"INTRODUCTION: SURVEY OF LITERATURE OF "ALL IN THE FAMILY"

Mike Porter

On the night of January 12, 1971 a group of men sat watching a monitor in the CBS executive suite in New York. Some were optimistic but all were nervous as careers lay on the line. Meanwhile, a continent away, another gentleman was "pacing the floor of a viewing room in Television City, Hollywood, like an expectant father."[1]

It was too late for anyone to change their minds--the point of no return had been reached. At 10:30 p.m. EST, these men looked on as a new mid-season replacement program was fed down the lines to awaiting and warned affiliates nationwide. Meanwhile, in every major television market, extra operators hired by the network prepared themselves for the expected tempest of an enraged American public.

As was later recalled, these men "kind of sneaked it on one night with no advance advertising or anything."[2] As the show began with its now familiar theme song--American television entered into what was later described as "a new era of candor."[3] The name of the program was "All in the Family."

Without a doubt, "All in the Family" is one of the most controversial yet successful series in the history of television. The show about Archie Bunker, his wife Edith, his daughter Gloria and his son-in-law the "Meathead," became what one

observer called "instant American folklore."[4] Indeed that observation became true since in 1978 Archie Bunker's famous chair was installed as an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution. The term "Bunkerism" was quickly coined for any Archie-like saying, Archie Bunker received write in votes for President, and President Nixon described Archie Bunker as "a good man."[5]

Copious amounts of material, both scholarly and popular in nature, have been published on "All in the Family" over the decade of the '70's. This article will attempt to provide a historical sketch of the series as well as summarize the overall influences and effects of the program on the television industry. Areas discussed will include the program's original conception by Norman Lear; Lear's subsequent battles with two networks to have his project aired; initial reactions to the show by both audience and critics; the program's overwhelming commercial success; the effects of "All in the Family" on prime-time programming; the subsequent spin-offs and imitators; the technological innovations spawned by the series' production; the empirical attempts to measure the show's effects on viewers in terms of bigotry reinforcement or reduction; and the gradual but profound character development and evolution that took place as Archie, Edith, Mike and Gloria interacted for eight seasons. By examining each of these aspects of the

popular television attraction, we can better understand and appreciate the role that "All in the Family" played in shaping American television during the past decade.

Conception and Early Reactions

In conducting research on "All in the Family," it quickly becomes apparent that initial reactions to Archie Bunker's repeated, robust and unapologetic use of racial and ethnic epithets"[6] were as different as black and white.

Some critics immediately damned the show as being "a new low in taste"[7] and a "wretched program"[8] and CBS's own First Lady of television comedy, Lucille Ball, commented that:

> "All in the Family" puts words back into our vocabulary that hadn't been there for years....I'll never do any show like that![9]

But at the same time, other critics heralded the show as being "The best TV comedy since the original 'The Honeymooners.'"[10] TV Guide critic, Cleveland Amory, went out on a shaky limb in early 1971 by suggesting that "All in the Family" is not just the best-written, best-directed and best-acted show on television, it is the best show on television."[11]

When the first episode of "All in the Family" premiered on that January night, the American public was not as enraged as CBS brass had expected, since "the relative few who did call in did so mostly to express their pleasure."[12]

While the responses to "All in the Family" did indeed span the gamut--all seemed to agree on one point. The man responsible for Archie Bunker was his creator--Norman Lear.

Up until that January night, Norman Lear had been a successful writer/producer/director who had gotten his start in the early days of live television as a gag writer for some of the biggest stars of the era--Danny Thomas, George Gobel, and Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.

In 1951, Lear teamed with a successful producer/director by the name of Bud Yorkin. The pair formed their own production company--Tandem Productions. Lear and Yorkin developed a partnership in which the two of them would work on various projects as a team or individually. Tandem Productions produced occasional television specials and attempted a failing TV series entitled "Band of Gold." By the early 1960's, Lear and Yorkin were trying their hands at producing motion pictures with their first effort being a film adaptation of Neil Simon's "Come Blow Your Horn" starring Frank Sinatra. Throughout the next decade, Tandem Productions cranked out a series of films including, "Divorce American Style," "The Night They Raided Minskey's," "Start the Revolution Without Me," and "Cold Turkey," a 1971 venture starring Dick Van Dyke, Bob Newhart, and a little known actress by the name of Jean Stapleton.

