

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1944.

WEATHER RADIO TODAY

WAAT	770	WEA
WABC	840	WEY
WBA	1330	WHN
WENX	1350	WHO
WFTN	1430	WDR

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1944

NEW YORK—Cloudy and light snow in sections.

TEMPERATURE—Increasing so cold today; light rain.

PENNSYLVANIA—Cloudy with light snow in north portion. Increasing cloudiness.

DE WEATHER FEATURES

Records of observations Weather Bureau the temperatures and the lowest and the highest temperatures for the twenty-four hours ending 8:30 P. M. (All eastern war time.)

	High	Low
New York	40	27
Wash. D. C.	37	23
N. Orleans	54	43
New York	34	21
Norfolk	38	25
Okla. City	35	22
Omaha	38	25
Philadelphia	35	22
Phoenix	45	32
Pittsburgh	38	25
Portland, Me.	35	22
Portland, Ore.	45	32
Richmond	38	25
St. Louis	35	22
Balt. Wash.	38	25
S. Anton	35	22
San Diego	45	32
San Francisco	45	32
Savannah	38	25
Seattle	35	22
Spokane	38	25
Tampa	35	22
Tucson	45	32
Washington	38	25

Lucille Manners, Soprano; Ross Graham, Baritone; Concert Orchestra—WEAF, 8-8:30.

Kate Smith Show: Fred McMurray, Diana Lynn—WABC, 8-8:55.

Variety: Frank Munn, Tenor; Evelyn MacGregor, Contralto; Lyman Orchestra; Chorus—WEAF, 9-9:30.

Comedy Quiz: "It Pays to Be Ignorant"—WABC, 9-9:30.

Amos 'n' Andy, Comedy Sketch—WEAF, 10-10:30.

Boxing: Beau Jack vs. Bob Montgomery, at Madison Square Garden—WOR, 10-11.

Variety: Garry Moore, Jimmy Durante, Comedy: Roy Bargy Orchestra; Georgia Gibbs, Songs—WABC, 10-10:30.

Representative Clinton F. Anderson of New Mexico discussing "The Soldier's Vote"—WJZ, 10-10:30.

Recital: Beatrice Mary, Soprano—WQXR, 10-10:45.

Stage Door Canteen, with Bert Lytell, Patsy Kelly, Akim Tamiroff, Gene Kelly, Nan Wynn—WABC, 10:30-11.

Forum: "Feeding the Children of the Occupied Democracies of Europe," Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, Senator Elbert D. Thomas of Utah, Dr. Howard E. Kershner—WEAF, 10:45-11.

There is no listing for a station the preceding program is on.

MORE

... Music Harmonies ... Music

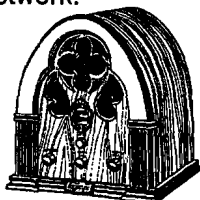


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Old Time Radio Club
P.O. Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086



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The Illustrated Press is a monthly newsletter of The **Old Time Radio Club**, headquartered in Western New York State. Contents except where noted, are copyright 1996 by the OTRC.

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Do You Remember . . . ?

By Stu Mann

Just as the strains of an old song have power to transport us back in time, so the mention of a name, perhaps long forgotten, can take us back to another day, or another place. Do You Remember will try to let you know what happened to some of these people you may remember.

ARTHUR LAKE

"Dagwood Bumstead" (as he was known to millions) was born in 1905 in Corbin, Kentucky. He attended school in Nashville, Tennessee, but spent most of his boyhood traveling with his family. His father and his father's twin brother had an aerialist act called "The Flying Silverlakes". His mother was a stage actress known as Edith Goodwin. Arthur and his sister Florence became part of the act as soon as it switched to vaudeville and was renamed "Family Affairs".

Arthur's last name was shortened to Lake by his producer Carl Laemmle, Jr. when he went into the movies. His first role was in *Jack and the Beanstalk* (1917). In 1924 Arthur began making *Sweet Sixteen Comedies* which typecast him as a teenager, a part he played until he was into middle age.

