARIES were sponsored by the Hartz Mountain Pet foods. The theme music was "Tales of the Vienna Woods." The lovely organist was named Gloria and Gene played his talking violin. Emcee Jess Kirkpatrick sometimes sang along with the Master Radio Canary Chorus. In 1945 "Frankie—the Canary Crooner" was featured on the show—and even received fan mail.

In 1943 over the Mutual network, busy actor Don Douglas played all of the roles heard on *THE BLACK CASTLE* mystery series.

Some of the best simulated sound effects originated in the studios of Detroit's WXYZ where Jim Jewell was the first director of the Lone Ranger series. He was a sound effects perfectionist and often insisted on the mixing of several sounds to achieve just the right effect.

Two unforgettable sound effects of radio days were the erupting closet on the Fibber McGee and Molly show—and the chugging, choking, snorting, coughing of Jack Benny's ancient Maxwell car, for which vocal master Mel Blanc supplied the vocal gymnastics.



Parks Johnson and Jerry Belcher were the stars of radio's popular **VOX POP** program. The title was derived from the words 'vox populi' defined as "popular sentiment" and "voice of the people." The series premiered on July 7, 1935.

In 1935 over NBC, Mon.-Wed.-Fri. at 4:45 p.m. Bill Baar was heard as story teller *GRANDPA BURTON*. He supplied the voices for all of the characters heard on the show.

Conducting similar chores was Jimmy Scribner who played all of the characters heard on *THE JOHNSON FAMILY* program. This show was the continuing story of a Negro family.

Champion among one man show performers was comedian and stage actor *FRANK FAY*. On an early program he wrote, directed, produced, announced, performed and even supplied his own music.

BETTY BOOP FABLES was based on the movie cartoon adventures created by Max Fleischer. The radio show starred baby-voiced Mae Questel. (Red Pepper Sam was heard as Ferdie Frog.) In 1936 she was also heard as Baron Munchausen's (Jack Pearl) slightly dizzy secretary extraordinary, Suzy Woods. Miss Questel also supplied the movie soundtrack voices for Betty Boop, Olive Oyl and Little Lulu. She began her career when she won a "Helen Kane look (and sound) alike contest." Miss Kane was the original "Boop Boop a Doop Girl."

Sunday evenings at 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. over the NBC Blue network in 1936, Tom Terris *THE VAGABOND ADVENTURER* was heard telling his tales of adventure. Mr. Terris was a world traveler and circled the globe at least two times.

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE heard on the highly popular program belonged to Dr. M. Sayle Taylor.

Martha Wentworth was known as radio's "woman of a hundred voices" and "the female Lon Chaney of the air." She was heard in dozens of roles.

Edgar Bergen was born in Chicago on February 16, 1903. During the summers between 1922-25 he toured the Chautauqua circuit as a magician and ventriloquist. For the next ten years he worked in vaudeville in both American and European theaters. His first radio appearance was on December 17, 1936. The limelight was stolen from him by a fresh little wooden Englishman, by the name of Charlie McCarthy.



Don McNeill's **BREAKFAST CLUB** was first heard on June 23, 1933 and went on to become one of the longest-running shows in network history. One of the regulars was the 'roamin crooner,' Jack Owens. He sang to ladies in the audience

Bergen supplied the voice for Charlie as well as for the very dense hay-seed character, Mortimer Snerd, and spinisterish Effie Klinker. Pat Patrick was heard as Ersel Twing, Richard Haydn as Professor Lemuel Carp and Don Ameche as Pasquale.

During the show's many years of popularity, featured vocalists included Dorothy Lamour, Dale Evans, Anita Ellis and Anita Gordon. Ray Noble waved his baton at the orchestra.

Many top stars made guest appearances with Charlie. W. C. Fields and John Barrymore both traded quips with the monocled pseudo-Englishman. On the broadcast of December 12, 1937, the repartee between Mr. McCarthy and one Miss Mae West, caused quite a controversy and nearly led to a senate investigation of radio. It all happened quite innocently(?) when the sultry Miss West related the story of Adam and Eve to Charlie in her come-up-and-see-me manner.

Comedy teams with preposterous names were a fad in the early days of radio. COLONEL LEMUEL Q. STOOP-NAGLE AND BUDD were portrayed by F. Chase Taylor and Wilbur Hulick. The SMITH BROTHERS, Trade and Mark, were portrayed by Billy Hillpot and Scrappy Lambert. SENATOR FRANKENSTEIN FISHFACE & PROFESSOR FIGGSBOTTLE were played by Elmore Vincent and Don Johnson. One newscaster used only the initials "Q.E.D."; his actual identity was never revealed.

