

PRAIRIE  
FARMER

WLS

# FAMILY ALBUM



1924-  
1954

30th Anniversary

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**1924-1954**  
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**PRAIRIE FARMER**

**WLS**

**FAMILY ALBUM**

Published by

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Chicago 7, Illinois

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**GUS A. HOLT** was born in Moline, Ill. of sturdy Swedish stock. When he was seven the family moved to Grant County, S. D., just before that state was admitted to the Union. The boy first tasted pioneer life in one of those terrifying blizzards, which raged so furiously for three days that the only way to feed the livestock was to follow a heavy cord strung from the doorknob to the stable and return to the house the same way. The whole countryside was snowed in for weeks; there were no trains; no mail. But the cellar was never short of food; usually a couple of barrels of fresh beef and pork, as well as plenty of potatoes, vegetables and preserves. Only sugar and coffee ran out; then Mr. Holt's mother toasted barley to use for coffee.

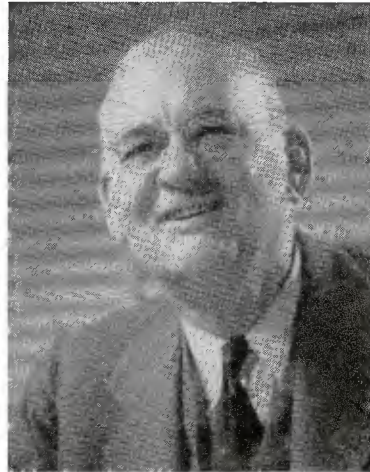
He was confirmed in a hand-hewn log church. The white people had helped the Indians build it, and they had later purchased it when the Indians moved to the reservation. He used to go swimming in Punished Woman's Lake, so named because a woman was lashed to a tree on the shore and killed by the Indians. He always feared passing the tree where, according to the story, the tragedy happened.

Mr. Holt likes to remember his experience following a threshing ring; firing an old straw burner; rising at 3:30 every morning to get up steam. When the straw was damp after a rain, this was no easy task.

After he grew up, he headed for St. Paul, Minn., where he worked at different jobs and finally, in 1906, joined the Cloverleaf newspapers organization, of which Burrige D. Butler was one of the owners. In January 1909, he came to Prairie Farmer in Chicago, just after it was purchased by Mr. Butler. As advisor to Mr. Butler, Mr. Holt built up the Prairie Farmer circulation, helped to inaugurate new editorial policies and established the classified advertising department.

Mr. Holt has always been intensely interested in the welfare of farm folks. As a farm-raised boy, he learned first-hand the problems and the satisfaction of farm living. His philosophy always was that the farm is not just a place where crops and livestock are grown, but the home of a family where American ideals are nurtured and folks practice principles of good citizenship . . . in other words—that farming is not only a means of livelihood, but a way of life.

Mr. Holt is an executive of Prairie Farmer-WLS and a trustee of the Burrige D. Butler Memorial Trust of Chicago.



THE LATE Burrige D. Butler—great Prairie Farmer-WLS leader.

## **DEDICATION**

A MOST SINCERE man with a friendly and sympathetic understanding of people and their problems. He led a nationwide movement to raise farm paper circulation methods to a high plane. He organized the fight against farm thievery—a serious menace to rural safety created by hard roads and automobiles. He established the Prairie Farmer Protective Union as a powerful department to guard against those who seek to take unfair advantage of people in rural areas. His quiet but firm influence for the right is manifest in the many helpful services of Prairie Farmer-WLS and the constructive policies and wholesome ideals of the organization and its people.

To Gus Holt—friend, counsellor, thinker and doer—we dedicate the 1954 Family Album.



## Arthur C. Page

July 21, 1888 - April 4, 1953

SOMEHOW ARTHUR PAGE made ordinary folks feel that they were important. He saw the stuff of human greatness in the experiences of everyday life, the quiet devotion of man and wife and the ambitions of parents for their children. He respected hard work, thrift and reverence for God. Arthur Page was educated in science and economics; but, as he progressed in years and wisdom he became more concerned with his fellowmen. He comforted them in affliction and rejoiced with them in their successes. The history of WLS is full of instances when he reached out a helping hand through the magic of radio.



## **PASTOR TO MILLIONS**

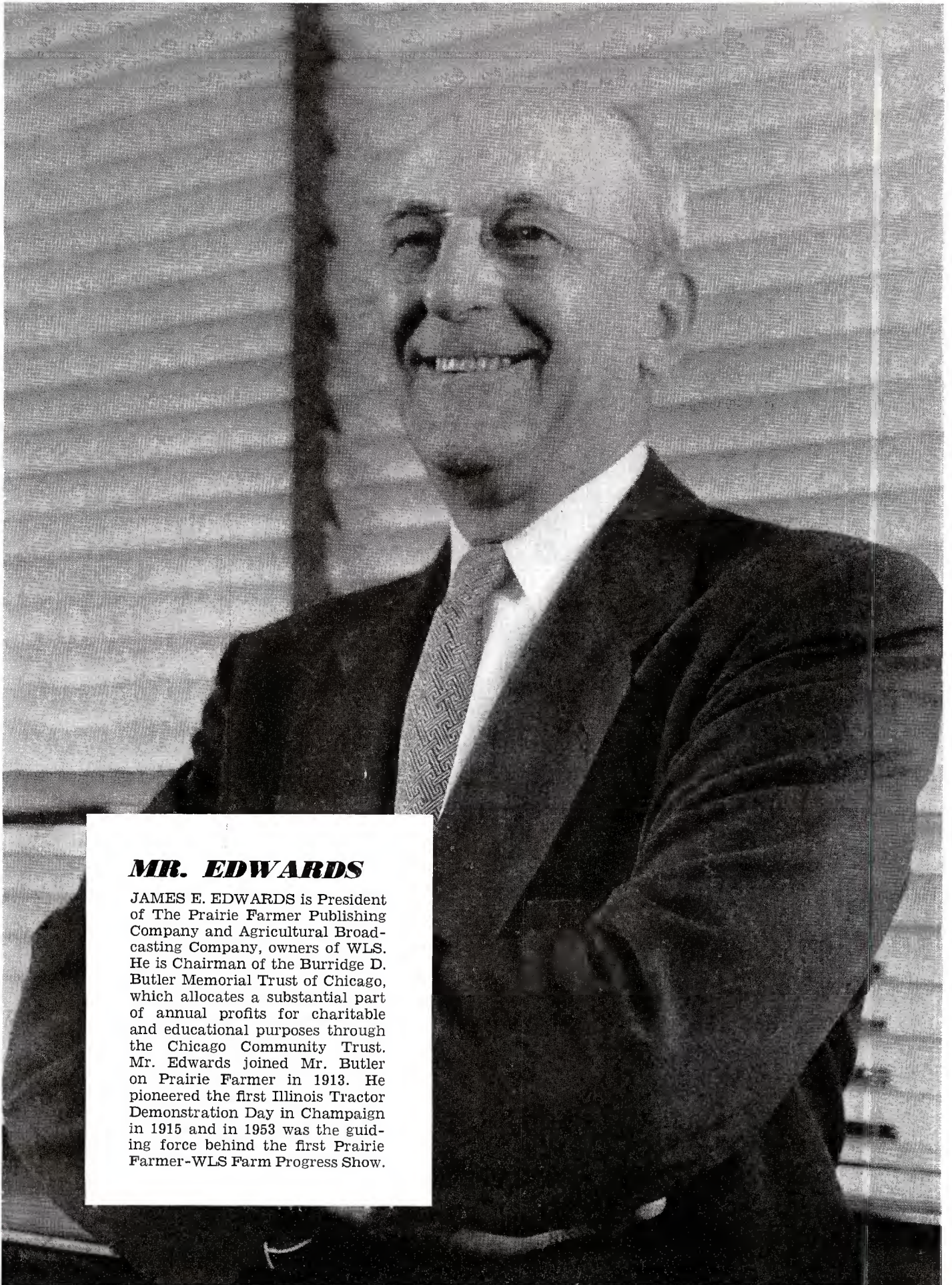
JOHN HOLLAND, of Van Buren county, Iowa, ordained a Christian minister in 1905, never dreamed he would inspire millions through such a medium as radio. Last October he was honored as 20-year pastor of the WLS Little Brown Church of the Air. No one can estimate the good accomplished by this consecrated man. Mrs. Holland, the former Daisy Pearce of Oswego, Ill., has shared in his 45 years as a minister.



## **GOOD NEIGHBORS**

CHRISTMAS NEIGHBORS CLUB means radios, wheel chairs, inhalators, orthopedic walkers and other strength and morale-building equipment in thousands of midwestern hospitals, childrens' homes and other child-caring institutions. It represents the "share with others" spirit of the friendly, loyal Prairie Farmer-WLS audience. The photo shows the use of club-given equipment in one of the many hundreds of deserving hospitals served. The idea was started in 1935.





***MR. EDWARDS***

JAMES E. EDWARDS is President of The Prairie Farmer Publishing Company and Agricultural Broadcasting Company, owners of WLS. He is Chairman of the Burrige D. Butler Memorial Trust of Chicago, which allocates a substantial part of annual profits for charitable and educational purposes through the Chicago Community Trust. Mr. Edwards joined Mr. Butler on Prairie Farmer in 1913. He pioneered the first Illinois Tractor Demonstration Day in Champaign in 1915 and in 1953 was the guiding force behind the first Prairie Farmer-WLS Farm Progress Show.



## **GEORGE R. COOK**

TWENTY-SIX YEARS ago, George R. Cook of the little town of Edina, Mo. found employment in Chicago with Prairie Farmer. He advanced within the organization to become Treasurer of WLS a director of both companies, and a trustee of the Burrige D. Butler Memorial Trust of Chicago. He also manages the Eighth Street Theatre, now owned by the Agricultural Broadcasting Company.



## **GLENN SNYDER**

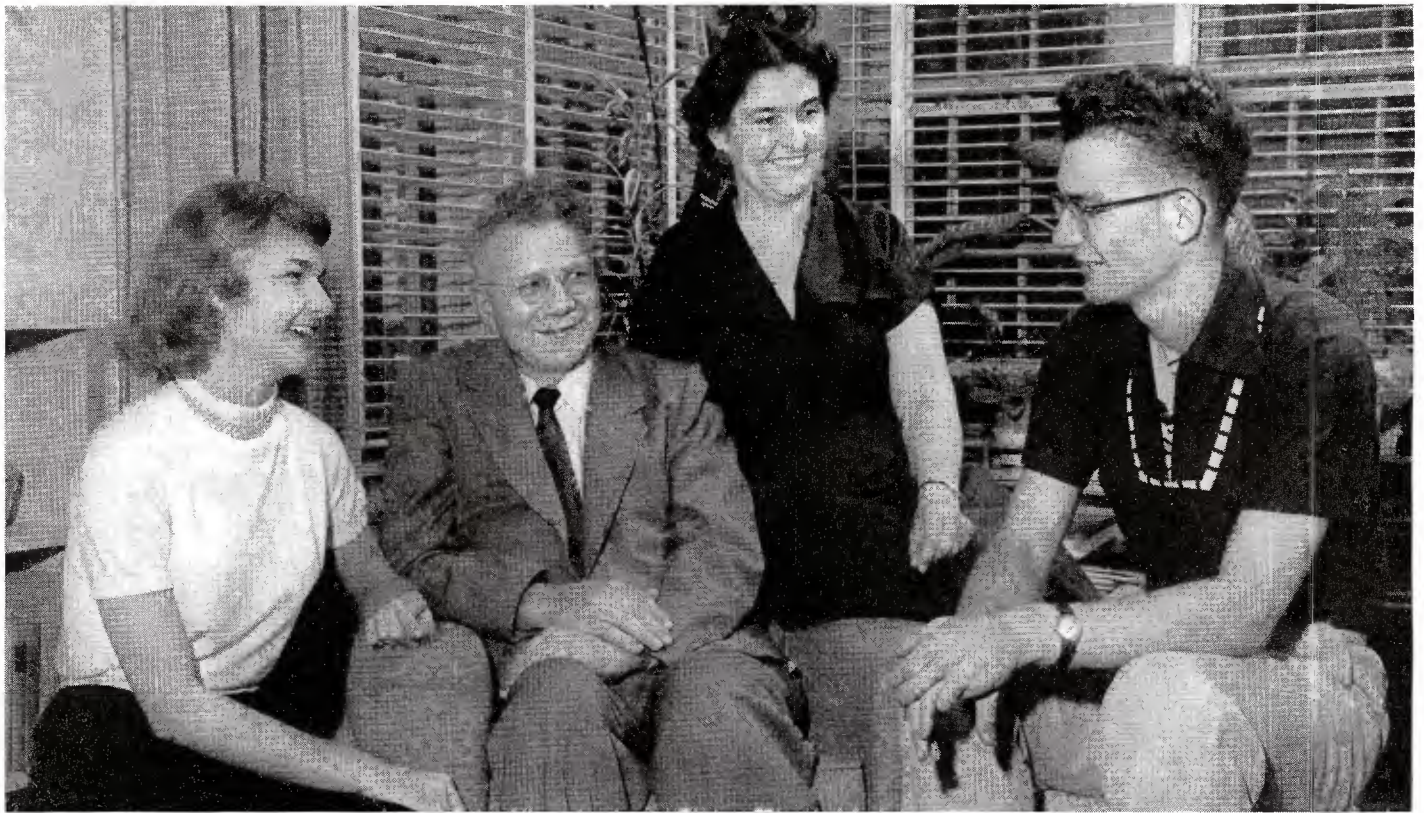
MANAGING THE DAILY operations of WLS, a 50,000 watt clear channel station, requires mature judgment, coupled with experience and foresight. Since 1931, Glenn Snyder has successfully supervised all station activities as General Manager of WLS and Vice President of Agricultural Broadcasting Company. He is a director of this company and The Prairie Farmer Publishing Company. He was reared in Lamoni, Iowa.

## **FRED ORLEMANN**

BEHIND THE famous Prairie Farmer-WLS "No Worry" Tours is the thinking and planning of Fred W. Orlemann, Treasurer and Business Manager of Prairie Farmer. This is just one of his many duties. Originally from Cincinnati; he is a director of The Prairie Farmer Publishing Company and Agricultural Broadcasting Company, also a trustee of the Burrige D. Butler Memorial Trust of Chicago. His secretary, Lillian Serpico, right, has made many friends among Prairie Farmer-WLS tourists. She has assisted on several of the trips.







EDITOR PAUL C. JOHNSON has, since 1947, directed the editorial policies of *Prairie Farmer*. Farm-reared near Northfield, Minn., he was formerly a country newspaper editor and University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Editor. Mrs. Johnson was Miss Eveline Ellingson of Northfield. David is a St. Olaf College junior. Linda is a senior in Maine Township High School near their Park Ridge home. Because of his service to agriculture through *Prairie Farmer* and WLS, Mr. Johnson was named Honorary American Farmer at the 1952 FFA convention and awarded a Distinguished Service 4-H Medal during the Washington, D. C., 4-H Club Camp in 1953.

## ***PRAIRIE FARMER***

MANAGING EDITOR JIM THOMSON admires a sketch by Bill Featheringill, *Prairie Farmer* Art Director. Born in Hamilton, Scotland, Jim became an Ottawa, Ill. newspaper man. While there he wed Dorothy Schinz and they have three daughters and two sons. Reared near Joplin, Mo., Bill married Eve Stanton, Marion, Ind. They are the parents of three girls and a boy.