Arthur played the original role of Dagwood, and stayed with the series in motion pictures, radio and television. When Penny Singleton left the radio version after seven years, Mrs. Lake, the former Patricia Van Cleve, took over the role for the remaining five years. When it became a TV program in 1954, Blondie was played by Pamela Britton. It premiered in January and was dropped in December. In July 1958 it commenced again, but this time it lasted four months

It was in Santa Monica that Arthur, following his retirement, opened a bar which lasted all of six weeks. Along with his large earnings during his heyday, the Lakes were well remembered in the will of Marion Davies who had a great affection for her niece — Arthur's wife. One of Patricia Lakes trinkets that would be beyond the Bumstead family budget was a \$600,000. Cadochon cut-star sapphire necklace.

Arthur Lake was born April 17, 1905 and died in 1987.

The Missing Chapter In Fred Allen's Life

—
by Norton Russell

When you finally meet Fred Allen, you have to keep reminding yourself that your talking to a famous comedian. No one ever looked less like one. What he really looks like is a serious, sensible New Englander in a good conservative business suit.

Fred was born, you know, in a house which stood on the boundary line between Somerville and Cambridge, Massachusetts. His first job, when he was fourteen, was in the Boston Public Library. Nobody in his family ever showed any inclination to go on the stage. His people were, and are, the sort to whom the world of spotlights and backdrops seems completely alien, inhabited by foreigners.

Yet today Fred Allen is a successful comedian, in radio, moving pictures, and the stage. How did it happen? How did he make the transition from public library to Town Hall?

The answer lies in the woman who molded Fred Allen's life — the one person who always thinks of him, and still speaks of him, by his real name of John Sullivan. Few of Fred's friends and business associates have ever seen her. Most of them, I imagine, don't even know of her existence. Yet she has had a profound effect on Fred's character and career, and even now, in everything he does, he is motivated by the wish to please her, to help her.

She lives in a Boston suburb, her name is Mrs. Elizabeth Lovely, and she is Fred Allen's aunt. You'd do better to call her his mother, though, because she's the only one he's known since he was four years old.

I visited her in her second-story flat just out of Boston — five sunny rooms, not very large, filled with comfortable elderly furniture. "I've lived here for eighteen years," she told me. "John wants me to move into an apartment closer in to town, but you'll never catch me living in one of those little boxes."

I believed her, because I couldn't imagine Elizabeth Lovely doing anything she was convinced wasn't right and sensible. She is seventy-eight now, an alert, strong seventy-eight. Her near-sighted eyes indicate her humor and kindness, but the lines of her face, the firm chin, indicate her will-power.

And again, looking at her, I wondered how in the world Fred had gone on the stage when he was scarcely more than a boy. Surely his Aunt Elizabeth must have opposed it, not on any narrow-minded or intolerant grounds, but simply because of its hazards and insecurity.

As she told me her story, though, I began to understand. It's her story, and a part of Fred Allen's story that's never been told before, as well. "John's mother — she was my sister — died of pneumonia when John was four and his brother Robert two," she said. "His father was busy all day in the Boston Library, where he was a book-binder, so of course he didn't have time to raise the boys. I decided it was up to me to take care of them, and their father too."

It was not a new sort of job for her. Her own mother had died when she herself was only fifteen, the oldest of a family of six. Already she knew how to rear a family, how to make a home run smoothly. She'd mothered her father, her brothers and sisters, since before she was old enough to put up her hair. In addition, a few years before, her husband, Michael Lovely had been stricken with paralysis, and she had been caring for him. Childless herself, she still has had more cares, more responsibilities, than the average mother.

"I took in home dressmaking after my husband fell ill, but when the two boys and their father came to live with me, I didn't have time to do that anymore. I looked around until I found a comfortable house in Allston, a suburb of Boston, and we all moved into it. One of my brothers and two of my sisters agreed to live with me and pay board, and all together, by managing, I was able to make both ends meet."

It was in Allston that Fred Allen spent his boyhood and went to school. It was the ordinary boyhood of an ordinary American boy, unshadowed, thanks to Aunt Elizabeth, by the lack of a mother. An ordinary boyhood concerned with such matters as baseball, swimming and school. Nobody, certainly not Aunt Elizabeth, attached any significance to the fact that a good deal of Fred's time was unaccounted for. Off playing somewhere, no doubt. She didn't know then, how many hours he spent practicing juggling. Then when Fred was fifteen, and working after school in the library, a neighbor tossed a bombshell into the Sullivan household. "Saw John acting on the stage last night," he told Aunt Elizabeth. "Acting — on the stage?" she asked, amazed. "How? Where?" "Amateur night over at the Bijou," she was told. "They announced him as Fred Allen, but it was John all right." Now right here is where you would have expected Aunt Elizabeth to call her nephew and register

some serious objections. He had been performing in amateur night shows for some time, she learned, while she thought he was safely at work in the library.

