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BING CROSBY

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A PICTORIAL TRIBUTE

**THE WOMEN
AND THE
CHILDREN
HE LOVED**

**MEMORIES OF
A MAN AND
HIS MUSIC BY
THE STARS WHO
WORKED AND
PLAYED WITH HIM**

**HOW 'DER BINGLE'
HELPED WIN A WAR**

**WHEN HE
TURNED
TO RADIO,
LOVERS
EVERYWHERE
TURNED ON**

**BOB HOPE'S
EULOGY**





BING CROSBY

A PICTORIAL TRIBUTE

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"For all the roads he traveled in his memorable career, Bing Crosby remained a gentleman, proof that a great talent can be a good man despite the pressures of show business.

"He lived a life his fans around the world felt was typically American: successful yet modest, casual but elegant. He revolutionized popular music, sang the biggest hit of all time, and yet was a man who would be at ease in any American home."

President Jimmy Carter

THE ROAD TO FAME LIES AHEAD



A star was born here in Tacoma, but didn't stay long.



An early playmate was youngest sister, Mary Rose.

■ For half a century, Bing Crosby was the living embodiment of America. Eternally young and cool, optimistic in the face of overwhelming odds—whether global depression or cataclysmic war—he symbolized the nation that was the hope of the world. It was the land where every Christmas promised to be just a little whiter than the one before and Crosby seemed always to be a part of it. And why not? He had done as much to shape its public personality as any man of his era.

Much of the Crosby charm can be traced to Bing's background. His

roots were not in the cosmopolitan, technologically oriented America where he would achieve fame and wealth, but in the small towns that always were the bedrock of his immense popularity.

The new century was barely a year old, itself, when Harry Lillis Crosby was born in Tacoma, Wash., on May 2, 1901, and its newest marvels would be an even longer time in coming to the Pacific Northwest, where he spent the formative years of his life. While he waited for progress to catch up with him, he would move around a bit.

The first time came just after his fifth birthday, when his father, Harry Lowe Crosby, was offered a bookkeeper's job with the Inland Brewery of Spokane. After some talk with his wife—the former Kate Harrigan—he moved their family to the burgeoning metropolis and it was there that the future showman and his three brothers and three sisters did their growing up.

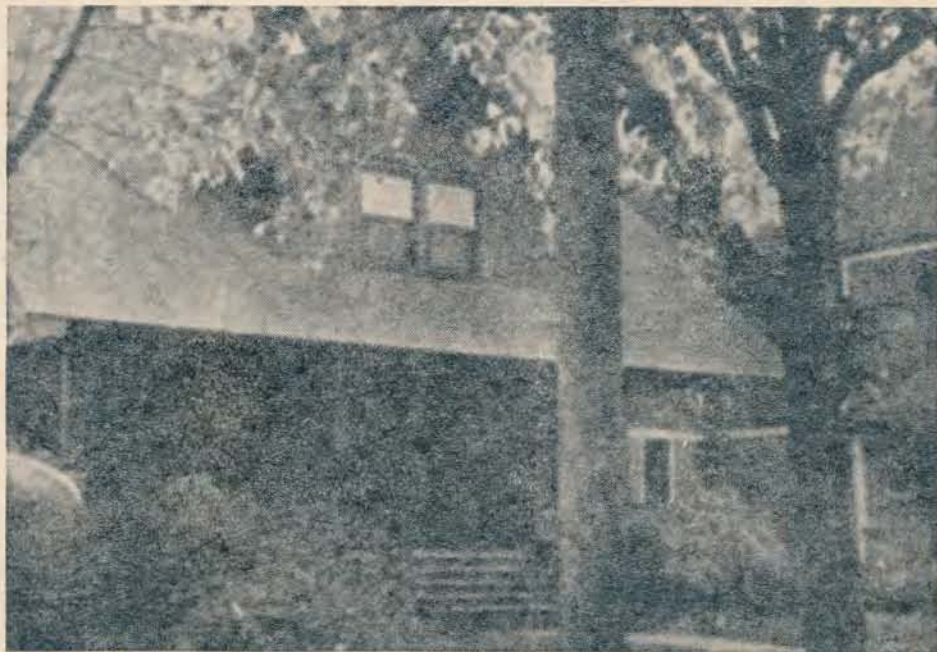
The largely apocryphal story of how young Harry acquired his nickname begins when the boy was just seven years old and hooked on a Sunday comic strip called "The



Football was just one of many sports that attracted Bing (front row, left) and his personality made him a natural leader.

Bingsville Bugle." The star of the "Bugle" was a character by the name of Bingo, whose large ears bore an embarrassing, unmistakable resemblance to young Crosby's. A neighbor boy was the first to seize upon this remarkable discovery and tag his friend Bingo. The monicker stuck for some time, until the O was lost somewhere, and the youth henceforth was known—and became famous—as Bing.

Bing's love of music was handed down from both his parents. His father was an enthusiastic devotee of both mandolin and guitar whose greatest pleasure came from sharing the stage with his wife in various Gilbert and Sullivan productions around Spokane. Bing was still in grade school when he began singing



Spokane home was first one that the Crosby family could really call its own.



Teenager who enjoyed visiting farms never dreamed that someday he would own vast ranches where his own herds would roam.



By 16, Gonzaga AC swimming champ.

with some choral groups and Mrs. Crosby, sensing his early promise, decided to bring him to a voice coach. Bing was just 12, when he auditioned.

The coach suggested that he forget about singing popular songs for awhile and devote himself instead to tone production and breathing exercises. That would be the end of Bing's formal study of music. For the rest of his life he was unable to read a note.

Bing's high school years were marked by his interest in sports at the Gonzaga Athletic Club and his association with an amateur band known as "The Juicy Seven." After graduation from the Jesuit-affiliated high, he enrolled as a law student at the Order's Gonzaga University and, just as importantly, began singing and playing drums with "The Musicaladers." The six-piece combo gigged all over the state and then settled down to a regular summer job at the new Lareida's Dance Pavillion on the outskirts of Spokane.

The Musicaladers lasted until 1925, when Bing and the band's piano player, Al Rinker, left Washington in an ancient Ford bound for Los Angeles. "Two Boys and a

Piano—Singing Songs In Their Own Way" performed up and down the Pacific Coast without much notice for two years. Their luck changed when Paul Whiteman, America's foremost band leader, learned of their act and asked them to audition for him.

"We went up to see Whiteman at his living quarters in the Million Dollar Theater in L. A.," Bing would remember, "and he had a pound of caviar in his lap and a magnum of champagne on the breakfast table. I'd never even seen caviar up to then, but I wasn't so dumb that I didn't know what the stuff was. And let me tell you, I was impressed. That seemed to be the ultimate in attainment . . . to be able to eat caviar and sip champagne for breakfast. Whiteman talked to Al and I for a couple of minutes and asked us about our background. Then he mentioned that he thought the act was fine and would we care to join his band. Would we ever?"

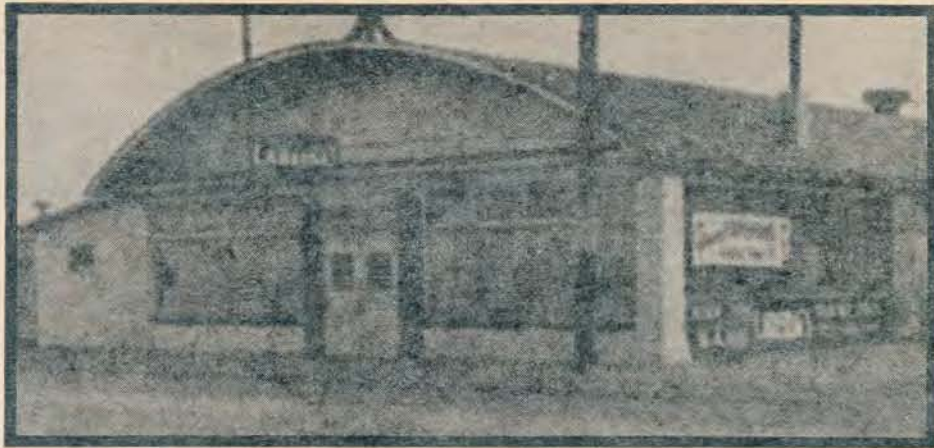
Whiteman never had seen the Musicaladers perform, but had made his offer on the advice of a couple of his musicians who had caught their act. Just the same, he was eager to have the boys join him



Serious face of high school grad belied devil-may-care attitude of future superstar.



"Two Boys and a Piano" headed for L.A.



Lareida's Dance Hall provided summer showcase for struggling "Musicaladers." for his next major booking in Chicago. Crosby and Rinker quickly agreed, but before heading out to the midwest Bing had his first recording date at a California studio.

Bing and Al caught up with Whiteman at Chicago's Tivoli Theater, where they made their debut

sitting in with the band. Because Al was something of a musician, The King of Jazz trusted him with a guitar to hold as a prop. Because Crosby was not, he was assigned a Peck horn—something like an alto or French horn—and given strict orders not to blow it.



Bing's dad worked hard to provide large brood with extras.



His mother helped fill home with love and Catholic faith.

Undismayed, the pair stuck with Whiteman and actually were doing quite well—until the band journeyed to the east coast. When they performed their piano and vocal specialty act at New York's cavernous Paramount Theater, they bombed spectacularly. It would be years before the boys learned why.

"The act was no different in New York than anywhere else," Bing would tell friends, "but the theater was. Those were the days before microphones and the Paramount was a big theater, the biggest I'd ever seen up to then. We thought they hated us. They just couldn't hear us."

At the time, no one recognized the problem for what it was and Crosby and Rinker's fortunes with Whiteman dimmed. Instead of firing them, though, The King of Jazz decided to doctor their act by adding another singer-piano player who was making a name for himself on the New York nightclub circuit. When Harry Barris joined the pair, "The Rhythm Boys" were born.

The trio was a hit—and they knew it, celebrating to excess almost every night at local bars. Whiteman wouldn't stand for it and, to get them out of his sight, he shipped them off to play the Keith Orpheum vaudeville circuit under his aegis. It would be a short-lived separation.

Talkies were only three years old in 1930, but Hollywood was already starved for new voices. When Universal signed Whiteman and the band to film "The King of Jazz," a call went out for "The Rhythm Boys" to rejoin them. To his immense disgust, Whiteman learned that Crosby had not calmed down, but was wilder than ever.

Just before Bing's first date with the makeup man, he had the bad luck to be arrested on a drunk driving charge. Crosby always would maintain that he was innocent that time, but, in any event, he was haled into court a few weeks later and asked to tell his side of it.

"Don't you know there's a prohibition law in effect in this country?" the judge asked.

"Sure," came the singer's honest reply. "But nobody pays attention to it."

That remark cost Bing a 60-day

term in the local jail at a time when he could least afford it. Whiteman's lawyers worked out a sort of work-release program which allowed Bing to be let out of his cell when he was needed in front of the cameras, with a guard standing by. But, as punishment for the latest escapade, his solo in the movie was given to another performer and, as soon as the filming was over, Whiteman dropped the ebullient Rhythm Boys' contract. They didn't mind.

Secure in their talent, they quickly became regulars at the posh Montmartre Cafe on Hollywood Boulevard at a weekly salary of \$400 each—a heady sum in those depression days. From the Montmartre, they anti-gravitated upward to Los

Angeles' number one nightspot—the famed Coconut Grove in the Ambassador Hotel on Wilshire Boulevard, where they performed with the Gus Arnheim Orchestra.

It was during their long stay at the Coconut Grove that Bing refined and polished the style of singing that would make him a world wide star. He was becoming so good, in fact, that he was leaving the other Rhythm Boys far behind. As his star ascended, it was only natural that the future of the trio should dim. But, before the group broke up, Bing would have to find a new direction for his talents. He just had begun to look when the revolutionary medium of radio began taking off all around him. ■



Clowning of "The Rhythm Boys" onstage and off brought fans, lots of headaches.

HE SANG AND THE WORLD TUNED IN



The microphones and Bing's face changed over 30 years.



But warmth and goodness of the man kept listeners loyal.

■ During the Rhythm Boys' stay at the Coconut Grove, a two-hour radio show was broadcast live from studios above the nightclub. Backed by the Gus Arnheim orchestra, Bing quickly became its star. The show went all the way to the San Francisco Bay area in northern California, but Everett Crosby—who'd abandoned his interest in a trucking company to manage his brother's career—felt that Bing's talents deserved wider exposure. He mailed copies of Bing's recording of "I Sur-

render, Dear," to the heads of both CBS and NBC in New York and then settled back to wait for what he was certain would be a favorable response.

It was William S. Paley, the Columbia Broadcasting System president, who made the first offer. From an ocean liner bound for Europe, he cabled Everett with a request to bring his brother east for an audition. He would have been in touch sooner, Paley explained, but he had taken the Crosby record on board

ship with him in New York and had not gotten around to playing it until he was half-way to France.