In 1968, Lear read a brief trade item in Variety about a popular BBC comedy series entitled "Til Death Do Us Part." The show centered around Alf Garnett, a lowerclass Cockney-accented father who fought with his live-in son-in-law about every social and political issue under the sun and who referred to his wife Else as a "silly old moo." This reminded

Lear of his relationship with his own father. Said Lear in a 1976 Playboy interview:

> I was transported immediately to the relationship I enjoyed with my own father. We never agreed about anything; we fought about everything. I'd tell him he was a bigot; he'd call me a goddam bleedin' heart liberal, and we were both right--but also wrong.... The whole show came to me full blown. My father used to tell my mother to "stifle" herself.[13]

Lear acquired the television rights to the program and set about to write an Americanized version of the same theme. After completing an 80 page treatment of character descriptions and sample dialogue, Lear submitted his concept to the American Broadcasting Company television network. Richard Adler further explained the process in the following manner:

> Martin Stringer, president of ABC-TV, liked the idea, and over the next year, the network paid some $250,000 for a sample script and the production of two pilot episodes, which were taped in January and March of 1968.[14]

These first two pilots were produced under the title of "Those Were the Days" (taken from the show's theme song) and starred unknowns Carroll O'Connor and Jean Stapleton as Archie and Edith Bunker. The actor and actress portraying the roles of Gloria and Mike Stivic in the first pilot were not liked by the network so the roles were recast for the second pilot with two more unknowns--Sally Struthers and the son of actor/producer/writer Carl Reiner, Rob Reiner.

After viewing the second pilot, ABC decided that the idea was too hot to handle and put it into cold storage. At this

time, Lear was making his directorial debut with his film "Cold Turkey" and was later approached in 1970 by the new President of CBS, Robert Wood.

Wood and CBS vice-president Fred Silverman expressed great interest in Lear's concept and by the summer of 1970, they ordered a third pilot. Lear's third attempt was now titled "All in the Family" and the script involved Mike trying to talk Gloria into having sex on a Sunday morning whild Archie and Edith are away at church. Archie and Edith arrive home a little early and Archie begins on a verbal rampage by attacking Mike and every minority under the sun with epithets such as "Spade," "Hebe," "Fag," "Wop," and "Polack."

Wood then screened the pilot with fellow executives and later reflected the following:

> The main attraction was the realism part. It was time TV dared to do something like this. I liked that this program was going to draw off real life.[15]

Television historian Richard Adler added:

> Wood was fully aware that the show was "fraught with problems," but he also believed that it had the potential to be a runaway hit....Wood's enthusiasm for "All in the Family" was not shared by his fellow executives at CBS, however; their skepticism was confirmed by the network's audience tests with the two Lear pilots. The tests were as negative at CBS as they had been at ABC.[16]

Wood arranged for a special screening of the pilot for CBS's founder and Chairman of the Board, William S. Paley. Former CBS executive, Mike Dunn, attended the screening and later remembered Paley's reaction:

> He (Paley) said you could never use the word 'Yid' or any such epithet. He felt that CBS should never be the first in any such controversy.[17]

With what was described as "less than ringing endorsement,"[18] Wood gave the green light for the production of 13 episodes of Lear's "All in the Family" as a future mid-season replacement series.

Despite the go ahead from Wood, Lear continued to face a series of other problems with the network on issues of creativity and censorship. Lear got into heated battles with CBS's head of standards and practices, William Tankersley. Tankersley insisted that Archie's use of several "goddamns" in the premiere episode be deleted as well as some 80 seconds of the more explicit sexual references.[19] Lear, however, remained steadfast and refused to accept any changes. It was Lear's intention not to allow any precedent to be set affecting the contents of future episodes. Wood stepped in as arbitrator, and Lear eventually compromised. Archie's "goddamns" were edited but most of the sexual references remained except for some minor bit of business about Mike's fly.[20] Despite changes, Lear felt he had won an impressive and rare battle with the network over creative flexibility and all of Archie's epithets remained untouched.

