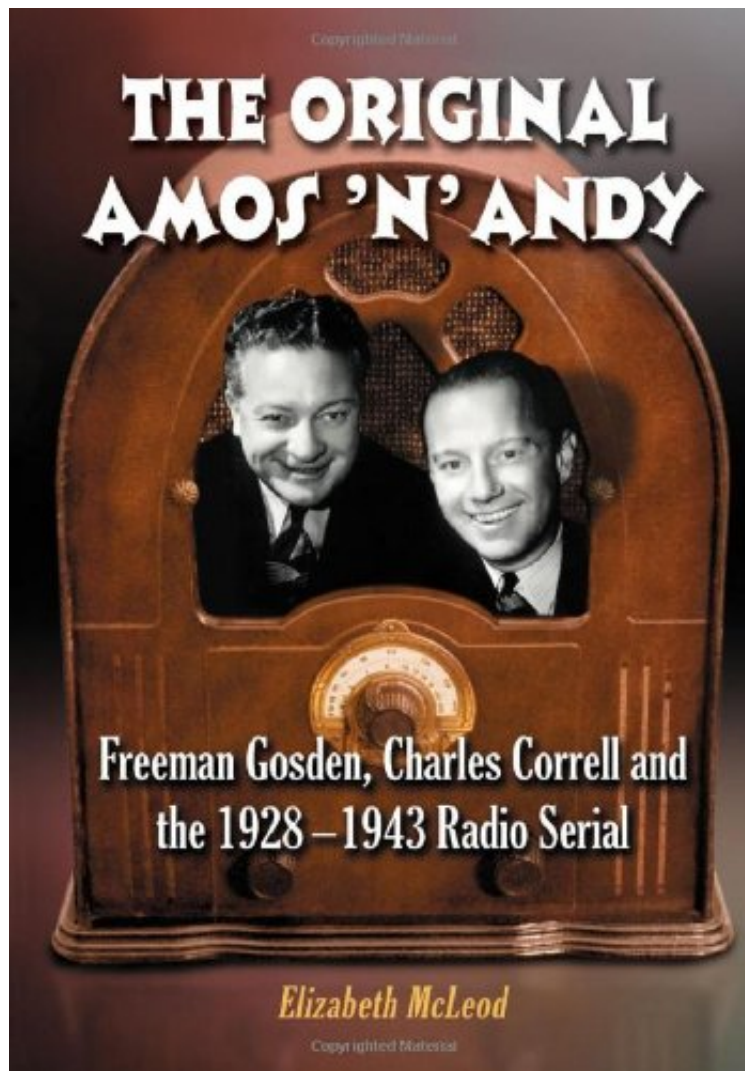


[Online library] The Original Amos 'n' Andy: Freeman Gosden, Charles Correll and the 1928-1943 Radio Serial

The Original Amos 'n' Andy: Freeman Gosden, Charles Correll and the 1928-1943 Radio Serial

Elizabeth McLeod

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Elizabeth McLeod : The Original Amos 'n' Andy: Freeman Gosden, Charles Correll and the 1928-1943 Radio Serial before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Original Amos 'n' Andy: Freeman Gosden, Charles Correll and the 1928-1943 Radio Serial:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. informative, well-written, and significant well beyond the scope of the radio show itselfBy W. Gary Wetsteinthis book is a *must read* for anyone interested in amos 'n' andy, the history of early old time radio, or the comic serial format generally. "must read" is an abused and overused cliché in

book reviews, but in this case no other phrase would fit. If there is an overarching theme to the book, it's that Correll and Gosden's contributions to broadcasting, which were far reaching and numerous, have been unfairly obscured by the various controversies surrounding Amos 'n' Andy over the years: e.g., they virtually invented the concept of syndicated broadcasting, the daily serial format, and to a large extent, the very concept of a fully plotted continuing radio series. What Louis Armstrong was to American popular music, Correll and Gosden were to broadcasting. In addition, McLeod also concerns herself largely with shattering numerous well-established myths surrounding the duo and their show. For instance, she thoroughly-- yet respectfully-- debunks the notion that Amos 'n' Andy was a controversial show during its initial serial run. She convincingly presents evidence that the only major organized protest against the show by African Americans was by a Philadelphia newspaper in 1931, and that the publisher's motivation was more likely to increase the circulation of his newspaper than to express any genuine outrage. In any event, the public failed to rally around the cause, and the first instance of serious organized protest against Amos 'n' Andy didn't occur until the television era. Even then, McLeod points out, the radio show-- which was still on the air-- remained almost entirely outside the storm of controversy. She also demonstrates, through fascinating excerpts from the original scripts, that the world of Amos 'n' Andy was far from a simplistic and demeaning exploitation of stereotyped minstrel characters. The lack of surviving recordings from the serial era, and the huge popularity of the later radio and television sitcom versions, have all but completely obscured how diverse and individualized the characters populating the Amos 'n' Andy universe were. In fact, it may have been the only show on radio to have presented African Americans as anything *but* subservient characters. The book is extremely well-written, perfectly straddling the language line between serious academic study and readability. There's enough material here with enough backing evidence and research to justify a doctoral thesis, but the prose is never anything less than completely fluid and accessible, unlike so many academic pop culture studies (ever read any "serious" film criticism? My *goodness*.) The book itself is hardbound with a lovely laminated cover (no dust jacket included or required), with numerous black and white photos throughout. An appendix provides a detailed analysis of the ratings history of the program over the years, which debunks yet another myth that the soaring popularity of the show in its early years was followed by a sharp decline in listenership in the early '30s. While a bit on the pricey side, the monumental nature of the task at hand, and my guess that McLeod's years of research work was not funded by grants, and the fact that the topic itself has such a limited potential readership, I can't imagine she will ever receive anything close to the compensation she deserves. I was quite happy to contribute something to the "cause". I've spent far less on other serious OTR studies and regretted the money spent. This book is well worth the investment.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. **The Definitive Work on Amos 'n' Andy** By James S. Jones Jr. For far too long history has ignored the immense contributions to the radio medium by two men who were radio story-telling pioneers. The two men were Freeman F. Gosden and Charles J. Correll---Amos 'n' Andy. Most radio and social histories dismiss Amos 'n' Andy as merely "racist," but they fail to put Amos 'n' Andy in a proper perspective. Finally someone has come along who has set the record straight--Elizabeth McLeod. Using the original scripts as her primary sources, she has painstakingly retold the true story of Amos 'n' Andy---leaving the question of the program's place in race relations up to those who wish to make up their own minds---which they will have little trouble doing, as the facts are presented clearly and accurately in this book. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in Amos 'n' Andy or the history of broadcasting and mass media in the United States. I would love to see the complete Amos 'n' Andy scripts reprinted in book form---perhaps this will be accomplished on the coat-tails of this work.

