

Great Day Arrives And House Brothers Leave For New York



AWAIT TRAIN'S ARRIVAL—The seven bachelor House brothers and their three unmarried sisters are seen as they gathered in the waiting room of the New York Central station in St. Thomas and looked over a map of New York City while awaiting the arrival of

the Empire State Express on Tuesday morning. They are on their way to attend the premiere of M-G-M's new release, "Seven Brides For Seven Brothers." From left to right, sitting, are: Earl, Vern, Ray, Lee and George. Looking over their shoulders are, left to right: Ada, Bill, Annabel, Clarence and Marjorie.—(T.-J. Photo).

All the excitement and exuberance that marks the anticipation of a first train ride bubbled over onto the platform and in the waiting room of the New York Central station here shortly before noon on Tuesday. It was apparent in the actions and the eyes of seven bachelor House brothers.

It was "D-Day" for the House brothers of Port Talbot, Vern, Earl, Ray, Lee, Bill, George and Clarence, who are New York-bound to attend the premiere of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's latest release "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers."

Their three maiden sisters, Ada, Annabel and Marjorie, and a host of relatives and friends travelling from as far as Toronto, were on hand to bid them "bon voyage." Getting into the act were a host of other travellers who were also waiting for the Empire State Express to pull alongside the station. They joined the merry throng.

Tuesday morning marked the end of three weeks of anticipation and a final two days of hectic preparation in the House-hold. It marked the end of successful "manhunt" staged by managers of Loew's theatres across United States and Canada. It was a manhunt for seven bachelor brothers and the House brothers were the only such septet turned up.

The seven brothers were at the station bright and early, more than an hour before the train was due to arrive. They were spic and span, ready to stand before television cameras and press photographers here and in New

York. Their work-a-day gear was left back on the farm and they were off to the big city in their Sunday-go-to-meet-in-best. Joking and good natured jesting was the order of the day.

It was a big morning for the seven brothers. According to MGM's representative, Fred Jackson, manager of Loew's Theatre in London, Ont., none of the brothers had ever been away for a long train ride before. Their only previous experience with railroad travel had been on the London and Port Stanley railway. Mr. Jackson was on hand to see them safely on their way to New York.

Travelling with them is a London, Ont., reporter, Norman Riddiough, who will send back stories for The Canadian Press.

Among those on hand to wish the brothers the "best of luck" were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Waite, 67 Flora street, an aunt and uncle; George Waite, another uncle (his wife, Elizabeth, wanted to be present but illness prevented it); Mrs. Aileen Thorpe, Fingal, a cousin; Mrs. Donald McLellan, a neighbor; Richard Timewell, Fingal; Mr. and Mrs. William Edwards and family, Toronto; all good friends of the House brothers. Just before the train was due to arrive, Frank Curtis, R.R. 1, St. Thomas, Bill House's boss, drove up to extend his best wishes to the "boys."

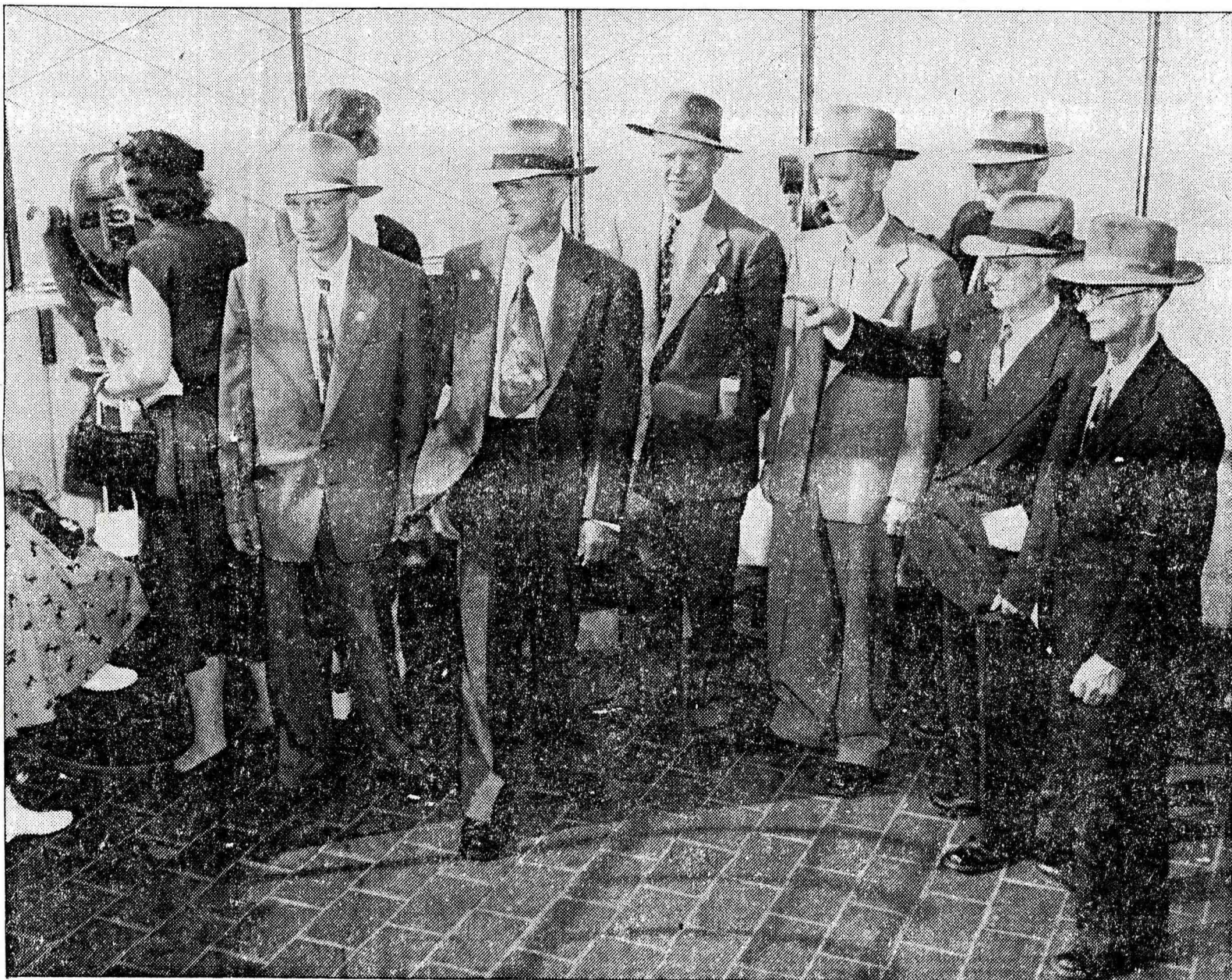
Then, with photographs for newspaper and television taken, the brothers boarded a sleek and shiny NYC passenger coach, waved "goodbye" from the windows and were eastward bound, not to return until next Monday evening.