On January 11th, the day before the program's scheduled premiere, another unexpected obstacle appeared. Richard Adler explains:

> ....several CBS executives decided it would be more prudent to begin the series with what was to be the second episode, which was deemed slightly less shocking than the first.[21]

Again, Lear remained adamant and insisted the pilot episode, produced specifically to introduce the characters to the American public be aired first. Lear explained his reasoning this way:

> I felt we had to get the network wet completely. Once you're completely wet, you can't get wetter. I wanted the audience to hear all of Archie's epithets, to see his sexual hang-ups, to meet the whole family.[22]

Rare in the world of television, the producer won over the network brass. It was decided that the pilot episode would be aired the following evening as scheduled. "All in the Family" was to be a mid-season replacement for a faltering CBS situation comedy "To Rome With Love" which was in the time slot following another CBS comedy "Hee Haw."

The reaction to the premiere episode was nothing at all as CBS had predicted. "All in the Family" began its life in the ratings cellar and "failed to generate a response of any kind from those who watched."[23] As the weeks progressed, however, the Nielson ratings revealed that "All in the Family" was steadily picking up viewers at a tremendous rate. By the time the original 13 episodes were in reruns, "All in the Family" had become the number one program on television and had received its first of almost 20 Emmys as Best Outstanding Comedy Series of the Year.

Commercial Success

By May of 1971, Norman Lear was the most acclaimed producer in Hollywood and Tandem Productions proceeded to

waste no time in capitalizing on the success of Archie Bunker and company. Yorkin and Lear repackaged 13 excerpts from the 1971 season into what was to become a best-selling comedy album, with a second album to follow the next year. A 95 cent paperback appeared in 1972 on bookshelves entitled The Wit & Wisdom of Archie Bunker which featured popular "Bunkerisms" as well as humorous excerpts of dialogue from the first two seasons. During the 1972 Presidential race, an "Archie Bunker for President" campaign developed with T-shirts, beer mugs, bumper stickers, and buttons--all hurriedly mass produced and marketed as Bunkermania abounded. An "All in the Family" fan magazine flourished for a while and a gentleman by the name of Spencer Marsch published two books--God, Man and Archie Bunker and Edith the Good--both attempts to extract religious messages from the program in a "gospel according to Bunker" style. Even such marketing efforts as The Edith Bunker Cookbook and Gloria Bunker (sic) cut out dolls appeared.

Programming Effects

"All in the Family" was a drastic change from the standard fantasy-like, non-offensive television programming by touching on popular issues of the day. Norman Lear had been credited with developing the first "relevant" situation comedy. The effects of Lear's newly created genre of television were soon felt in many areas of the industry and were by no means limited

to television comedies. Long standing taboos had at last been exposed to the light of the orthicon tube. "All in the Family" historian Richard Adler explained:

> Archie's success encouraged M*A*S*H to tackle topics beyond its previous norm. The Archie influence even permeated serious television, leading to bolder approaches in made-for-TV movies....Archie even opened the way and conditioned prime time viewers to accept subject matter that has helped make "60 Minutes" television's most looked at documentary series.[24]

In still another critique of "All in the Family," Adler stated:

> "All in the Family" marked an abrupt departure from the escapist fantasies that had been dominating the medium for many years--remember "The Beverly Hillbillies," "Green Acres," "Gilligan's Island?"[25]

As is usual in the television industry--any remote success leads to a rash of spin-offs and imitators. "All in the Family" was the epitome of this. Lear himself lead the way with a succession of "relevant" situation comedies. "Sanford and Son" dealt with the plight of a pair of black junk dealers in the Watts section of Los Angeles. "Maude" was Lear's next venture, spun-off directly from "All in the Family" (in which Maude Finley appeared as Edith's cousin). Maude was the antithesis of Archie--a liberal feminist four times married. By 1974 Maude's outspoken maid, Florida, was developed into her own series entitled "Good Times" which dealt with a struggling ghetto family in Chicago.

In 1975, "All in the Family" spun-off yet another series, "The Jeffersons," as Lionel and family become successful in the dry cleaning business and move out of Queens into a plush Manhattan high-rise.

By the end of the 1975 season, Norman Lear was the producer of television's three most popular prime time shows: "All in the Family" was No. 1, "Sanford & Son" was No. 2, and "Maude" was No. 3. Controversy continued to plague Lear as black organizations complained that characters like Fred Sanford and J.J. of "Good Times" were demeaning to blacks. Other protests peaked when "Maude" considered an abortion and called her husband Walter a "son of a bitch."

Lear, still in partnership with Yorkin in Tandem Productions, formed his own "spin-off" production company, T.A.T Productions, in 1975. Since then it has produced such series as "The Jeffersons," "One Day At A Time," and "Hello, Larry."