Sammy Jones Athens, GA 16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. **Set Aside Everything You Think You Know** By Michael J. Hayde This book is a must-read. Period. Okay, that's not much of a review. But it's a fact. If you have any interest in genuine broadcasting history - indeed, if you want to know how broadcast entertainment evolved to embrace forms that we know and love to the present day, and you want to know EXACTLY WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE - this book is a must-read. Most of you only know what you've been told about "Amos 'n' Andy." Most of you have been misled by so-called "enlightened scholarship" that has reduced this once-beloved show to what one revisionist termed "a nightly racial slur." Behold instead the work of a genuine scholar, Elizabeth McLeod, who has evaluated all the latter-day critiques and not-so-benign neglect surrounding Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll's place in broadcast history and then sets the record straight with facts. This is a thoroughly enjoyable, enlightening, fascinating account of a program that captivated millions of listeners of all races. It's a story of two performers who created characters that all of America cared about and considered friends. It's an account of the power of intimacy in all of broadcasting, whether strictly aural, visual or both. And it's a meticulous, exhaustively researched documentation of data that proves without doubt that Amos Jones and Andy Brown were beloved because they represented that which is good and decent in humankind, foibles and all. Sadly, I know some who flatly declare they will never read this book (hopefully they won't be writing "reviews" here). I don't know whether they're afraid to let go of their pre-conceived notions, or afraid to think for themselves - or just afraid to be seen reading something with "Amos 'n' Andy" on the cover. To continue to skewer radio's "Amos 'n' Andy" without having read and reflected upon this work is akin to saying that, from 1928-43, this nation consisted of about 50 million racists, some of whom can be found in your own family tree. The time has come - it was long overdue - to set the record straight about "Amos 'n' Andy" and its creators; time for America to know the rest of this story. This book is a must-read.

They were pioneers of modern entertainment: theirs was the first serial program specifically devised for broadcast, and the first to feature continuing characters. They invented the concept of broadcast syndication. At its height, their show was required nightly listening for a third of the nation. Many still remember it fondly--just not in polite company. Amos 'n' Andy, the creation of Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden, has been excoriated as a "nightly racial slur," an unpleasant artifact of America's racist past. Most critical evaluations are based upon the show's later television and radio episodes aired after Correll and Gosden had surrendered creative control, and ignore the bulk of their work--over 4000 radio episodes, carefully penned by the actors, which differ markedly from the later works. Their legacy is undoubtedly mixed, but a close examination of those early radio scripts, many the only surviving record of a show, offers surprising insight into Amos 'n' Andy and begs for a fair assessment of Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden's place in radio history. This critical reexamination of Amos 'n' Andy, the pioneering creation of Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden, presents an unapologetic but balanced view lacking in most treatments. It relies upon an untapped resource--thousands of pages of scripts from the show's nearly forgotten earliest version, which most clearly reflected the vision of its creators. Consequently, it provides fresh insights and in part refutes the usual blanket condemnations of this groundbreaking show. The text incorporates numerous script excerpts, provides key background information, and acknowledges the show's importance to radio broadcasting and modern entertainment. A stunning group of photographs enhance the text, which includes an appendix of ratings and cast and crew information as well as notes, bibliography and index.

"Extensive roster of cast and credits...notes are detailed...illustrations are plentiful" --SPERDVAC
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Quarterly. "Interesting" --In the Groove Magazine "An important record" --Communication Booknotes Quarterly. About
the Author Elizabeth McLeod is a journalist and broadcast historian. She lives and works on the coast of Maine.