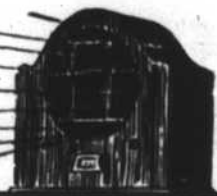




Learn While You Listen-In



Through such as Miss Helen Johnson, above, broadcasting director of the American School of the Air, the one-room country schoolhouse, right, keeps in touch with the main educational stream via radio.



By Norman Siegel

ARE you tempted by the sales talk of an encyclopedia vendor? Do your eyes bulge when he sticks his head in your door and lures you with promises of culture? Do you secretly yearn to discover the habits of the auk, or what febrile really means? Then you probably are interested in what radio has to offer in the way of education.

It's easy to go to school by radio. No examinations, home work or attendance requirements. If the lesson becomes too boring, just swing the dial and somewhere there's an orchestra to change the mood.

Yet radio has a lot to offer you in the way of knowledge this season. Spurred on by Parent-Teacher Associations and women's groups, both NBC and Columbia are devoting more time to educational features than ever before. In addition to lectures by leading figures in various fields of endeavor and international broadcasts of an educational nature, the networks offer specific programs designed to enlighten the listener on curricular matters.

Under the direction of Helen Johnson and Edward Murrow, Columbia broadcasts a regular course of study five days a week. The program is known as the "American School of the Air."

It is designed primarily for school children, as a radio supplement to their daily class-room work. It is broadcast every afternoon from Monday through Friday during the school year, from 2:15 to 2:45 p. m. In many schools it is relayed over loudspeaker systems in the classrooms.

THE American School of the Air is devoting its efforts this season to history, music, literature, geography, elementary science, current events and vocational guidance. This curriculum was evolved after seven years of experimentation and study. In its first year on the air the school included civics, health, nature study and international good will on its programs. Numerous conferences with educators and changing trends in pedagogy have caused these subjects to be merged and included with the ones now offered.

The history course this season is mainly American. The teaching of ancient history has dropped out of the grammar and high school curricula and even European history is being relegated to the colleges. For that reason, the "American School" is confining itself to the history of the United States.

The history of American cities is being dramatized in the first part of this course. In the second half of the sea-

son, the elements of American life such as shipping, roads, building, communications, medicine, newspapers and industry will be dramatically traced.

Everything is dramatized on this radio school. To teach geography, for instance, a whole family has been created. They're known as the "Hamiltons." Mr. Hamilton, a traveling business man, and his two sons, Herbert and Tommy, travel about the world. They are occasionally accompanied by Grandmother Hamilton and a small cousin, Mary.

This year, Mrs. Hamilton and the two other juvenile members of the mythical family, Pauline and Sidney, are staying at home. The family jaunts carry them to the most inaccessible places. This year they started at Gibraltar and will zig-zag about the globe until they finally land at Baffin Island and North Greenland.

Elementary science likewise has the severe quality of the text book removed from it when it goes on the radio. "Aunt Betty" gathers her three small nieces and nephews about her in the radio studio, hands out corks, bottles, baking soda, or whatever is necessary

to show how gases expand, or what is oxygen. "Aunt Betty" is a science teacher as well as being an aunt and she explains everything very patiently.

IN music and literature, the school of the air tries to do something different from the average musical or dramatic programs heard constantly over the airwaves. The programs are planned strictly with the age of certain groups in mind. As a matter of fact there are three music courses—six to nine—nine to 12—and junior and senior high school.

Dorothy Gordon, attractive Columbia songstress, sings children's folk songs and game songs for the little ones on Thursday afternoons. A course in folk music for children over nine years of age will feature short wave broadcasts from foreign countries. These international music programs will begin Feb. 4 with a broadcast from London and will end April 29 with an Irish program from Dublin.

In the field of literature, the younger children will be offered 12 folk stories, including the story of the origin of fire, Jason and the Golden Fleece, Beowulf.

the Song of Roland and Johnny Appleseed.

Eight of Shakespeare's plays will be dramatized and abridged into half-hour radio versions for the high school classes. A course in poetry appreciation conducted by noted guest speakers will also be offered the senior high school group.

The Friday afternoon programs are devoted to current events and vocational guidance under the direction of Shepard Stone, of the New York Times. This series is probably the most complete attempt at education by radio. However, there are a number of other worthwhile ventures in education on radio.

COLUMBIA is sponsoring a science series on Tuesday afternoons at 3:15 and an Academy of Medicine program on Thursdays at 1:30. Both programs are designed for adult listeners and are in the form of talks and discussions by noted scientists and physicians.

In the field of music, Dr. Walter Damrosch's music appreciation series on NBC has long been outstanding. Columbia is also offering two series of concerts designed for a juvenile audience. Eugene Goossens is directing his Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in five such programs and Ernest Schelling is conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra of New York in six Saturday morning concerts for youngsters.

During the week, the dialer in search of something educational can discover a variety of programs to attract his attention. On Monday night, NBC offers talks by leading government officials, including members of the president's cabinet, on its National Radio Forum from Washington, D. C.

On Sunday mornings three University of Chicago professors discuss various current problems for an NBC audience from Mitchell Tower on the Midway Campus. They have no prepared script but conduct their program in a conversational manner.

The National Home and Farm Hour broadcast during the week by NBC may be classed as a school for farmers. Leading farm authorities appear on the program with crop advice. Over a period of months the listener receives a liberal education in farming on this series, which is presented more in the form of a variety show than along a purely educational formula.



The "Hamilton Family," whose jaunts make radio geography interesting. In the picture, from left to right, are Gene Leonard, Betty Garde, Walter Tetley, Albert Aley, Ruth Russell and John Monks.