Although Lear continued to enjoy great success in the years following the early seventies, his position as leader of the situation comedy producers was later taken over by Garry Marshall, whose fantasy, non-relevant and non-mature sit-coms such as "Happy Days," "Laverne & Shirley" and "Mork & Mindy" took top spots in the ratings during the latter years of the decade. Meanwhile, some of Lear's later efforts such as "All's Fair," "The Dumplings" and "Hot L Baltimore" failed to capture audience attention.

Technical Innovations

Many technical precedents set by "All In the Family" were soon adopted by subsequent sit-coms. Two of "All In the Family's" early writers, Michael Ross and Bernie West,

noted that the show was the first situation comedy to be video taped in front of a live studio audience. Because of his experience with live television during the 1950's, Norman Lear wanted the more intimate, immediate and theatrical quality gained by taping the show in the form of a continuous two-act play with none of television's traditional stop-start action and retakes. "All in the Family" was in fact a renaissance of the situation comedy classics of the 50's such as "I Love Lucy" and "The Honeymooners"--all filmed with three cameras in front of live audiences and edited for broadcast. Lear also revolutionized the TV industry with a remarkable discovery--the use of video tape made each half hour episode cost significantly less than the standard film techniques.

By the early 1970's, electronic technology had made it possible to edit video tape with the same professional quality as film. James Lynch's study of "All in the Family's" production techniques revealed that each episode is taped twice by the cast on the same night using four cameras (each with a different studio audience.) In post-production the director and editor decide upon the best takes from each taping to produce one episode.

James Lynch described the process as told to him by former "All in the Family" director, John Rich.

> In final electronic editing, a 1/2 hour episode averages 50 to 60 edits....Total editing time runs

> 12 to 15 hours....The operation is slow, demanding, precise and frustrating. But, the results reflect a clean, smooth production without destroying the feeling that it is all happening live at the moment.[26]

Soon the prime time schedule was filled with situation comedies produced on video tape in the same fashion, including "Chico and the Man," "Welcome Back, Kotter," "Barney Miller," and "Alice."

Studies of Audience Effects

A general survey of literature reveals that copious amounts of empirical data has been conducted on "All in the Family" and its effects on viewers. Richard Adler pointed out that more empirical research has been conducted on audience reaction to "All in the Family" than any other TV entertainment program.[27] From the outset, experts have debated whether the actions and epithets of Archie Bunker are actually "fanning the flames of bigotry rather than dousing them."[28] The question is: Does "All in the Family" reduce prejudice in the minds of its audience, as Norman Lear and company originally had hoped, or does it reinforce already established bigoted preconceptions? When the premiere episode of "All in the Family" was aired, CBS ran the following preamble to the program which stated:

> "All in the Family" seeks to throw a humorous spotlight on our frailities, prejudices and concerns. By making them a source of laughter, we hope to show--in a mature fashion--just how absurd they are.[29]

Has the satire of "All in the Family" entertained us for almost a decade but failed in the process to educate and better us? A study was conducted by Vidmar and Rokeach to test their hypothesis of selective perception, which is based on the premise that different people perceive the program in different ways. Vidmar and Rokeach used two separate sample groups with the result being that the program was preceived in different manners. The majority saw the show as being amusing and few found it offensive. Nevertheless, the majority identified with Archie over Mike and perceived Archie as the hero and the winner and agreed with Archie's attitudes. The majority, however, admitted that Mike made better sense than Archie. These conclusions of Vidmar and Rokeach reveal that many failed to comprehend the fact that Archie was intended to represent a satire on bigotry and that it was Archie who was meant to be ridiculed by the outcome of each episode. Instead, the majority saw Mike as the ridiculed figure. Such results supported Midmar and Rokeach's selective perception hypothesis.[30]

A similar study, conducted by Brigham and Giesbrecht, concluded that Vidmar and Rokeach had lessened the significance of their results by methodological flaws. Brigham and Giesbrecht affirmed that Vidmar and Rokeach failed to validate a precise measurement of prejudice and used only whites in their samples. Thus, the Vidmar and Rokeach study may not have concentrated on the actual audience. According to CBS viewer

demographics, many blacks are regular "All in the Family" viewers. Brigham and Giesbrecht conducted a similar study but used blacks in approximately one-third of their two samples. Their results affirmed that racial attitudes were not a major contributing factor to the reaction of blacks to "All in the Family." Within both samples, there existed a tendency for those who enjoyed the show to perceive it as being less harmful to racial relations. Brigham and Giesbrecht also were able to reinforce their hypothesis that neither enjoyment of the show nor frequency of viewing were strongly related to the racial prejudices of the viewers.[31]

