

ADVERTISING CHANGES HOW RADIO IS FUNDED

“Leave the congested city and enjoy what nature intended you to enjoy!” The first radio ad begged listeners to escape Manhattan, a heavily populated part of New York City. It urged them to come see beautiful new apartments in Queens, a suburb. WEAF in New York City played this 10-minute

commercial on August 28, 1922. The ad was the first in a series.

Soon other advertisers, such as the credit card company American Express, were buying airtime for commercials. Other companies sponsored entire radio programs. These businesses wanted to be

Gracie Allen (center) and George Burns (right) before a taping of *Burns & Allen*

THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

The 1930s was considered the Golden Age of Radio. During the Great Depression, people turned to their radios for news. But they also enjoyed dramas, comedies, musical and variety shows, soap operas, and game shows. These shows helped them take their minds off hard times. Some of the most popular programs were the *Lone Ranger* and *Burns & Allen*.

associated with popular programs. They paid a fee to sponsor the show. Most radio shows were named after their sponsors. The *Lucky Strike Radio Show* and the *Chase and Sanborn Hour* are just two examples.

Advertisers invented new kinds of shows to reach people who might buy their products. Soap operas, for instance, were designed to sell cleaning products to women. Advertising continued to influence what shows played on the radio—until television came along. When

\$100

Cost of the first radio commercial on WEAF.

- The ad ran in New York City.
- Other businesses soon began running commercials.
- Many companies sponsored whole programs.

advertisers flocked to the new medium, they took their shows with them.



The stars of the *Chase and Sanborn Hour* David Rubinoff (left), Eddie Cantor (center), and James Wallington (right)