MARGARET CONNELL, who is secretary to Paul Johnson, has served *Prairie Farmer* capably for many years. She was personal secretary to Mr. Butler, the late president.





BORN ON A FARM near Monticello, Iowa; served as country school teacher; reporter on three Iowa newspapers; Iowa Farm Bureau writer; seven years with Prairie Farmer. There you have Gladys Skelley, Home Editor, heard on Prairie Farmer-WLS Air Edition and before numerous farm women's meetings. Honored in 1953 as president of National Farm Home Editors' Association. She is never too busy to be friendly.



AS ASSOCIATE Editor of Prairie Farmer, Ralph S. Yohe not only thinks back to his home farm in Wayne county, Ill.; his agricultural training at the U. of Illinois and two years in poultry improvement work. He recalls farm lessons learned from Greece to Lapland, for Ralph has traveled in many European lands. His stories and photos appear in Prairie Farmer and he broadcasts over WLS. Author of "What Farmers Can Learn from Other Lands."

## **EDITORS**

HERE ARE Helen Page, secretary to Ralph Yohe, and Jean Quigley, for five years Managing Editor Jim Thomson's secretary, about to have coffee. Helen lived in or near Lafayette, Ind. before coming to Prairie Farmer five years ago. Jean, right, is a farm girl who lived near Saunemin, Livingston county, Ill.



MARIANNE FINGL has been Gladys Skelley's secretarial assistant six years. She is a Chicago girl. She prepares and sends out thousands of letters with answers to home and household questions, recipes, suggestions for home parties and play scripts for rural production. Folks even write to Miss Skelley for suggestions on the important question—"What shall we name the baby?"



## **'ASK GRACE'**

WHEN A question arises at WLS, someone usually suggests "Ask Grace Cassidy—she'll know!" As Traffic Manager, she must check all program details and see that everything is ready for tomorrow when she goes home to Crystal Lake tonight.



## **KAY HOCKSTAD**

AS SECRETARY to Harold Safford, Mrs. Hockstad must keep many program details at her finger-tips. Formerly Kay Grice, Silvis, Ill., her home is now in Elmhurst with husband Ralph, Arlene, 14, Linda, 10, and Jane, 6.

## **HAROLD SAFFORD**

OVER 25 YEARS ago, Harold A. Safford, right, left Sioux Falls, S. D. where he was a newspaper managing editor, to join the WLS staff. For many intervening years he has been Program Director. It takes a busy and capable man to do this job, and Harold seldom finds time to take a vacation. Three daughters, one son and seven grand-children help to make life satisfying for Harold and his wife, the former Mabel Chappell, Brookings, S. D. Harold's home town was Aberdeen, S. D.



## **HERB HOWARD**

FOR THE PAST six years Program Director of WNAX, Yankton, S. D., Herb Howard returned in October as Assistant to the Program Director. For several years he was a WLS production man. A West Chicago man, Herb married the former Pauline Birkholtz of Chicago. Three children.





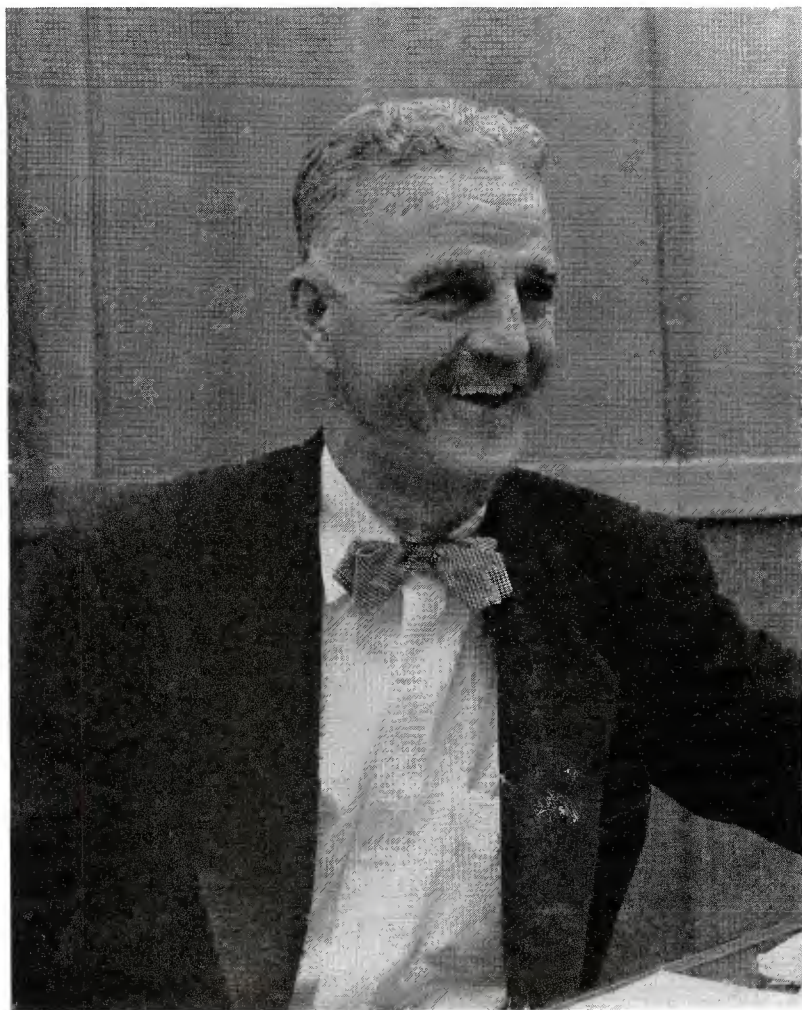
## **COPY ACCEPTANCE**

MANY PAGES of script must be carefully edited daily by Kay Brady, Continuity Editor, above. WLS copy standards are necessarily very high. Miss Brady is a native Missourian and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. She is the writer of Magic Harp for School Time.



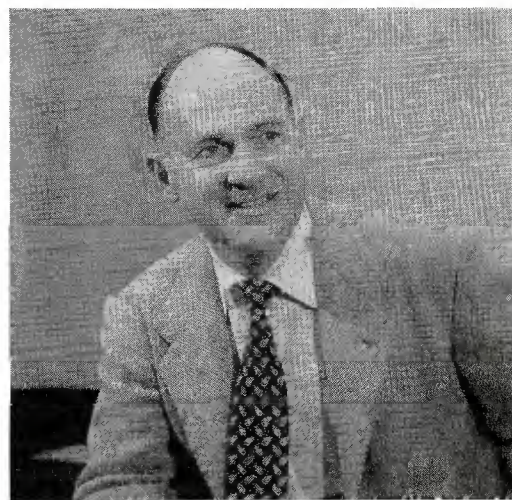
## **HAPPY BRIDE**

ELLA COLE and Henrietta Stricker are watching Suzanne Bradley Richerson open wedding gifts from her fellow workers on the eve of her marriage, Sept. 5. Suzanne came from Tucson, Ariz. to join these new friends in WLS continuity typing—later transferring to sales promotion.



## **PRODUCTION**

WHILE STRIVING for program perfection, Al Boyd, Production Manager, left, knows that sincerity, friendliness and informality are much more important than split-second timing. He has administered Christmas Neighbors Club details for many years. Mrs. Boyd is Rita Ascot. With daughter Carol, a high school senior, they live near Batavia.



## **WRITER**

WRITING interesting programs is the job of Al Rice, Chief Script man. Twenty-five years with the Maple City Four. Home town—Center Berlin, N. Y. Mrs. Rice was Marian Nelson of Oak Park. Residents of Elmhurst.



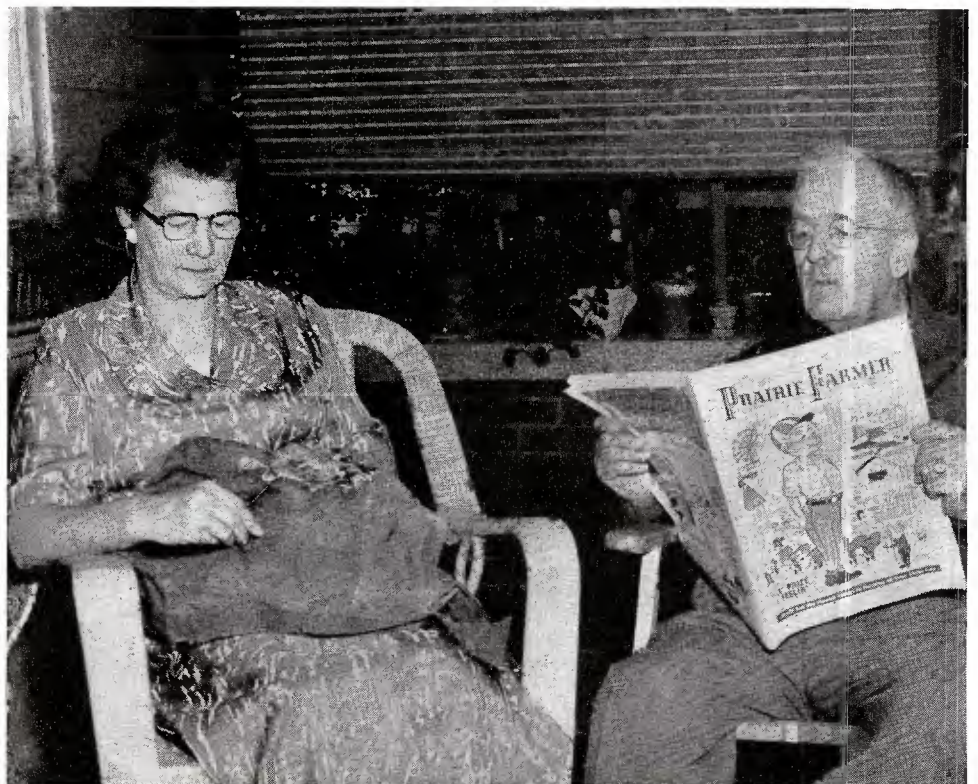
# **FIELD**

## **BERTSCH IN NEW JOB**

MAYNARD H. BERTSCH was named Farm Program Director in charge of Prairie Farmer-WLS Dinnerbell Time just before the Album went to press. This former Cambridge, Ind. man, who has served as Indiana Field Editor since 1947, also continues to be a member of Prairie Farmer's editorial staff as Radio Editor. Mrs. Bertsch is the former Esther Theobald of Bentonville, Ind. The family, including Larry Lee, 15, and Linda Elaine, 14, has been living in Pershing, Ind. Maynard's voice is familiar to Dinnerbell listeners as he has broadcast many Hoosier events in recent years.

## **THE VININGS**

KEATS K. VINING has long been identified with Michigan. Born in Lakeview, he served 27 of his 31 years as Kent county agent. Became Michigan Field Editor in 1949. Mrs. Vining, who is pursuing her hobby of hand-made aprons in the photo, was born Vesta E. Edgerly in Howard City, Mich. Keats' main hobby? Five wonderful grand-children, of course. Also enjoys stamp-collecting, photography and shop work. They live in Grand Rapids.



# **EDITORS**

## **RICHARD TAKES BRIDE**

CHAIRMAN of the very successful Prairie Farmer-WLS Farm Progress Show near Armstrong, Vermilion county, last Oct. 2, (See page 54) Illinois Field Editor Dick Albrecht took time out to wed Miss Barbara Bailey in Minneapolis, July 25. The charming bride had served as Household Editor of **THE FARMER** of St. Paul and was originally from Sioux City, Iowa. Dick was farm-raised near Ohio, Ill. His broad knowledge of soils, crops and fertilizers was put to excellent use in planning the Farm Progress Show demonstration plots which attracted the attention of thousands of farm visitors.



## **DELLA REPORTS**

DELLA LOUI won championship honors as a country newspaper correspondent before becoming Wisconsin Field Editor to report farm news for Prairie Farmer-WLS. Reared on an Iowa county farm, she first reported rural news for the Rice Lake Chronograph at age 10. Mr. and Mrs. Loui live at Madison. One son and a grandson, who is the "apple of grandma's eye." Della drives many miles to get stories and photos for Prairie Farmer readers.

HEADING THE Circulation Department is Bill Renshaw, for 35 years with Prairie Farmer. He supervises the fieldmen who serve Prairie Farmer subscribers. While a member of the Editorial Department, Bill organized the Flying Farmers. An active pilot, he has flown 3,000 hours in connection with his work. Reared on a White county, Ill. farm, Bill's hobby is growing tomatoes. Mrs. Renshaw was the former Gertrude Courson, Brownstown, Ill.

## **FARM FOLKS DEPEND UPON THEM**

MEET DICK LANGE, right, and Circulation Department assistants. From left: Marie Thompson, Esther Wagner, Muriel Anderson, Frieda Calder and Renate McKenzie. Likely as not you've had subscription letters from Dick.

OVER A PERIOD of many years, Prairie Farmer's Protective Union has saved millions of dollars for subscribers. Lower right: Mollie Feldman, in charge, and secretaries Virginia Reuter and Leota Wylie.

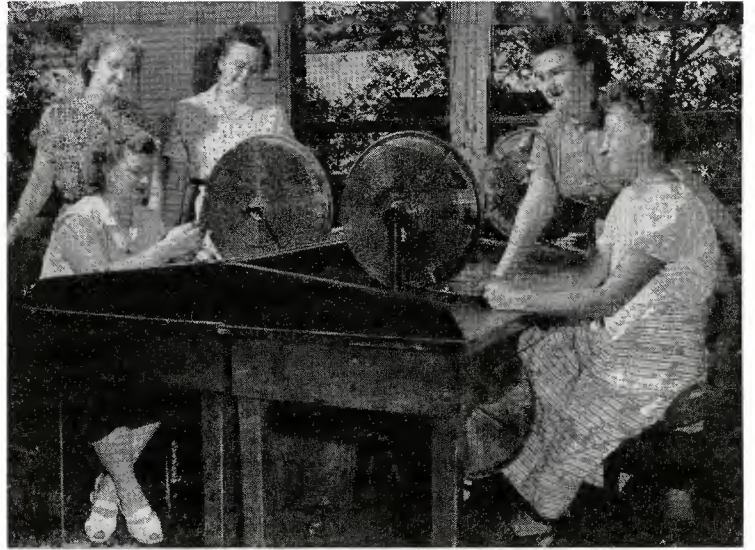
RAY NIELSON, below, working through Prairie Farmer's Protective Union, cooperates with law enforcement officers in rural crime matters. A native of Denmark. Mr. and Mrs. Nielson's son, Bill, is 11.





WHEN THE GREAT Goss Rotary Press starts rolling off 10,000 copies of *Prairie Farmer* per hour, twice monthly, Art Buch stands by to see that everything operates smoothly. He's no amateur as he has served 27 years as superintendent of the rotary press room. Reared in Detroit and Buffalo, Art settled down with his wife and children in suburban Berwyn long ago.

IF YOU VISITED the *Prairie Farmer* mailing department you would see miles and miles of stencil rolls with the names, rural route, town and state of every subscriber. It's easy to make an individual stencil plate and insert it into a roll if you're as experienced as these girls. Left, Loretta Mocerri, seated, Sarah Rowald, Barbara Nakvos, Theresa Kubiawski and Sadie Jacobs. Dick Newton, lower left, originally from Belle, Mo., is foreman of the *Prairie Farmer* mailing and shipping rooms.