Evidence from a different kind of study revealed some additional insights into "All in the Family's" effects on its vast audience. David Loye measured the responses of 260 Los Angeles couples to a number of prime-time programs. Sample members rated each program on an E scale of 1 to 4 according to the degree to which they found the show emotionally aesthetically, morally and intellectually arousing and/or satisfying. The results were summed up in the following:

> "All in the Family"--and also "Good Times," both Norman Lear productions--were unusual among the comedies in showing impact on the right side of the E bar, for moral and intellectual arousal.[32]

A study conducted by Stuart Surlin asked members of a sample to respond to the "All in the Family" characters on a survey, as well as fill out the Short Form Dogmatism Scale.

Surlin concluded that:

> Clearly, the character "Archie" is perceived quite favorably by viewers similar in beliefs and demographics to "Archie." Because of the inability of these individuals to differentiate source and message, there is a high probability that "Archie" is used as a credible source and that this "racist" message is favorably accepted.[33]

In spite of the vast amount of research done on the effects of "All in the Family," only one major study exists on its influence on children. This is especially surprising since over nine million children under the age of twelve watch it every week.[34] Critics have complained for years that Archie's racial epithets such as "Hebe," "Spic," "Fag," and "Pinko" are merely open invitations to small children to use this language as well. Black critic Clayton Riley affirmed that "All in the Family" was responsible for tensions and violence at an integrated New York City school. According to Riley

> The teachers became very concerned about some of the words the kids were using right out in the open--words such as "coon" and "Jungle Bunny" and "Spade." Well, the black kids began asking their parents what those words meant and some pretty serious fights broke out.[35]

As stated, only one study has been conducted dealing with "All in the Family" and children. This study, done by Timothy Meyer, concluded that the effects of "All in the Family" were not at all consistent or uniform among children of varying demographic backgrounds. Meyer concluded that it

was not the ethical/moral focus of the program from which the children learned, but the physical appearances and actions of the characters. The children were too young to grasp the situation of the characters and the various issues being presented within each episode.[6] Unfortunately, this study was a one-time only experiment. A survey of literature on "All in the Family" reveals that no long term case study has been conducted with those children who have grown up on front of their television sets with Archie Bunker over the past decade. Such a study might prove valuable in determining the effects of mass media entertainment on children's perceptions of the world.

Based on a survey of all of the "All in the Family" empirical studies conducted over the years, author Richard Adler concluded:

> Despite their limitations, these studies clearly demonstrated that all viewers of "All in the Family" do not see the program in the same way....Despite the number of studies that "All in the Family" has stimulated, we still know relatively little about its impact.[37]

Undoubtedly, more research on "All in the Family" should be conducted in the immediate future, especially since it is apparent that the series will be seen by generations to come in syndicated reruns nationwide.

Character Background And Development

Critics have acclaimed "All in the Family" as a milestone in television history because of its realistic approaches to

important issues through the use of comedy--issues that were once unspoken subject matter on the medium of television. Cited one critic: "A lot of people are thrilled by the recognition, in a comedy series, of life as it is really lived."[38]

The almost instantaneous impact of "All in the Family's" realism was exemplified by the following anecdote by Norman Lear:

> All in the Family" first aired on January 12, 1971 and two days later we received our first piece of mail. It was a letter from a woman who had been divorced many years before, when her son was 4 years old. The boy had never seen his father after that. On the night "All in the Family" debuted, her son was now 32 years old and living in a city 1000 miles away. The show was on for about ten minutes when the lady ran to the telephone and almost broke her dialing finger phoning her son. Happily she reached him and screamed across the miles; "You've always wanted to know what your father was like--well, hurry up and turn on channel 2!" 39

The following is a brief character description of the four main characters involved in the popular television situation comedy"

Archie Bunker: A bigoted, fifty-ish, working middle class family man, who resides in the Corona section of Queens, New York at 704 Houser Street. Originally, Archie earned a living by working as a dock foreman for the Pendergast Tool & Die Company and made extra income by driving a cab on the weekends. In the 1977-78 season, Archie fulfilled a lifelong dream and bought his favorite local tavern, Kelsey's Bar, from an ailing Tommy Kelsey.