"The idea at first did seem utterly fantastic to me," she said. "Why John had been studying for a business career! But as I thought it over, I began to see his viewpoint. I knew him so well that I could understand why he'd kept it all a secret. If he hadn't been afraid I'd forbid him to enter the amateur competitions, he'd have confided in me — and that he hadn't done so it proved that entering them meant a good deal to him. Without saying anything to him, I found out the next time one of the theaters was going to present amateur acts, and went, sitting in the back of the auditorium where he couldn't possibly see me. I admit I was a bit excited."

"I guess I was a lot more nervous than he was when he came on the stage. He started his act with some juggling, and everything went along all right until somebody in the audience cried, 'Give him the hook! Give him the hook!' If it had been me, I'd have run right off the stage, but John just stopped and answered the fellow, 'No! Give me a show instead!' He answered up so quickly and so spunkily that I had to laugh myself, and the audience roared and clapped and told the heckler to be quiet. Then John finished, and everybody applauded."

"I went home and made up my mind that if John wanted to go on the stage — well, he'd just have to do it. I don't believe in trying to keep people from doing things they want to do, to make a living, as long as it's an honest living. Besides, John seems to have a natural talent. Not many boys his age could have answered up to that man in the audience. I found out he'd been afraid of two things — that his father and I would object, and that he'd fail. These were the two reasons he'd used the name Fred Allen."

"Of course, I didn't know then that he'd be as big a success as he has, but after watching him that one time I thought he could probably make a go of it. Anyway, I decided I wouldn't stop him from trying."

That's how it happened that Fred Allen entered vaudeville as soon as he'd finished high school. Fred's early days in the show business were about as precarious as those of others who are stars today. but no matter how difficult it was to get money, nor where he was, he contributed regularly to the expenses of the family. It was no longer necessary, financially, for the family to live together, and gradually they drifted apart, until, when the war broke out. Aunt Elizabeth had with her only her invalid husband and one sister. Fred's

father had died a few years before. During the first years of the war, Fred was touring in Australia, but when the United States entered the conflict he returned home, intending to enlist. His brother Robert had already done so, and was in a training camp, preparing to go overseas.

But he found his aunt facing a crisis. Her sister had fallen ill with an incurable disease, and it was taking every penny she had saved throughout long years of economical housekeeping to pay for medicine and doctors for the two invalids.

For the first time in her life, she asked another person to make a sacrifice for her sake. She knew that Fred had already had two years of living in war-time Australia, met on every side by the question, implied or open, of those hysterical days, "Why aren't you in the trenches?" She knew how the suggestion that he was a slacker had galled him. Yet, because she could see no other way out of her trouble, she explained the situation to him and asked him not to enlist.

Fred proved, then, that he hadn't forgotten his aunt's love and tolerance, that he knew of the years of her life she had given to him. "Don't worry," he said, "of course I won't enlist, I'll go on working, and we'll get along fine."

But there was still the draft. Fred wouldn't have anything to say about it if his name was drawn. Aunt Elizabeth determined to forestall any such event. She went to the draft board herself, without saying anything to Fred (he doesn't know to this day that she did this), and explained her situation to the officials. If Fred went to war, she concluded, there'd be nobody to take care of his family. I don't know how much effect this indomitable old lady's plea had — but the fact remains that Fred wasn't drafted. Perhaps the officials were impressed, as I was, by her courage, her refusal to let life control her, and her determination to control it instead.

When I spoke of my admiration for these qualities in her, however, I discovered that I was talking of something beyond her comprehension. She simply didn't realize that in rearing Fred so wisely, keeping the family going against continual odds, she had done anything out of the ordinary.

"But I've never been in want," she said. "I've had to economize, yes, but lots of people have to do that. You just do the best you can with what you have, and everything usually turns out all right."