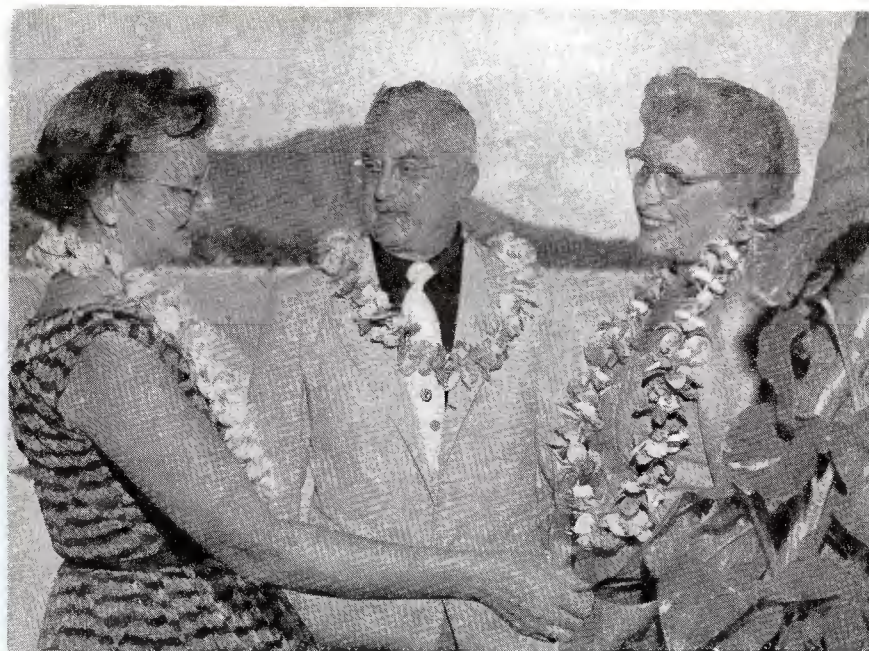


BACK OF EDITORIAL and advertising offices are many more folks who help make it possible to publish *Prairie Farmer* regularly. They're the "back stage" workers in the print shop, mailing department and press room. Foreman of the busy print shop is Eddie Cesal, below. A native Chicagoan, Eddie has served *Prairie Farmer* 30 years. He has four daughters.



## **WORKERS BACK STAGE**





## **CANDLES TO ELECTRICITY**

FROM 1841 TO 1954, a period during which American farmers progressed from sickles to combines and from candles to electricity—practically every invention designed to make farm living more profitable and enjoyable has appeared in *Prairie Farmer* advertising columns. Head of department is Vern Anderson, a *Prairie Farmer* and WLS Director and a Trustee of the Burrige D. Butler Memorial Trust.

## **TOURING HAWAII**

PRAIRIE FARMER-WLS sponsors several "No Worry" travel tours annually. Highlighting 1953 were two thrilling water trips to Hawaii enjoyed by 184 corn and dairy belt folks. Here is Marie Thiel, secretary to President Edwards, on Waikiki Beach with Business Manager and Mrs. Fred Orlemann.

## **THE AD FOLKS**

WOMEN EMPLOYEES of the advertising department, right, are: Pearl Ruck de Shel, Carol Solomon, Dorothy Kriz, Sally Kolicus and Barbara Thomson. Below, advertising staff members: Bob Birk, Bill Brookman, Vern Anderson, manager, Herb Horn, Walt Brian, Paul Scotte and Dick Scrymiger.



## **BEHIND THE SCENE**

AS SECRETARY to General Manager Snyder, Betty McCann handles many important station details. She has worked behind the scenes at WLS for over 19 years, assisting in various departments. For some time, she handled the mail for the Prairie Farmer-WLS Christmas Neighbors Club and the Little Brown Church.



## **SALES AND SERVICE**

ADVERTISING HAS been an integral part of American broadcasting for over 25 years. It enables stations like WLS to be self-supporting—free from government subsidies and political censorship. Because WLS carries information concerning numerous products for the farm and home, listeners are in a better position to choose the necessities and luxuries which make for happier living. Members of the WLS staff who sell and serve advertisers are, from the left, standing: Warren Middleton, Joe Kaspar, Maryan Gans, A. N. (Pete) Cooke, Ray Betsinger, Nancy Roberts and Betty Howard. Seated are Grace Patrick and Charles (Chick) Freeman, Sales Manager. Betty Howard has succeeded Mr. Middleton, who resigned as Sales Promotion Manager.



## **BOOK WLS STARS**

AS A RESULT of the activities of the WLS Artists' Bureau, folks throughout mid-America are enabled to personally see and hear WLS National Barn Dance stars in their own theatres, auditoriums and outdoor parks. Over 950,000 people usually see station favorites every year in their home communities. Above standing: George Ferguson, Camille Sullivan, Paul Aubrey and Georgia Smith; seated: Mr. and Mrs. Earl Kurtze. Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Kurtze have been associated in the Artists' Bureau for about 25 years. The entertainers enjoy meeting so many listeners and appreciate the opportunity to learn their song and music preferences first-hand.



MR. AND MRS. EARL BASS were practically Prairie Farmer-WLS staff members during preparations for Farm Progress Day, Oct. 2. Left, President Edwards, presented them with a clock-radio on Dinnerbell Time from their Armstrong, Ill. farm, operated by Gene and Ronald Apland.

OVER 360 PEOPLE, almost equally divided between Prairie Farmer and WLS, serve in numerous capacities. Below are: Ann Erhardt, Celia Uritz, Mabel Macklin and Columbia Struck, who handle the Prairie Farmer filing.



## JUST TO SAY 'HELLO'

THE HAYLOFT CANTEEN on the top floor of Prairie Farmer is a popular place for coffee, lunches and breakfasts. Lower right, the photographer found six prominent Prairie Farmer employees having coffee in the canteen and asked them to pose for an album picture. From left, Dolores Minaltoski, Minnie Koch, Rosalie Saalfeld, Edith Maley, Helen Lantz and Sharlene Cohen. Coffee good, girls?



MANY EMPLOYEES visited Studio A when William Beery, Elgin, Ill. sang on Dinnerbell Time last April 8, his 101st birthday. It was the 14th annual appearance of this former Ohio school teacher, singer and hymn writer. Carl Neumann, right, became Assistant Manager of the National Livestock and Meat Board, Aug. 1, after spending one year with us.



JAMES E. EDWARDS, JR. co-ordinates a number of activities of Prairie Farmer's business department. He was in charge of the champion corn huskers reunion for Farm Progress Day on the Earl Bass Farm, in Vermilion county, Ill. Visitors saw a skilled tractor driving contest, junior land judging bee, corn-growing, meat-cutting and farm machinery demonstrations, fiddlin' and square dance calling contests, WLS stars' programs and other activities. The University of Illinois and Purdue cooperated and 114 commercial exhibitors had displays. (See page 54.)



# ACCOUNTING AND MAIL

JOHN ALLEN, Assistant Treasurer of WLS and his secretary, Mildred Fredrickson (page 53) have the responsibility of all WLS payroll records. This includes writing those welcome pay-day checks. They mail thousands of invoices, pay bills, and handle countless other details of advertising, business and general accounting.



RESPONSIBLE for Prairie Farmer payroll records and other accounting details of a farm paper serving over 400,000 families are Terry Mathes, Dick Birdsong, in charge, Nettie Browder, right.

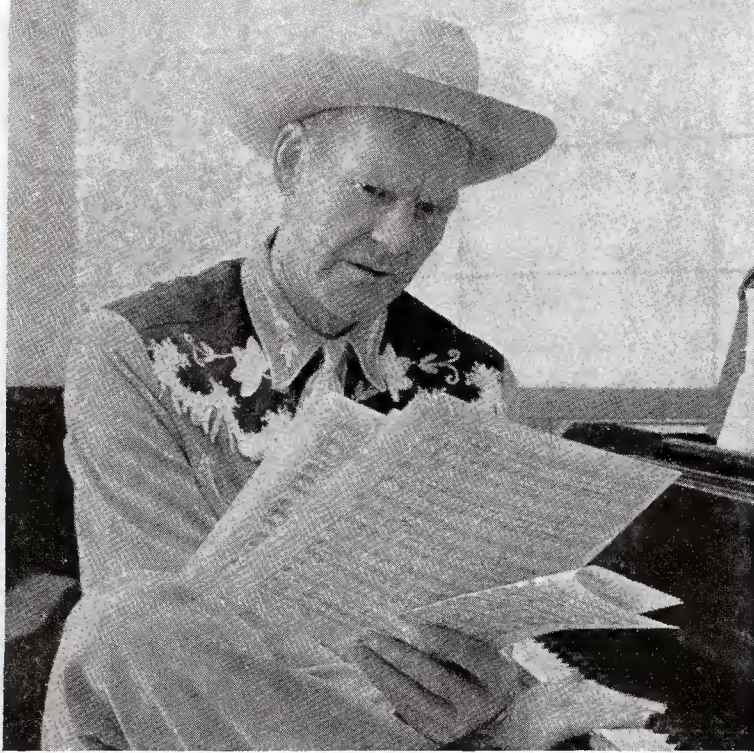


INGEBORG BUNGE used to work in the mail department but is now rapidly memorizing technical terms as secretary to Tom Rowe, WLS Chief Engineer.



SORTING, OPENING and routing Prairie Farmer readers' and WLS listeners' letters to editors, program executives, entertainers or advertisers are duties of the mail room girls. They keep a daily mail record of where the thousands of letters are from. From left, Gertrude Grosskopf, Bertha Fenzau, Emma Olsberg, Mildred Burton, in charge, and Ann Dietz.

## A TUNE'S ON TRIAL -ARKIE JUDGES



ARKIE, THE WOODCHOPPER, looking for something unusual to catch the ears of listeners, examines sheet music of new song.

"WELL NOW—I don't really know if I like this or not!"

"LET'S SEE—well, maybe it does have some possibilities."



"THE WORDS are good, and the music fits 'em real neat!"

"BOY! THOSE chords'll give my guitar a real workout!"

"CUTE MELODY. I really think the folks'll go for it strong."

"HERE GOES! I'll sing it on the barn dance Saturday!"

## 'OLD MAN BARN DANCE'

TO ARKIE, relaxing at home usually means planning the next outdoors jaunt with Vera and Laddie, the pup. He loves hunting, fishing, golf, tennis, bowling, horses and dogs. Born near Knobnoster, this Missouri farm boy celebrated 25 years in radio last January. His first job—playing guitar and fiddle for a square dance at \$4.00 for six hours. "Mrs. Arkie" was Vera Firth, Perry county, Ill.

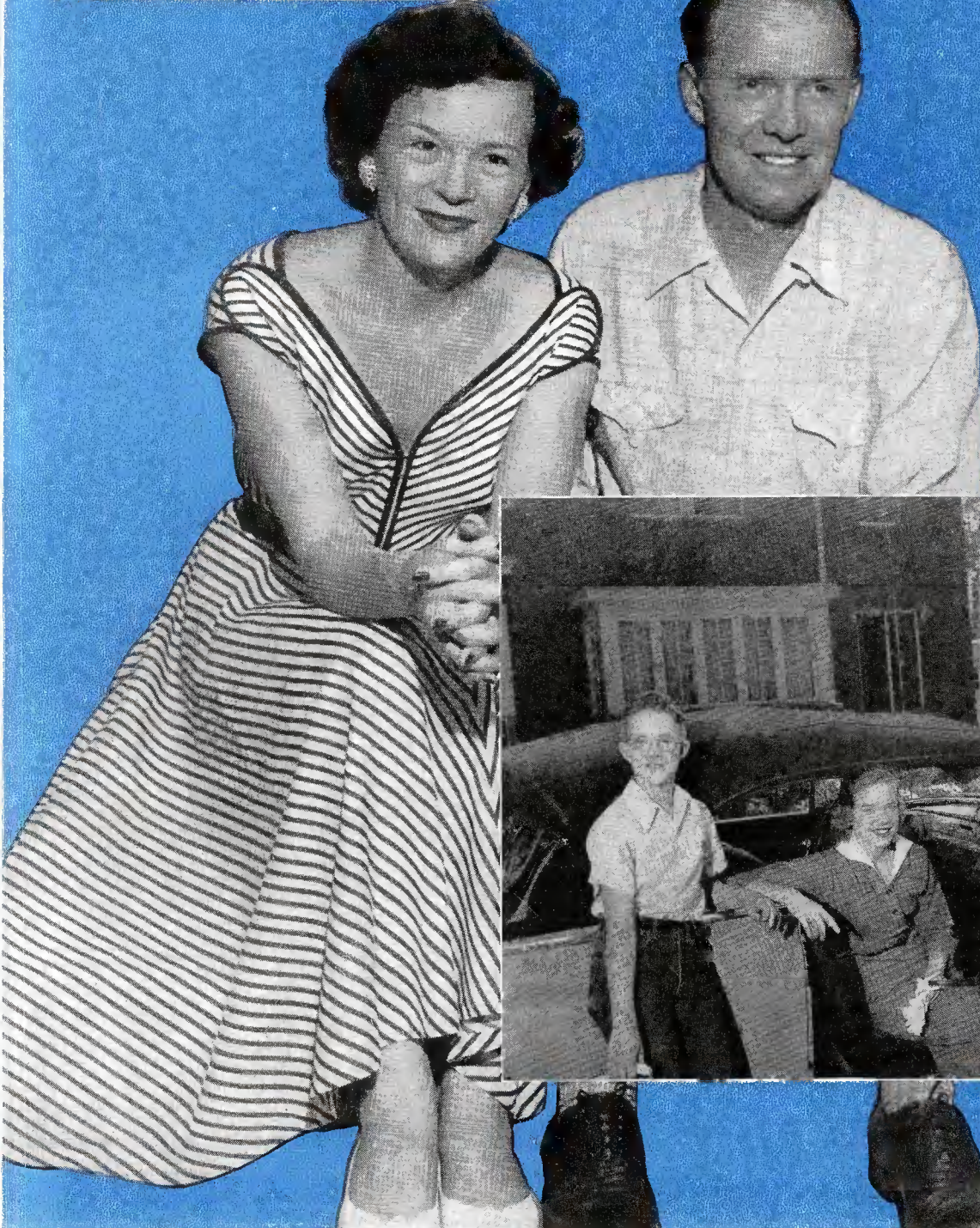


# YOU ADOPTED THIS FAMILY

WHEN MYRTLE COOPER and Scott Wiseman got "hitched", Dec. 13, 1934, no one knew that these North Carolina "youngsters" would still hold top favor in 1954. Whether on the daily Lu and Scotty Show, left, or the National Barn Dance, they still manage to keep that sincerity and freshness that makes and holds loyal friends.



WLS LISTENERS long ago adopted the Wiseman family. When Linda Lou, 17, and Steve, 13, were born, the welcome news spread from Maine to California. Lulu Belle and Scotty are real Oak Park "home folks." Below they are about to say farewell to Linda as she leaves for Greenbrier College, W. Va., while 8th grader Steve helps out.





A MORNING OFF for the Buccaneers and 19 eager Richards, Fouts, Flemings, Stokes and Kayes visit Brookfield Children's Zoo and Farm, popular spot near Chicago.

"BOYS WILL BE BOYS" but some dads never grow up, particularly Pete, Stubby, Jerry, Tiny and Sonny, left. It was their own idea and the camera man was ready!