Edith Bunker: Archie's faithful and loving wife of over 25 years. While Edith is sometimes slow to grasp details in conversations with the family, she represents pure honesty and trust. Edith had no prejudices of her own

but whenever she tries to state her opinion, she is told to "stifle" by Archie. Growing tired of being a housewife in later seasons, Edith gets a volunteer job at the Sunshine Home working with the elderly.

Gloria Bunker Stivic: Archie and Edith's only offspring. In her late teens when the show began, Gloria grew into a woman in her mid-twenties. Gloria is bright but never attended college, choosing to work and put her husband through college instead. Gloria, like her husband, is a liberal atheist. Gloria inherited her temper from her father and worked at the cosmetic counter at Krissler's Department Store.

Michael Stivic: Mike is an idealistic sociology major at the start of the series. Being of Polish descent and in his twenties, Mike is a staunch liberal, pacifist and atheist. During the run of the series, Mike graduated from college with a master's degree in sociology and landed a job as a teacher in a New York City college. He and Gloria had a baby boy named Joey and moved next door to Archie and Edith. By the end of the eighth season, Mike and Gloria learn that Mike has been offered a teaching position in Santa Barbara, California and they decide to accept. The ninth season of the series went on without the weekly appearances of Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers.

During its nine year run as "All in the Family," the series was applauded as television's first "realistic" program--dealing with issues such as bigotry, Vietnam, the plight of the elderly, breast cancer, menopause, rape, homosexuality, impotence, death, mental retardation and menstruation. The characters of "All in the Family" possessed a quality that,

to that point, had been rare among television characters--memory which sometimes allowed them to reflect upon and learn om experiences in past episodes. "All in the Family" writers ss and West explained:

> One of the things that has happened on our show is that the characters grew. There have been several episodes where Edith has stood up to Archie and given him whatfor....We have been confronted by all of these problems--Mike growing, Gloria growing, Edith growing.[40]

An it even became apparent in later seasons that Archie ad grown as an individual, despite Carroll O'Connor's claim hat "It would take a miracle for Archie to change his attiudes. Christ would have to come down personally and speak o him."[41]

The current executive producer of "Archie Bunker's Place," nd former "All in the Family" producer, Mort Lachman, remarked, Of course Archie's been toned down a bit. You can't go on oing a caricature forever."[42] Associate producer Milt Josefserg added that "We had to show the softer side of Archie when e introduced his grandson. How could we have him hating a ittle baby?"[43] This statement by Josefsberg was also conirmed by Richard Adler:

> The arrival of a grandson for the Bunkers took some of the passion out of the generational conflict which had previously given the show much of its energy.[44]

All in the Family" star Jean Stapleton once commented er feelings on the development of the characters:

> We mirror the times, and people do change. My character, Edith, has changed because the world comes in and touches her. She's smarter and more aware of women's rights, and she even stands up to Archie now.

> The part of Gloria has changed drastically. Who would dream in the early days that she would force Mike, her husband, to have a vasectomy? ....Archie still talks bigotry, but he gets slapped down more and more. That's the way life progresses.[45]

Concerning the character of Mike, one critic noted: "Mike seemed to lose some of his idealism and passion as he made the transition from student to teacher."[46]

The physical changes among the characters were marked as well during the program's existence. Mike, who began the series as a long-haired, moustached and sloppily dressed college activist ended the show as a short-haired, clean shaven and well-dressed college professor. In the same fashion, the character of Gloria began as an 18 year-old Shirley Temple-Little Orphan Annie type character, once described as "sweet, itsy-poo."[47] In later years Gloria matured into a woman and mother. The continual evolution of the characters played a major part in the sustained popularity of the show over the years. Stated one critic during the 1977-78 season:

> What is most remarkable about the series is that it has maintained its capacity to grow and surprise. Mike and Gloria, in particular, have emerged as major characters capable of sustaining episodes on their own. And Archie has been struggling manfully to come to terms with the increasing independence of his wife.[48]

By the completion of the 1977-78 season, both Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers announced they would be leaving the program for other career ventures. Norman Lear did, however, persuade them to make special appearances at later dates. In order to compensate for their void, the role of nine year-old Stephanie,

Edith's niece, was adopted by the Bunkers after being abandoned by her father. To play upon Archie's prejudiced nature, Stephanie announced that she was Jewish.