Before 1931 was over, Bing signed a contract to do a national show from New York at a salary of \$600 a week. The first scheduled broadcast was a disaster which almost cost Crosby his radio career before it had even begun.

"I lost my voice completely," Bing would recall. "I'd been keeping a pretty busy schedule in those days, which included plenty of

AT THE CROSS ROADS OF THE WORLD

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JUST ACROSS THE STREET

Starts Friday

IN PERSON

RADIO'S NEWEST SENSATION

BING CROSBY

Romantic singer of songs you love



AT THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE NOW
"GIRLS ABOUT TOWN" - KAY FRANCIS
LILYAN TASHMAN - JOEL MC CREA

Paramount THEATRE

"GIRLS ABOUT TOWN"

By the time Bing was invited back to play the Paramount after his first dismal reception there, he had found the style that was to make him everything that the huge billboard proclaimed and he would go on to conquer show business as no one had before or would since, winning along the way the label that was most used on his death, "the world's most popular entertainer."



Never afraid to share his radio spot with other famous singers, "The Groaner" enjoyed duets with likes of Nat King Cole.



Outstanding memory helped make it easy for Bing to breeze through scripts.

nightclubbing until four or five in the morning and, usually, I'd be called on to sing a number or two with the house band. I'd also spent too much time rehearsing for the show, which I saw as my big break.

"To make matters worse, my rehearsal hall was one of the first air conditioned rooms I'd ever been in and I caught a cold. Instead of resting my voice, I tried to sing over it and just made things a whole lot worse. Finally, when it was time for me to go on, I couldn't make a sound. It wasn't laryngitis, but those rumors that I had stage fright aren't true."

Bing's voice returned as abruptly as it had disappeared and, just three nights later, he was back in front of a CBS microphone to try his luck again. What came out of radios from coast to coast was pure Crosby and made him a success beyond his wildest dreams.

Brother Everett knew there was no time to waste and immediately began hunting for a sponsor for the

radio show. After considering several offers, he decided to let Cremo cigars pick up the tab. It was also Everett's decision to showcase the Crosby talent at The Paramount, the same Times Square theater where Bing had been such a dud a short time before. There seemed a certain justice in the return to the Paramount, scene of that early disaster which proved so lucky.

When the Rhythm Boys were chasing patrons out of the house, the Paramount's management had pressured Paul Whiteman into agreeing that Crosby would not sing there with the band. Now they were offering improbable sums of money for Bing's name on a ten-week contract. They got it, in November, 1931, for \$2500 a week. In return, Bing would emcee the vaudeville

show and provide snappy patter and a song or two with one of the other acts on the program.

Hoping to drum up some publicity, Bob Weitman, the theater manager, booked handsome Russ Columbo into the Brooklyn Paramount, across the East River, and launched the so-called Battle of the Baritones. It was more of a skirmish than a war, because Bing was just



America stayed home to listen to programs that presented such talent as Crosby, Lamour, Hope and a very young Sinatra.



Bing clowned with bazooka-playing show regular Bob Burns and a Dorsey trombonist with same name as homespun comic.



Singer-actor Dick Powell traded quips and sang with another celebrated crooner.

too good for the competition. He broke every house record at the Paramount and was quickly re-signed to do another 19 weeks at \$4000 each. Between the Paramount, his radio show and booming record sales, he was grossing about \$7000 a week, an extraordinary sum in those depression days.

But he was earning his money. Rarely did he do fewer than five shows a day at the Paramount and he was always a perfectionist in the recording studio and on the air. It was only natural that the strain began to tell on his voice and he consulted a New York specialist for advice when the problem no longer could be ignored.

Bing was not at all prepared for what the doctor told him. He had developed nodes on his vocal chords—a common ailment among singers—and might lose his voice altogether. There were two ways to prevent that from happening, but neither of them was especially pleasant.

The first was to check into a Philadelphia hospital for an operation to remove the nodes. There was no guarantee that the surgery would be a success, he was warned, and it might well ruin his voice forever.

The second choice was to cut out



Classics didn't get overlooked as Bing hosted Jascha Heifetz and Victor Young (L) in bringing variety to radio audience.



Beloved character actor Barry Fitzgerald and opera star Dorothy Kirsten easily fitted into show's wide open format.

singing for a while and reduce his talking to a bare minimum. Crosby chose the latter alternative. He kept his mouth clamped for two weeks, except when he was eating, and gradually his voice was restored. To his surprise—and immense pleasure—it came back richer and more full-bodied than it ever had been before.

Bing's range was rather limited and so he developed a pleasant falsetto for variety. At the same time, he began his famous habit of joining lines of melody with a distinctive bu-bu-bu-boo-bu-boo and by whistling.

Many years later, creative jazz singers would perfect that style and call it "scat" singing. Bing always said that he developed it simply because he had a hard time remembering a song's lyrics.

In 1935, the directors of the "Kraft Music Hall," radio's most



Frances Langford at "Command Performance" mike; Meredith Wilson batoned.



Film stars such as Gary Cooper flocked on show, put at ease by "Mr. Casual."



Fans could compare styles of show business' top names when Al Jolsen guested.

popular show, approached Crosby with an offer he could scarcely turn down. They wanted him to share the airwaves, one night, with his former boss, Paul Whiteman, who was the show's regular host. While the Whiteman orchestra did some numbers from a studio in New York, Crosby would sing from Hollywood with Jimmy Dorsey's band. The December 5, 1935, broadcast was such a success that, within the year, Bing had been signed to replace Whiteman as host and the Kraft Music Hall had moved its headquarters to Hollywood.

Linked by Crosby's crooning, the show presented to the American public such diverse talents as Yehudi Menuhin, Jascha Heifitz and Ogden Nash. Bing tried to keep his own patter to a minimum and to concentrate on his music. But his sponsors, recognizing his unique personality, insisted that he take a much more commanding part in his own program. Reluctantly, Bing agreed. The audience response to his additional efforts was greater even than expected.

Crosby had other reservations as well. Not only did he not enjoy doing the show in front of an audience, but he was even more opposed to the use of canned laughter or applause.

That impasse finally was resolved when his brother Larry, by then working as his public relations man, agreed to allow some uniformed servicemen in the studio while the show was being broadcast—as long as he could make sure they would clap at the right time. They did just that, enthusiastically, and their spontaneity added to the mood of the program.

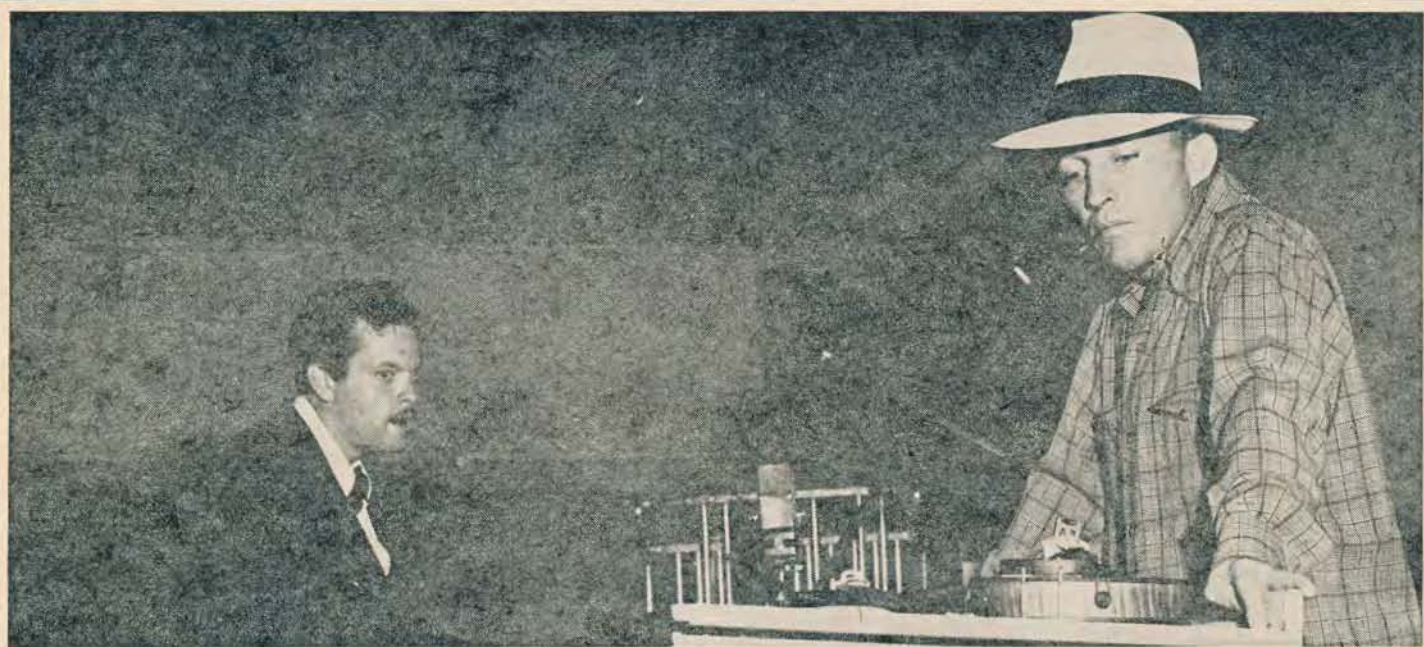
In 1937, fearful that limited radio exposure was costing him his identity as a big band leader, Jimmy Dorsey pulled out of the Kraft Music Hall. Bing replaced him with John Scott Trotter, the young arranger with the Hal Kemp band. Trotter felt that the Dorsey orchestra occasionally used to drown out Bing's voice and believed that he could solve the problem by taking the melody line away from the reed section. Bing was so pleased with the new sound that he asked Trotter to



Mellow tones of Dick Haymes and program's host contrasted sharply with the nasal notes and nonsense of Jimmy Durante.



Multi-millionaires all—Crosby, Godfrey and Como—and they did it basically by personal warmth and relaxed talents.



Appearance by "boy genius" of drama, Orsen Welles, didn't faze Bing who never was at a lose for words or a song.



Going-national first before CBS mike, crooner stayed with network for years.

arrange the scores for his recording dates as well.

Bing always was very proud of the unknowns he booked on his show who later went on to great success. Shortly after the War, he offered a seven-minute spot to Victor Borge, a piano-playing comic who was a Danish refugee from Nazi oppression. Borge refused to relinquish the mike that night and dominated the show completely. Bing was so pleased with his performance, though, that he had him back as a special featured guest every week for a year.

Crosby also enjoyed letting certain amateur musicians play on his show. At various times, the Kraft Music Hall featured Henry Fonda on trumpet, Phil Silvers on clarinet and Jimmy Stewart on accordion. As time passed, almost every major star made an appearance on the program, lured by Bing's warmth and huge audience.

Bing left the Kraft Music Hall in 1945, taking John Scott Trotter and a few members of the band with him. Bored with Hollywood audiences, which he felt were jaded, he emerged on October 16, 1946, in the American Broadcasting Company's San Francisco studios with "The Bing Crosby Show," for Philco. The first network show to be transcribed prior to broadcast, it lasted until 1955, when Bing decided to give up radio schedules forever. ■



Music filled the air waves when singing cowboy Gene Autry and the Andrews Sisters joined up with radio's "Mr. Music."



Radio's king as Chief Thundervoice.



Louis Jordan was one of many instrumentalists whose talent Bing loved featuring.

CAMERAS ROLLED AND THE CROWDS LINED UP



Bing's first featured film, "Big Broadcast," in 1932 with funnyman Stu Irwin.



Sheet music tie-in typical of the era.

■ If Bing's initial film appearance in "The King of Jazz" failed to make the world take notice, his next try at Hollywood was hardly more auspicious. It was during his 1931 run at the Montmartre that Everett landed a contract for him to appear in half a dozen 20-minute shorts at \$750 a piece for Mack Sennett—whose legendary film factory had been the spawning ground for such comic talent as Charlie Chaplin, Laurel & Hardy and The Keystone Cops.

The Crosby movies—each loosely tied to one of Bing's song hits—were a bit more serious in tone than Sennett's standard slapstick fare, but not much. The plot—what there was of it—usually centered upon a socialite mother, her lovely young



Previous movie venture, series of Mack Sennett short subjects, made no waves.



Role with Marion Davies brought in \$s.



Mary Carlisle became "College Humor" co-star; campus setting proved popular.



Bandleader Bob Crosby visited 1934 set.



Recognize Kitty Carlisle? She shared credits on "We're Not Dressing."

daughter and Bing as the band crooner with a wanton reputation. The mother never thought Bing was good enough for her little girl. Her choice was usually some hopeless square who ended up in the fish-pond while Bing got the girl after a car chase.