CONNIE, 7, is suspicious of the South American llamas, but not Papa Stubby, Tommy, 12, and Mamma Eva Lou Fouts.



AN APPLE MAKES a friend for Michael Fleming, 14, as Sandra, 12, Carol, 7, mom and dad look on. Fulton, Tenn., and Paducah, Ky. are Mary Edd and Sonny's towns.



# BUCCS HAVE FUN AT ZOO



RONNIE RICHARDS, 12, and his dad have the Zoo's goat. Mary is from Flora, Ind.; Jerry from Freeport, Ill.



THE STOKES feed the Zoo Jersey. There's Larry, 12, and Debbie, 7. Tiny is from Frankfort, Ind.; Glenna from Covington, Ky.



PEGGY KAYE, 6, shows dad and mother the Chinese geese. Audubon, Ia., is Edith's old home. Pete's a Chicagoan.



ON THE COVERED wagon are: Michael, Ronnie, Larry and Tommy—Peggy, Connie, Debbie, Carol and Sandra.



PROVIDING FUN and entertainment for their families or WLS listeners comes naturally to the talented Buccaneers, whether it's singing, swimming, gardening, fishing or zoo-visiting. Here they relax at the end of their visit to the Zoo.





  
**30th Anniversary**

## **A TOP-HAND AND CREW**



**BOB ARCHER** sings traditional and modern western songs with ability and sincerity. He is a friendly, capable master of ceremonies on the National Barn Dance. He loves children and they love him. Born near West Point, Ky., reared there and on the family's North Dakota ranch, Bob early learned to know both his folk songs and ranch life. Small wonder he is well known as the WLS "Top Hand of the Cow-Hands."

ABOVE, RIGHT, Robert Archer, 2, is observed by cute little Mary, nearly, one, and mother Maggie as daddy Bob gives him a lesson in cowboy cookery. The Atchers live in their own farm home near suburban Palatine. Maggie, who sings duets with Bob on occasion, was formerly Marguerite Whitehall of Chicago. Below, Bob is teaching his son to know and love his educated golden palamino. Young Robert is learning to sing and pick a mandolin.





## ***A FUN MAKER***

DONALD RED BLANCHARD announces records and says funny things between times on his popular Red Blanchard Shows and Saturday Merry-Go-Round. He's been a favorite on the National Barn Dance for years. Easily one of radio's most talented personalities, he combines ready wit with ability to play guitar, string bass, banjo, bicycle pump and other gadgets. Played and sang for years before World War II proved his worth as a comedian.



MEET THE BLANCHARDS: Red, Sallie, Donald, 6, and Donna Colleen, 2. This happy family lives in Brookfield where Red is very handy around the house and yard. He met Marcella (Sallie) Ebert of Chicago when she was square dancing at Eighth Street Theatre. Red's first job was "workin' for Pa with no pay an' I was worth it!" His parents live near Pittsville, Wis., where he is Honorary Mayor and Fire Chief. Right—Red does some impromptu steps during National Barn Dance while Donna Wilson applauds. Red does rope tricks, too.





CHECKING COPYRIGHT clearance and filing index cards for all sheet music and records received by WLS as well as clearing and copying all musical programs are duties of Hazel Moore and Libby Kirk. They are, left, checking a 16-inch transcription turning at 33 1/3 RPM.

MAX THOMPSON, as pleasantly methodical as he looks, must see to it that every recorded and transcribed announcement and music number goes on the air upon split-second cues from the studio. Madeline Lorch and Fred Vopatek assist him in these duties in Studio E.



## ***THEIR WORK MAKES MUSIC***



LEE BALDWIN became Music Department head last August, moving from WLW, Cincinnati. Meet the family at home in Maywood. Barbara is a Proviso High School freshman and an older daughter, Mrs. Patricia McGrew lives in Portland, Ore. Mrs. Baldwin was Claire Saborke of Stevens Point, Wis. Lee is from Delaware, Ohio.



SEEMS THAT Emma Bauman, right, has an ambition to learn how to pick out a few chords on the guitar so she called on that capable WLS Ranger, Verne Fiedler, for instruction. Miss Bauman, a Chicago girl, is secretary to Al Boyd. She handles many details of the Christmas Neighbors Club in December and January.



**CHIEF PRODUCER** of the National Barn Dance and other programs is William J. Nelson, whose first job 15 years ago was WLS office boy. Did much radio production with U. S. Army Air Force. Married Mary Jane Dewey, born in Springfield, Ill. In the photo you see Billy Jane, 8, Linda Lynn, 5, and Claudia Dewey, 2. They live in Bill's home town—Oak Park.

**REHEARSING**, balancing and timing programs has been Bill Joyce's job as a WLS producer for six years. He was a theatre prop boy, NBC music librarian and sound effects man and ABC producer before joining WLS. A native of Chicago, Bill married Jean Cormier, Hurley, Wis. They have a daughter, Jeanne Marie, age 14.

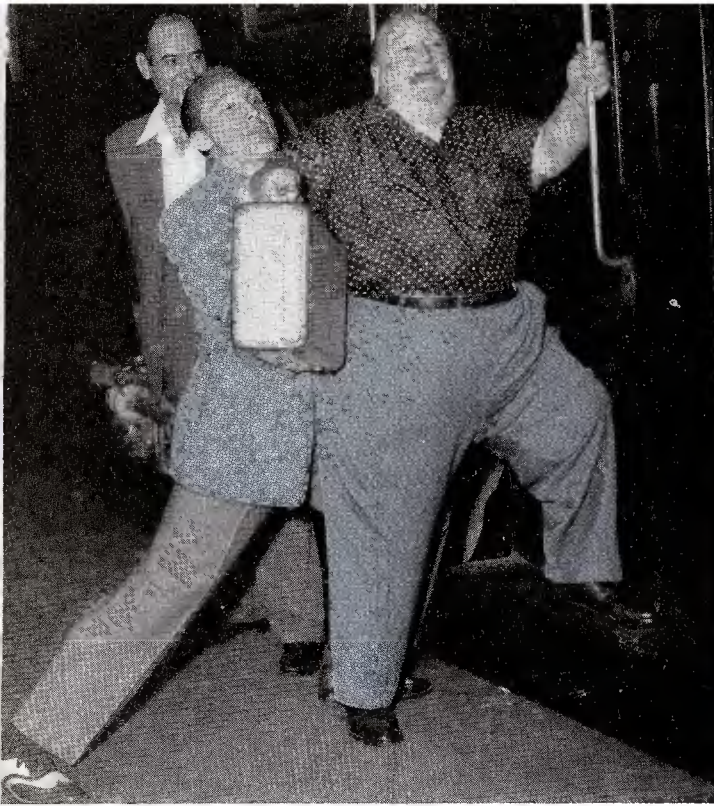
## ***PRODUCTION IS THEIR JOB***

**RAY FERRIS** has auditioned and advised hundreds of aspiring radio acts as a WLS producer during the past 15 years. Pioneer in Chicago local and network radio as a harmony singer, Ray has written several popular songs. Born in Chicago, he lived as a boy near Alma, Ill. Mrs. Ferris is the former Lyla Shelton, Hazelhurst, Wis.



**WLS**  
1924-1954  
**30th Anniversary**

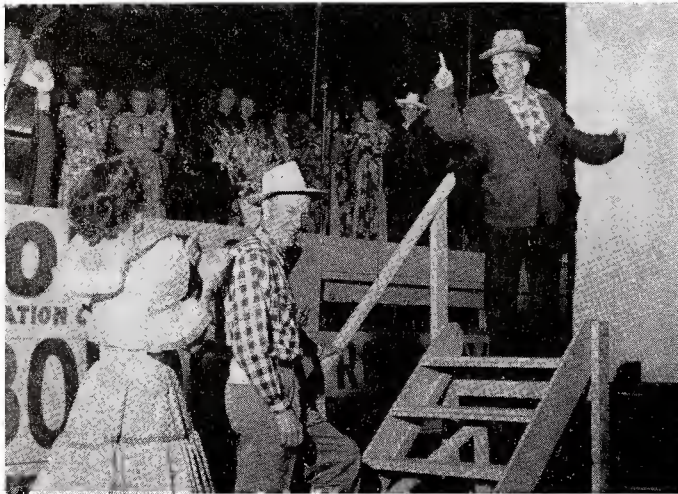
# ***'THE BARN***



**HOMER** Does his good deed by boosting Otto on the train while Denny Taillon of the G. M. & O. looks on. Otto hasn't missed any of the Illinois State Fair National Barn Dances.



**EVERYONE** Had a good time on the train enroute to Springfield. The photographer interrupted a lively song session featuring Skeeter Bonn, Phyllis Brown, Jimmy Gross and Red Blanchard.



**LULU BELLE** puts Scotty through the husband-remodeling machine operated by Jimmy James. The audience and Lu were surprised when Scotty came out a horse—of all things!



**TABLES WERE TURNED** when Lulu Belle asked for autographs of Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Ferree, Evelyn and Kathleen, Mattoon—Typical Illinois Farm Family of 1953. Grace Wilson awaits turn.



# DANCE GOES TO THE FAIR



AFTER ARRIVING in Springfield the whole crew lunched at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel and immediately afterward took two chartered buses to the Fair grounds to rehearse the big show.

COLLEEN, GRACE WILSON, Phyllis Brown, Patsy Montana, and Donna enjoy a "hen session." Everyone was glad to have Patsy back from Hollywood as a State Fair show guest.



← GOVERNOR WILLIAM G. STRATTON, left, made his National Barn Dance debut by inviting the world to attend the state fair. He was presented by Program Director Harold A. Safford, right, who has introduced many governors on this program. Grace Wilson, Arkie and Patsy Montana looked on.

IT WAS THE "night of the year" for the National Barn Dance crew, as Bob Atcher's smile indicates. A record-breaking total of 12,992 folks packed the grandstand and race track seating area. It was a wonderful tribute to all the WLS stars and everyone responded with "the show of the year."



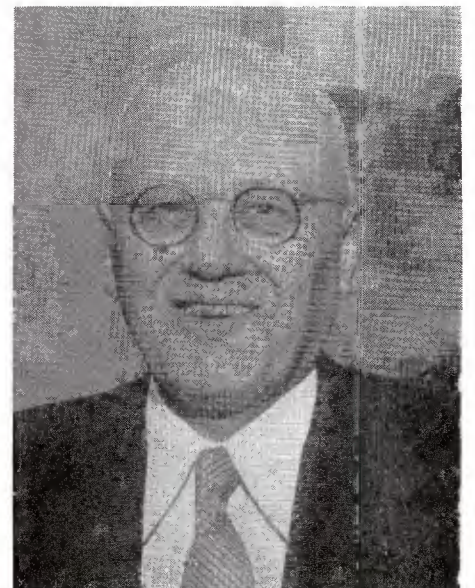
BILL MORRISSEY probably meets more livestock producers than anyone in the yards. Here he is chatting with several Illinois and Iowa shippers and wives in the Chicago Livestock Exchange studio right after a noon broadcast. WLS livestock reports greatly influence shipping

## ***FARM NEWS MEN***

MARKET OBSERVER Bill Morrissey has a great WLS farm audience when he gives his noonday cattle, hog and sheep reports. He has been broadcasting from Chicago's Union Stock Yards since 1940.



LOYD BURLINGHAM comes to WLS each noon from his "Green Pastures on the Kishwaukee" farm near Woodstock, Ill. to broadcast "The Farming Business."

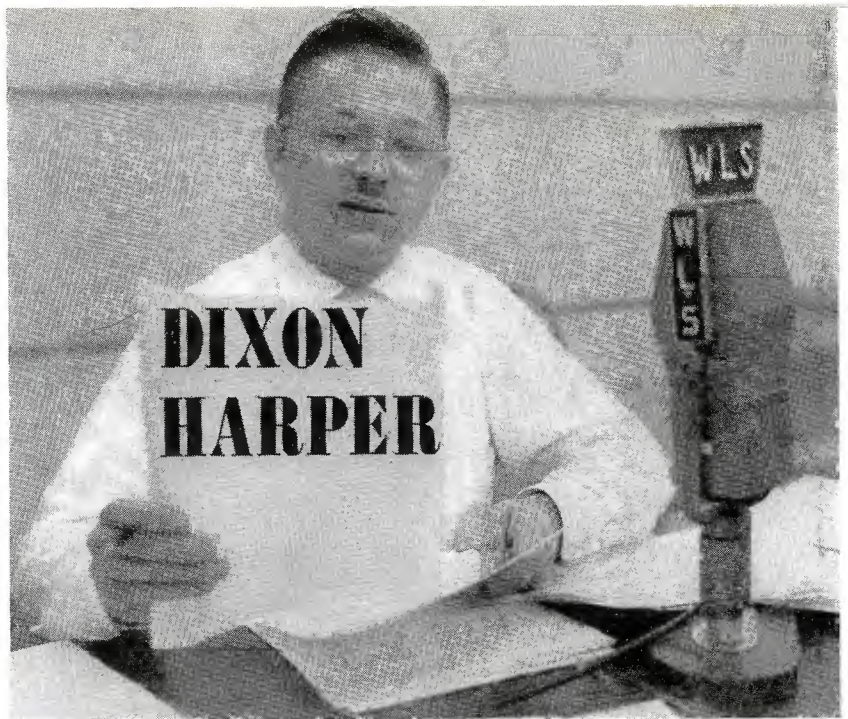


MANAGER DAVE SWANSON of the Chicago Producers Commission Association broadcasts "Trends and Possibilities of the Livestock Market" each Saturday.



## **GREETES FOLKS**

GREETING FRIENDLY Dinnerbell Time visitors is part of the job of Romaine Benner, farm department secretary. She often asks newlyweds and anniversary couples to ring the dinnerbells. She makes folks feel at home when they arrive, also keeps accurate records of all announcements and guest speakers' names. Goshen, Indiana is her home town.



DIXON L. (DIX) HARPER started in radio as Uncle Remus on WOI, Iowa State College, two years before he graduated in agriculture. Before joining WLS last March, he was farm director of WIOU, Kokomo and WIBC, Indianapolis. Reared on home farm near Ames, Iowa; won honors in 4-H livestock and grain clubs; served in Army Air Corps; managed a Wisconsin Duroc farm. As Farm News Director, Dix conducts "R. F. D. 890" at noon.

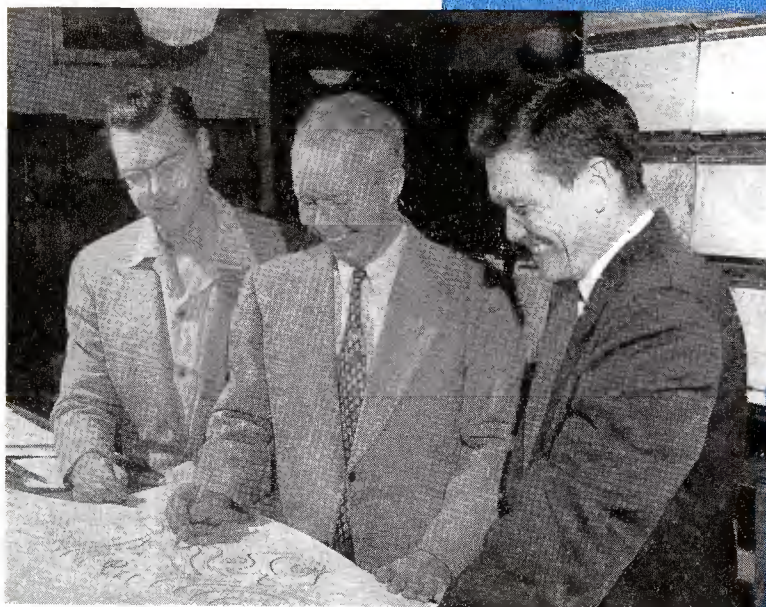
MEET THE HARPERS in their tomato patch at their Wheaton home. Gardening and photography are hobbies of Dix and the former Shirley Thevenin of Ruthven, Iowa. They met and were married as students at Iowa State College. Little Susan, 2, helps make their home happy.