Since Lear had to annually increase the economic incentives for his cast to keep hem under contract, by the 1978-79 season, "All in the Family" had broken another record by being the most expensive half-hour series on television, costing the network around $290,000 per episode.[49]

In the early years, Lear quickly learned that Carroll O'Connor especially needed economic incentives to remain in the series as Archie Bunker. During the summer of 1974, O'Conner went on a one man strike due to contract disputes and two episodes of "All in the Family" had to be written and produced totally without the appearance of Archie.

During the 1978-79 season of "All in the Family," the program, even without the services of Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers, still had much audience appeal. The series finished the year among the top ten prime time programs while reruns of past "All in the Family" episodes, shown on CBS's daytime schedule, often placed first in the daytime ratings.[50]

At the finish of the 1978-79 season, Jean Stapleton decided to leave her role as Edith for other pursuits. CBS executives realizing her void might mean the end of the series reacted quickly. As Carroll O'Connor recalled in an article:

> Bob Daly, president of CBS Entertainment, called and said he still wanted to air some variation of the show, some kind of Archie situation, even though Jean Stapleton, Rob Reiner and Sally Struthers had departed. ....Daly persuaded Jean Stapleton to make time for four special appearances. And best of all, considering our need for continuing strength, was my luck in persuading Oscar-winner Martin Balsam to join the company and costar as Archie's new business partner.[51]

"Archie Bunker's Place" premiered in the 1979-80 season on CBS's Sunday night schedule, opposite ABC's "Mork & Mindy." Despite predictions of doom for Archie against such formidable competition, "Archie Bunker's Place" enjoyed a resurgence in Archie's popularity as reflected in the Nielson ratings. "Archie Bunker's Place" placed in the top five prime time programs throughout the year, forcing "Mork & Mindy" back to its original Thursday night time slot.

In the spring of 1980, Norman Lear made an unexpected announcement. Lear stated that at the beginning of the 1980-81 season of "Archie Bunker's Place," the character of Edith would die. With Jean Stapleton's departure from the series, as Carroll O'Connor put it: "We didn't know what else to do."[52]

In memory of his beloved character, Lear's Tandem Productions contributed $500,000 to establish a fund to promote the Equal Rights Amendment. Lear remarked about the gradual growth of the character: "What's been happening to housewives across America was best mirrored by Edith Bunker."[53]

With the demise of Edith Bunker, it is obvious that the "All in the Family" of Archie, Edith, Mike and Gloria can

ver be reunited again and the interplay that made the ries so popular will never be heard again in future episodes. wever, the over 200 episodes of the original series will main a familiar and popular attraction in syndicated reruns individual stations across the country.

Although the history of "All in the Family" was aracterized by the depths of rejection followed by the niths of accolades, there is little doubt about the consistency of its contributions to the television industry. is fact is confirmed by its list of awards and its sustained pularity during the decade of the 1970's. For five years 971-76), "All in the Family" was the highest rated program the country.[54]

"All in the Family" was controversy because it forced s audience to react in the extremities. As this article s shown, the series was acclaimed and damned by audience mbers, critics and organizations. Because of its controversy, e series became the focus of more empirical research than y other entertainment venture in history.[55] And despite e vast analysis, few concrete conclusions were drawn.

Perhaps most importantly, "All in the Family" was sponsible for raising the television industry and its mass dience to a new level of consciousness. As one observer ted:

> "All in the Family" brought the television viewers their first substantial comedy. That small screen which we looked at for years finally looked back at us and became a mirror.[56]

Because of "All in the Family," television will never be e same.

FOOTNOTES

Mike Porter received an M.A. in Communication from Memphis State University in December, 1980, where he is a part-time instructor of Speech.

[1]Rowland Barber, "Bellowing, Half-Baked, Fire-Breathing Bigotry," reprinted in TV Guide: The First 25 Years, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 183.

[2]Barbara Cady, "A Candid Conversation With the Creator Of Archie Bunker, Maude Finley, Fred Sanford and the Rest," Playboy, March, 1976, p. 62.

[3]"The Team Behind Archie Bunker & Co.," Time, September 25, 1972, p. 48.