When Bing's 29-week run at the Paramount finally came to a close, the studio of the same name called him back to Hollywood for his first feature. Co-starring in "The Big Broadcast of 1932" were many of radio's top acts, including Burns and Allen, The Mills Brothers, Kate

Smith and The Boswell Sisters. Only Crosby got special treatment when it was time to step before the camera.

Years earlier, Bing had flunked a 20th Century Fox screen test because of his large, protruding ears. Now that Paramount had cast him in a big budget picture, the make-up department was ordered to do something about the jug handles. The problem appeared to be solved with the invention of a device—half adhesive tape and half spirit gum—which fastened the singer's ears to the side of his head.

Besides giving Bing an unwholesomely streamlined look, the contraction was also notoriously unreliable, often coming apart under the hot studio lights and sending the singer's ears snapping back to their natural position. If that weren't bad enough, Crosby was prematurely bald and had to be fitted with a toupee in preparation for his screen appearances.

If Bing's looks were becoming the product of a committee, no one at Paramount had the nerve, or bad judgment, to tamper with his singing. Crosby had never been in finer



Little Donald O'Connor made cast of '38 "Sing You Sinners."



Another kid star—Gloria Jean in "If I Had My Way," 1940.



Making "Waikiki Wedding" and handling fans' pix requests; 175,000 in one year.



Are you lucky enough to own signed one?

voice and even before "Broadcast" was half complete it was obvious that he was going to be a big star. Without waiting for the movie to be released, when his price might go up, Paramount offered him a three-year, five-picture deal at the incredible sum of \$300,000. For their money, the studio got him to co-star with funnyman Jack Oakie in "College Humor" and then paired them again in "Too Much Money" with Skeets Gallagher and Ned Sparks.

In 1933, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, eager to boost the fading film fortunes of girlfriend Marion Davies, put up the money for "Going Hollywood" at MGM. Hearst wasn't a fan of the Crosby style, but Marion insisted on the young crooner under contract to Paramount. When songwriter Arthur Freed was called in as arbitrator, he sided with Marion and Paramount soon agreed to loan Bing to



Bing in blackface for "Dixie" in 1943.



Brian Donleavy tooted trumpet in "Birth of the Blues" that revived early songs.



"The Bells of St. Mary's" with Ingrid didn't ring as loudly as first priest role.



Talked into "Going My Way," he won an Oscar as did co-star Barry Fitzgerald when votes for 1944 Academy Awards were in.

Metro. For his services, brother Everett exacted a fee of \$2000 a week. It was well worth it. "Going Hollywood" was so profitable that it made its star the number seven box office draw for the year.

Buoyed by his box office clout, Bing rebelled at having his ears

pinned back for "She Loves Me Not." His new confidence also paved the way to better roles and, in 1935, he was paired with W. C. Fields in "Mississippi." Paramount never again would tell Bing what to do with his ears, but when his weight—always a problem—soared

to 190 pounds, they insisted that he hide his swelling gut. The solution, this time, much to Crosby's chagrin, was a corset.

A year earlier, Bing had starred with Clark Gable's future bride, Carole Lombard, in "We're Not Dressing." In one sequence, the



"Blue Skies" tribute to Irving Berlin meant lots of songs.



"Variety Girl" with Hope; song-and-dancers but no "Road."



Takeoff on RCA symbol lightened "Emperor Waltz" in 1948.



Veronica Lake visited set of "Connecticut Yankee" musical.



"White Christmas," with Clooney and Kaye, spun off "Holiday Inn" song hit.



Serious acting as alcoholic husband of Grace Kelly in "Country Girl" in 1955.



Label often tagged on him provided title for 1950's "Mr. Music" with Groucho.



Pathos, suspense in "Little Boy Lost."

couple were supposed to have an argument which ended with Bing taking a poke at her. All through rehearsal, Carole had asked Bing not to slap her and he had always pulled his punch. The day of the shooting, there would be no faking it, though, and Bing's hand would have to make contact with Carole's cheek. No one was prepared for what happened.

As soon as Crosby touched Carole, she became livid and rushed him. Knocking her startled co-star to the floor, she jumped on his stomach then threw herself on him, biting and clawing. Before any serious damage could be done, some crew members realized that Carole no longer was acting and pulled her off the thoroughly perplexed singer.

Carole was weeping hysterically, but she calmed down enough to explain to Bing that ever since childhood she had reacted violently



Louis Armstrong and good pal brightened up "High Society."



Return to clerical garb came with "Say One for Me" in '59.

when someone touched her face with less than affection. She had hoped that it wouldn't happen this time and was apologetic that it had. When Bing viewed the rushes the next day, his heart sank for he realized that the scene would have to be re-shot. In her frenzy, Carole had yanked off his toupee, completely spoiling the "take."

Bing made another "Big Broadcast" picture for Paramount in 1936 and then starred in "Anything Goes" with Ethel Merman. As cinema art, it was a total flop, but it did mark the debut of the unforgettable title song and also of "I Get A Kick

Out Of You." "Rhythm On The Range," Bing's next, was even more unmemorable, although it gave him the chance to dress up in cowboy duds and warble "Empty Saddles" and "I'm An Old Cowhand," as well as team up with "The Arkansas Philosopher," bazooka-playing comedian Bob Burns.

In 1937, Martha Raye and Andy Devine backed Bing in "Double Or Nothing." A year later, in "Sing You Sinners," Bing played opposite 12-year-old Donald O'Connor and sang "Small Fry" with him. Bing's other outings that year were in "Pennies From Heaven" and "Doc-

tor Rhythm" with Bea Lillie and Andy Devine. Set in a New York City zoo, the latter film also starred 350 monkeys, all of whom made a grand leap to freedom from a sound stage and had to be rounded up all over Los Angeles for weeks.

The following year saw Bing in "Paris Honeymoon," "The Star Maker" and "East Side of Heaven" with Mischa Auer. It was also in 1939 that Paramount decided to team Jack Oakie and Fred MacMurray in a South Sea Island adventure film to be called "The Road To Mandalay." When the stars nixed the project, it was offered to



"Robin and the Seven Hoods," with Martin, Sinatra and most of Rat Pack was gangster movie takeoff that got shot down.



In 1960, "High Time" put all-time idol face to face with current idol Fabian.

Burns and Allen and Bing Crosby was all for it, but the erstwhile vaudevillians said they were unavailable. The studio's third choice, Bob Hope, loved the idea and, in November, signed onto the film, which by then had been renamed "The Road To Singapore."

Playing opposite the boys would be Dorothy Lamour, a raven-haired former Miss New Orleans already known as "The Sarong Girl" because of her affinity for South Seas costume dramas. The seven-picture "Road" series, which also brought its heroes to Zanzibar, Morocco, Utopia, Bali, Rio and Hong Kong would be the biggest grossing film series in history until eclipsed by James Bond's escapades.

The second in the "Road" series, "The Road To Zanzibar," premiered in 1941 and was an even bigger smash than "Singapore."



Cameo part as alcoholic doctor in 1966 "Stagecoach" remake was last film role.

Bing devoted most of 1942 to raising money for the war effort. But he still found time to appear in two pictures—"The Road to Morocco" and "Holiday Inn." The latter was not much to speak of, except for what might be the most memorable scene in Bing's entire career. In it, he is seated beside a cozy fire and blonde Marjorie Reynolds in a ski lodge. After a few words to the girl, he turns to the camera and sings "White Christmas."

"Wherever I went during the war," Bing later would say, "that's the song the guys always wanted to hear first."

The Irving Berlin tune, to date, has sold about 100,000,000 copies, about a third of them by Crosby. But Bing almost refused to sing it. He felt it was wrong to capitalize upon a religious holiday.

In 1944, Bing played a minstrel in "Here Come The Waves" and sang "Accentuate The Positive." He donned another costume that same year for his most memorable screen performance.

For some time, director Leo McCarey had been trying to convince the brass at RKO pictures—where he had filmed some of his finest movie comedies—to back him in a film about a Brooklyn parish priest to be called "The Padre." When RKO nixed the idea, he took it to Paramount, where it was given the green light and the leading role was assigned to Bing.

Still reluctant to trade on religion as a show business vehicle, the star said no, but McCarey was unwilling to give up. He personally broached the subject to Crosby, who eventually yielded. It was one of the best decisions he ever made.

The picture was retitled "Going My Way" and for his role as Father Chuck O'Malley Bing won the Academy Award for Best Actor. "Swinging On A Star," his finest song in the film, netted an Oscar for writers Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen. Barry Fitzgerald, for Best Supporting Actor, McCarey for Best Director and Frank Butler and Frank Cavett for best screenplay also netted the coveted statuettes. Bing's version of "Silent Night," which he also sang in the picture,



Title song from 1942 "Road to Morocco" came to typify series with Bob Hope that grossed millions at boxoffice worldwide.



Brother Everett visited "Road to Rio" set to talk business.



Traveling duo trekked up to Klondike for "Road to Utopia."



Dorothy Lamour made six of seven trips with boys as co-star of series, here, "Road to Bali," and played herself in last.



Rambling ended with "Road to Hong Kong," but their friendship never ceased.

became the second best-selling single of his career.

When Father O'Malley re-surfaced the following year in "The Bells Of St. Mary," he was playing opposite Ingrid Bergman as Sister Benedict. The sequel to "Going My Way" was a success, but not the smash its predecessor had been.

Later in 1945, Bing was re-united with Hope and Lamour in the Klondike for "The Road to Utopia" and then played himself in "Duffy's Tavern." The next year, Paramount starred him in "Blue Skies," again with Fred Astaire. The film, which can best be described as an Irving Berlin retrospective, had Bing doing 16 numbers.

Bing was back on the Road again in 1947, en route to Rio with Hope and Lamour. After that, he did "Welcome Stranger" and "Variety Girl," a film potpourri featuring dozens of Paramount stars. Bing did a skit with Bob in straw hats and skimmers.

In 1954, Bing starred in the first of a pair of memorable films with the lovely Grace Kelly. Initially, he did not want the part of an aging, al-



He couldn't believe that just "a guy who sings songs" could win coveted Oscar.

coholic actor struggling along the comeback trail in "The Country Girl." It was a purely dramatic role and a difficult one at that. But director George Seaton, for whom he had made "Little Boy Lost" in 1953, convinced him to try and the payoff was another Best Actor nomination. Bing lost to Marlon Brando and "On The Waterfront" that year, but Grace won for Best Actress.

Following a remake of "Anything Goes" with Donald O'Connor and Mitzi Gaynor, Bing made another of his unforgettable films. It, too, was a remake—of the 1940 hit "Philadelphia Story." Playing the roles made famous by Katherine Hepburn, Cary Grant and James Stewart were Crosby, Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra. For added support, Bing's old friend, Louis Armstrong, was added to the cast.

The Cole Porter score featured the touching ballad "True Love" by the Groaner and the future princess. It sold over a million copies and was Grace's only gold record. It was Bing's 20th.

Bing joined Bob Hope again in London in 1961 to shoot "The Road to Hong Kong." The final picture in the series, it was the only one in which Dorothy Lamour did not play the female lead, although she did make a cameo appearance as herself. His last film role came three years later in a Cinemascope remake of the classic John Wayne western, "Stagecoach," in which he again played an alcoholic.

Bing never appeared in another feature picture. Plans appeared finalized for him to star in one more Road show with Hope and Lamour. It was to be called "The Road To The Fountain of Youth," but it never got before the cameras.

It can be said that the hallmark of Bing's film career was his faithful adherence on-screen to his own off the screen personality. As a result, he often turned down roles which other actors coveted.

"I don't think I would have been believable as Scrooge for a minute," he told an interviewer after rejecting a part in a planned new production of "A Christmas Carol." "Everybody knows I'm really just a big, good-natured slob." ■









EVERYBODY LOVED AMERICA'S 'FIRST FAMILY'



Devoted fans clamored for news of their favorite and his wife and children, but never got full story of what went on.

■ Things were looking bright for teenaged Wilma Winnifred Wyatt of Harriman, Tenn. Barely a year earlier, she'd copped top prize in a national Ruth Etting sing-alike contest and was rewarded with a trip to Chicago to understudy the torch singer during the run of a Loop mu-

sical. Then she'd been brought back east for a starring role in "Good News" on Broadway, where she was so good that 20th Century Fox gave her a three-year contract.

With the deal came a new name for her—Dixie Lee. And she did nothing to disgrace it in her first

film appearance, in something called "Movietone Follies," when she was just 17 years old.

When the blonde Southern beauty was not before the cameras, she usually could be found on the arm of one or another of the movie capital's up and coming young stars.



Dixie had face, figure, talent; gave up career for Bing.



Arrival of first son, Gary, made headlines around world.