Well it has turned out all right for Aunt Elizabeth, and I'm glad. In her seventy-eighth year she is strong,

healthy, full of interest in life and what it has to offer — and very proud of Fred. With her sister she lives in Boston, doing all her own housework and on holidays gathering her family around her once more for a feast she cooks herself. Once a year, lately, Fred has treated her to a trip. Two years ago it was to Ireland, to see her parents' birthplace. Last year it was to South America, with her sister. On their way home they met another grand old lady named May Robson. This year it may be Florida, or Hollywood. She says she'd like to take another sea voyage, but her sister (who is several years younger) had about enough of the sea when they went to South America. They may take one yet though. I've a suspicion that Aunt Elizabeth thinks it will be time enough to sit around home when she's old.

(Reprinted from *Radio Mirror*, March, 1936)

JIMMY

by DOM PARISI

He entered this world on a cold kitchen table, in a barren flat above his father's tiny lower East side barbershop. A midwife helped with the delivery. The place was Brooklyn, New York, the date February 20, 1893. (Tune In Yesterday lists

the date as February 10, 1893. Jahn Robbins in his book *Inka Dinka Doo* dates it as February 20, 1893.) James Francis Durante, son of the Italian immigrant Bartolomeo and his mail-order bride from Sicily, Rosa from who Jimmy inherited his big nose, was to become one of the greatest entertainers of all time.

During Jimmy's early childhood he worked in the barbershop lathering customer faces prior to his father doing the shaving. Durante left school in the seventh grade. He held some temporary jobs. He washed cadavers in a neighborhood funeral parlor, he drove a coal wagon, ran errands for the American Banknote Co., and he even fought under the name of "Kid Salerno." Jimmy was KO'd in his first and only fight!

Durante started to fool around with the piano. His disappointed dad wanted him to become a concert pianist



someday, but Jimmy had other goals. He got his first piano at around eleven. The piano was given to the Durante's by their cousin who didn't have room for it in their home. A determined Jimmy slowly learned to play the thing. (In his lifetime he played in honky-tonk beer joints during the twenties, Prohibition and the Depression. He entertained the Troops during World War II and the Vietnam War.)

In 1910, at seventeen, Jimmy played ragtime at Diamond Tony's, a beer hall in Coney Island. During the latter part of 1911 business wasn't doing so good, Durante was let go. He landed a job in Cary Walsh's, a cabaret not far from Diamond Tony's. Jimmy once remarked that Walsh's was a little fancier than Tony's — "There was a sign in the toilet that says: Gents, please button-up your fly."

It was in Carey's that Durante met a skinny-big-black-eyed waiter named Eddie Cantor. They soon became good friends. Jimmy said: "If I never worked at Carey's, it figures I might never have met Eddie. In a way he changed my whole life." Cantor was a big help for getting Jimmy started as a comedian. Eddie would tell Durante over and over that plinking tunes on a piano in beer joints wouldn't get him anywhere. Jimmy would remark — "What else can I do?" Cantor would tell him to get out on the floor and tell jokes. "Gee Eddie," Durante would remark, "I couldn't do that. I'd be afraid they'd start laughing."

In 1916 Jimmy put together a Dixieland combo for the Club Alamo in Harlem. There he met Eddie Jackson, a singer who was to become his longtime partner. Around 1923 they opened the Club Durant joined by the vaudeville team of Harry Harris and Frank Nolan. The sign maker had no idea that Durante was spelled with an "E" at the end of Jimmy's last name. The sign read "Durant." The sign maker wanted another hundred dollars to add the letter. The boys settled for the sign as it was — "Club Durant". Business was slow. Hardly anyone came to the club — until soft-shoe dancer Lou Clayton entered the scene. Together with Jimmy and Jackson they turned things around, (Harris and Nolan dropped out of the picture.) and the club developed into a "Classy Joint". Well known people of the time came to the club: W. C. Fields, Will Rogers, Alfred Lunt and his wife Lynn Fontanne, Ziegfeld Follies performers, Babe Ruth and others.

Publisher William Randolph Hearst once said that Ragtime was "Satan Music". "The Titles alone give you an indication of what to expect: *Sour Grapes Rag, Ragtime Insanity, Lovin' Woman Rag*. Listen to them and you will realize how decadent they are." With Hearst's al-

leged rumored background he dared to make a remark like that. How could he put a moral value on Ragtime. How about his affair with his mistress? Regardless, if Ragtime was "Bad", then we have come a long way. What would Hearst say of today's music? The people liked ragtime, Durante gave it to them.