A radio personality whose identity was a closely guarded secret was, *THE SILVER MASKED TENOR*. He broadcast over WEAJ in New York from 1923 through 1927 as soloist with the Goodrich Silvertown Orchestra. He was signed to an exclusive contract with NBC in 1929 and was heard regularly through 1940 when he was forced to retire because of serious injuries received in an auto accident. The tenor always wore a sterling silver mask when making public appearances. After his death in 1959 his identity was at last revealed—his real name, Joseph M. White.

Listeners could never really be sure to whom the voice



Lionel Barrymore, famous for his annual radio performance as 'Scrooge,' had a show of his own called **MAYOR OF THE TOWN** which aired from 1942 through 1949. Versatile Agnes Moorehead played his whining housekeeper, Marilly.

belonged when they listened to their favorite radio characters. For instance, *BEULAH*, the beloved Negro maid was created by actor Marlin Hurt who played the role himself. He thought up the character when he was a boy of ten and first used the voice of Beulah on early Fibber McGree and Molly programs.

Beulah was later featured on The Plantation Party show on which Mr. Hurt was also heard as Colonel Hurt. Still later the character became the central figure of a comedy series in which Beulah was employed by the Henderson family. (CBS debut, 7-2-45). Her boyfriend, Bill Jackson was played on the air by Mr. Hurt also. The Hendersons were played by Hugh Studebaker and Mary Jane Croft. Oriole was played by Ruby Dandridge.

Hurt had also been heard on some of the early Red Skelton programs in the characterization of "Mademoiselle Levy" and the B & W Show Boat program (1940). He was also heard as Dick on Affairs of Tom, Dick and Harry.

After Mr. Hurt died on March 21, 1946, the radio role of Beulah was taken over by another actor named Bob Corley. Eventually an actress, Hattie McDaniel became the first woman to be heard as Beulah. When Miss McDaniel was forced to give up the role due to illness, actress Amanda Randolph took over. In the television series both Ethel Waters and Louise Beavers were seen in the role.

Another featured performer on The Plantation Party was Whitey Ford, better known as *THE DUKE OF PADUCAH*. Ford, whose full given name was Benjamin Franklin Ford, started in radio in 1924. At one time he had been the emcee on Gene Autry's program. In September of 1942 the Duke took his comedy antics to The Grand Ole Opry show where he remained a favorite for more than seventeen years. A non-smoker in real life, Ford's long career in radio was sponsored mainly by tobacco companies. His tag line was "I'm goin' back to the wagon, boys, these shoes are a-killin' me!"

Over the air, the roles of children were usually played by mature actresses. Dolores Gillen was one such actress who utilized her "baby voice." She was heard as both of the howl-



Marianne and Peggy-Joan, **THE MOYLAND SISTERS**, were first heard on the **HORN & HARDART'S CHILDREN'S HOUR** in 1938. They were given their own Sunday afternoon show in 1939. Billed as "The Angels of the Airwaves," the pair sang "astonishing three-part harmony."

ing twins on Abbie's Irish Rose and Pepper Young's Family. She also supplied the voice for young son, Sammy on When A Girl Marries. Sally Belle Cox was one of the first child imitators (1932). Madeleine Pierce impersonated children of varying ages such as the nine-month-old son on Front Page Farrell to the four year old Granddaughter on Stella Dallas. Miss Lee was also heard as the voice of baby Wendy on The Second Mrs. Burton. Wilda Hinkle was another actress specializing in child voices.

The role of Baby Snooks little brother, Robespierre, was assigned to actress Leone Ledoux. She was also heard as Baby Dumpling on the Blondie program. On One Man's Family she was kept quite busy supplying the voices for all three triplets Abigail, Deborah and Constance as well as the voice of the Barbour's great-grandchild, Paul John Fransworth.

Another veteran performer who has made a speciality of playing children on the air is versatile Sarah Fussell. Still another actress who makes child's work of supplying young voices is Zel DeCyr. She has been heard speaking for youngsters in commercials.

TOMMY RIGGS was a ventriloquist of sorts, although he never used a dummy as part of his act. On the air he did the voice for his imaginary young niece *BETTY LOU*. He was heard with Edgar Bergen and had a forty-seven-week guest run on the Rudy Vallee Show. In 1942 he had his own program on which Betty Lou's boy-friend, Wilbur, was played by Wally Maher. Verna Felton was heard as Mrs. McIntyre.

