



Fibber McGee & Molly
by, Adventures in Cassettes, A
Division of Metacom, Inc.

Fibber McGee & Molly were in real life, Jim and Marian Jordan. Both were interested in music- Jim wanted to be a singer and Marian a music teacher. They were childhood sweethearts and were married in 1918 in Peoria, Illinois.

There were several years of odd jobs, vaudeville tours, two kids and lowpaying radio jobs. Then, in 1931, they collaborated with a writer named Don Quinn and created an all-new show. The show was called "Smackout," about a grocer who was always "smackout of everything but small tales." This Chicago-based show ran from 1931 to 1935.

In 1935, an advertising agency executive for Johnson's Wax heard the show and bought it for his client. On April 16, 1935, the show first aired on NBC Blue nationwide as "Fibber McGee and Molly." By 1939, it aired on Tuesday nights at 9:30 p.m. Eastern time on the Red network. The "grocer" image evolved into a bumbling, well-intentioned hardhead as well as the teller of "tall tales."

The "Fibber McGee and Molly" show would evolve over several years, adding new characters and angles. "Sis," played by Marian; "Gildersleeve," played by Harold Peary; "Old Timer," played by Bill Thompson, and many other characters filled out the skits. Wallace Wimple, Horatio K. Boomer, Alice Darling, Beulah, Doc Gamble, and other characters emerged during the course of the show. Some characters disappeared during World War II and reappeared once the war was over-when the actors, e.g. Gale Gordon and Bill Thompson, returned from the service. There were also several characters never actually heard on the show, such as Myrt, the telephone operator around which gags were designed.

Fibber McGee & Molly, cont.

"Fibber McGee and Molly" was very popular, even surpassing Bob Hope and Jack Benny at times. Johnson's Wax sponsored the show until 1950. Pet Milk sponsored the show in 1951. Reynolds Aluminum sponsored the show from 1952-June 1953. In October 1953, it returned as a 15 minute, five-times-a-week show which lasted until 1957. In the late 1950's, Fibber McGee and Molly were heard in 5 minute sketches on the NBC "Monitor" series.

Old-Time Radio Drama

Old-Time Radio Drama (OTRD) first aired on September 3, 1989 for one hour. They went over to two hours on January 5, 1992. Most of the shows come from some collectors in Madison. You can hear this OTRD on the Ideas Network of Wisconsin Public Radio anywhere in Wisconsin, Sunday nights from 9-11:00 pm. In Superior the station is 91.3, FM, KUWS.

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY...



THE OLD-TIME RADIO GAZZETTE,
(continued)

Questions And Answers

Each month I will be having a "questions and answers" section, and if you have any questions on old-time radio, please let me know.

"When did Laurel & Hardy start playing in films?" -Ryan Mihalak, Poplar, WI, 12 years

Laurel & Hardy started in films together in 1917, in a silent short called "Lucky Dog." It wasn't until 1926 that Laurel & Hardy started playing as a team in a film called "45 Minutes From Hollywood."

Laurel & Hardy also had different things on radio too. However, they were not as good on radio as they were in movies. If you wish to find information on getting some of their broadcasts from radio, please let me know.

If you want info on getting old-time radio shows, please let me know. I have different catalogues for ordering.

Old-Time Radio Memorabilia

The Golden Age Of Radio Poster...

The Golden Age Of Radio Sweatshirt...\$24.95 each or two for \$44.95

Personality "Mugs From Radio Spirits, Inc... Fibber McGee & Molly, Amos n³ Andy, and The Great Gildersleeve. \$9.95 each

Radio, "Theater Of The Mind" Sweatshirt and T-Shirt...sweatshirt-26.00-t-shirt-16.00

The Maltese Falcon Replica...\$24.95 each

*If you wish to get any of the above, please let me know.

If you want to join the Old-Time Radio Club, the cost is \$5.00 for 12 issues.

Ralph Doty's "Radio Memories"

On August 13, Ralph Doty will have his annual "Radio Memories" line-up of old-time radio shows. When Doty worked at KDAL, 610, Superior, he had these "Radio Memories" shows every week, but now he only does these specials every 6-7 months. The line-up will be The Judy Canova Show, The Shadow, Phil Harris & Alice Faye, The Green Hornet, The Jack Benny Program, and The Cisco Kid. It is perfectly legal to tape them off KDAL, 610, Duluth, Superior. It runs from 7-10:00 p.m.