Success didn't last long, however! Two years after the Club Durant was opened, October 1925, it was sealed for selling liquor. The story is that two strangers appeared at the Club Durant where the doorman tried to stop them from entering. They asked to see Durante. "Jimmy, old pal, it's so good to lay eyes on you again", one of them said. "How's your brother Al and your sister Lillian?" "Those sure were good times we had in school 114" the other said. "Remember when a baseball landed on your head?" "Yeah. it's good to see you fellows" Jimmy said. A couple of days later the place was padlocked. Those "childhood friends" were liquor inspectors!

After the club closed Clayton found work for them at Minsky's Burlesque, then at the Dover Club, a speakeasy on 51st Street. Clayton (he was the legal brains of the outfit) settled for a salary of \$1,750 plus 50% of anything over \$10,000 business. The first week the Dover raked in \$18,000. The owner tried to settle for \$3,000. Clayton demanded the 50% agreed upon. After a long and heated discussion they were given 60% ownership of the club. Clayton, Jackson and Durante stayed with the Dover for two and one-half years. During that period, the owner and the boys divided a profit of over \$500,000!

In early 1927, the boys (calling themselves The Three Sawdust Bums) started working at the Parady Club on East 48th Street for \$3,000 a week. Things started to take off. When comedienne Fanny Brice took ill while booked at New York's Palace Theater, Clayton arraigned booking for \$5,500 a week, \$2,500 more than what they were pulling in at the Parody. It looked like the boys had finally arrived! Next stop the midwest, Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, where they bombed. (They couldn't please everyone.)

In the fall of 1928 they returned to New York to appear at the Silver Slipper, a newly opened speakeasy on 48th Street. Ten days later it was closed for selling liquor. The next booking was at the Les Ambassadeurs a few blocks from the Slipper. They always had other spots to go.

In the spring of '29 they were hired by Florenz Ziegfeld to appear in his new musical *Show Girl*. They received great reviews. Walter Winchell wrote that: "Lou Clayton

and Eddie Jackson are super in *Show Girl*, but the superest of them all is Schnozzla Durante who is an inspired, gilt-edged madman. Last night Jolson found it out." (Jack Duffy of the Vaudeville team of Bernard and Duffy gave Jimmy the name "Schnozzola". While playing at the Alamo, Duffy walks in and Durante asks him to do a number. "Sure, Schnozzola", Jack says. The name stuck.)

The movies were to follow. Some good, some duds! . . . *Little Miss Broadway*, *Jumbo* and others. His last movie was the 1963 *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad, World*.

After a long career on stage during and after prohibition Jimmy's popularity started to fade. During World War II radio put new life into his career. After the death of his first wife Jeanne Olson, Durante teamed up with Bow-Tied Garry Moore for *The Camel Caravan Show*. Then in 1943 Lou Costello had a heart attack, Bud Abbott didn't want to do their Thursday night comedy show alone. Producer Phil Cohan arranged for Durante and Moore to fill in for Abbott and Costello. On March 25, 1943 *The Durante-Moore Show* premiered on NBC. After they finished their commitment to sub for Abbott and Costello, they were signed for Camel Cigarettes on CBS.

Garry struck out on his own in 1947. On October 1, 1947 Jimmy carried on alone with *The Jimmy Durante Show*, sponsored by Rexall Drugs on NBC. He was to continue for three more years. Jimmy had his weekly regulars on the show — Peggy Lee, Arthur Treacher and Victor Moore. Durante opened each show with his "Ink-A-Dink" theme. It seems that he never finished some of the songs he started to sing on his show. After a small lead-in to a song Durante would yell "Stop da music! Stop da music! There's somethin' wrong wit da orchestrial harmonics!" His show moved to Friday night in 1948 sponsored again by Camel. Television beckoned and Jimmy left radio for it in 1950. His television show was on NBC's *Four Star Review*. He also appeared on *The Colgate Comedy Hour* and on his *Jimmy Durante Show*.

