



Artifact of the Week:

Little Orphan Annie Mug

By the mid-1930s children's radio programs were becoming increasingly popular. Most were fifteen minute serials, with the story continuing day to day, airing about the time kids got home from school, say 4 to 6 p.m.

Little Orphan Annie is one of the best-remembered kids' programs from the golden age of radio. It aired from 1930 to 1942. For most of those years its sponsor was Ovaltine, a powder added to milk that made it taste somewhat like chocolate milk. For the last two years Quaker Oats was the program's sponsor.



Radio premiums were toys or other objects that kids could get by sending in a couple of box tops or package labels plus a modest cost (perhaps 10 to 25 cents). Sponsors liked offering premiums because it increased product sales ("Mommy, please buy two boxes of Wheaties so I can send away for this cool prize.") It also served to indicate how popular the program was.

This artifact is a Beetleware plastic Ovaltine "shake-up mug" from which kids could drink their Ovaltine while listening to the show. (It originally had a tight fitting top.) The program also offered a decoder badge that kids used to decode the daily secret message.

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!