Riggs was born in Pittsburgh, Pa. He once had his dual voice examined at the Cornell Medical College in NYC where doctors explained to him that his dual voices were due to the unusual size and strength of his throat muscles.

In later years Riggs had his own television show in Alabama and then returned to his native Pittsburgh where he was a disc jockey on radio station WCAE. He died at the age of 57 on May 21, 1967.



BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS WITH TED MALONE filled the airwaves with heartbreaking poems for more than twenty years. The program enjoyed popularity from 1935 through 1956. Malone's real name was Alden Russell and he entered show business as a ukelele player.

TONY WONS read poetry over the air using a whispery close-to-the-microphone technique. He was a great favorite with the ladies on his *TONY WONS SCRAPBOOK* program. In 1938 he was sponsored by Hallmark greeting cards and was the first to urge the public to look for the Hallmark of quality "when you care enough to send the very best."

Marion Young Taylor joined station WOR in 1941. As the voice of *MARTHA DEANE* she was the first radio interviewer to introduce topical guests and discussions to daytime audiences. She has been conducting interviews five mornings a week, 52 weeks a year for 30 years. During this time she has interviewed more than 10,000 guests. Her secret of a good interview—she is a good *listener*.

DOROTHY AND DICK (Kilgallen and Kollmar) broadcast for 18 years, five mornings a week, 45 minutes a day from their breakfast table (with the exception of one year, when the show was taped at night). Their three children Dick, Jr., Jill and Kerry all had their chance on the air also. If one of their parents couldn't make the show they would substitute. Youngest son Kerry sometimes came into the room and prattled for the listeners. The program was terminated in 1963 because the couple had conflicting outside interests. Miss Killgallen was a popular panelist on the television quiz show *WHAT'S MY LINE* for most of its long run. She died at the age of fifty-two on November 8, 1965.

JOHN J. ANTHONY got his idea for his very successful show, *THE GOODWILL HOUR*, while serving a jail sentence for failing to make alimony payments. After his release, he became the head of The Alimony League. He began broadcasting *The Goodwill Hour* on April 10, 1930. His announcer, actor Roland Winters would say: "You have a friend and adviser in John J. Anthony." The program was aired for over twenty years. Anthony's real name was Lester Kroll and he had been a former cab driver. Some of his famous catch phrases were "What is your problem, madam?" "No names, please" and "Don't touch the microphone." He served as Commis-



Actress Penny Singleton is remembered by radio listeners as the star of the **BLONDIE** comedy series based on the famous cartoon character. The show debuted on CBS on July 3, 1939 and lasted through 1950.

sioner of Human Relations for the County of Los Angeles and was seen in the film, *Divorce American Style*. He died at the age of sixty-eight on July 16, 1970.

Holding one of radio's most durable broadcasting schedules is LONG JOHN NEBEL (all six foot four inches of him). After a varied career which found him working in carnivals and circuses and even managing a pair of Siamese twins, he began his radio career in 1954 at the age of forty-three for WOR in New York. Ten years later he switched over to WNBC where his late night show is heard six times each week. He averages about thirty-two hours each week on the air. His show features many controversial guests, many of whom have walked off his show while it was in progress.

THE FITZGERALDS (Ed and Pegeen) started their husband/wife talk show back in the late '30's. They can still be heard over WOR in New York.

MARY MARGARET McBRIDE first broadcast from New York on May 3, 1934. During the year 1934/35 she was heard as the voice of "Martha Deane" over WOR. This folksy type lady with the graham-cracker voice and warm friendly curiosity was born in Paris, Mo. on November 16, 1899.

In 1944, when she celebrated her 10th anniversary of broadcasting, 20,000 women attended the ceremony held at Madison Square Garden. On her 15th anniversary show in 1949 she celebrated at Yankee Stadium with only a few of the 65,000 seats unfilled by loyal fans.

In 1935 over NBC, Homer Croy wrote the scripts for *THE MELODY MASTER* and was also starred as Clem Clemens, homespun philosopher and editor of the rural Willow Heights Journal.

Actress and comedian Mabel Albertson did similar chores for NBC's IODENT DRESS REHEARSAL program heard in 1936, Sun. eves. at 11:30. Miss Albertson played the role of "The Countess of Kleptomania." The program also featured comedian Pinky Lee.

Southern humorist and author Strickland Gillilan was heard as "The Crossroads Philosopher" in broadcasts from



LIGHT'S OUT, radio's ultimate horror show began in Chicago in 1934 as a late-night quarter hour program. Arch Oboler joined the show two years later as head writer. Seen here in a 1936 broadcast are Betty Winkler and Ted Maxwell.