## **IT'S WLS FOR NEWS, WEATHER**

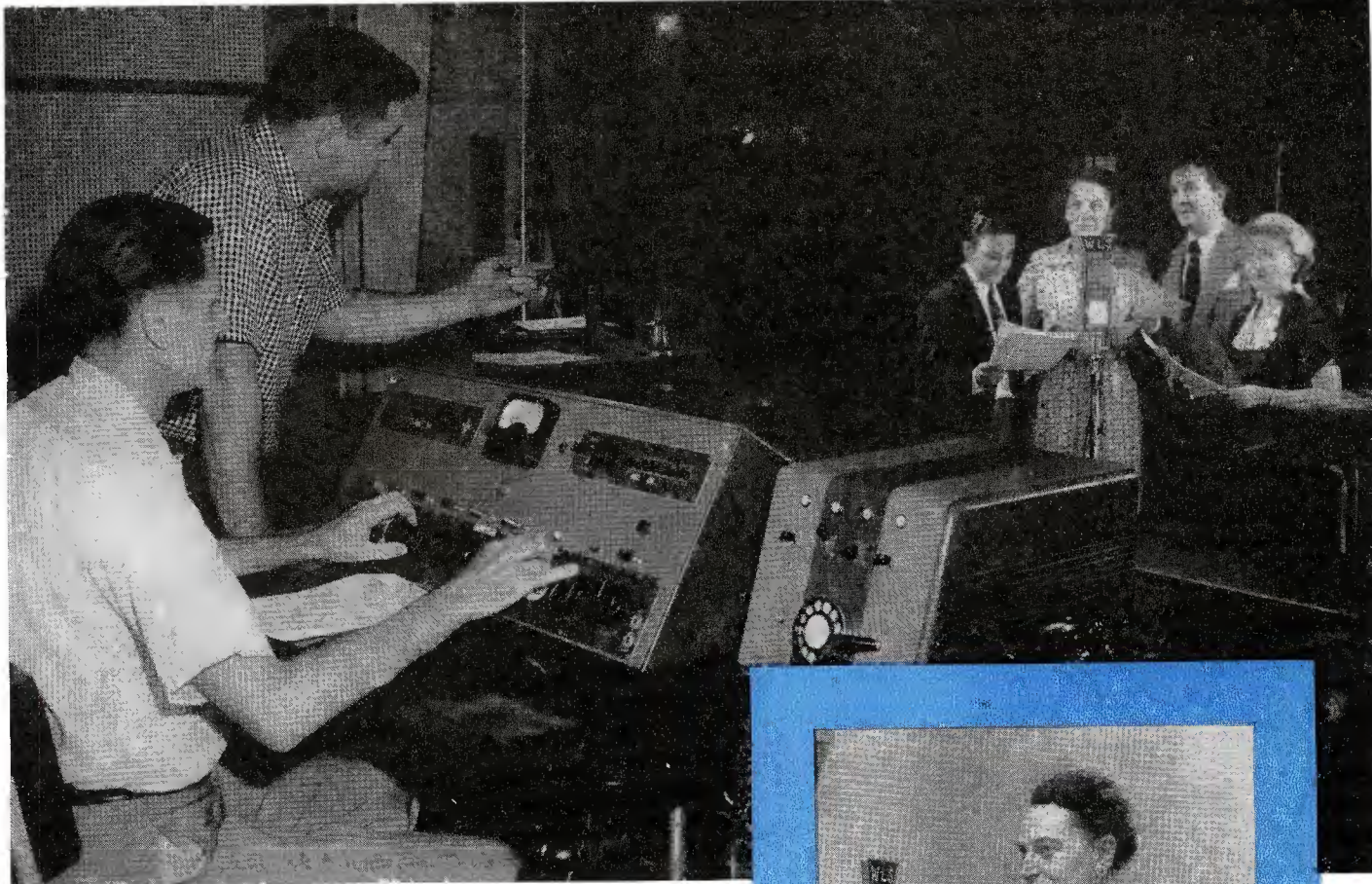
NEWS AND SPECIAL events are directed by Bill Small, right, and Jim Horstman, assistant. Working closely with Prairie Farmer editors, WLS news announcers, the Associated Press and United Press and spot covering many midwestern stories—the news staff edits, rewrites and prepares news for approximately 50 weekly newscasts. Listeners depend upon WLS up-to-the-minute news, interviews and special features, starting with the first newscast at 5:00 a. m.



NOTHING IS MORE important in a radio news department than good weather coverage. Weather is a "must" on all WLS newscasts and other local programs. Weather-men Robert E. Lautzenheiser, left, Charles B. Johnson and Virgil F. Hendricks must have been ready to predict a break in the 1953 drought, judging by their smiles. They serve under Chief Meteorologist Gordon E. Dunn. The special U. S. Weather Bureau wire furnishes WLS with frequent forecasts and weather condition reports daily.

NEWS OF ANOTHER SORT—the doings of make-believe characters—has been a WLS Sunday morning program for boys and girls with "Uncle Jack" Stilwill and "Aunt Rita" Ascot, right, reading the Chicago Sun-Times funnies. Jack Stilwill has long served as a station announcer. (See page 37.) Rita has proved to be a real children's favorite for several years. She regularly appears on WLS School Time dramatic broadcasts and has taken character parts on many network radio programs. Like all outstanding radio actresses, she has the ability to think and act like someone else. At home Rita is Mrs. Al Boyd, Plum Tree Farm near Batavia, west of Chicago.





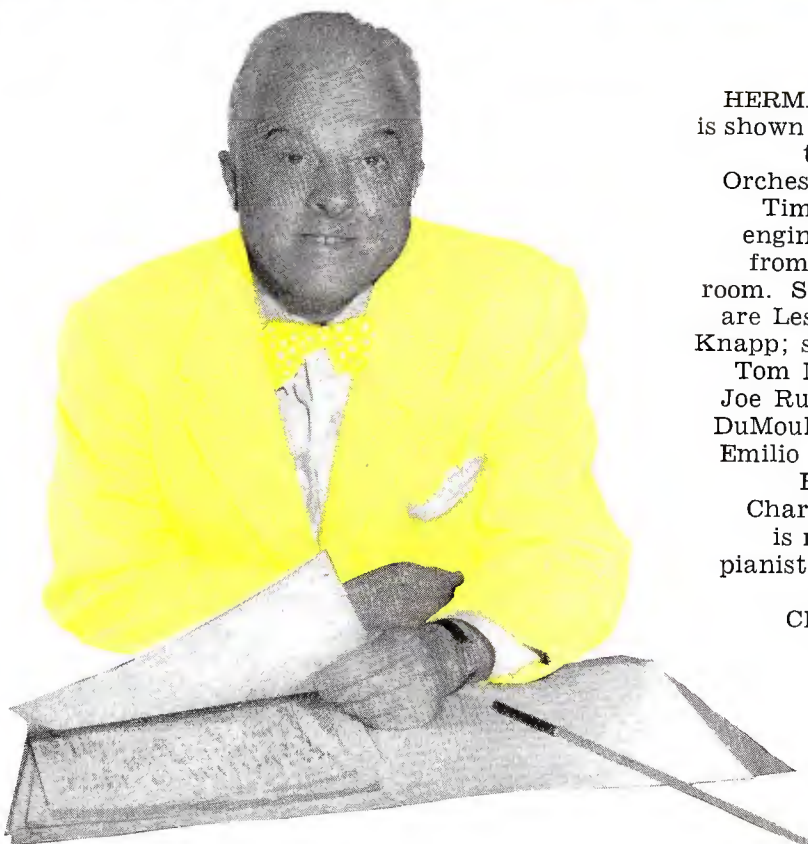
## **SCHOOL TIME MEETS NEEDED**

MRS. JOSEPHINE WETZLER, Educational Director, is the "schoolma'am" who rings the bell calling together an estimated 1,360,000 boys and girls weekly in rural and urban schools to listen to WLS School Time. Many mothers also tune in to enjoy this afternoon program supplementing their children's daily studies. "Miss Jo" gives a story for the "small fry" Mondays with whimsical Freddie, the Fabulous Field Mouse. She narrates Book Box Tuesdays; presents Magic Harp Wednesdays; Prairieville, U. S. A. Thursdays and We Look at the News Friday. Pure Milk Association, with 15,660 dairy families, cooperates in making School Time possible. Much assistance is given by the Advisory Council and Parent-Teacher Associations. Mrs. Wetzler, reared in Peoria, is an experienced newspaper reporter, radio drama writer and air personality. Top photo—a Prairieville, U. S. A. cast: From left: Corny Peeples, Mrs. Wetzler, Larry Alexander, and Rita Ascot. In control booth, Chuck Ostler, engineer, and Bill Nelson, producer. Middle—Mrs. Josephine Wetzler. Below, Patti Purvey, secretary. School Time has won seven major awards, including the much coveted duPont award, in the past five years.





## MUSIC MAKERS



HERMAN FELBER, left, is shown above conducting the talented WLS Orchestra on Dinnerbell Time, as seen by the engineer and producer from Studio A control room. Standing members are Les Schein and Roy Knapp; seated: back row, Tom Moore, Lou Klatt, Joe Rullo; middle: Ted DuMoulin, Walter Lewis, Emilio Sylvestre; front; Henry Waxman,



Charlotte Chambers, David Chausow. Mr. DuMoulin is manager of the orchestra. For a better look at pianist John Brown, see page 44. Ted Morse (Otto) not in picture. Margaret Sweeney, right, is one of Chicago's best known harpists. Herman Felber is recognized as a leading conductor of Chicagoland. For 21 years he has directed the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra with distinction. He also conducts the Youth Orchestra of Greater Chicago as well as Northwestern University's Symphony Orchestra. Those duties make Herman a busy man.


  
**30th Anniversary**



## **MARTHA CELEBRATES 25 RADIO YEARS**

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, Martha Crane began working in the Prairie Farmer-WLS mail room. Before long she was assistant to the household editor on Homemakers' Hour, later took charge of it. In 1935, when Feature Foods started, Martha became its director-announcer. Now 19 years later, this half hour program continues a top favorite. In addition to latest news of foods and homemaking, interviews with people from every walk of life, listeners enjoy Martha's friendly chats about her family. She married her childhood sweetheart, Ray Caris, in 1929. Next to Ray in photo is Crane with his pet "kitty." He is a freshman at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mt. Pleasant, Martha and Ray's home town. Barry is a Highland Park High School freshman. The Caris four enjoy a home they have remodeled together.



## **JACK HOLDEN IS DEAN OF ANNOUNCERS**

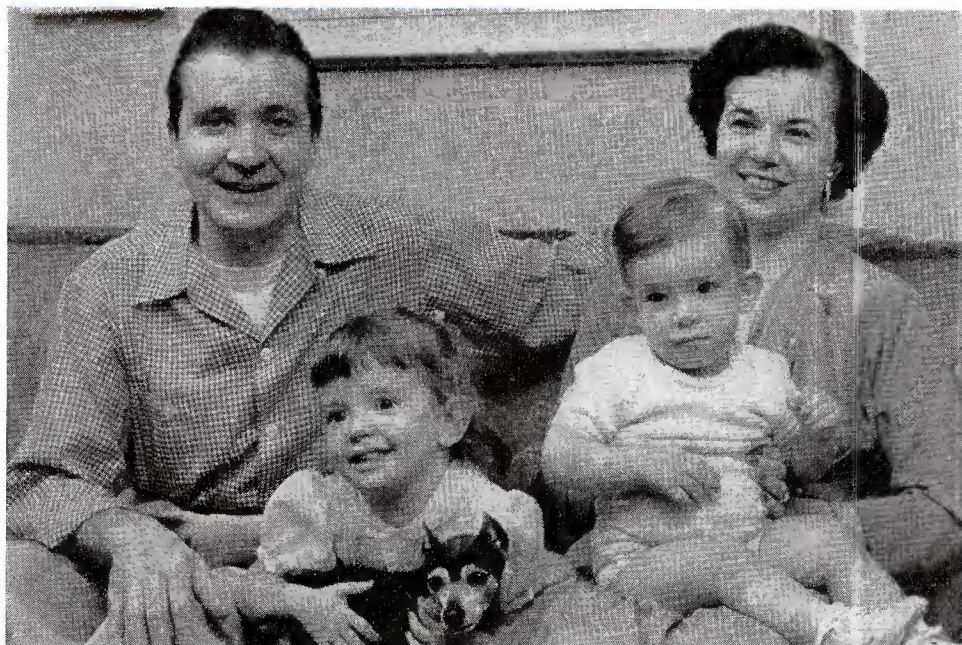
THAT HAPPY TRIO to your left should be easily recognizable as Jack, Johnny and Christine Holden of WLS and River Forest. Looks like a Christmas card picture, doesn't it? Jack came to the Prairie Farmer station from Battle Creek, Mich. in 1931 and is now the oldest WLS announcer in years of service. He is famous for his original writing "The Story of the First Good Friday" which he reads each spring. Mrs. Holden was Christine Endebak, born in Amsterdam, Holland. Remember her sweet yodeling on the National Barn Dance as "The Little Swiss Miss?" Johnny is a lively 6-year-old. Jack's older son, Don, is a Decatur, Ill. radio announcer and the father of 2-year-old Billy, the pride of granddad's heart. One of Chicago's best known and most popular announcers—that's Jack!

# **THEIR VOICES MEAN WLS TO MILLIONS**



## **THE LARRY ALEXANDERS**

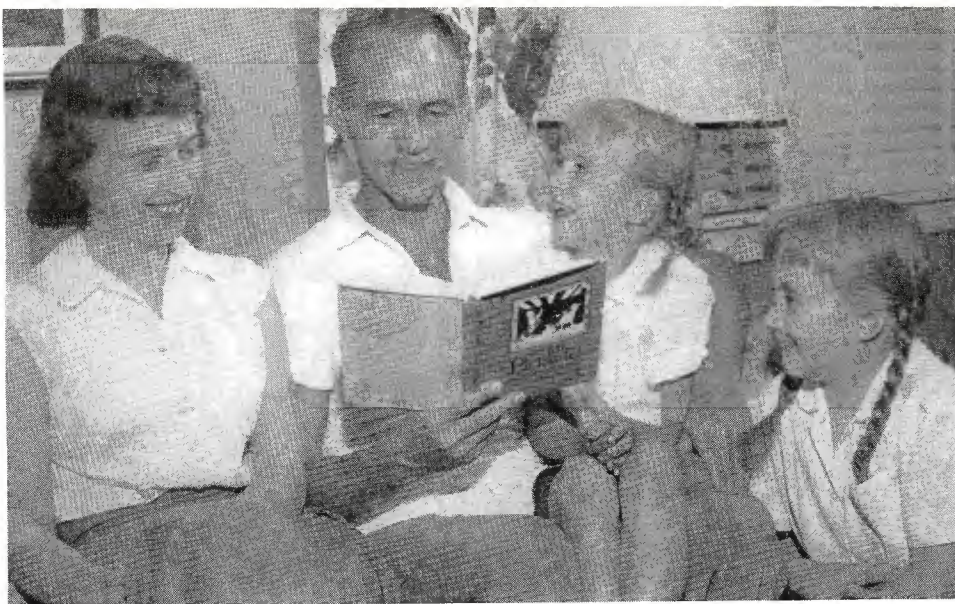
ANNOUNCER Larry Alexander first joined WLS in 1946 for a 15-month period, left for other radio work in Chicago and then returned early in 1953. Born in Boston, Mass. his first announcing job was in Beckley, W. Va. He then auditioned successfully in Chicago and it was here that he met and married Jeanne Thompson, mother of Toni, 3, and one-year-old Larry Rico. Movie and still photography occupy much of Larry's spare time.