One of her most frequent escorts was another Fox actor who took her to the Coconut Grove to catch the show starring The Rhythm Boys. It was the lead Boy, singer Bing Crosby, who caught Dixie's eye, and soon she was a regular at a ringside table, once she got over being put off by his brashness.

When Hollywood gossip columnists clued the bosses at Fox to Dixie's friendship with the singer, they cautioned her against such a relationship: The crooner with the reputation for irresponsibility would be poison for her career and marriage would be the end of it. With her future so much more promising than his, they said, she could plan on bankrolling the free-spending singer until the inevitable divorce. But Dixie had a mind of her own.

"We met at the Coconut Grove where the Rhythm Boys were playing under false moonlights and

phony palms," she would recall. "We had expensive dates, alternating with cheap dates.

"Bing didn't hold on to his money. He used to throw it away. We'd go down to the beach at Ocean Park, when there wasn't much dough, and eat hot dogs and look at the moon. When I went to Mexico on a trip, Bing called me on the phone and sang, 'I Surrender, Dear.' But I was the one to surrender."

Actually, the courtship didn't proceed all that smoothly. Dixie's friends never let her forget that she was thinking of wedding a man ten years her senior. And though she didn't seem to mind, it did trouble her that Bing still hadn't learned to hold on to a dollar. Nevertheless, they were married on September 29, 1930, just before Dixie's 19th birthday, at the Blessed Sacrament Church on Sunset Boulevard.

Bing was still working for Mack



A new role: playing the proud Poppa.



Birth of twin sons, Dennis and Philip, created big stir.



Lindsay, named for Dad's pal, rounded out "First Family."

Sennett and couldn't afford the time or the money for a trip to Niagara Falls. But an old buddy suddenly decided the time was right to go east until Christmas and she lent the young couple her home and servants. They lived "good" that autumn, Dixie told friends later.

Dixie still was under contract to Fox at the time, but her movie career was just about over. She did make minor appearances in "Red-heads on Parade" and "Love in Bloom" after her marriage, but more pressing responsibilities would prevent her from achieving the stardom which had been predicted for her.

On June 25, 1933, Dixie gave birth to a blue-eyed baby boy who was named Gary Evans, after his father's friend, Gary Cooper. He was followed into the world, little more than a year later, by twin brothers Dennis Michael and Philip Lang Crosby. The birth of Lindsay Harry



Waking nights to comfort fourth boy was nothing new to old-hand-at-it father.



Formal nights out didn't happen often for famous parents in troubled period, but there was little gossip about the rifts.



Studio played up family-man image with stream of photos of boys and their Pop.

Crosby on January 5, 1938, rounded out the clan that would become the center of the nation's attention over the years as Bing's devoted fans clamored to know all about America's "First Family."

The Crosby marriage, despite its portrayal in fan magazines, was far from perfect, however. Not more than a year after they were wed came the first in a series of separations which both sides would agree stemmed from Bing's relapse into the wild living which nearly had cost him Dixie's hand in the first place.

On one occasion, Dixie was so upset with her husband that she traveled to Ensenada, Mexico, to file for a quickie divorce. Bing did not even know that she was gone, until he read about it in a Los Angeles newspaper, but he wasted little time in getting on a train to Mexico. When he saw how serious she was, he begged her to return home with him. Dixie said, "yes," but only after Bing agreed to give up his drinking and all-night carousing for good. And this time he meant what he said for certain.



Academy Award night demanded togetherness, brightened by Bing's winning Oscar.



Private school was proper for young clan whose father worried about kidnapping.



Early intro to show biz for growing quartet as they guested on radio program.

With one problem resolved, the Crosbys were free to concentrate on the other things that were wrong with their marriage. Bing's band-leader brother, Bob, once suggested that the marital rift stemmed from the fact that Dixie had become a "golf widow." Some friends believed that the trouble purportedly lay in Dixie's own heavy drinking which supposedly had begun during her famous husband's frequent and prolonged absences from home. Still others were certain that Dixie was fed up with Bing's toughness in raising the boys.

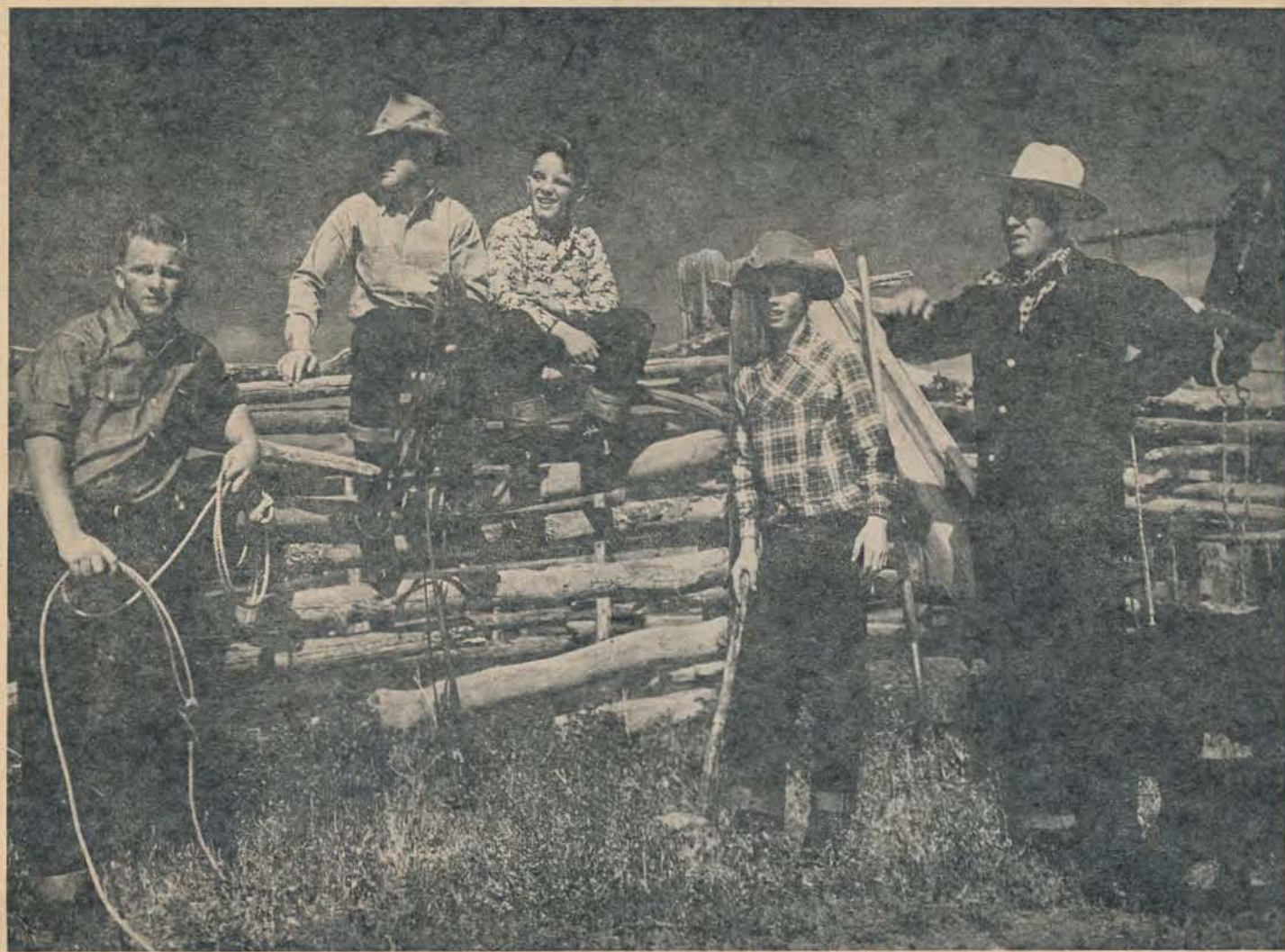
It was Bing's oldest son, Gary, who always had suffered from a weight problem, who seemed to bear the brunt of his father's iron-handed discipline. To his immense embarrassment, Bing often called him names like "Fatso" and would spank or even cane him for relatively minor wrongdoings.

Gary became so estranged from his father that he never came to him with his problems and the rift between Bing and the boys only seemed to widen still more as they got older.

When Bing was going to be away from the Holmby Hills mansion for a couple of days, or more, he would leave a set of chores for the boys to do and the rules they were to obey in his absence. To Dixie fell the unwanted responsibility of noting all transgressions and presenting a list of them to her husband upon his return. Bing then would mete out what he felt were punishments that fitted the severity of the boys' misdeeds.

Finally, in 1950, a Crosby family spokesman confirmed to Hollywood gossip columnists that Dixie had gone to Nevada, where the Crosbys maintained a permanent residence, to file for a divorce. This time, things had gotten so out of hand that the property settlement already had been drawn up. For reasons never made public, Dixie, at the last minute, did not go through with the divorce and returned home to California.

Following the latest reconciliation, friends agreed that Bing and Dixie seemed closer than ever before. But the next two years were trying times for the Crosbys. First,

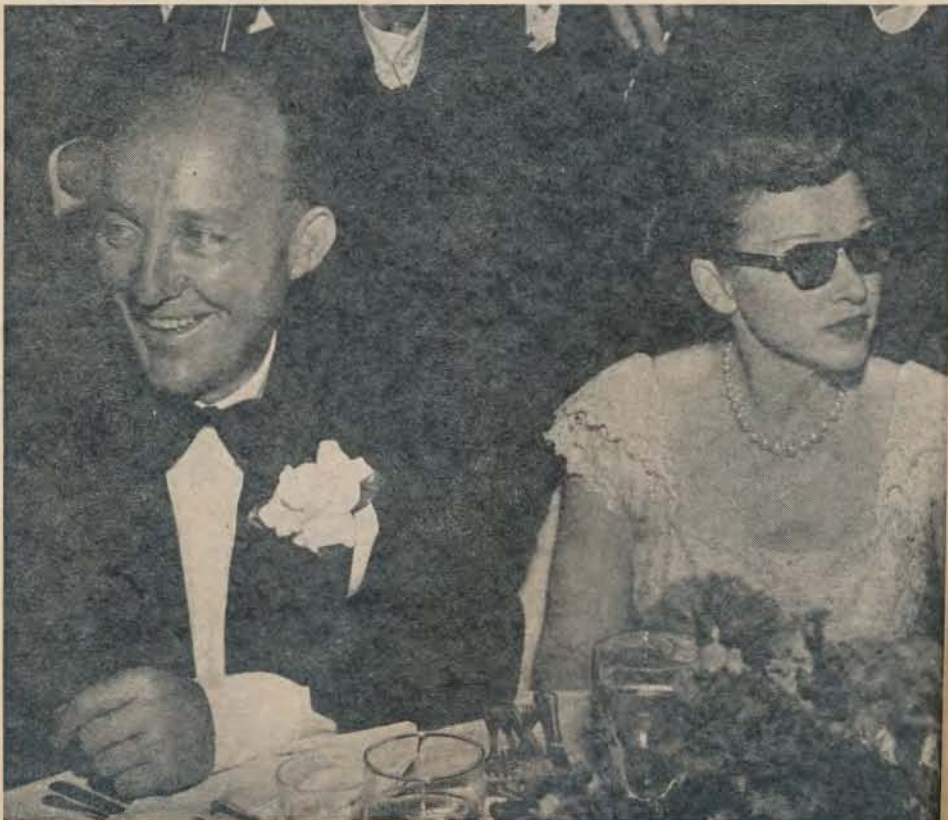


Visits to Nevada ranch seemed enviable, but Dad was strict disciplinarian who demanded chores be done for allowances.