Durante's famous "Goodnight Mrs. Calabash wherever you are" closing dialogue remained a mystery for years. Who was she? Was she a real person? A fake? Some guesses were that Mrs. Calabash was: 1. A racehorse that always finished last and Durante lost thousands on the nags. 2. The nickname for his partner Lou Clayton. 3. The widowed mother of a small boy who had died of polio. 4. A former neighbor that went out 20 years ago for a pack of cigarettes — she never returned. 5. The married name of an old girlfriend who had jilted Jimmy in favor of a dentist.

The truth is that Mrs. Calabash was the creation of producer Phil Cohan. He and Durante developed Mrs. Calabash as a fictional joke. They got the name from the type of pipe Cohan was smoking.

Jimmy's later years were filled with a combination of sadness and happiness. A series of strokes prevented him from bringing laughter to his loyal fans. Still, he was a happy man for he had a lovely wife and daughter who loved him. He met his second wife Margie Little in 1944 while he was playing the Copacabana. He married her 16 years later — she was 39, he was 67.

Clayton died on September 12, 1950. George Jessel delivered the eulogy. Clayton's last words were: "Take care of the long-nosed fellow. If I ever hear of anyone hurting Jimmy, I'll come back and kill him." The long-nosed fellow died on January 29, 1980 of lung congestion in Beverly Hills, California. He was 86 years young. The world lost a diamond in the rough when Jimmy died!

Goodnight Jimmy, wherever you are.

His Movies:

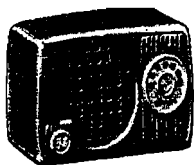
Roadhouse Nights, 1930, Paramount
 New Adventures of Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford, 1931, MGM
 The Cuban Love Song, 1931, MGM
 The Passionate Plumber, 1932, MGM
 The Wet Parade, 1932, MGM
 Blondie Of The Follies, 1932, MGM
 The Phantom President, 1932, Paramount
 What! No Beer?, 1933, MGM
 Hell Below, 1933, MGM
 Broadway To Hollywood, 1933, MGM
 Meet The Baron, 1933, MGM
 Palooka, 1934, United Artists
 George White's Scandals, 1934, Fox
 Hollywood Party, 1934, MGM
 Strictly Dynamite, 1934, RKO
 Student Tour, 1934, MGM
 Carnival, 1935, Columbia
 Land Without Music, 1936, British
 Sally, Irene and Mary, 1938, 20th Century Fox
 Start Cheering, 1938, Columbia
 Little Miss Broadway, 1938, 20th Century Fox
 Melody Ranch, 1940, Republic
 You're In The Army Now, 1941, Warner Bros.
 The Man Who Came To Dinner, 1942, Warner Bros.
 Two Girls and A Sailor, 1944, MGM
 Music For Millions, 1945, MGM
 Two Sisters From Boston, 1946, MGM
 It Happened In Brooklyn, 1947, MGM
 This Time For Keeps, 1947, MGM

On An Island With You, 1948, MGM
 The Great Rupert, 1950, Eagle Lion
 The Milkman, 1950, Universal
 Beau James, 1957, Paramount (Cameo)
 Pepe, 1960, Columbia
 The Last Judgment, 1961, Italian
 Jumbo, 1942, MGM
 It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World, 1963, United Artists
His Stage Shows:
 Show Girl, 1929
 The New Yorker, 1930
 Strike Me Pink, 1933
 Jumbo, 1935
 Red, Hot And Blue, 1936
 Stars In Your Eyes, 1939
 Keep Off The Grass, 1940

Source: Inka Dinka Doo - The Life Of Jimmy Durante,
 by Jhan Robbins

Tune In Yesterday, by John Dunning

Handbook Of Old Time Radio, by Swartz and Reinehr



SAME TIME, SAME STATION

by Jim Cox

DAVID HARUM

From his very first broadcast, the banker-hero of New England, David Harum, became an on-the-air crusader "for love . . . for happiness . . . and the good way of life." Never married, he resided in the home of his sister, Polly Benson (called Aunt Polly on the show) and her husband, James, who operated the local hotel. As president of the Homerville Bank, Harum was in a position to dispense not only financial assistance but to become actively involved in the personal lives of the townfolk. They looked to him as one of their leading citizens and frequently sought sage counsel from him.

Offering large doses of grandfatherly advice and helping folks out of trouble became his forte. In fact, an early epigraph introduced the program as "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 outwitting those who are too clever in scheming in helping themselves."