## **MEET THE CAMPBELLS**

THE FIRST WLS Family Album (1930) had photos of "Dynamite Jim"—a young harmonica-guitar playing singer and fiddler. Harry Campbell is the same Walkerton, Ind. farm boy as "Jim." He has since served Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois stations as farm director, was with the war-time Triple A and farmed with his dad. Harry married college sweetheart Betty Weeks, North Manchester, Ind. Their youngsters are Becky Sue, 11, and Barbara Ann, 3. He returned last July as early morning WLS farm announcer.





## **THE DUANES AT HOME**

NO MATTER what the weather, Bill Duane is up real early to bring all the news to the hundreds of thousands of families who depend on WLS. Does regular announcing, too. A native of Ashland, Wis., Bill married Helen Haskett of Norwalk, Conn., in Sioux Falls, S. D. and entered radio in Beckley, W. Va., where he knew Larry Alexander. First job—with a railroad gang. With Helen he enjoys good plays, sports, reading—but especially daughters Kristen, 9, and Elizabeth, 7.



## **HAL CULVER AND CLAN**

VETERAN WLS mike-man, Hal Culver is friendly and relaxed whether announcing news, doing interviews, emceeing barn dance shows or serving as "disc jockey." He sings well, too, and likes to fish, play golf, and do wood-working. Born in Nashville, Ill., a Methodist preacher's son, Hal broke into radio in Nashville, Tenn. "Mrs. Hal" was Margaret Elsie Overy, Winnipeg, Man. David is now 11. All three are very fond of Pushka and Bridget, their Springers.



## **THE THREE STILWILLS**

JACK STILWILL, whose voice is so familiar to WLS listeners on the National Barn Dance and daytime programs, entered radio in Yankton, S. D. 22 years ago. Before that, he was city editor of the Yankton daily newspaper. Born in Tyndall, S. D. While working in Indianapolis, Jack and Miss Jeanne Pettinger of that city pledged their vows. Their main interest is 16-year-old Rick, junior varsity football guard in Evanston Township High School. Looks like Rick has outgrown dad.



THE CHORE BOYS, busiest musicians on the National Barn Dance, provide capable instrumental accompaniment for singers from rehearsal until sign-off. Above, Johnny Frigo, violin; Jimmy Gross, steel guitar; Les Schein, string bass; and Augie Klein, accordion. Jimmy is a Purdue senior in Forestry. Johnny, an accomplished painter, has given exhibits. Left, the Scheins with Mrs. Toby Silbert Schein, Howard, 9, Fred, 5, and Les, who has played with both popular and symphonic orchestras, also directed. Below, the Kleins, with Richard, 10, Janice Marie, 12, James, 6, and Mrs. Mary Jane Klein, who was one of the original DeZurik Sisters from Royalton, Minn. Augie's musical ability plus his showmanship and infectious laughter have made him a prime favorite with everyone.

## ***BARN DANCE PLAYERS***





## ***BOY FROM HILLS***

FRIENDLY Dolph Hewitt, "the boy from the hills of Pennsylvania," first learned that it's fun to entertain when he played fiddle at square dances around West Finley, Pa. He tried singing on radio and found that folks liked him. Dolph's wife was formerly Ruth Johnson of Grand Ledge, Mich., member of a sister radio team. They were in St. Louis radio together and married in Cleveland after Dolph said goodbye to the World War II Marines. Seven-year-old Chuckie is dad's pal and helps him to grow vegetables for mother Ruth to put up. Chuckie likes to tease, too. Note this photo taken by the Hewitt home near Lombard.





# JOIN US AND LAUGH



## HOMER AND PAL JETHRO

HOMER AND JETHRO produce odd, comical and pleasing twists to their mountain-style harmonizing and masterful mandolin-guitar treatment of their own home-made parodies on popular songs. As a result, the RCA Victor records of these National Barn Dance stars are in big demand from cow-camps to colleges. The upper photo was taken at the Pittsville, Wis., Indian Pow Wow last August, while the lower pose simply shows the lads in their most conservative suits. Henry (Homer) Haynes, left, born in Knoxville, Tenn., is married to Elizabeth Coleman, Greenville, Ky. Son Kenneth is 10. Conasaga, Ga. is Kenneth (Jethro) Burns' birth-place. His wife was Lois Johnson, Williamsburg, Ohio. John, their son, is 5.



## MUSICAL COMEDIAN

JIMMY JAMES is usually introduced on the old hayloft show as "that wicky wacky wizard of the banjo." That's not the half of it, for this former Springfield, Mass., boy is also a comedy pantomime artist and monologist, master of ceremonies, trombonist and guitarist. A great showman, he has probably appeared before more people personally in recent years than any other WLS artist. Married and has two boys, Don and James. Composer of successful songs, including two recently recorded by Dolph Hewitt.





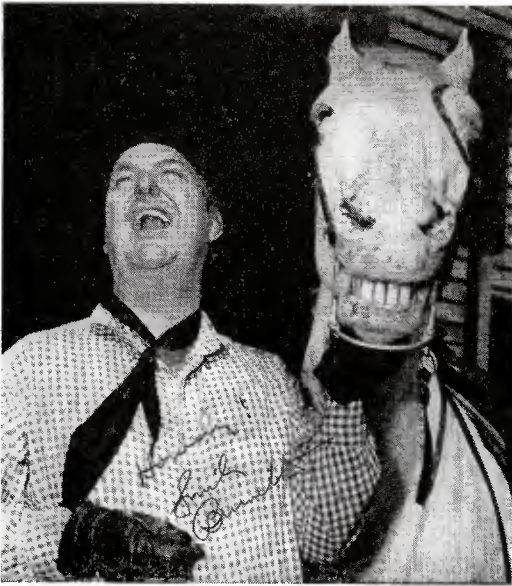
## **UNCLE OTTO'S WORRIED**

Otto is skeptical about the value of the permanent waving outfit to him as are his pals, Jimmy James and Cousin Tilford of the Virginia Hams. Producer Bill Nelson perfected this "machine" for the barn dance at Springfield and now uses it on the Eighth Street Theatre stage where the Hams are the center of much of the fun-making every Saturday night. Otto (Ted Morse) plays trumpet in the WLS Orchestra during the week. He's a native of Topeka, Kans.; got \$60.00 monthly on his first job as page boy in the state capitol. Used to teach band music in the Fairfield, Ill. High School. A real WLS old-timer and an outstanding comedian.

It's FUN WHEN A WLS alumnus visits the National Barn Dance to make a guest appearance or to talk over old times. Pat Buttram returned last September to "crack-wise" as in days of yore with his feuding partner, Jack Holden. Below, Jimmy James, Grace Wilson and Uncle Otto are probably laughing at one of Pat's stories about his summer trip to England with Gene Autry's Rodeo. He is now Gene's comedian in western pictures and on network radio. Pat came up from Winston county, Ala., about 20 years ago to join the WLS staff. Hollywood is a healthy spot, judging by Pat's weight and alfalfa.

## **PAT BUTTRAM VISITS**





## 'FROG' AND FRIEND

SMILEY BURNETTE, known for many years as "Frog" in western movies, "gusted" on the National Barn Dance last August. His first WLS appearances were with Gene Autry in the early '30's. A Central Illinois boy, Smiley has more than made good in Hollywood. The Burnettes have two girls and two boys.



## NEW COMIC

WLS ALUMNUS George Gobel started to sing on the National Barn Dance in 1932 when he was 13. A WLS star eight years, he is now acclaimed America's most promising young TV comic. Left, George at 14. Above, George in 1953 with Alice Humecke Gobel, Gregg, 8, and Georgia, 3. Alice was George's boyhood sweetheart.



## REX CAME HOME

REX ALLEN returned for the Illinois State Fair Barn Dance Aug. 15, to be roundly welcomed by folks who saw his rise as a WLS personality and in Hollywood westerns. Left, Rex, Bonnie, Chico, 7, and Curtis, 4. Right, Rex autographing for Little Sisters Square Dancers of Fulton county, Ill.





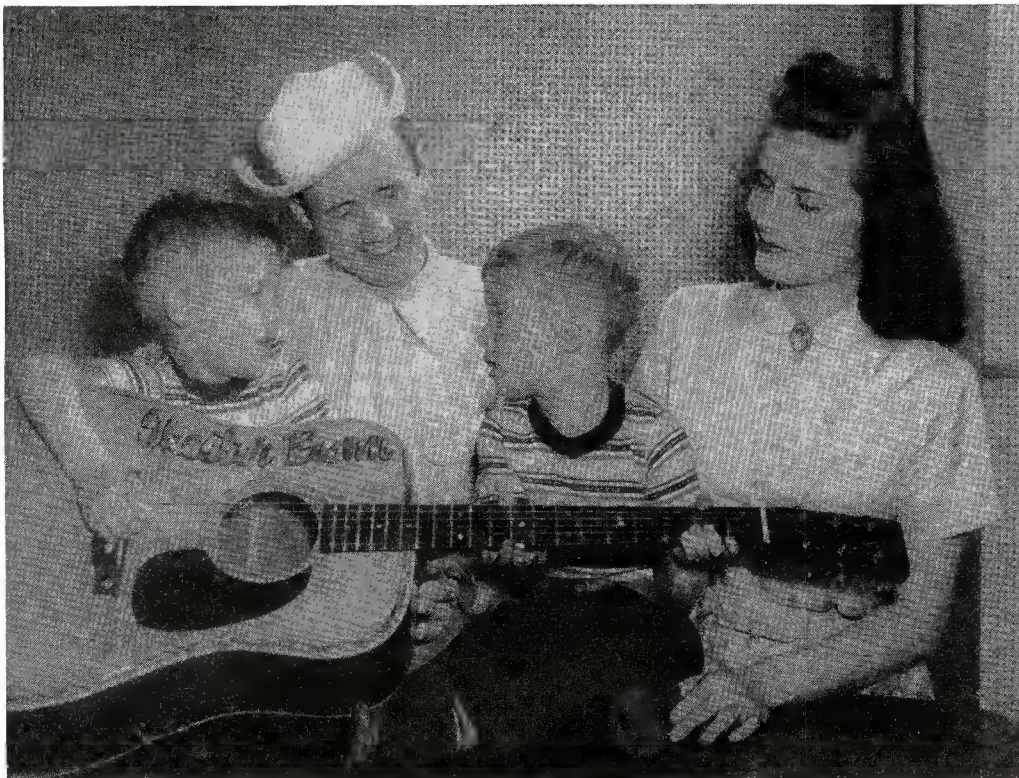
## **SKEETER BONN**

THAT "PICKIN' and singin' boy" with the high, clear voice is Skeeter Bonn, born in Sugarville, Fulton county, Ill. No mistaking that distinctive style when Skeeter is doing some tricky yodeling or singing folk-type ballads. Has very large repertoire. Skeeter hopes to be a recording star some day. He first worked in a grocery store at all of 25 cents an hour. Navy veteran of World War II.



## **FAST ON STRINGS**

WHEN NOT PROVING his top talent as an accompanist or soloist on his electric guitar or banjo, Jimmie Hutchinson, right, seeks relaxation motor boating—or repairing old radios! Born in Rochester, Pa., his first money was earned carrying messages for Western Union. His wife is the former Edith Johnson of Grand Ledge, Mich., sister of Mrs. Dolph Hewitt. They have a "little Jimmie," age three. Both Jimmie and Dolph were given their first full-time radio jobs at Wheeling, W. Va.



## **HAPPY FAMILY**

RICKY LEWIS, 6, and Randy Lee, 5, are the pride and joy of Skeeter and the former Mary Strode, Canton, Ill. When Skeeter decided to leave his factory production line job in Peoria for full-time radio singing at WHO, Des Moines, two years ago, Mary Louise wisely backed him in his ambition. Skeeter's real name is Junior Lewis Boughan.

## **REHEARSAL FOR THE FAIR**

GRACE WILSON was rehearsing with John Brown for the Illinois State Fair show when this photo was taken of these beloved and talented artists. Born in Owosso, Mich., Grace was on the first WLS program, April 12, 1924. On her first stage appearances, she played the little boy with Effie Shannon and Herbert Kelsie in "The Moth and the Flame." Pianist John was born and reared in Chanute, Kansas. Mrs. Brown was Juanita Swenk of Adrian, Mich., once member of the May and June WLS team. Daughters Joan, 7, and Bette, 14, are excellent musicians.



## **SONG JOURNEYS**

MISS EVELYN, left, sings "Just a Little Street Where Old Friends Meet" as her calling card each Saturday morning. Ushered on the air with this friendly melody played by organist Howard Peterson, Miss Evelyn dons her "pert red walkin' shoes" to go on a weekly musical journey with sweet songs and bits of her cheery philosophy and rhyme. Reared in Decatur, Ill., this singer originally joined WLS as a member of the Three Little Maids, a sister trio. She declares that song requests from friends are most helpful in planning her shows.

## **THREE ARTISTS**

HOWARD PETERSON, an artist on the organ, has made many folks happier with his playing of sweet and lilting melodies through the years. He is a veteran church, theatre and radio organist. His wife, Avis Leone, is a talented soprano while daughter Melody, 11, has become an accomplished pianist. Howard is heard on School Time and other programs. The Petersons have a Riverside home.





## ***SISTERS IN HARMONY***

TWO LITTLE GIRLS, born in Emporium, Pa., later moved with their family to Monaca, Beaver Valley, in the same state, where they started harmonizing. Soon they earned their first dollars singing during square dance intermissions. Their first real "break" came with appearances on the Barn Dance from WKST, Newcastle, Pa., followed by professional engagements at stations in seven states for about eight years. They joined WLS late in 1950, coming from KOTA, Rapid City, S. D. Yes, they're Donna, left, and Colleen Wilson, the friendly, attractive and versatile Beaver Valley Sweethearts. When not broadcasting or making personal appearances, they'll likely be found playing with their own Bobbie Allen, 4, and Colleen Thoralee, 4, at their South Holland, Ill., residence. Their mother and dad share their home. The "Beavers" always dress alike and enjoy similar hobbies—swimming, bowling and horseback riding. They have been successful as phonograph recording artists, starting with "Mockin' Bird Hill" which was a national hit.