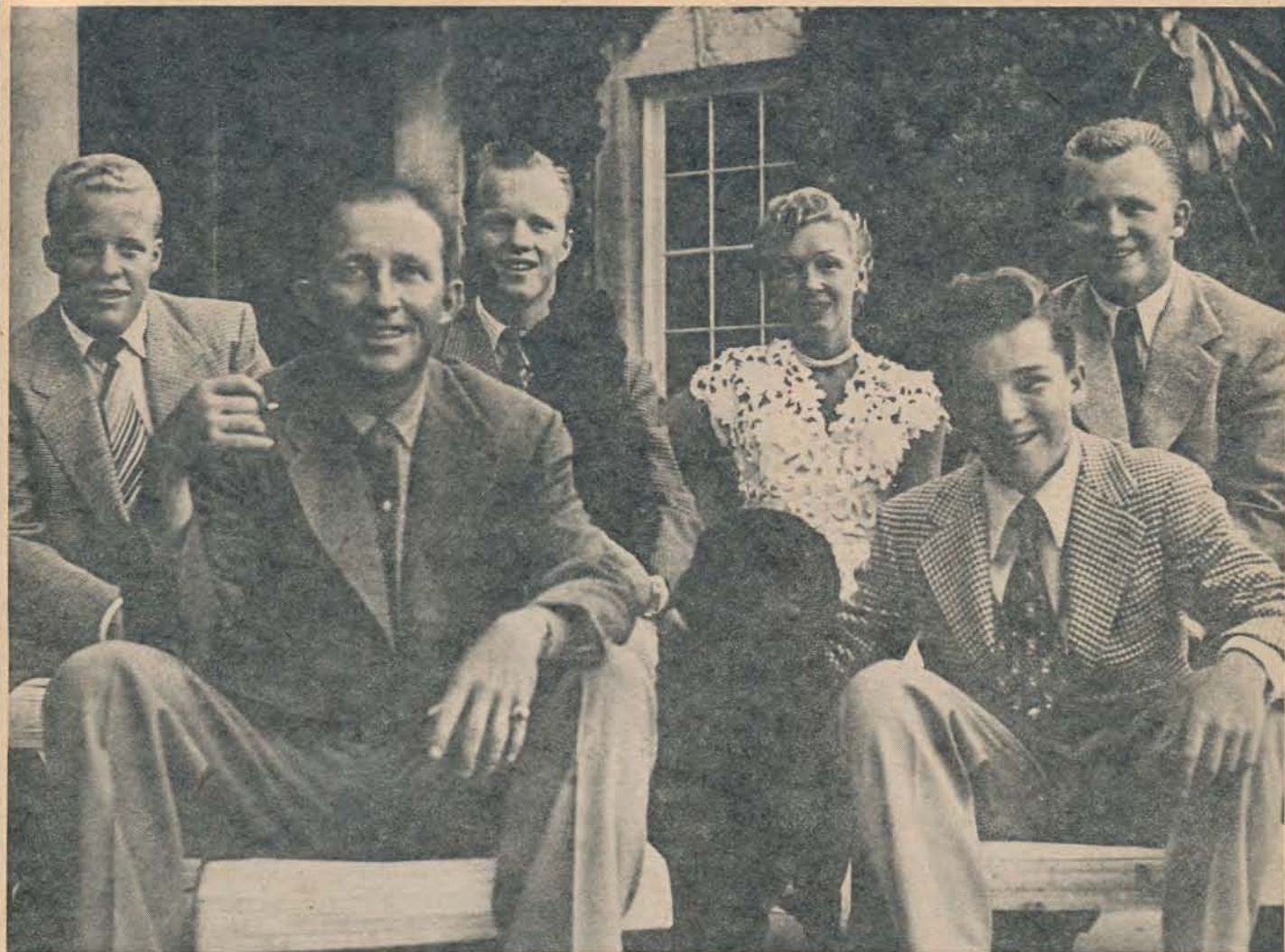
Bing fell ill and required surgery. And then it was Dixie's turn to be hospitalized and to go under the surgeon's knife.

Bing's health soon was restored, but, as 1952 drew to a close, Dixie's condition deteriorated and the word spread through Hollywood that she had terminal cancer. When another operation to save her life failed, Bing took a room at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, so that he could be with her at all times.

As Dixie worsened, Gary was summoned home from Palo Alto, Cal., where he was a student at Stanford University and the twins returned from Washington State College. Lindsay, still the baby of the family at 14, had been in Los Angeles throughout his mother's illness. The family maintained a vigil in the hospital and called upon a priest to administer the last rites of the church. Finally, on November 1, 1952, coincidentally Dixie's 41st birthday, she died.



■ *Strain of illness and marital tension showed on woman who changed Bing's ways.*



Just a bit more formal than thousands like it taken over the years was this photograph which was made not long before Dixie died.



His sons drifted away from Bing as their lives, careers diverged; this get-together in 1971 was first of kind in ten years.

'DER BINGLE' HELPS WIN A WAR



Courageous crooner went overseas to entertain troops and 4,000 turned out at air base hanger in England to see the show.



Homefront duty included traveling with Hollywood Victory Caravan troupe.



Strictly un-GI; fatigues and wild tie.



London Stage Door Canteen opening act.

■ Brother Everett had been a top sergeant during World War I, but Bing—who was only 17 when hostilities concluded—had been too young to serve in the Army. When the American involvement in the Second World War began, the Groaner—in his 40s and the father of four young sons—again was exempt from the draft. Nevertheless, he volunteered to do his bit for the war effort. Appraising his greatest value not as just another ordinary foot soldier, but as the man acknowledged to be the world's most popular entertainer, the government asked him to hit the road to entertain servicemen, in-

cluding, eventually, going to Europe with the USO to perform for the troops. Bing hurried home and packed his bags.

Early in August of 1944, less than two months after D Day and soon after completing the aptly named "Here Come The Waves" with Betty Hutton, another tireless performer for GIs, Bing set sail for his first European visit on the *Ile de France*. Once the pride of the French passenger fleet, the luxury liner had been converted into a troop ship carrying ten times its peace-time complement of 1500 well cared for passengers.

Space was so scarce that the soldiers had to sleep in relays, spending eight hours in their bunks before going up on deck to let other GIs catch 40 winks on the same sheets. Everyone on board had to work multiple shifts, even the entertainers. Bing kept himself out of trouble by performing five shows a day, each on a different deck. His troupe was made up of accordion and guitar accompanists, baggy pants comic Joe De Rita, blonde dancer Darlene Garner and singer Jeanie Darrell.

The *Ile de France* tied up on the Clyde River in Scotland on August



"Command Performance" broadcasts were beamed to servicemen and all stars helped.

25 and Bing hurried off to catch the London train. At Greenock, a small military base, he ran into Fred Astaire, who was an old friend, and the two decided to travel together to Glasgow, where they could make connections for the British capital.

During a stopover at St. Enoch's station in Glasgow, a crowd estimated at 40,000 began milling about to catch a glimpse of the Yank movie stars. Before allowing the train to pull out, they demanded a song and dance number from Crosby and Astaire. But the station was so crowded that there was no room for them to perform. Neither could they fight their way through the crowd to the waiting train. Finally, a station master—clad in striped trousers, frock coat, wing collar, Ascot and high silk hat—cleared a way through the mob "like Moses parting the Red Sea," as Bing recalled it, and the Americans made their getaway.

As luck would have it, Bing's arrival in London coincided with a brutal series of rocket assaults launched by the Nazis from occupied Europe.



Joining Betty Hutton to do "their bit."



Captain Meredith Wilson wielded baton for "Command" shows that featured GIs' favorite numbers.



Wartime effort added to a hectic schedule, but never too busy to chat with gals and guys in service when traveling.

While he was in England, Bing cut a few sides with the famed Glenn Miller Band at the Air Force Command and then joined him on a tour of Allied air bases. Not long after, Miller would die when a light plane carrying him to France to set up a concert tour on the front lines would go down over the English Channel.

"Der Bingle," as Crosby supposedly had been labeled by the Nazis, even found the time to make a broadcast to the enemy. It was someone in the London Office of Strategic Services who believed it would be a good idea for the world's best-known voice to make a pitch to the German people—and especially their soldiers—about the invincibility of American-style democracy. Bing sang and talked in carefully studied phonetic German, but never did find out how the show was received by what must have been his toughest audience.

In September, the Crosby troupe flew to Cherbourg, France, where they caught up with the Third Army en route to Paris. Then it was on to



Program guests of era included war heroes like South Pacific ace Maj. Dick Bong.



"Der Bingle" braved the Nazis to visit front lines in France, entertained GIs fresh from foxholes and in hospital wards.



Clowning with fellow trouper Fred Astaire and Army nurses before show for wounded soldiers needing a lift from home.



Top brass like Gen. Omar Bradley welcomed relaxing bit, too. Liberated youngsters in French town got dash of Crosby charm.

Nancy and Metz, close to the front lines. Bing paid countless visits to field hospitals and other installations where the wounded were being cared for, yet still managed to perform a minimum of three shows a day.

In France, Bing again ran into Fred Astaire, who told him that whether he knew it, or not, USO entertainers often faced as many dangers as the troops in the field. The dancer gave the singer two pieces of advice.

"Don't ever bed down anywhere near a bridge," he said, "and when you're riding in a Jeep always keep checking for telephone wires. When you don't see them any more, you're in big trouble."

Astaire explained that he had come within inches of losing his life by failing to heed the first of his own warnings and Bing promised that he

would not be so careless. He still had Fred's words in mind when he came back to headquarters his first night out and a lieutenant showed him his barracks, pleasant, comfortable quarters in plain sight of what was very obviously a bridge.

Bing shook his head and told the officer that he preferred to sleep in a crude, damp shack high on a remote hill. The lieutenant was scratching his head in bewilderment as he escorted Crosby to his new quarters, but Bing knew what he was doing. In the middle of the night, a hail of enemy bombs destroyed the bridge and the nearby barracks.

A few days later, Bing was touring the front in a Jeep with another lieutenant who suddenly blurted out a confession that they were lost. Bing felt his heart sink when he looked up from a map he was studying to see that the last telephone wires had

been left a good distance behind. His next discovery was that the patrols passing along the road were clad in the gray-green uniforms of the Reich's army. When the lieutenant came to the same horrifying realization, he made a U-turn and raced back to the Allied lines.

Standing in a conference room dominated by a wall-sized map of France, General Omar Bradley chatted with Bing that evening. "How did you do today?" he asked.

"Pretty good," the Groaner answered. "We visited all the spots we'd planned on seeing and even covered St. Marie Eglise."

"St. Marie Eglise?" Bradley said in disbelief. Then he turned his back on the entertainer to consult his map. "But we haven't taken that town yet."

"We had it for a little while this afternoon," Crosby smiled. ■

A ROMANCE THAT LAUGHED AT TIME



Taste of life-style ahead; early Palm Springs date.



Formal night out soon made romance rumors official.

■ In the year after his wife's death, Bing sharply curtailed his activities on the silver screen. Shortly after the funeral, he returned to Paramount to complete "Little Boy Lost," which he had started that summer and he also made a cameo appearance in "Scared Stiff," a Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis picture.

As might have been expected, the gossip columnists began speculating upon when the 53-year-old entertainer would announce his retirement from show business. They were confounded, when, shortly before New Year's, 1954, he instead went before the cameras again to begin work on "White Christmas,"

with old friends Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney.

Now that Crosby was back at work, the columnists found new games to play. "The world's most eligible bachelor," as one of them referred to the Groaner, would certainly not remain single for long. On paper, at least, he was linked romantically with Rhonda Fleming, Mona Freeman and even Grace Kelly. What they never suspected was that Bing actually had become involved again and had succeeded in doing so behind their backs.

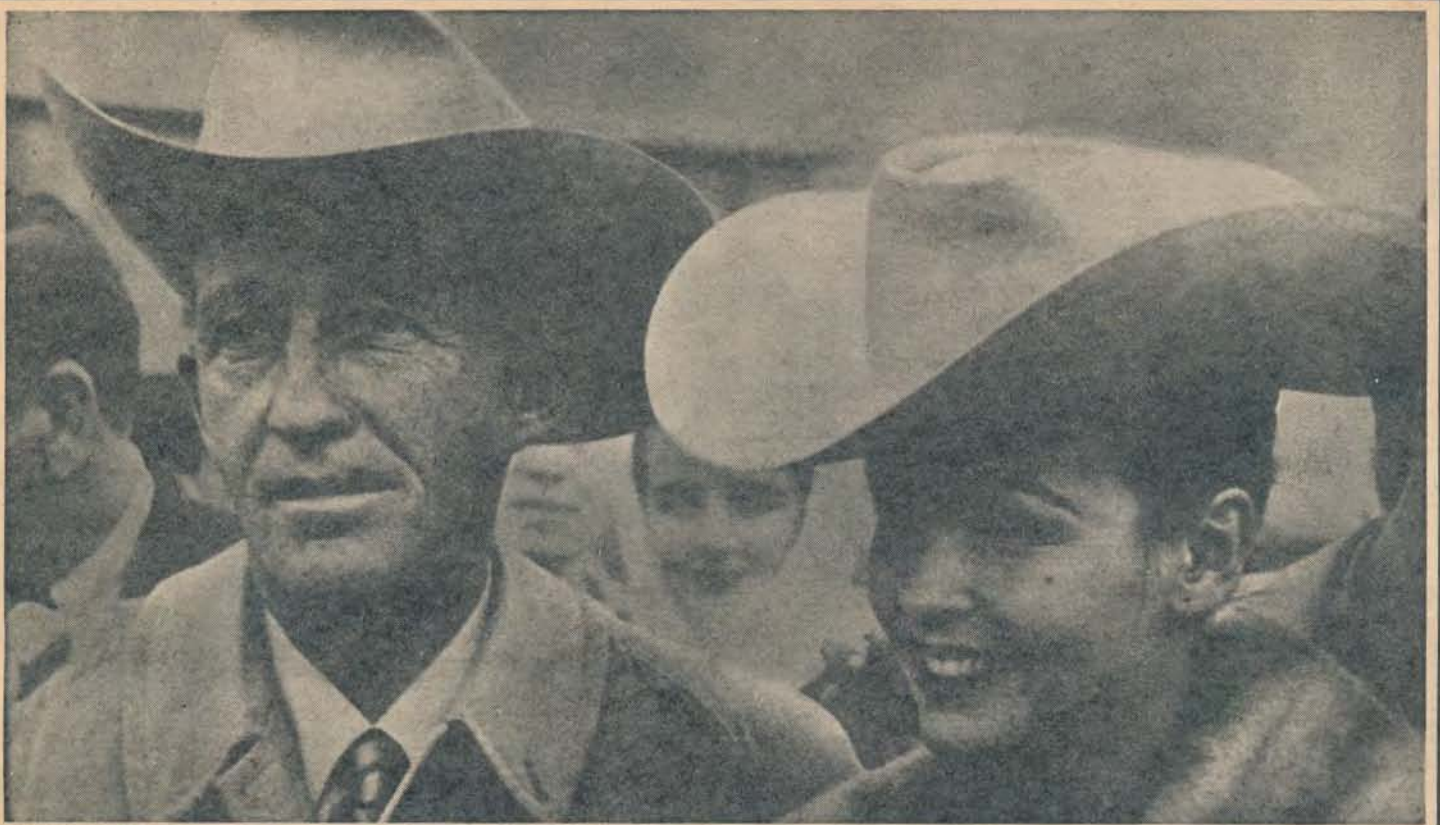
The object of Bing's affection was Kathryn Grant, formerly Olive Grandstaff of Houston, Tex., where

she had been a beauty queen before coming to Hollywood to try her hand at life in front of the bright lights. Just 19 years of age, she had landed a small part in "White Christmas," managing to escape the notice of most of the cast and crew, but not the star. Unknown to screenland gossips, the pair had been a hot item for most of the year and on October 30, Bing proposed. Kathryn accepted and a wedding date of February 7, 1955, was set.

