



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

Elizabeth McLeod

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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.

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