## **'OUR MELODY MISS'**

PHYLLIS BROWN, born and reared on Chicago's southwest side, was one of the very few singers who joined the National Barn Dance cast immediately after winning amateur radio and television shows. Before that she sang at high school events. She has gained many loyal friends because of her likeable personality and her ability to sing home folks songs with clarity, feeling and fine diction. Has recorded several numbers. The "Little Melody Miss" is considered by many as one of the top vocalists in her field. Enjoys swimming, horseback riding and stock car races. Phyllis is also a record collector.

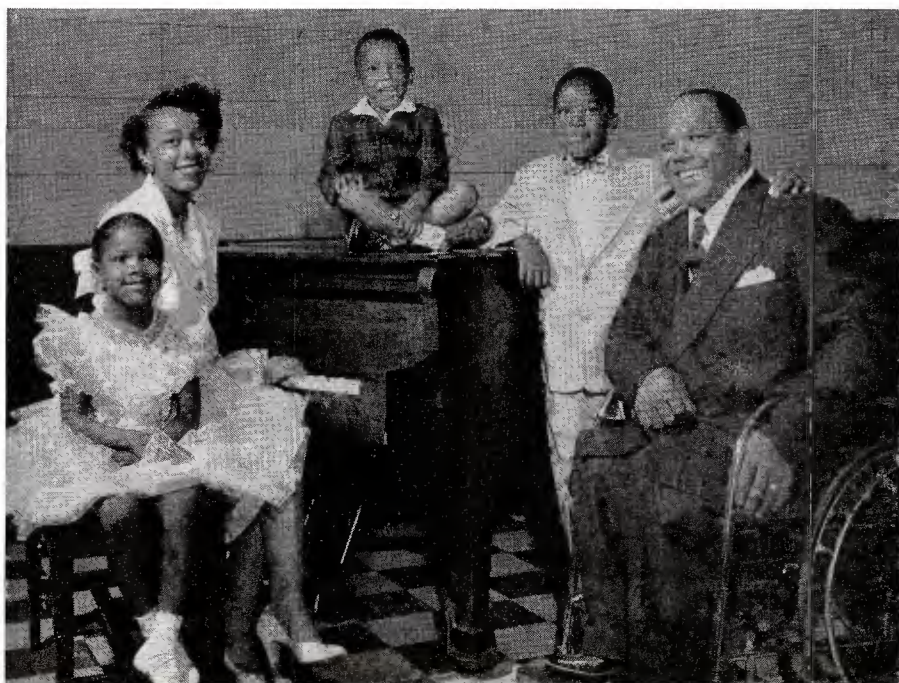


## **VERSATILE**

BILLY LEE HOLMES, left, and Don Stevens rehearsed diligently and had several auditions before getting booked regularly on the Saturday morning Barn Dance Preview. Billy plays harmonica blues like his famous dad, Salty Holmes; sings capably and plays bass accompaniment, as well as rhythm guitar. Born in Glasgow, Ky., he's still single. Don Stevens, who backs up singers with electric steel and standard guitar, is married to Elaine Kordick and they have an 18-month-old Allen Curtis. Both parents are Chicagoans. Don enjoys leather work.

## **PRUTH McFARLIN**

INSPIRATION to thousands of people, young and old, is Pruth McFarlin, tenor. He proved that crippling polio in babyhood need not repress talent development. Born in Pensacola, Fla., he worked his way through Southern University in Baton Rouge, La. Highly trained as a concert singer, Pruth is featured for his third year in high school assembly programs. This season he headquarters in Rochester, N. Y., returning to WLS for occasional Saturday programs. From left, meet Pruth Katherine, 8, wife Katherine, Novik, 4, Hari, 8, and Pruth.





## **“LET’S DANCE”**

WLS HAYLOFT DANCERS went over to Grant Park for this picture. Back row: Marty Boltz, Charles Gley, Jack Behrends. Pat Reis. Front row: Catherine Corbett, Winston Corbett, Harry Sorenson, Connie Wajorowski. Nice looking, aren't they?

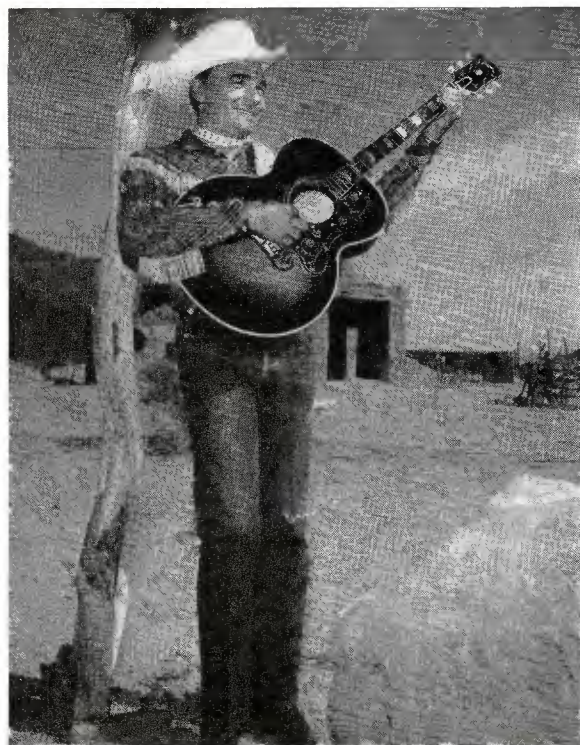
## **“ALLEMANDE LEFT”**

DIRECTING AND CALLING square dances on the National Barn Dance is John Dolce, right, a Chicago Park District supervisor, born in Mt. Maggiore, Palermo, Italy. Married Mae Seaton, Chicago. They have John, Jr., 18; Helene Marie, 12; and Robert, 8. John is a well known boxing referee, too.

## **WOODY MERCER**

ARIZONA COWBOY Woody Mercer joined the staff last October, a friendly personable western singer who is making new friends daily. He was born in Douglas, Ariz. and married Bette Louise Watson, Houston, Tex. They have little Cheri, 3. Woody was a cowpuncher who found he liked singing better.

WLS  
1924-  
1954  
30th Anniversary



## **“GLAD TO SEE YOU”**

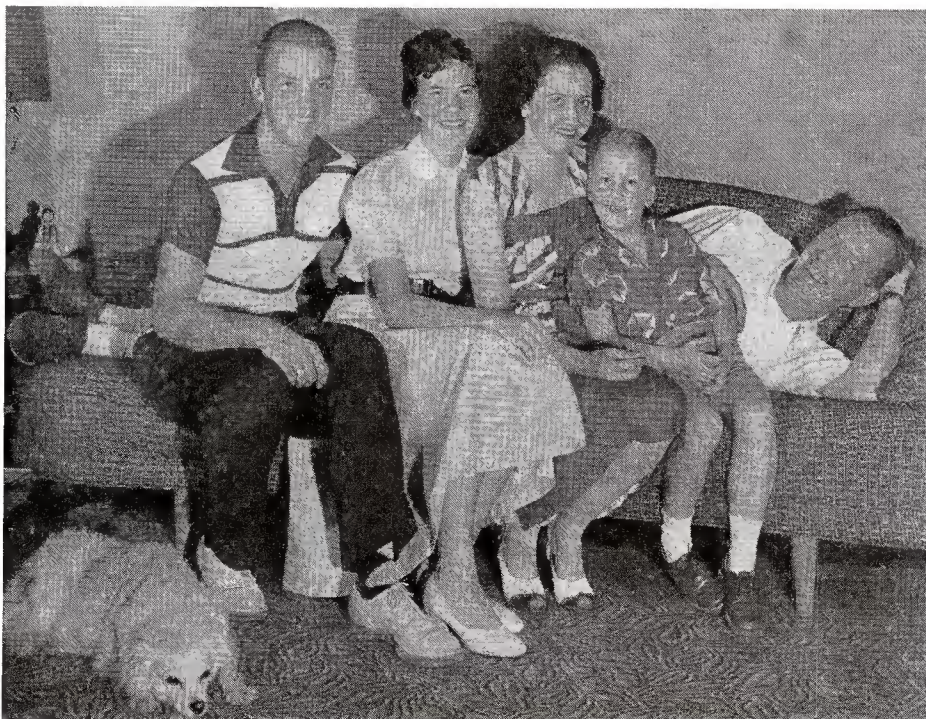
HERE'S TINY STOKES greeting Clinton county, Ind. friends at Prairie Farmer-WLS headquarters during the 1953 Indiana State Fair. The Buccs made many new Hoosier friends during the fair.





## **RANGERS OF THE AIR**

SHOWMANSHIP, coupled with versatility as musicians, perhaps best describes the WLS Rangers, who serve as the accompaniment group for singers on daytime programs. They combine over 100 years of musical experience. Lew Klatt, veteran orchestra accordion man, upper left; Arthur "Holly" Swanson, bass artist, upper right; Ewing "Toby" Nix is the violinist and Verne Fiedler, rhythm guitarist. They frequently feature their own instrumental arrangements of favorite songs. The Rangers add spark to any radio program.



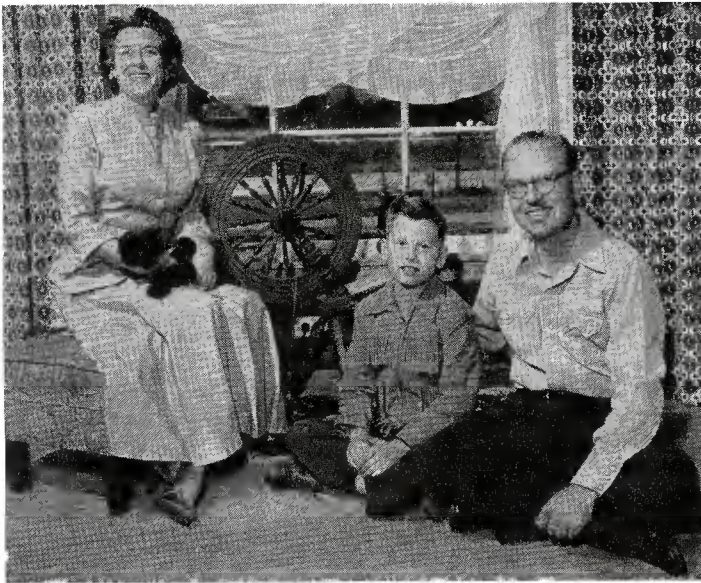
## **FOUR BY ONE**

EFFICIENT Use of the living room settee is possible when dad is 82 inches long, say the Holly Swansons of suburban Naperville. Yes, "Cousin Tilford" is a wonderful dad to Dick, 19, a Northwestern sophomore; Barbara, 15, high school freshman; and first grader Jimmie, 6. Mrs. Swanson is from Paris, Ill., and was formerly Lila Pennington. A very devoted family.

## **HOME IS**

## **FIEDLERS, INCORPORATED**

STEPHEN THOMAS, born last August 16, is responsible for the happy smiles of Verne and Virginia Mary Vitt Fiedler—and the look of wonderment on the face of brother Joe, age six. Verne is an accomplished rhythm guitar and bass player and teacher. Although born in Jacksonville, Ill., Verne grew to manhood in Springfield. His first job as a paper boy netted him six dollars weekly. Virginia Fiedler, who was born in Girard, Ill., loves to raise flowers around their Naperville home. “Joe and Steve are our greatest hobbies,” declares Verne. “We feel that nothing could be more rewarding than instilling our children with intellectual and spiritual values.”



## **NIX FAMILY TRIO**

FIDDLING BY EAR comes naturally down around Ozark, Mo., where Francis Ewing “Toby” Nix was born. However Toby studied violin so that he might play anything from a hoedown to a symphony. He started his radio career at Del Rio, Texas; met Miss Ruby Boswell of Deming, N. M., and they were married in Tombstone, Ariz. Now they live in Elmhurst, Ill., with their 10-year-old Freddy. Toby and Ruby have really gotten around, especially Toby, who traveled in many more states on his first job as violinist with a tent show. Baseball is the family hobby.

## **LONG TALL ‘CUZ’**

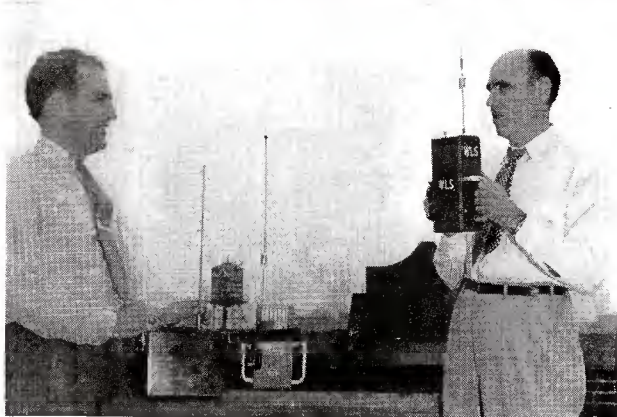
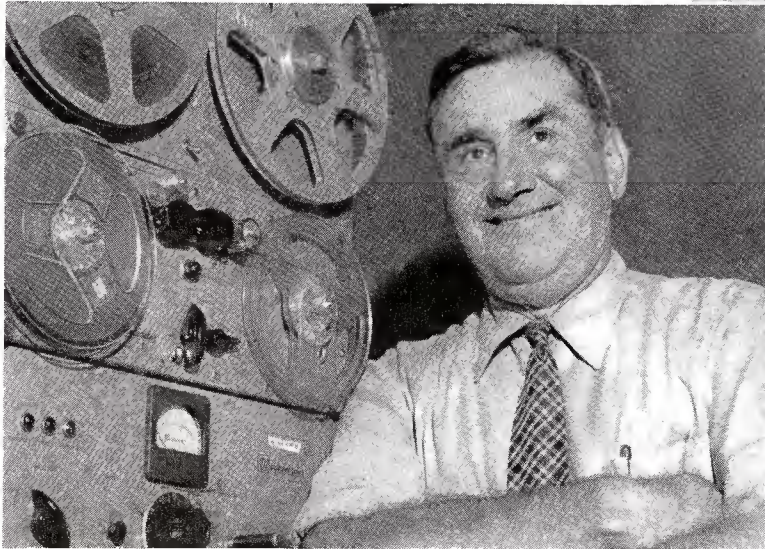
“WHO IS COUSIN TILFORD and how tall is he?” many National Barn Dance visitors ask. He is Arthur “Holly” Swanson, son of a Chicago railroad man. Both parents were in the Salvation Army where Holly learned to play tuba. Later he mastered the string bass, and traveled as a musician and comedian with leading orchestras, including Al Trace, Lawrence Welk and Art Kassel. Says Holly, “My height? Just tell them I’m five feet 22!”



## **MUSIC TO THEM**

# ENGINEERING

CHARLES NEHLSSEN, assistant studio engineer, is standing beside one of the racks of tape recording equipment used to record programs for later play-back. Auditions are frequently recorded on tape, too. Charley recorded the famous Hindenburg disaster for WLS on May 6, 1937.