THE CISCO KID

"Ceesco! The shereef, he ees getting closer!" The Cisco Kid, Robin Hood of the Old West, was first heard in 1942 as he and his sidekick, Pancho rode to adventure. Often mistaken for the "bad guys," the two always triumphed over evil in each episode. Cisco's usual reward was a kiss from the heroine—the kissing effect achieved by dreamy organ music. At the end of each show, a closing punchline was delivered by Pancho—a terrible joke followed by feigned disgust by Cisco: "OH, PAN-CHO!" With a whoop of laughter, the two would ride off on their trusty steeds, Diablo and Loco.

THE OLD-TIME RADIO CLUB
c/o TOM C. MILLER
2004 EAST 6TH STREET
SUPERIOR, WI 54880



Radio Shows



Rudy Vallee



Phil Harris, Alice Faye



Orson Wells

By Roger Sovocool

“Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. America and all ships at sea.” “Henry! Henry Aldrich!” . . . “Coming, Mother!” How well I remember those old radio broadcasts.

Finishing our farm chores around 6:30 pm, we would light a kerosene lantern and head for the old farm house where tantalizing aromas began to work on our noses as we neared the door. In the back kitchen, we would wash in the porcelain sink where a small hand pump would splash water on our hands and faces. One of us would pump while the other washed. Near the sink would be the water bucket filled with good well water (no chlorine or fluoride added) and hanging on the side of the pail was an agate dipper which we all drank from. My, how good that water tasted, germs and all.

As we entered the main kitchen, sat down and gave thanks, we began to eat the wonderful meal set before us. A typical meal consisted of delicious homemade bread, farm butter, via the wooden churn, and garden vegetables — fresh in the summer, canned for the winter. For meat, we had our own pork or beef hanging in the cellar to be cut up. Some bacon and other cuts were kept in big crock pots in the cellar with lids over them.

In the basement, a big bin of potatoes was stored in one corner. Around the cellar walls were shelf upon shelf of canned peaches, strawberries, blackberries, all kinds of vegetables and jams. In another corner, apples were stored for mouth watering apple pies to be made later on. In short, our farm cellar was like a grocery store.

Pushing ourselves away from the table, we headed for the living room where great adventures awaited us. If it was Saturday night, we would turn on the radio to the station broadcasting “Gangbusters”. Look out for those bullets! The program started with machine gun fire in the back ground. Then came the “Grand Ol’

Opry” with Minnie Pearl, Roy Acuff, Les Paul, Mary Ford, and Hank Williams — all household names. After church on Sunday (by the way, every business was closed back then for a day of rest), we listened to the song, “Back in the saddle again, out where a friend is a friend,” sung by who else but Gene Autry and his horse, Champion.

Evening time, Maxwell House Coffee presented the “Edgar Bergen Show” with Charlie McCarthy. Then Jell-O’s Don Wilson gave us Jack Benny and that gravelly voice, “I say Boss, shall I open the safe?” I can still hear Rochester say that. For my money, he was star of that show. How we did laugh over Kingfish and Sapphire of the “Amos & Andy” show. Oh yes, lest we forget, Sunday around 4:00 pm the laugh would begin and a voice saying, “Who know what evil lurks in the hearts of men?” Nobody but the shadow played by Lamont Cranston could laugh like that.

Throughout the week, we turned into “Inner Sanctum Mystery” with that squeaking door opening in the background — a program that used to make me take my Roy Rogers BB gun rifle to bed with me to ward off night stalkers imagined from the sounds the wind used to make on our old farm house. While eating supper, we would listen to Wheaties presents “Jack Armstrong, the All American Boy”, followed by “Easy Aces”, “Mr. District Attorney”, “Death Valley Days”, “Dr. Christian”, and George Burns with lovely Gracie Allen. What an act she had! The radio shows were many. We grew up with them—the long nights were made bearable by the thought of what shows awaited us on what nights. ❖