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Invisible Stars: A Social History of Women in American Broadcasting (Media, Communication, and Culture in America)

Donna L. Halper

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Donna L. Halper : Invisible Stars: A Social History of Women in American Broadcasting (Media, Communication, and Culture in America) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Invisible Stars: A Social History of Women in American Broadcasting (Media, Communication, and Culture in America):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Joni Beemsterboersomewhat dated info as might be expected0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Women in broadcastingBy Ted KneeboneIf I had been a shaker and a mover in some area of broadcasting, it might have been hard for me to read Donna Halper's new book, "Invisible Stars"--without feeling some embarrassment. Her story is the story of women who succeeded in American broadcasting, many of whom succeed in spite of the fact of their gender. It seems that back in the 1920s when radio was considered a toy, women were quite welcome to announce, sing or play an instrument, become program directors, and even in rare cases, own a radio station. But when radio began to be commercially profitable, when more and more people had radios, when networks came into being, then women were not so welcome, especially in the ranks of management. By the decades, Halper takes us through the history of how women made their mark, or were denied even the opportunity of trying to do that. The struggle of women for recognition and equality in radio and television reads something like the struggle for the same things by black people and other minorities. One of the mysteries that Halper brings to our attention is the developments before, during, and after World War II. Before the War, women's place was in the home, being the dutiful wife, keeping house, cooking the meals, taking care of the kids. During the War, women were encouraged to take jobs in war manufacturing plants, AND to do all the traditional stuff. When, after the War, the men came back and wanted their jobs back, women were expected to go back to the kitchen and nursery. And the same thing happened in broadcasting. The sad thing is that even though some women in radio and television have made important gains, much of the picture of broadcasting in the 2000s is not much different from what it was in the 1950s. Halper has done an excellent job of research, witness her extensive bibliography, in this well-written account of women in American broadcasting. Let Halper have the last word: "Perhaps one day soon, the pioneering women of radio and television will be given the same respect for their accomplishments that society has accorded their male counterparts. I hope this book will contribute to the process and keep women of broadcasting from remaining invisible stars."0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Review of _Invisible Stars_By A CustomerDonna Halper's book Invisible Stars sheds daylight on the dim careers of American women in broadcasting. It's a lively book, and the women in it are a lively bunch: not only the expected announcers and managers, but station owners and transmitter engineers have braved minority odds to follow the muse of radio. Arranged by decades from the pioneering 20s through the era of big networks to the fragmented markets of the new millennium, Halper's book traces a good double handful of female achievers as their careers changed with the times.Halper's own achievements are noteworthy, not just in radio but in writing. The book is intensively researched and lavish of detail, yet written in a bright, wry style that continually absorbs and entertains. It's a serious work, but an accessible one, and not for hyper-feminists only. Halper doesn't suffer anit-feminists gladly, but clearly shows that anti-feminists aren't all male. Her just exasperation at sweeping stereotypes is tempered with humor and an admirably balanced tone. She chronicles the unfairness these women faced in their careers and is never unfair herself: when there are extenuating or alternative explanations for blatantly sexist acts, she always takes the time to point them out.Gender interaction in the 20th century workplace isn't simply a tale of oppressors and their victims, and Halper knows that. She charts the ambiguous, hypocritical and sometimes schizophrenic attitudes in the minds of both sexes, and uncovers their roots in recession and war, as well as in the less excusable manipulations of the media. The women in this book aren't pure rebels or pure conformists. They're competent people trying to do their jobs, though power-structures are rigid, privilege is stacked against them, and shifting media mantras about how women ought to behave this time hum obsessively in the background.Invisible Stars, in short, is no partisan screed, but an honest examination of its topic. Rational readers of both genders can expect to learn a lot from it about the workings of radio and of reality.

Although much of American broadcasting in its early years was an exclusively white male preserve, broadcast historian Donna Halper documents the countless contributions made by women in the field. This artful social history brings the lives and work of the women of broadcasting to their proper prominence.

...an exemplary job at chronicling women's roles... This book should be required in every broadcast history class.... -- Journalism History, Spring 2002...tells story of women in broadcasting as part of the larger social history...making it that much more valuable. -- Communication Booknotes QuarterlyFrom the PublisherAwarded the American Political Science Association's Ralph J. Bunche Award