When the time came for the ceremony, however, Bing was in the hospital for surgery to remove some kidney stones and Kathryn was ordered by the studio on a publicity



Twenty years later and glow of love still surrounded them as Kathryn and Bing entertained at Las Vegas church benefit.



Wedding day stopover in Texas to visit bride's family meant traditional cowboy hats for big welcome at Houston airport.



Brief return to acting after marriage as "Pygmalion" star.



New family responsibility as baby Harry makes his debut.



A golfer's wife has to know the score.

tour of Europe. With no objection from either party, a new date of May 2, was set. But then Kathryn lost her nerve and the nuptials were postponed to September 10. They came very close, that time, but, a few hours before the start of the ceremony, Kathryn chickened out again and the wedding guests returned home disappointed.

The couple dated sporadically in 1956 and, the following year, Bing flew to Europe to compete in the French Amateur Golf Champion-



"It's a girl!" button on proud Pop's shirt heralds arrival of Mary Frances.

ship at Chantilly. When he won his first match, it seemed that he was his familiar, easygoing self again. But, on the inside, he was a mess. He missed Kathryn badly and was fearful of losing her forever. Hoping to breathe new life into the withering romance, he wrote her every day.

Upon returning to California, he phoned Kathryn and felt his heart sink when she told him that she would no longer see him and was going to Spain to do another movie. Desperate, then, Bing began another

letter-writing campaign. Again he was getting nowhere, until in a final letter he told her that he loved her and wanted to marry her. The day after the letter arrived, the pair were married in Las Vegas. It was October 24, 1957, and they dodged most reporters all the way back to the Crosby ranch in Elko, where they honeymooned, after a brief stop to visit Kathryn's folks.

Kathryn Grant Crosby, as had Dixie Lee Crosby nearly 30 years before, retired from the screen after



By time of sixth son Nathaniel's third birthday party, his parents were well settled into married life, taking it easy.



Maintaining her own identity, Kathryn returned to school, won nurse's cap.

marrying Bing and settled down to raise a family. Harry Lillis Crosby, Jr., was born on August 8, 1958, and was followed by Bing's only daughter, Mary Frances, on September 14, 1959, and Nathaniel Patrick on October 29, 1961.

Not long after they were married, Bing and Kathryn began spending part of their time aboard the "True Love," a 55-foot yacht they enjoyed sailing in Mexican waters. The couple soon discovered that they didn't mind being away from the Hollywood social scene at all and, after scouting around for a new place to live, the Crosbys abandoned the old estate in Holmby Hills and settled down in a mansion in Hillsborough, Cal., about 20 miles south of San Francisco, to live out for the rest of Bing's life a May-December romance that constantly confounded the scoffers who all along had insisted "It won't last." ■



Visit by Harry Jr. and his Mom to "Road to Hong Kong" set was occasion for Dad and Bob Hope to break from hectic shooting.



Bing's grief showed at 1964 funeral of mother, 91.



Crosbys take delivery of yacht named for song hit "True Love."



The "Second Family" posed during 1976 Christmas TV special, with Nathaniel flanking parents, Harry Jr. backing sister.

WORKING HARD AT TAKING IT EASY



He could clown for the gallery between shots, but took every swing seriously.

■ Throughout his career, when Bing was not on camera or behind a microphone, it usually was a safe bet that he could be found on the golf links. He had been bitten by the golfing bug as a very young man, but didn't get much opportunity to indulge himself until he moved to Los Angeles with Al Rinker.

There were plenty of public courses for the young duffers to sharpen their game, but Bing preferred the posher, private links. The only problem was that none of the exclusive country clubs were interested in sharing their greenspace with a couple of penniless entertainers from Washington.

Bing was not to be denied, though. During a run at the Metropolitan Theater in L. A., he became friendly with a frequent backstage visitor, a handsome young man from Scotland who happened to be the pro at one of the finest golf clubs around. Something of an amateur song writer and hopelessly stage struck, he was eager to be of service to the performers. But, when they asked for permission to play his golf course, the answer was no, at least until Crosby and Rinker expressed a sudden interest in his tunes. Then the young Scot told them that if they showed up early in the morning, no later than 6 o'clock, and were off the links by 9, they could have the course to themselves.

The arrangement was working well, until one morning when the Rhythm Boys game bogged down and they found themselves still on

the tenth green while an elderly club member was teeing up on the same hole. It was too late to hide, so Crosby and Rinker stood aside to let the old duffer play through. His drive was a powerful shot that drifted to the left and rolled right at Crosby. In no mood for an early morning confrontation with the golfer, the singer impulsively nudged the ball with his foot and



Running into Hope in England called for a halt in everything for another match.

was as surprised as anyone when it dropped into the cup.

When the duffer came up to the green and couldn't find his ball, Crosby suggested that he try the hole. The old man thought he was crazy, but, when he found the ball in the cup, was ecstatic. It was his first hole-in-one in 17 years of golfing and he wanted the Rhythm Boys to

bear testimony before the other club members.

Crosby and Rinker followed him back to the clubhouse, where plans were made for a celebration. Then he uncorked the champagne. By the time the other members had arrived to hear the tale, the Rhythm Boys had embellished each detail, somehow forgetting that it was Crosby's



What to do when you can't go outside.

Brother Larry gave up trying business talk when Ben Hogan was Bing's partner.



Mixing interests by reading racing sheet before teeing up.



He made sure his Palm Springs estate was near this course.



With actor Lyn Overman checking Santa Anita refurbishing.



Cattle breeding for fun and profit means having own brand.

foot which had accomplished what the golfer's clubs could not.

The next morning, Crosby was surprised to find a picture of himself, Al and the old gent on local sporting pages with an account of the rare feat. And he was even more amazed at receiving from the young Scot who had allowed them on the links in the first place an embossed envelope from the duffer, who happened to be vice president of the club. When they opened it, they found inside a two-month guest privilege at the club.

Bing's most famous connection with the game was the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Tourney. In his younger days, he played in many other competitions as well. In 1940, he made an unsuccessful bid to capture the national amateur championship at the Winged Foot Country Club in Westchester, N. Y.

Another year he teamed with Bob Hope in the Texas open, paired against Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan. Hope made an excellent first shot and Bing's was even better. Suddenly it occurred to Crosby that perhaps the impossible could happen—that he and Hope could beat two of the finest golfers in America. And with that he lost his concentration and shot an ordinary round.

In May of 1950, barely a month after a bout with appendicitis, Bing sailed for Europe to compete in the British and French Amateurs. On a sightseeing trip in Paris, he lay down on a lawn in the 'Rond Point,' placed a newspaper over his face and went to sleep. He was awakened by a poke from the "baton" of a "flic" who told him to keep off the grass.

Bing identified himself as the world famous movie star he was, but the *gendarme* was having none of it. In fact, he was about to haul Crosby off to jail, when Bing remembered a gold golf clip in his pocket which had been presented to him by the Professional Golfer's Association—the PGA. Flashing it at the cop, he explained in fractured French that he was a member of the "Police Garde Americain" and was quickly released.

When Bing showed up for a practice round at a public course near St.



Deep sea fishing fan came up with this big one during cruise out of Avalon.



Hooking trout can be relaxing as well.

A trophy like this proves as thrilling as another million-seller recording.



Idaho film location provided good excuse for fishing jaunt with some pals.

Andrew's in Scotland—site of the British Amateur—2000 of his fans came by to watch. Virtually every time he hit a ball, one of them would scoop it up as a souvenir and he had to abandon the round after only five holes. In the tournament, Bing was listed as a 33-to-1 shot by the British bookmakers, but birdied three of the first four holes before justifying their appraisal by being eliminated in the first round.

Bing also was responsible for the only known hit about his favorite sport. The title was "Straight Down The Middle."

Crosby was fond of watching good horseflesh on the move, too. He acquired the habit after he purchased stock in the Santa Anita race course. When he became a breeder, as well, it was his partner's complaint that Bob Hope's jokes about their horses were costing them money. Many influential horsemen were fans of the comedian and wouldn't have anything to do with a



Enjoying rustic charm of Nevada ranch helped keep Mr. Casual running smoothly.



Work of another kind can be just fun.



From cowboy musicals to range rider.

Crosby horse after listening to Bob describe them as gluepots.

A Crosby horse never did win a major stakes race in the east—which was one of Bing's dreams—but Ligaroti, an Argentine-bred colt, copped the Sunset Handicap and the American Handicap at Hollywood Park and Etolia II, a mare, won the Vanity Handicap at the same track.

Bing had been a pretty fair football and baseball player when he was a boy and he always stayed in shape. Once, while driving with a friend past the New York Aquacade, he saw Johnny Weissmuller, the Olympic swimming champion and movie Tarzan, emcee a diving show in which the stars plummeted from a 65-foot board. "I can do that kind of stuff," Crosby bragged.

When his friend put up \$100 to say that he couldn't, Bing told him to park the car. After the show was over, they went backstage and explained their wager to Weissmuller. Johnny got Bing a bathing suit worn



Gun collector and avid hunter delighted in roaming with shaggy companion.



Del Mar ranch activities centered around bangtail breeding.



Have to be carefree to have horse named Double Trouble.



Actresses Marsha Hunt, Eleanore Whitney meet a winner.

by one of the comic divers in the show. It was a two-piece model, circa 1900, and came with matching hat. The singer hid backstage in the ridiculous outfit until, during the second show, Weissmuller announced: "Next diver, Bing Crosby of Hollywood."

Bing appeared on the board with his pipe clenched between his teeth. He planned to do a jackknife, but fearful of swallowing the pipe decided to jump in feet first instead. When he emerged from the pool,

his friend did not dispute that he had gone off the board, but he insisted that jumping in that way did not constitute a dive. Instead of the \$100 he handed over \$65.

Bing, always a devoted saltwater angler, also enjoyed fishing and hunting on his ranch at Elko, Nev. The spread also became site of his profitable cattle-breeding setup.

Crosby raised a little grain on his spread and he also kept a small flock of sheep and some chickens. But his greatest pleasure at Elko was

in hunting and fishing—he would, in fact, go just about anywhere in the world to try a new trout stream or discover a new fly—in the 12,000 foot high Ruby Mountains.

When Bing's sons came to visit the ranch, he put them to work as buckaroos and at other, more mundane tasks at the same pay the other hands received. He also made sure that they had enough time on their own—knowing from experience how important learning to play as well as work can be. ■

"They're off and running."

JOSEPH M. SCHENK

A newspaper clipping is visible in the bottom right corner, partially overlapping the name 'JOSEPH M. SCHENK'. The clipping has a large black arrow pointing to a specific section. The text in the clipping is partially legible and includes the following items:

1	THE...
2	THE...
3	THE...

Other visible text includes 'SIX...', 'THE...', and 'THE...'. The clipping appears to be a list or index of some kind.

THAT OLD GANG OF MINE



Collectively they have entertained billions and individually enjoyed hamming it up on stage and off when schedules meshed.