In a manner befitting *Just Plain Bill*, the barber of Heartville, the banker of Homerville — who was labeled "the Will Rogers of radio soap opera" — projected values

that were considered to be "All-American." Kind and benevolent, Harum was generous to a fault, often going out of his way to assist a troubled neighbor, relative or friend. Sometimes his involvement in their lives brought difficulty and danger to himself. But just like all of his philosophical counterparts in radio soapland — including *Just Plain Bill*, *Ma Perkins*, Ruth Wayne Evans of *Big Sister*, Papa David of *Life Can Be Beautiful*, Dr. John Rutledge of *The Guiding Light* and others — he had the capacity to remain level-headed, even when those about him were losing their heads.

On the broadcast of August 10, 1945, for instance, he found himself in one of those trying situations. Harum and Susan Price Wells — who often assisted him in his exploits in "do-goodism" — had tracked young kidnap victim Jenny Gray to the estate of Jonathan Blake. There her host was detaining Gray against her will. Shortly after their arrival on the lawn of the secluded property, Harum and Wells found themselves face-to-face with one of Blake's big burly thugs who was brandishing a colt 45. "I got orders to ask questions after I shoot he informed the pair.

Having been down similar roads before, Harum's listeners could be sure this was a typical day in the life of the rural banker. Their hero would think of something to overturn the tables on Blake's bodyguard — and release Miss Gray from unwelcome confinement, before further disaster struck.

Late in the 40s Harum injected himself into the lives of Elaine Dilling, a former Homerville resident, and her daughter, Dorothy, who briefly returned to the town. This time, however, the bank president had some legitimate reasons for becoming involved in the dilemma for the woman were there about some financial concerns. Accompanied by Dorothy's fiancée, Jack Wallace, they traveled to Homerville to claim an inheritance that legally belonged to Dorothy.

What Harum didn't know, of course, was that at the very moment he was being played a fool. In reality, Dorothy Dilling was an impostor. Together with Wallace and a third accomplice — wily old Hilda Jackson, who soon arrived posing as Mrs. Bradshaw, Elaine Dilling's mother — they mixed deception and mayhem. Actually, Hilda Jackson was keeping close tabs on the *real* Dorothy Dilling, whom she was holding against *her* will at the former Dilling mansion.

One of Harum's first clues that something was amiss was when he learned that Elaine Dilling was frightened by her "daughter." Yet with Elaine powerless to help herself, it appeared that Jack, "Dorothy" and "Mrs.

Bradshaw" would succeed in their evil scheme. Unless, of course, David Harum could learn the truth and find a way to prevent them from carrying out their diabolical plan. By then, he had earned a widespread reputation for saving young damsels in distress — especially those tied in knots inside old estates. Long-time fans could rest assured they had little cause to break into a sweat.

The Second World War exerted a heavy influence on this serial just as it did many of its contemporaries. Harum volunteered to serve his country as the manager of a plant manufacturing secret weapons for the government. While he had no prior experience, his audience forgave that, seeing that he was doing his part to "fight for the right" at home.

At one period the *Harum* program wafted onto the airwaves with the familiar strains of "Sunbonnet Sue," its theme, hummed by Stanley Davis while he plucked the notes on a guitar. Davis must have made a nice living at this. He hummed the theme for *The Romance of Helen Trent* and whistled the one for *John's Other Wife* while accompanying himself on the guitar. By the mid-40s, however, the hums and plunks on *Harum* were discarded, giving rise to the more familiar studio organ, while "Sunbonnet Sue" still ushered in the serial, it was played to a lively beat that gave the drama a sense of urgency, complementing the staccato delivery of announcer Ford Bond's narration and commercials. ("Once again we present Bab-O's own program, *David Harum*," Bond imparted daily in broken, rapid-fire delivery.)

The role of David Harum was played by three radio thespians — Wilmer Walter, Craig McDonnell and Cameron Prud'homme. The first two earned credits portraying the leads on shows evolving out of pulp fiction. Walter was Andy Gump on *The Gumps*, a prominent comic strip of the 30s; McDonnell appeared in *Official Detective*, a show loosely drawn from stories in the magazine of the same name.

But Prud'homme, who played Harum from 1944-47 and again as the series wound to its finish in 1950-51, sounded so much like Arthur Hughes — the actor who dispensed advice in the small town of Hartville as *Just Plain Bill* (Davidson) — listeners might have easily confused the two. Some fans, in fact, probably accepted the fact that they were the same individual.