TIMES-JOURNAL

BYGONE DAYS

Fine fashions of the 1880s are worn by these Rodney women who are, from left, front, Margaret McMillan, Lydia Mungar, Martha Werner, second row, Maude McLaren, Sadie Mapes, Mary Werner, Minnie Ellis, back, Carrie Liebner, Belle Gray and Minnie Mapes



The House brothers atop the Empire State building during their visit to New York in 1954.

Seven Brides recalls local story

By Richard Loesch
of The Free Press

A new CBS series, *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*, brings to mind an unusual entertainment story which happened in the London area 28 years ago.

In 1954, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer produced the hit musical by the same name, starring Howard Keel and Jane Powell. To promote the film, somebody at MGM came up with the idea of trying to find seven real-life bachelor brothers.

News about the search ran in about 60 newspapers in the U.S. and Canada, including The London Free Press. A small three-inch long item in this newspaper found the bachelors — seven brothers named House in the Port Stanley area. No other place on the continent could match the find.

All but one of the House brothers were farmers. Four worked their Lake Erie-edge farm near Port Stanley. Two worked on other farms in the district and the seventh was employed by an auto parts firm in St. Thomas.

That led to a six-day whirlwind trip to New York City for the shy, non-smoking, non-drinking brothers. They hit the high spots, going to many of them accompanied by profes-

sional models provided by their hosts. One of the events was the premiere of the movie at Radio City Music Hall. The Free Press sent a reporter along to tell the folks back home all about it.

After they got back from New York, they went to the film's Canadian premiere at Loew's Theatre in London — a first for this city.

Inevitably, the years have brought changes to the House brothers. One has died and another is in a nursing home. Their ages range from 59 to 80. Four still work the farm. And all have remained bachelors.

When they went to New York, their hosts told them, jokingly, that while they would be shown a good time, that didn't go as far as finding brides for them. The big-city boys needn't have bothered. The brothers seemed to be quite content with their unmarried status.

In an interview in 1962, Earl was the only one to even try to explain why the seven never married. "I guess we're too choosy," he said.

Reading the stories about their trip, one gets the impression the brothers were not overwhelmed by it. They took it all in stride. New York was interesting, maybe even enjoyable for some of them, but they sure wouldn't want to live there.

When I talked to Raymond by telephone the other day, I asked if he ever thought about the trip. He answered with one word, "Nope."

Now, back to the new series, *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers*. A special 90-minute preview is scheduled Sunday at 8 p.m. on CBS. After that, it will run as an hour-long show Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

CBS calls it family drama with musical highlights. The network says it is "loosely based on the 1954 film, but unlike the film, is set in contemporary times."

Peter Horton, one of the stars in the series, thinks that skeptical critics as well as the public will be "extremely, pleasantly surprised" with the show. For that matter, so is he.

He admits that when he first heard about producer David Gerber's plan to adapt the big-screen musical into a series, he said, "Oh, come on!" Horton really didn't care for the movie that much, and he thought, "What they'll do is make it into a real cutesy, boring thing."

He claims it's emerging as anything but that.

"It's got a texture I never expected," he says. "It's got dirt — not nasty dirt, but rural dirt — and they're dealing with issues in it, real-life situations. I'm thrilled about that."

I wonder if the House brothers will be watching?



Taken 1930.

WALLACETOWN UNITED CHURCH YPS SOFTBALL TEAM.

BACK ROW.

1 Cary Holland; 2 Tom Page; 3 Red Brown; 4 Harold Clarke;
5 Jack Lamb; 6 Raymond; Braddon; 7 Harold M, Keller, 8 John Brown.

SITTING.

1 Clair Hales, 2 Harry Stevenson, 3 Dr. McDonald, 4 Earl Stevenson,
5 Earl Shipley.