■ "Where there's life, there's hope," the radio announcer would say at the start of the show. "And where there's Hope," a smooth, familiar baritone would interject, "there's Crosby."

If it seemed to an adoring public that the two stars always had been friends, such was not exactly the case. There had been a time, when both were very young, that they did not even know each other. But that

situation was corrected in 1932, when a nationwide tour took the crooner back to New York for an engagement at the Capitol Theater. Billed just below him was the British-born comic who had earned some of his biggest, if unwanted laughs during a brief pugilistic career under the name of Packy East. Now, for the first time in his life, he was knocking them dead in the aisles as Bob Hope.

Although they did not appear on stage together, there was plenty of time before and after and between shows for them to become very close friends. The usual setting for those first collaborations was any one of a number of Times Square saloons.

Inexplicably, they did not get together professionally for another seven years, when someone at Paramount had a particularly fortunate flash of genius and teamed them in



When Bing made Las Vegas debut last year, longtime friend Rosemary Clooney joined him for benefit show.

Takeoff on "Bonanza" for TV special brought best pals together again.



the first of seven "Road" pictures they did together, "The Road to Singapore." Between films, they became embroiled in a mock radio feud which had the entire country in stitches during the War years. It began only because their writers found that it was very easy to write insulting dialogue for the pair.

In 1945, Bing bought a piece of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team. Bob, unwilling to be outdone, responded by investing a chunk of capital in the Cleveland Indians. Bing said that he was surprised by the news.

"Hope doesn't often come up with much money," he said. "He's a fast man with a squaw, but a slow man with a buck."

Bob countered with tales of Bing's legendary fortune, reputedly one of the largest in Hollywood.

"Bing's so rich," he said, "that he doesn't even have to pay an income tax. He just calls the government and asks them how much they need."

Bing and Bob had the nation's two top rated radio shows and were, respectively, Paramount's leading box office draws. Out of the public eye, there wasn't even a hint of rivalry between them, except on the golf course, where each was the other's favorite partner. During World War II, their exhibition matches raised countless thousands of dollars for charity. After each match, they would auction off their clubs and golf balls, and even the outfits they had worn to admiring purchasers of war bonds.

Bing was partner to another make-believe radio battle with arch singing rival Frank Sinatra. The voice from Hoboken had made no secret of the fact that he patterned himself after the crooner upon hearing Bing's records for the first time. Frank had broken some of Crosby's box office records at New York's Paramount, but, shortly after his arrival in Hollywood in 1942, Bing—who was nearly 15 years older—took him aside for some good-natured advice.

He purportedly explained he had heard that Frank had run up such large debts when he was a struggling young singer and that he had been

With Hope working in England, Crosby just had to drop in.





A rare occurrence: Bob bests Bing and gets a shine at television rehearsal.



Broadway booking years ago launched a friendship that time never dimmed.



Always sparring about golf or money.

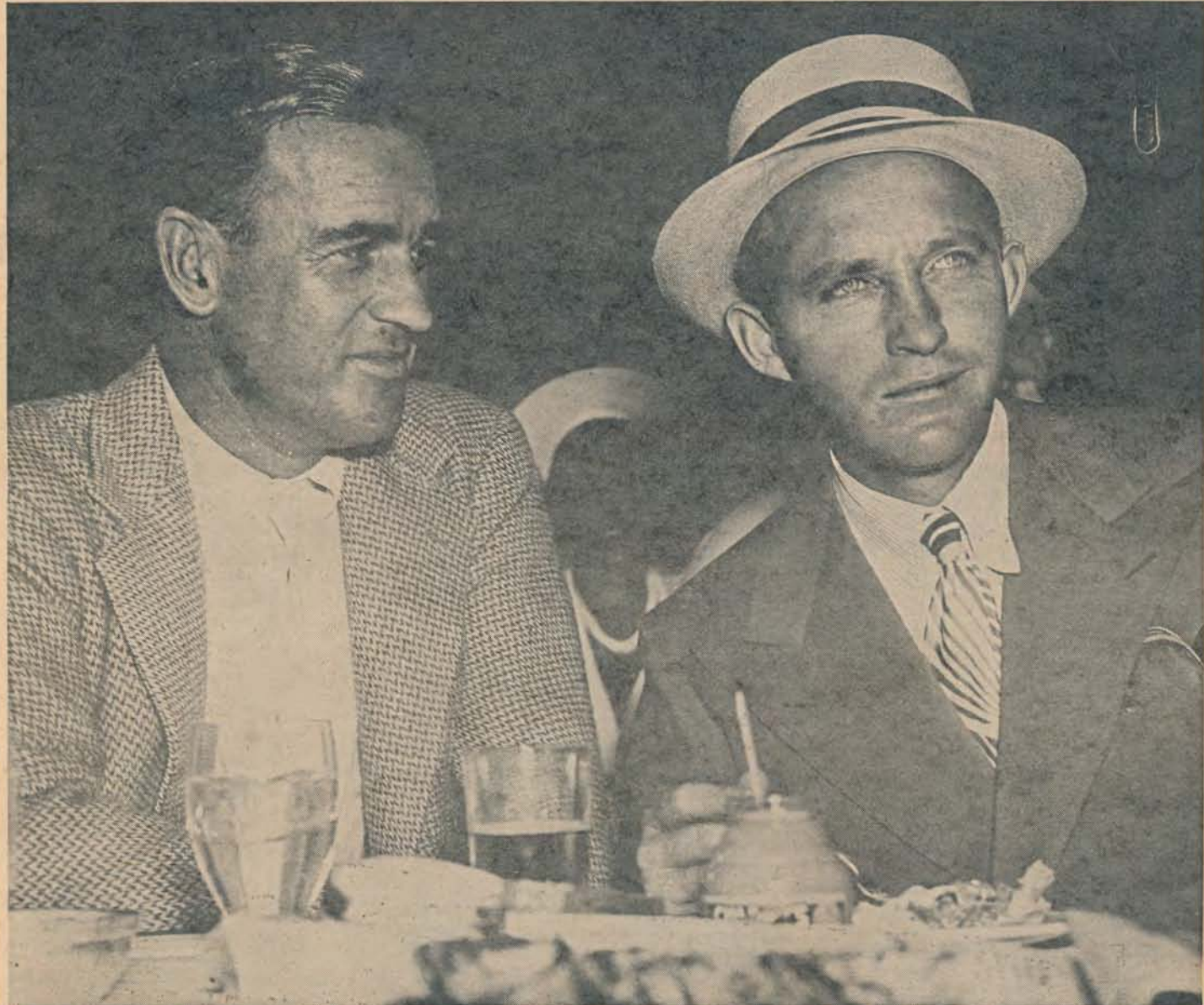
forced to mortgage his future by selling pieces of his contract to various backers. Bing suggested that Frank borrow the money to buy back his contract—and his freedom. Frank reportedly saw the logic in Bing's argument and did as he had been advised—a move which enabled him to keep many of the millions he earned during his career from slipping away.

Sinatra frequently teamed up with Crosby and Hope during their war bond-selling Victory Caravans. Although his radio feud with Bing was not as pronounced as the Crosby-Hope battle, it ended much more spectacularly when a female fan of the Groaner's stuck an icepick into the chest of one of his own loyal followers.

A number of Bing's closest friendships stemmed from his part ownership of the Del Mar Turf Club, a thoroughbred track north of San Diego. Bing served as president while his dear pal and fellow member of the informal Westwood Chowder Club, actor Pat O'Brien, was vice-president. The race course acted as a magnet on the Hollywood crowd and, nearly every Saturday night during the meet, there would be parties which usually found Bing and Pat in attendance along with Jimmy Durante, Clark Gable and



From "Rat Pack," Bing moved into "The Clan" with Deano. Many happy days were spent at track with actor Pat O'Brien.



One of singer's closest buddies and business partners was socialite Lindsay Howard for whom a Crosby son was named.

his wife, Carole Lombard; Charles Laughton, Robert Newton and, of course, Bob Hope. It was Bing's constant complaint that although he was prexy of the track he couldn't place a bet there. Each time he tried, the line at the ticket seller's window got lost in a sea of his fans.

Another friendship Bing made at the track was that of Lindsay Howard. In 1935, the singer had purchased a promising colt by the name of Zombie, who was, unfortunately, to live up to his name. Nonetheless, Bing became so excited about the sport of kings that he soon found himself the owner of no fewer than 21 oaters. With no place to put them, he opened a breeding farm with Howard which went under the title of Bing-Ling stables, and which usually was good for about a dozen foals a year.

Bing never forgot his old friends. For one of his anniversaries in show business, it was decided to re-unite

him with the other two thirds of Paul Whiteman's long-dormant Rhythm Boys. Bing was told that the group's take for the one-night stand would be \$6000 with \$5000 going to him. Bing would have none of it, though, and he insisted that the money be split three ways—evenly.

As might be expected, Bing was also good friends with America's finest song writers. Among them was Jimmy Van Heusen, with whom he once teamed in a two-man show which traveled more than 5000 miles to play before servicemen all over the country. Van Heusen's song-writing partner, Johnny Burke, also was close to Bing. Professionally, they were linked inseparably by such tunes as "Pennies From Heaven," "I've Got A Pocketful of Dreams" and the 1944 Oscar-winning "Swinging On A Star." Still another of Bing's composer-friends, Johnny Mercer, even sat in with Crosby on a recording session which

was highlighted by their rendition of "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean" as "Mr. Crosby and Mr. Mercer."

Bing's friendship, with singer Rosemary Clooney and with comic Phil Harris were widely known. More of a secret was his charter membership in the Holmby Hills Rat Pack in the days when it was headed by Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Often, Bing would leave the meetings early, especially if he had a fishing date somewhere. But he remained a member in good standing, even after leadership of the group passed over to Frank Sinatra and its name changed to "The Clan."

In 1964, when a planned film project fell through, Bing joined many of the Clan members—including Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., Dean Martin and Peter Falk—in a spoof of Depression-era gangster films that was released as "Robin and The Seven Hoods."



Reunion of "The Rhythm Boys" kindled memories of the hardships and partying.



Costumed for a "Chowder Club" soiree.

Bing had accepted the role mainly because he thought it would be fun to work with his old friends. But filming began shortly after the death of President John F. Kennedy, who had been close to a number of Clan members and the impact of his assassination still could be felt on the sound stage. Sinatra had been extremely fond of the President and, in March of 1963, Kennedy had been a guest and golfing partner at Bing's Palm Springs, Cal., home.

Bing's friends were to come from all levels of society and his loyalty to them became a legend. ■

CASH FLOWED IN AND MILLIONS SHARED IT



His studio bike bore ad for his OJ.



It's the lucky rancher who can ride range in a luxury convertible like this.

■ Bing Crosby never tried to hide the fact that he was a very wealthy man. How could he? It was no secret that during the depression, when most people were struggling to survive, he was being paid unheard of sums of money to help them forget their cares and he was investing

wisely. What Bing did try to keep out of the papers was the exact extent of his wealth, although occasionally there would be a slip-up.

In 1945, when he sold his interest in the Del Mar Turf Club, it was reported that he received \$500,000. The money had been plowed back

into another sporting venture, a 15 percent ownership in the Pittsburgh Pirates. Bing also came to own a chunk of the Detroit Tigers.

Some of Bing's earliest investments had been in tax-free California municipal bonds and, often in partnership with Bob Hope, he had



Tribute to "1st Citizen of Recording Industry" as sales passed 200,000,000.



Helping to make hobby show a profit.

scored heavily in Texas oil and California real estate. He also owned a west coast TV station, a profitable cattle ranch in Elko, Nev., and continued to gross millions through films, records, concerts and television appearances. One of his most famous and profitable investments was in the Minute Maid orange juice company. And he and his family continued to make commercials for the firm after he had sold out.

Bing did not live flamboyantly, which is not to say that he was loath to part with his money. Many of his expenditures were for charities to which he devoted so much time.

The most famous was The Bing Crosby Pro-Amateur Golf Tournament, popularly known as The Crosby Clambake. The first competition was held at Del Mar, in 1937, for a total of \$2000 in prize money. During the War, the competition was shifted north to California's



Enormous wealth brought comfort of mansion at Hillsborough, an earlier one at Holmby Hills, desert lodge at Palm Springs and Pebble Beach estate close to Pro-Am links (top to bottom).



Children being aided by Sister Kenny got boost from Bing.



Thanks from Duke of Edinburgh for helping British causes.



Working with Hope again for another humanitarian venture, raising money at event for Eisenhower Medical Center.

Monterey Peninsula, where it was played on three golf courses. Bing personally picked up the tab for all expenses—including the prize money—which, in recent years, as the pros came to dominate the amateurs, topped \$200,000. Proceeds from the tournament, which totaled

over \$5,000,000, were donated toward the construction of youth recreation centers and hospitals.

