

Famous Babies Sell Products On Radio

Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

With the "**Great Depression**" gripping the lives of the American people, the decade of the 1930's was a dark period in American history. Jobs were scarce; dust storms raised havoc in the Midwest; and the morale was at an all time low. It was a time the people needed something---**anything** to get them out of their despair. That miracle took place in 1934 at Collander, Ontario (Canada) with the birth of the Dionne Quintuplets (Yvonne, Marie, Annette, Emilie, and Cecile).

The fascination of the babies spread like wildfire. The small Ontario town quickly became a tourist attraction, and the Dionne Quintuplets were instant celebrities. Sharing the spotlight with the children was Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe, who delivered the babies on that historical day and later became their guardian.

With the interest at a fever pitch, advertising agencies sought Dafoe to feature the babies in the advertising of their respective products. In no time, the Dionne Quintuplets and Dafoe became the 1930's answer to Arthur Godfrey for effective advertising. In magazine ads, they all had their pictures taken for the products they were selling. However, advertising on the radio proved to be a challenge.


Simply put, the children were much too young to say the words about the products they were selling on the air. To get around this small problem, the announcer simply mentioned that Dafoe "**selected**" the

products for them. For example, he selected **Colgate Dental Cream**, because it cleaned the children's teeth thoroughly, yet gently, and **Palmolive Soap** because of its gentle olive oil content. Both **Colgate Dental Cream** and **Palmolive Soap** were already top selling brands--- and with Dafoe and the quins in their corners, both products were more popular than ever ■.

In 1937, **Palmolive Soap** combined the people's interest in the quins with their interest in radio premiums. On **Columbia's PALMOLIVE BEAUTY BOX THEATER**, announcer Jean Paul King described an offer that would "**Thrill Your Children**"--- and maybe thrill a few adults as well. The premium was *A Day With The Quins*, a cutout book with natural color pictures of the Dionne Quintuplets. There were 4 pages with 63 different outfits



the children could cut out and dress the quins. Although the premium was designed for the children, their parents also had a gift. The cutout book cover was a copy of a full color oil painting of the Dionne Quins saying good night to Dafoe. It could be placed in a frame and hung on the wall. In order to receive this premium, the listeners sent in the black bands from 3 ***Palmolive Soap*** wrappers (no money was required). To the surprise of absolutely no one, the response for this premium was overwhelming. If any copies of this premium survive today, it would be a valuable collector's item.



As the 1940's began, the public's interest in the Dionne Quintuplets started to decline. They continued to have their names mentioned in radio commercials, and their faces pictured in magazine ads well into the decade. Noticeably missing from the 1940's advertising was Dr. Dafoe, who died in 1943.

If you're wondering what products featured the Dionne Quintuplets in their advertising. Some of the brands I have come across were ***Karo Syrup, Musterole, Colgate Ribbon Dental Cream, Palmolive Soap, Kre-Mel Pudding, Lysol Disinfectant, Lysol Hygenic Soap, Chevrolet, Quaker Oats, GM's Body By Fisher, Baby Ruth Candy Bar, Remington-Rand Typewriters, Pure Test Cod Liver Oil, Hinds Honey & Almond Fragrance Cream, and Carnation Evaporated Milk.***