Richmond, Va. over NBC of THE CORNCOB PIPE CLUB. The cast, all natives of Virginia, included Pat Binford.

"The Shepherd of the Air" was the title bestowed upon the Rev. Dr. Charles L. Goodell who conducted SABBATH REVERIES—a program which began on NBC network on June 2, 1929 and continued for many years.

Father Charles E. Coughlin, THE RADIO PRIEST began broadcasting on October 17, 1926. By the early 30's he had some 30,000,000 listeners to his weekly Sunday afternoon programs on CBS. In 1934 he was thought by some to be the second most powerful man in the country. He turned with a passion to politics and was an arch foe of president F. D. Roosevelt. Father Coughlin spoke out against the New Deal. When CBS refused to carry his broadcasts in the mid '30's, he formed his own network of some forty-seven stations. In 1935 it required a staff of 217 people to handle his mail at the Shrine of the Little Flower. Father Coughlin headed what might have been termed "a third political party" against Huey Long. During World War II he controlled the Social Justice magazine which was eventually banned from the mails as "a systematic and unscrupulous attack upon the war effort." Father Coughlin retired from broadcasting in 1940 and continued as a parish priest.

Programs of religious music and hymns always held great popularity. Among the outstanding singers of hymns were Edward MacHugh, THE GOSPEL SINGER (a native of Scotland), and Joe Emerson, the baritone heard on HYMNS OF ALL CHURCHES. Other highly popular programs were Rev. Charles E. Fuller's OLD FASHIONED REVIVAL HOUR which emanated from Long Beach, Calif. The show's theme was "Heavenly Sunshine." THE HOUR OF FAITH program was first broadcast nationally in 1942.



Writer-actor-producer Philips H. Lord (minus his 'Seth Parker' character make-up) also created **GANG BUSTERS** which began on CBS on January 15, 1936. The program featured many realistic sound-effects.

XIII

A WORD BEFORE CLOSING

Since its earliest days radio has been the subject of both lavish praise and strong criticism. In the January 1935 issue of *Radio Mirror Magazine*, Dr. Charles G. Shaw, a professor at New York University, answered the question: Is Radio Menacing Civilization? by saying "Yes. By lowering our cultural standards, by affecting our health and by menacing our property and our lives, it presents a decided danger." In the same article, Dr. Nicola Tesla, a famous inventor of the time, defended radio by answering the same question with an emphatic "No! Wireless, or 'Radio' as it is now called, has already conferred benefits upon us so great that they are inestimable. And as it progresses, it will perhaps become the chief force driving man onward . . ."

Aldous Huxley, in the chapter on "Silence" in "The Perennial Philosophy," has this to say of radio: "The Twentieth Century is the Age of Noise. Physical noise, mental noise and noise of desire—we hold history's record for all of them. And no wonder, for all the resources of our almost miraculous technology have been thrown into the current assault against silence. The most popular and influential of all recent inventions, the RADIO, is nothing but a conduit through which prefabricated din can flow into our homes . . ."

Even radio performers themselves sometimes spoke out against radio. Comedian Fred Allen once called radio "a bog of mediocrity." Others have felt differently. In her book "Marlene Dietrich's ABC" the famed actress had this to say of radio: "A great medium, and I won't let anyone bury it yet."



Suave Basil Rathbone began his career playing Shakespearean roles on the stage in 1912. He gained radio fame in 1939 as 'Sherlock Holmes.' His sidekick, 'Dr. Watson,' was played by dour Nigel Bruce.

During World War II the enemy put radio to use as a most potent weapon of psychological warfare, utilizing the broadcasting talents of propaganda artists such as Tokyo Rose (Iva Toguri d'Aquino) and Axis Sally (Mildred Gillars). Both American-born women were convicted of treason and served prison sentences. Tokyo Rose now works in a gift shop in Chicago while Axis Sally teaches music at a convent school in Ohio.

As recently as 1966, propaganda artists were still at work. During this year of the Vietnam conflict, a young American actress, Chris Noel was broadcasting a nightly one-hour show called A DATE WITH CHRIS, from Los Angeles to our armed forces in South Vietnam. Her show was in direct opposition to enemy broadcaster "Hanoi Hannah" who purred anti-Americanisms for the North Vietnamese.