Prud'homme earned recognition in at least three mediums — stage, film and radio. He gave fatherly advice to such on-stage and on-screen luminaries as Shirley Booth, Tammy Grimes, Katherine Hepburn and Geraldine Page. He landed radio parts in *Stella Dallas*, A

Woman of America, *Backstage Wife*, *Life Can Be Beautiful*, *Young Widder Brown*, *Cavalcade of America* and *Theatre Guild of the Air*. He also penned scripts for *Hawthorne House*, a regional serial drama heard in the west. When he died in 1967 he was 74.

From its inception on NBC Blue January 27, 1936, the *Harum* series tended to move frequently across the radio dial. It was also broadcast at many different hours of the day. Originally heard at 10:45 a.m. Eastern Time, the washboard weeper shifted to NBC Red at 11 a.m. later that inaugural year. For a few months, in 1937-38, the Mutual network added a repeat of the daily broadcast at 3:45 p.m.

For two years, 1940-42, the program found a home on NBC Red at 11:45 a.m., a time period it was destined to occupy more than any other quarter-hour. For a single season, *Harum* shifted to CBS at 3 p.m. in 1942-43, before returning to NBC at 11:45 a.m. It remained there until it moved back to CBS for two seasons — 10:45 a.m. in 1947-48 and 3 p.m. in 1948-49. Returning to NBC, it occupied the 11:45 a.m. slot until cancellation January 5, 1951.

Regrettably, the drama's ratings were spectacular in but one season, 1939-40, when it reached 9.0. In only five of 14 seasons for which numbers were kept did the series climb above 5.0. The frequent shift in networks and hours may have frustrated marginal fans, who perhaps had difficulty locating it. Or maybe there were enough other country philosophers on the job simultaneously that one more didn't make a lot of difference to most listeners.

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Dear Old-Time Radio Supporter,

On Saturday, September 6, 1997, our Club, *The Golden Radio Buffs of Maryland, Inc.*, will celebrate 25 years of service dedicated to the preservation of Old-Time Radio Entertainment on disc and tape. We are inviting you, who have supported us during this quarter-century to help us celebrate this most memorable event and milestone, which will be the largest gathering of radio and vintage TV personalities - both past and present - from the Maryland, D.C., New York and New Jersey areas.

This year our Banquet, Show and Awards Ceremony will be held at the beautiful *Bouni Temple Ballroom*, 4900 North Charles Street in Baltimore. Our Honored Guests scheduled to appear read like a "Who's Who" in Broadcasting; *Bea Wain*, vocalist for the Larry Clinton Orchestra and "Your Hit Parade," *Will Hutchins*, TV's "Dagwood," *Mrs. David Rubinoff & Mrs. Carmen Cavallero* (accepting posthumous awards for their late husbands). Our Masters Of Ceremonies will be *Fred Foy* announcer/narrator for "The Lone Ranger" show and popular Baltimore radio & TV Host, *Buddy Deane*.

We are offering, if you so desire, a table (*free of cost to you*), to display your books, tapes, literature, old radios or any radio-related merchandise you would care to promote. Also, why not take advantage of our low ad rates by placing an ad in our program, advertising your merchandise. (see ad rates below). If you decide to attend and display, you may set-up *Friday, Sept. 5th*, (the day before the Banquet). Cost for the Banquet will be \$30.00 p.p. (member) and \$35.00 p.p. (non-member). Our ad rates are as follows: FULL PAGE: \$660.00 * HALF PAGE: \$30.00 * QUARTER PAGE: \$15.00 * BUSINESS CARD: \$7.00 * PATRON OR BOOSTER AD (Single name or Mr. & Mrs.): \$2.00

The deadline for all ad copy is *Aug. 10, 1997*. We would appreciate hearing from you ASAP regarding the display table and ad, so we can reserve space for you. If further information is needed, send all inquiries to: *Gene Leitner, Banquet Chairman, 301 Jeanwood Court, Baltimore, Maryland 21222. (410) 477-3051*.

Hoping to hear from you soon and see you on September 6th.

Most Sincerely,
Owens L. Pomeroy, Co-Chairman
25th Anniversary Banquet Committee



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