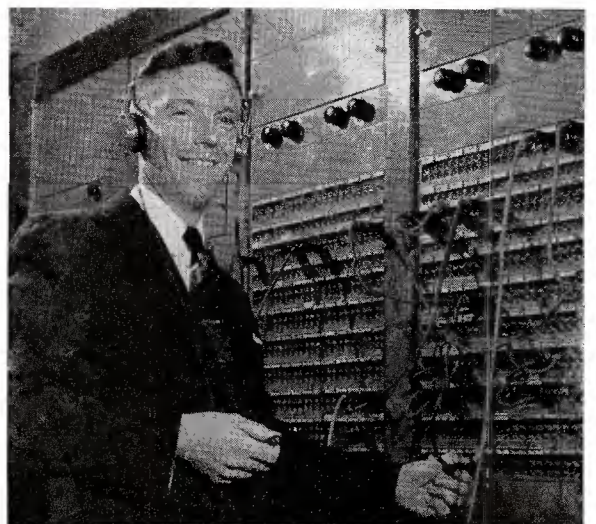
ROY HUBERTY and Vern Fulton test short wave remote transmitter and receiver equipment on the roof.



BILL TAYLOR is shown at the new RCA Console in Studio A control room during Dinnerbell Time.

TOM ROWE well remembers the now antiquated equipment in the Sears-Roebuck and Hotel Sherman WLS studios when the station went on the air, April 12, 1924. As Chief Engineer, he has supervised WLS growth from 500 to 50,000 watts. He has seen WLS equipment outmoded and replaced several times for it is his job to keep up with all technical advances. Consequently, WLS boasts the most modern studio, control, and recording equipment, complete with instant switching facilities.

GETTING READY to check an out-of-town program pickup is Dale Shimp, below. He's in front of main jack panel in the WLS master control room.





**MAURICE DONNELLY** records an entire 15-minute network program on a 16-inch acetate disc at  $33\frac{1}{3}$  RPM. It is for play-back at a more convenient listening time.

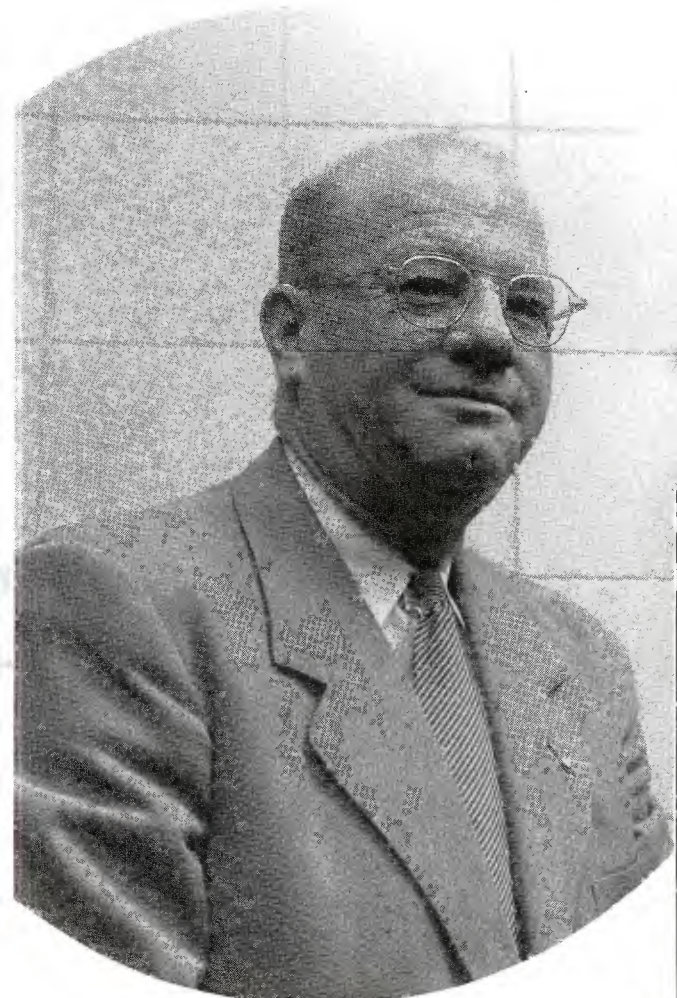
**RIGHT ABOVE**, camera man caught Chuck Ostler and Ray Ferris from Studio A as Chuck monitored and Ray produced "Stumpus" from the control room. This is a familiar scene to WLS performers during many of our studio broadcasts.

**BILL KELLER**, right, is shown coordinating all of the technical facilities during a National Barn Dance broadcast. He's at Master Control, the "nerve center" between Prairie Farmer studios and the transmitter, 25 miles from Chicago.

**HOMER COURCHENE**, below, who was employed soon after WLS started in 1924, has been Chief Transmitter Engineer for many years. In this job he and his staff are responsible for maintaining the big modern transmitter plant southwest, on U. S. Highway 45 at South 183rd St., near Tinley Park.



**HERE ARE ENGINEERS** Ernest Serena, William T. Anderson, George Busch, H. F. Kohnitz and R. Schmidt, seated; five members of the crew that mans the big transmitter plant near Tinley Park.



**VETERAN** studio engineer Burr Whyland, left, is shown at the Studio C control panel. He has monitored many auditions from this studio and should be a good judge of talent.



RITA CHOICE, left, greets all visitors and answers their questions at the Information Desk outside Studio A. This friendly young lady has been doing WLS public relations work over six years and knows all the answers to Prairie Farmer-WLS questions—or where to get them. She is a Windy City girl, married and lives in Glen Ellyn, Ill.

FRIENDLINESS AND sociability reign in the fourth floor Hayloft Canteen presided over by Mrs. Mary Wertschnig, whose ever-welcome coffee, daily breakfast and luncheon menus make her a very popular lady. Below, she is pouring for Jethro while Homer awaits his turn. The boys are about as serious here as you may ever expect to see them.

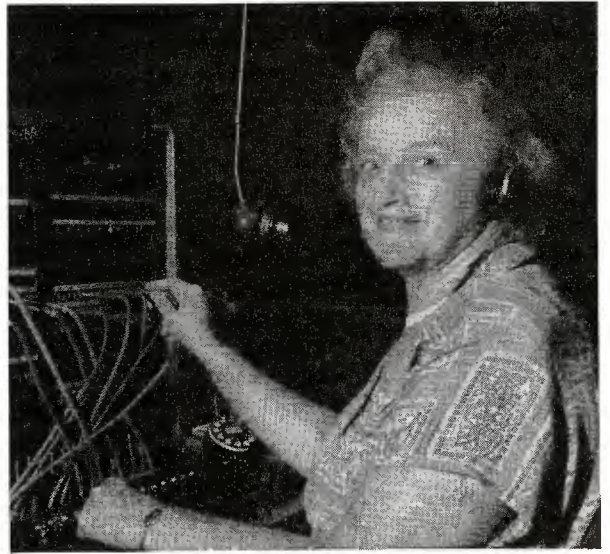
## ***THE CAMERA MAN GETS AROUND***



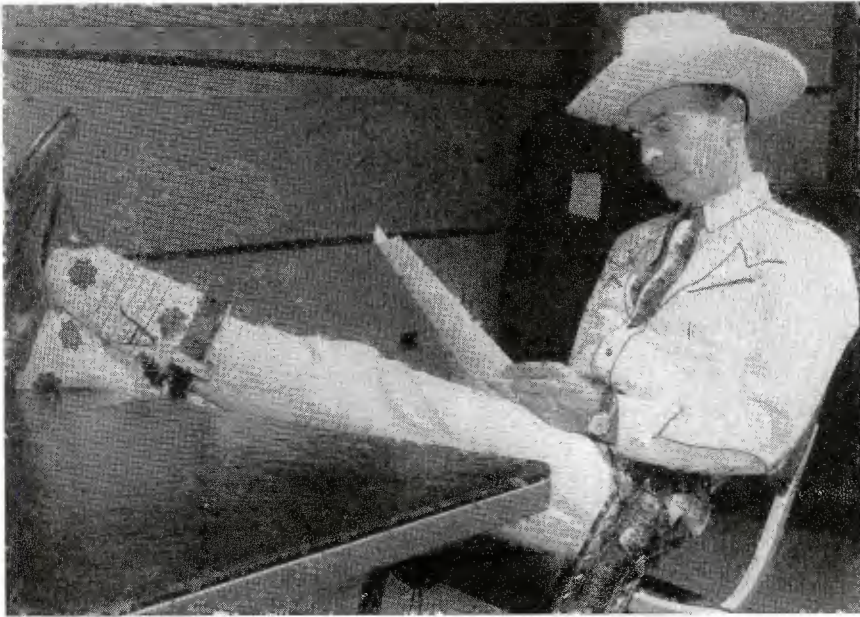
GEORGE C. BIGGAR, five years National Barn Dance Director, is Editor of this Family Album. He was responsible for the first (1930) edition. The late Arthur Page edited most of the others. George and his secretary, Mrs. Marion Kay, are seen, right, choosing album photos. Over 600 photographic proofs were inspected before final selections were made. A WLS program executive over 15 years, George is now president, general manager and part-owner of the DeKalb, Ill. station. Natives of Brookings, S. D., he and the former Genevieve Chappell have three children and two grandchildren. Hobby is gardening.



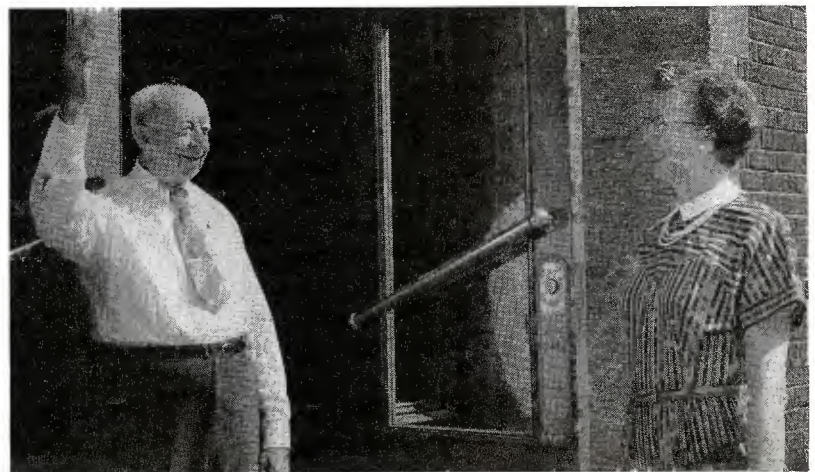
MRS. ANN MILLER, right, may be placing calls to New York and Kansas City and directing visitors to President Edwards and General Manager Snyder—all within a minute. She presides over the Prairie Farmer-WLS switchboard; is cashier of the Prairie Farmer-WLS Employees Credit Union. Has three children and three grandchildren.



BOB ATCHER seems to be taking things easy, but he is really concentrating on his script prior to going on the air. On occasions, Bob has to memorize many lines which he can do with amazing speed. Every program upon which he is featured sounds informal and unrehearsed, but it actually represents many hours of careful planning.



HERE ARE Carol Forsbeck and Ann Matheny having morning coffee. Both are college girls who assisted in the WLS offices during summer vacation. Carol is a sophomore at Illinois State Normal, at Normal, while Ann is in her junior year at DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind. The girls were born and raised in Chicago.



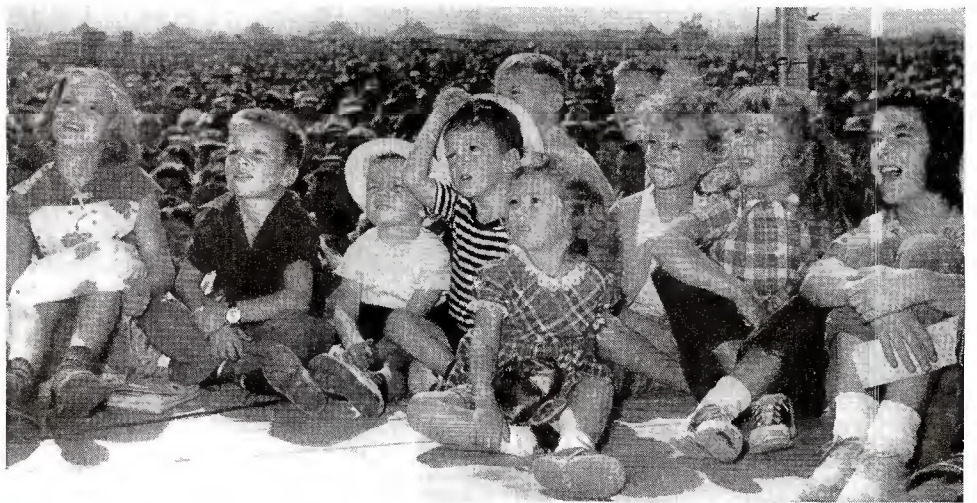
MRS. MILDRED FREDRICKSON ends another day with a cheerful goodbye from Henry Prince. As secretary to John Allen, Mildred creates happy faces when she delivers the pay checks. She grew up in Hinsdale. Henry was born and reared in Germany. He has greeted many thousands of visitors during 10 years as doorman. Newlyweds, anniversary couples, vacationers and school children have pleasant smiles of anticipation when they enter Prairie Farmer-WLS, declares Henry

# ALL ENJOY THE BIG DAY

WINNERS OF THE Junior Land Judging Bee at the Prairie Farmer-WLS Farm Progress Show were members of the Shelby county, Ill., 4-H Club team. Left to right: James Rentfrow, Max Fringer, Carl Cisna, Robert Wemple and Glen F. Sons, coach.



THESE Boys and girls seem entranced as they watch National Barn Dance stars during the Farm Progress Show on the Earl Bass Farm near Armstrong, Ill., Oct. 2. Beyond is part of the crowd estimated at around 75,000.



HERE ARE THE winners and runners-up in the Old Time Fiddlers' Contest held on Farm Progress Day. Winners (center)—Wm. H. Ordell, Philo, Ill., first; Bettie Mae Ikens, Amboy, Ill., second; and Mrs. Linda Deming, Mendota, Ill., third. That's Arkie on right, who was the popular "emcee."



**WLS**  
1924-1954  
*30th Anniversary*



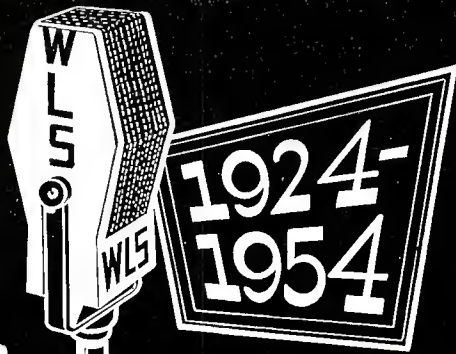
**'SEE YOU  
AT THE FAIR'**

NOW YOU'VE met us—the Prairie Farmer-WLS family—the friends you meet at the fair, the National Barn Dance, hear over the air or visit with through the pages of Prairie Farmer. A happy holiday season to you all, and the best wishes for a joyful, successful year of work and service, laughter and song—together in 1954.

**'THAT'S  
ALL  
FOLKS.  
GOOD BYE!'**





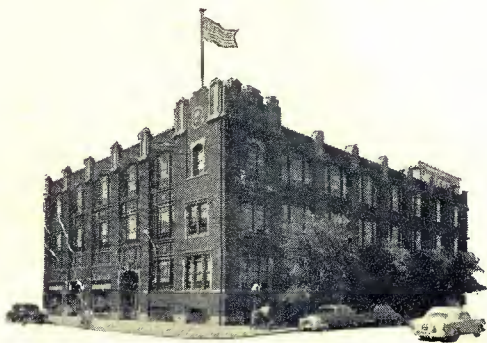


# 30th Anniversary

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The Home of Prairie Farmer-WLS  
*"Where the Latchstring Is Always Out"*  
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