

RADIO COLLECTION: Jack Benny

(Broadcast: May 2, 1932 – June 22, 1958)

Jack Benny's career in radio, spanning over twenty years, followed the medium from its so-called golden age to its gradual decline in the 1950s. Benny made his first appearance on commercial radio in March of 1932 on *The Ed Sullivan Show* for the CBS network, after developing a strong presence on the vaudeville circuit with a stage act that featured a comic violin performance. After proving he was adaptable to the demands of radio with Sullivan, Benny was able to negotiate a deal with the NBC Blue Network and sponsor Canada Dry Ginger Ale, Inc. for a music variety series that featured Benny accompanied by conductor George Olsen and vocalist Ethel Shutta.

During his early apprenticeship on air, Benny collaborated with writer Harry Conn who, from 1932 – 1936, helped him develop a clearly defined commercial persona as a well-mannered eccentric surrounded by a group of oddball associates with a repertoire of skits and gags that permitted Benny to greatly expand his presence in the commercial media through the fields of film and television. This work included starring and supporting roles in films for major studios in Los Angeles, (building on a corpus of film material Benny had completed in the late 20s and early 30s), and a weekly television variety series, *The Jack Benny Program*, which aired on CBS and NBC during 1950 – 1965.

The UCLA Film and Television Archive holds numerous titles of Jack Benny's work in radio and some of Mr. Benny's work in television and film available for use on-site at the Archive Research and Study Center. In addition to the media holdings found in the Archive, the Department of Special Collections unit of the UCLA Libraries Collection holds various print materials related to Jack Benny in the *Jack Benny Papers, 1930 – 1974* collection.

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Radio

(Please contact the Archive Research and Study Center for additional titles)

The Canada Dry Program with Jack Benny. Premiere (1932-05-02). Broadcast on NBC – Blue Network. Audio Study Copy: AA213

The Jello-O Program Starring Jack Benny. 5th Anniversary Show (1937-05-02). Broadcast on NBC – Red Network. Audio Study Copy: AA329

The Jell-O Program Starring Jack Benny. The Hunchback of Beverly Hills with Orson Welles (1940-03-17). Broadcast on NBC – Red Network. Audio Study Copy: AA1139

The Lucky Strike Program Starring Jack Benny. Guest, Frank Sinatra (1944-10-08). Broadcast on NBC. Audio Study Copy: AA789

The Grape Nuts and Grape Nuts Flakes Program Starring Jack Benny. The Gang is Going to NYC (1945-01-07). Broadcast on NBC. Audio Study Copy: AA781

The Lucky Strike Program Starring Jack Benny. Guests, Amos 'n' Andy and Red Skeleton (1949-09-25). Broadcast on CBS. Audio Study Copy: AA198

The Lucky Strike Program Starring Jack Benny. Guests, Danny Kaye, George Burns, Frank Sinatra and Groucho Marx (1952-03-02). Broadcast on CBS. Audio Study Copy: AA1061

The Lucky Strike Program Starring Jack Benny. Christmas Special (1956-12-23). Broadcast on CBS. Audio Study Copy: AA775

Television

(Please contact the Archive Research and Study Center for additional titles)

The Jack Benny Program. Pilot (1950-10-28). CBS. Study Copy: VA7059 T

The Jack Benny Program. Guests: Bing Crosby and George Burns (1954-03-21). CBS. Study Copy: VA9355 T

Print Resources

(For more information consult the UCLA Libraries Collection)

Benny, Jack and Joan Benny. *Sunday Nights at Seven: The Jack Benny Story*. New York: Warner Books, 1990.

Jack Benny: The Radio and Television Work. The Museum of Television and Radio. New York: Harper-Perennial, 1991.

Related Resources

The Department of Special Collections unit of the UCLA Libraries Collection holds various materials related to Jack Benny in the *Jack Benny Papers, 1930-1974* collection. For more information, please contact Special Collections: (310) 825-4988