[4]Ibid., p. 49.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Richard P. Adler, "Why Archie Bunker's Ratings Ain't So Hot.," The Wall Street Journal, February 18, 1977, p. 8.

[7]Arnold Hano, "Can Archie Bunker Give Bigotry A Bad Name?" The New York Times Magazine, March 12, 1972, p. 33.

[8]John Leonard, "Bigotry As A Dirty Joke," reprinted in All in the Family, A Critical Appraisal, Richard P. Adler, editor, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), p. 90.

[9]Hy Gardner, "Since You Asked--," The Commercial Appeal, March 24, 1980, p. 4.

[10]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. 69.

[11]Ibid., p. 89

[12]Robert Metz, CBS: Reflections In A Bloodshot Eye, (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1976), p. 334.

[13]Cady, "Interview With Creator of Archie," p. 62.

[14]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xx.

[15]"TV Speaking About the Unspeakable," Newsweek, November 29, 1971, p. 59.

[16]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xx-xxi.

[17]Metz, CBS: Bloodshot Eye, p. 332.

[18]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xxi.

[19]Metz, CBS: Bloodshot Eye, p. 333.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xxxiii.

[22]Metz, CBS: Reflections, pp. 332-3.

[23]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xxiv.

[24]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. 265.

[25]Adler, "Why Ratings Ain't So Hot," p. 8.

[26]James Lynch, "Seven Days With 'All in the Family': Case Study of the Taped TV Drama," Journal of Broadcasting, (Summer '73), pp. 260-261.

[27]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xxiv.

[28]Stuart H. Surlin and Eugene D. Tate, "All in the Family: Is Archie Funny?" Journal of Communications, Autumn '76), p. 61.

[29]Barber, "Bellowing, Half-Baked," TV Guide, p. 183.

[30]Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach, "Archie Bunker's Bigotry: A Study in Selective Perception and Exposure," Journal of Communications, (Winter '74), p. 41.

[31]John C. Brigham and Linda W. Giesbrecht, 'All in the Family': Racial Attitudes," Journal of Communications, (Autumn '76), p. 70.

[32]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xxxi.

[33]Stuart H. Surlin, "Bigotry On Air and In Life: The Archie Bunker Case," Public Telecommunications Review, April 1974, p. 40.

[34]Timothy Meyer, "Impact of 'All in the Family' On Children," Journal of Broadcasting, (Winter '76), p. 23.

[35]Charles L. Saunders, "Is Archie Bunker the Real White America?" Ebony, June, 1972, p. 188.

[36]Meyer, "'Family' On Children," p. 32.

[37]Adler, Critical Appraisal, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

[38]Barber, "Bellowing, Half-Baked," TV Guide, p. 184.

[39]Norman Lear, excerpt from album jacket of All in the Family, Atlantic Records, 1971.

[40]John Brady, "Closer and Closer To Real: An Interview With Michael Ross and Bernie West," Writer's Digest, August, 1973, p. 18.

[41]Richard Warren, "A Candid Conversation With Archbigot Archie Bunker's Better Half," Playboy, January, 1973, p. 64.

[42]Bill Davidson, "Has Archie Bunker Gone Soft?" TV Guide, November 12, 1977, p. 29.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xlii.

[45]Davidson, "Gone Soft?" p. 29.

[46]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xlii.

[47]Brady, "Closer And Closer To Real," p. 18.

[48]Adler, "Why Ratings Ain't So Hot," p. 8.

[49]Steven H. Scheuer, The Television Annual 1978-79, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979), p. 198.

[50]Davidson, "Gone Soft?" p. 29.

[51]Carroll O'Connor, "I Regret Nothing Except My Own Anger," TV Guide, September 22, 1979, p. 30.

[52]Carroll O'Connor, Tom Snyder's Celebrity Spotlight (Los Angeles: NBC-TV, June 23, 1980).

[53]Associated Press, "Edith Bunker ERA Fund Gets $500,000 From Lear," The Commercial Appeal, April 11, 1980, p. 50.

[54]Judy Fireman, TV Book: The Ultimate Television Book, (New York: Workman Publishing Company, 1977), p. 348.

[55]Adler, Critical Appraisal, p. xxix.

[56]Rick Mitz, The Great TV Sitcom Book, (New York: Richard Marek Publishers, 1980), p. 259.