Another favorite charity was the Bing Crosby Foundation, which made monetary grants to hard-pressed, but inspired inventors. The Bing Crosby student loan program,

started in the mid-1960s, provided cash to needy students at nearly 100 American colleges. In April, 1969, Bing donated \$1,000,000 for a Hall of Science building at the new Claremont, Cal., campus of Immaculate Heart College, where Kathryn had taken post-graduate work. ■



Joined by baseball great Ted Williams in benefit for environmental efforts.



Larry Crosby directed Foundation aid.



Another fund-raiser; this one a telethon to provide assistance for Olympics.



Kathryn unveiled model of Science Hall for which Crosbys donated \$1,000,000 to California college she had attended.

TRUE STARS KEEP ON SHINING



Move into TV came easily for Bing, but he was determined to do quality shows and put best foot forward at rehearsals.



Warming up the bu-bu-bu-boos for first of series of "specials" for ABC in '58.

■ When Bing's radio show went off the air in 1955, after a quarter-century of broadcasts, the crooner was not hurting for a new showcase to display his varied talents. For years, the still-new medium of television—as revolutionary in its time as radio had been nearly 30 years before—had been itching to get him.

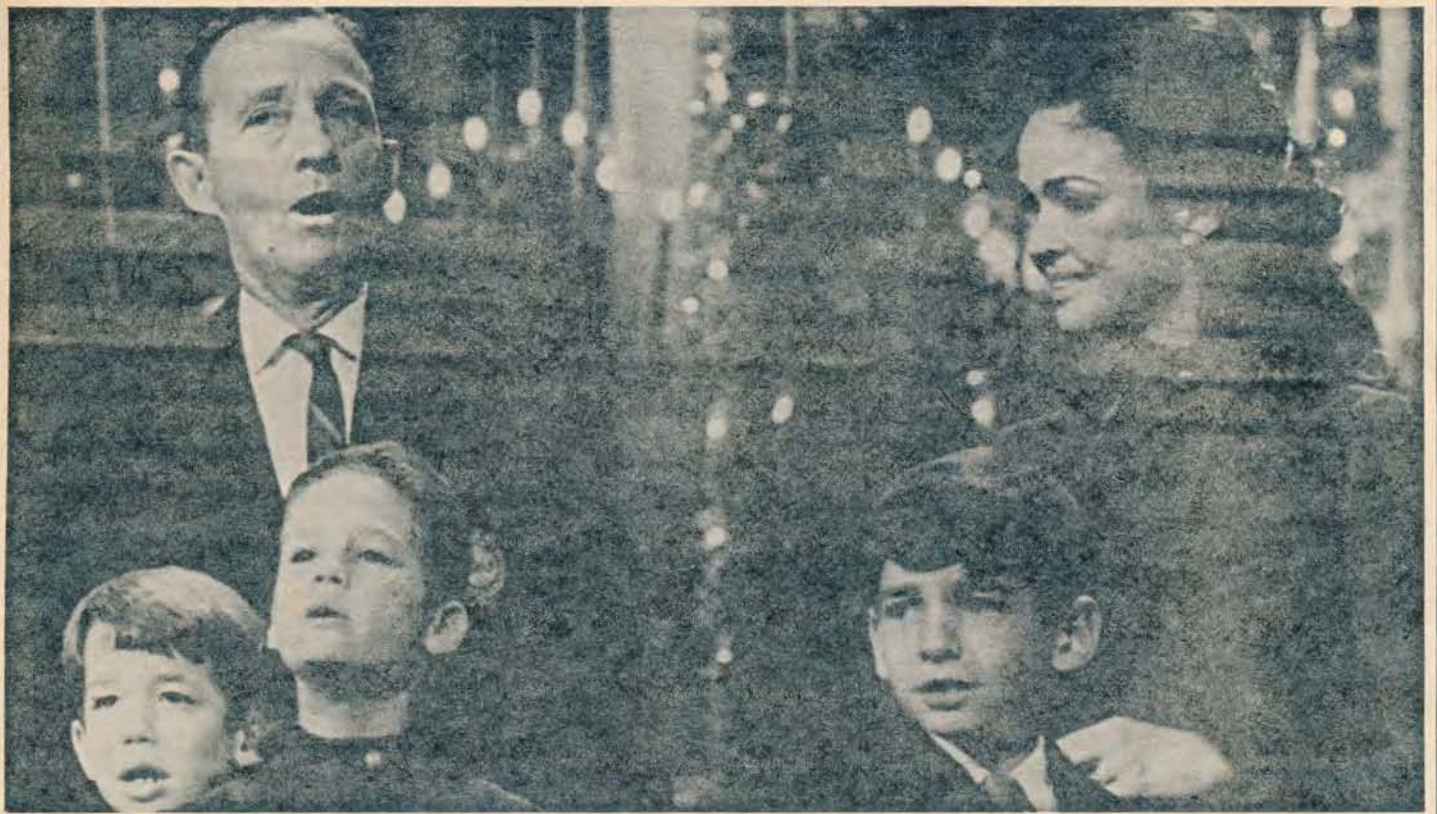
Fearful that overexposure would diminish his appeal as a star, Bing turned down all offers to do a weekly show and chose, instead, to appear in specials. And Bing did not take the word "special" lightly. For his first one, he surrounded himself with some of the greatest musical talent there was; performers who



For their initial professional appearance together, on 1964 "Bing Crosby Show," Kathryn got veteran's advice on costumes.



Gary joined his father that year, too, and the clothes for this skit only helped to point up their physical similarities.



Harry Jr. got to handle the guitar for big 1969 "Hollywood Palace" Christmas show that saw the family singing together.



Nanette Fabray and Red Buttons played "Palace," too.



Mary Frances outshined her parents as "Goldilocks."

also happened to be among his closest friends. Co-starring with him were Louis Armstrong, Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney.

As might have been expected, the show was an overwhelming hit and, when it came time for Sinatra to host his own special, it seemed only natural for him to invite Bing. Rounding out the cast were Dean Martin and Mitzi Gaynor.

Bing's next television effort was a 90-minute adaptation of "High Tor," Maxwell Anderson's engrossing drama about a small-town New York newspaperman. Despite an excellent cast, which included Julie Andrews, the critics were not impressed with much besides Bing.

Undaunted by that mis-step, Bing appeared on television time and time again. On February 15, 1964,

he made his first professional appearance with Kathryn on an hour-long special "Bing Crosby Show" for CBS. In September of that same year, he did a similar show for ABC with his eldest son, Gary. Later that year, Bing ignored his instincts and finally consented to do a weekly situation comedy. And he apparently was the least surprised of anyone when it bombed.



Sometimes strain of TV grind showed.

Bing did not give up on television after that. He was a frequent guest star on the popular "Hollywood Palace," occasionally appearing with Kathryn and the kids and, from time to time, hosted new specials. In the spring of 1970, along with Kathryn, he made a short guest appearance in a live action-animation version of "Goldilocks." The star of that show was his ten-year-old daughter, Mary Frances, who said at the time that she wanted to follow in her parents' footsteps in show business.



"I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" brought studio flakes on 1976 TV special.

In February of 1975, Bing flew to London to record 26 songs for a special two-album set which would be released to commemorate his 50th anniversary in show business which would arrive the following year. It wasn't long after that when Bing hit the boards again with a series of concert appearances for charities.

The tour kicked off in March with a performance at the Los Angeles Music Center. In June and July, the troupe visited the London Palladium, where Bing had scored so many successes. Before bringing the show

back to the United States, he also appeared in smaller theaters in the British Isles, doing medlies of his greatest hits for thrilled crowds.

In November, 1976, Bing and his family did a "White Christmas" television special for CBS and then journeyed to New York. On December 6, the Crosbys did a benefit performance for a Bronx high school at Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center. When the show was over, they were presented with a family portrait painted especially for the occasion. The show marked



The Crosbys traveled to London again in mid-1976 for two-week stint marking Bing's 50th anniversary in show business.

ON LIFE'S SCORECARD HE RATED TOPS

■ In the autumn of 1977, Bing made a triumphal return to Britain, playing to sellout crowds at London's Palladium. He regarded the trip as a test for his injured back and, when he found it gave him no trouble, decided to take a few days off for a trip to Spain to catch up on his golf and go hunting.

On Friday afternoon, October 14, after lunch with the club pro, Bing stepped onto the links at La Moraleja, outside Madrid, for a round with three of Spain's finest golfers. Clad in a familiar white hat and cardigan, he appeared his usual jaunty self during the 4½-hour round. When it was over, he had carded an 85 and his team had won the match by a single stroke. Bing was especially pleased, relaxed and singing as he

walked away from the 19th hole.

Suddenly, he collapsed and fell to the grass. He was rushed inside the clubhouse just 20 feet away, where oxygen was administered until a doctor arrived and gave him an injection of a cardiac stimulant. But it was of no use. Bing was dead of a massive heart attack.

"We thought he had just slipped," said one of his golfing partners. "He had shown no sign of fatigue. He was happy and singing as he went around the course. There were no last words."

Back home, that evening, the singer's widow faced the press at the Crosby mansion in Hillsborough. "I can't think of any better way for a golfer who sings for a living to finish the round," she said tearfully.

"The death of Bing Crosby is almost more than I can take," said Frank Sinatra. "He was the father of my career, the idol of my youth and a dear friend of my maturity. Bing's death leaves a gaping hole in our music and in the lives of anybody who ever loved him—and that's just about everybody."

"I hope that the road to heaven is as wonderful as the roads we traveled together," said Dorothy Lamour.

Bob Hope immediately canceled a benefit appearance for a New Jersey hospital, explaining: "I just can't get funny tonight."

Citing Bing's death as a "tragic loss," Fred Astaire added, "I'm so sorry for all of us who valued him so much." Mel Torme, whose voice

FINAL DAILY NEWS

Partly sunny, 56°
A 20% chance of
showers tomorrow
Details page 28.

Vol. 88, No. 98

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BING CROSBY DIES AT 73

Stricken After Golfing in Spain

Headlines stunned America with word of longtime favorite's death.

Daily Mail

Heart attack after British triumph

BING CROSBY DIES ON GOLF COURSE



Daily Mail Reporters

London front page typified worldwide reaction.



Stricken after good round that had him singing was golfer who'd picked an epitaph: "Bing—he could carry a tune."



Bing admired, said his old friend influenced all singers and "changed the whole face of popular music."

Bing's 19-year-old son Harry, flew to Spain from London, where he was studying drama, to make arrangements to return the body to the United States. On Monday, as the singer's remains were en route to California, special memorial services were held at Westminster Cathedral in London and St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, where Cardinal Cooke read to the mourners Bob Hope's stirring eulogy which appears on page 86.

Bing's funeral was held at St. Paul's Church in Westwood, Cal.



While Kathryn Crosby bravely faced the press here, Harry Jr., entrusted with bringing his father home, flew from drama school in London to Madrid, where Bing's golfing host embraced him. Londoners, meanwhile, flocked to a memorial mass in Westminster Cathedral. As plane bearing crucifix-topped coffin sped remains homeward, fur-coated Rise Stevens,

the opera star who had appeared in "Going My Way," joined mourners at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City for tributes there. The arrival of Bing's body in Los Angeles occasioned for his wife another news conference, where, joined by their children, she revealed plans for the very private funeral services and simple graveside ceremony that would follow.

To avoid the crowds which often have turned such solemn events into Hollywood carnivals, services began at 6 A.M., with just 35 of Bing's relatives and closest friends in attendance. Burial was in the family plot in Holy Cross Cemetery beside his parents and first wife.

A day earlier, in Westminster Abbey, Canon Oliver Kelly had told a throng of more than 2000 mourners that Bing Crosby was "a gentle soul who gave . . . pleasure with unaffected modesty. When the news of his death spread across the world, there was a pause, a moment of silence, of regret that a special voice has been stilled." ■



Shock of dearest friend's sudden passing showed on face of Bob Hope as he and his wife Dolores arrived at St. Paul's Catholic Church in Westwood, Cal., for mass limited to intimates of Bing and family. Rites were followed by early morning interment services that took place around flower-draped bier resting near graves of Bing's loved ones. The grieving family closed

ranks beside the coffin, which had as pallbearers the legendary singer's sons. Flanking one end of mourners were Bing's sister Mary Rose and white-haired brother Bob. The tragedy that affected the world was etched in the loveliness of the woman who had been his wife for almost twenty years and to whom the sympathy of millions hopefully offered some brief consolation.

"He never said an unkind word about anyone. Whether he was on life's fairway or in the rough, and that's one score card I would be proud to sign. He represented to Americans and to the world so many of the qualities we all like to have. Warmth, sincerity and a passion for life. It's a whole new world for me without him, a little shabbier, I regret. If friends could have been made to order, I would have asked for one like Bing."

Bob Hope





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