

P&G Soap Drab In Color..... Great For Washing Hands

"L-A-V-A! L-A-V-A!"

Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

Lava Soap may not necessarily be the most glamorous bar soap ever made. Its gray color may fit in better with the color scheme of a prison than with kitchens and bathrooms in the typical American home--- but when it comes to washing hands completely clean from dirt and gunk, it was simply the best in the business.

We have heard terms like **Brass Knuckles**, **Knuckle Ball**, and **Knucklehead** (some people think the latter is my real name). During the 1930's, **Lava** introduced an adversary known as "**Knuckle Grime**." It meant exactly as the name implied--- dirt and grime grounded into the knuckles. People who had this problem hid their hands in their pockets when they were around other people. **Lava** easily cleaned away knuckle grime from hands. The result was people could be expressive with their hands without feeling ashamed (unless that expression was in bad taste).

The reason why **Lava** could do this could be linked to the product's name--- and the volcano on the **Lava** box. Each regulation gray **Lava** soap bar contained powdery pumice--- the same stuff that comes out when a volcano belches. The pumice combined with a gentle soap cleaned hands thoroughly and fast--- although the timing it took to do this varied.

In 1941, a commercial for **Lava** was heard at the closing of a **VIC & SADE** broadcast. The subject of the commercial was an invitation by **Procter & Gamble** to the radio listeners to write a letter to the company on their experiences of washing their hands with **Lava**. In finishing off the commercial, the announcer said **Lava** cleaned extra dirty hands in only 20 seconds. ■ The following year, it took from 20-50 seconds--- and the year after that, it was from 30-50 seconds. ■ No, **Lava** wasn't slowing down with age, because it would take from 30-50 seconds to wash the hands clean for the remainder of radio's golden age.

During the war years, **Lava** was the soap everyone on the home front should use. Of course, good health was essential for war workers, mothers, housewives, and children. A grim reality was that hands came in contact with various surfaces that not only had dirt, grime, and gunk, but also germs. Since it



was imperative to maintain good health during this time, *Lava* came in handy for washing hands completely clean.



Lava will be remembered on radio for its sponsorship of the popular CBS anthology *THE FBI IN PEACE & WAR*. On this program, the radio listeners were introduced to *Lava's* new "jingle." Accompanied with a bass drum, a husky sounding voice sang out "*L-A-V-A! L-A-V-A!*" It's doubtful this little ditty would ever make the top songs of *YOUR HIT PARADE*, but then again, *Lava* didn't sponsor that program, either. It was, however, a memorable jingle.

On a 1953 broadcast of *THE FBI IN PEACE & WAR*, *Lava* was put to the test against another brand of soap in the "*Lava Wash-up Test*." The test consisted of 2 men, 2 sinks with running water, *Lava*, and the infamous "*other soap*." One man washed his hands with *Lava*, and the other man washed his with the other soap. While the 2 men were washing their hands, the announcer exclaimed, "*Wow! Look at Lava get that dirt!*" This comment was more than interesting because it was a radio commercial. The general rule was when the radio listeners could see with their eyes what they were hearing, it was known as television (pardon me for using the "T" word in a radio article)!

Since the planet earth is populated with people with different personalities, there might a remote possibility some radio listeners were washing their own hands with *Lava* while listening to the commercial. Personally, I can come to 2 different conclusions concerning the announcer's comment. 1.) It was a radio boner, and 2.) The radio commercial was the audio from a television commercial (once again, excuse me for using that word).

If you're wondering, the *Lava Wash-up Test* went according to Hoyle. The man who used *Lava* said his hands were clean, while the man who used the other soap said there was still some dirt on his hands and on the towel he used to dry his hands. Once again, *Lava* prevailed as the best hand soap.

Although *Lava* was made in a drab gray color, it did have some colorful advertising during radio's golden age--- and it also kept the hands of men, women, and children clean.