What is the future of radio? Only time can tell. But for now—to busy people everywhere, it remains the quickest, simplest method of keeping informed. Its sounds go directly from the lips of the speaker to the ears of the listener, as if the two were only inches apart, instead of perhaps a half world away. Radio does much more than entertain—it is a friend to the lonely—it interprets—persuades—and teaches, all for little more than a penny's worth of power each day. It hurdles the barriers of censorship and illiteracy. It continues to serve mankind with up to the minute news reports on happenings around the world and other important public services. . . . It is always ready to serve you . . . the most inexpensive entertainment medium . . . and best friend I ever had . . . RADIO . . . Keep listening!



Bill Stern's COLGATE SPORTS NEWSREEL was first heard on October 8, 1939. He presented dramatizations with sound effects and organ of famous sporting events and incidents in the lives of sports figures. He remained a popular favorite through 1956.



This is the complete cast and crew of the **FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY** show. First row: Harlow Wilcox, Jim 'Fibber McGee' Jordan, Marion 'Molly' Jordan, writer Don Quinn, Bill Thompson. Standing: Arthur Q. Bryan, bandleader Billy Mills, Ken Darby and the King's Men, producer Frank Pitman and actor Gale Gordon.



Comedian Red Skelton was basically a pantomimist. Much of his comedy antics was 'visual,' yet he gained great popularity on the air. He began his long running program on NBC on October 7, 1941. Shown here with his cast in 1949. On Floor: Red Skelton. Seated: Verna Felton, announcer Rod O'Connor, Lurene Tuttle. Standing: Pat McGeehan, the singing Four Knights and bandleader Dave Rose.



Quiz Kids

N. B. C. NETWORK — SUNDAY AFTERNOONS — 4 o'clock E.S.T. —
 3 o'clock C.S.T. — 2 o'clock Mountain — 1 o'clock Pacific Coast

SPONSORED BY ALKA-SELTZER AND ONE-A-DAY (Brand) VITAMINS

THE QUIZ KIDS was radio's juvenile answer to **INFORMATION PLEASE**. The program was first heard on NBC on June 28, 1940. The genial host was Joe Kelly. One of the most outstanding kids was young Joel Kupperman who came aboard in 1943. Joel had an IQ of 200-plus and was able to answer algebra problems almost instantly, without benefit of pencil and paper. **Quiz Kids** was one of radio's brightest programs.



ORSON WELLES frightened the whole country with an on-the-air Halloween prank on October 30, 1938 with his unforgettable broadcast of H. G. Wells' science fiction classic 'War of the Worlds' on the **MERCURY THEATRE ON THE AIR** program.

Hi-Yo Silver!

Say Hello To-



Hi-Yo Silver!—was read and the role of the Lone Ranger after the tragic death of George Seaton. Being in the program by the time Seaton left Chicago it was the first time on the air since Seaton left. Even so during the production, a girl he had with former Miss Illinois in an extraordinary manner. Since by the way, according to reports, she was in a hot fever, but she did not appear to be any more than a girl. He seemed very nervous in the end when he was in the hospital and died. He was in the hospital in 1941 in the end of the war. He was in the hospital in 1941 in the end of the war. He was in the hospital in 1941 in the end of the war.

July 1941



The Lone Ranger!

The role of **THE LONE RANGER** was played on the air by several different actors, including George Seaton, Earle Graser and Brace Beemer. Beemer took over the role in the spring of 1941 after Graser was killed in automobile accident.



The sponsors of **THE LONE RANGER** radio program wished to keep the identity of the actor who played the role a secret, so this artist's conception of the character was sent to fans who requested a photograph.



Gene Autry's **MELODY RANCH** program began on CBS on January 7, 1940. Left to right: Horace (Shorty Long) Murphy, Mary Lee, Gene Autry. Second row: announcer Tom Hanlon, Jimmy Wakely, Johnny Bond and Dick Reinhart.



EVE ARDEN was the star of **OUR MISS BROOKS** a comedy series about an English teacher at Madison High School. Miss Arden was perfectly cast as the tart-tongued teacher. The show premiered on CBS on July 19, 1948.



Jim and Marion Jordan began their long radio career in Chicago in 1926 as a singing duo billed as "The O'Henry Twins." In October 1927, they were the stars of **THE AIR SCOUTS** and in June 1929 launched a very early soap opera, **THE SMITH FAMILY**. Next came **SMACKOUT** in March of 1931. They gained radio immortality on April 16, 1935 as **FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY**.



Lurene Tuttle had a long and distinguished radio career. She was one of the supporting players heard frequently on **Lux Radio Theater**. She is also remembered for her role as Sam Spade's faithful secretary, Effie. She played characters of all types and ages.