

Frank Lee Graham
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One would not be far wrong if they supposed that Frank Lee Graham was born and bred to be an actor. Born in Detroit, MI on 22 November 1914, he was the son of inventor Frank Graham and opera singer Ethel Briggs Graham. As a youngster he toured with his mother, becoming familiar with the stage and stagecraft at an early age. The family moved to Seattle in 1920 and he made his first appearance on radio in 1931 while a member of a local repertory company that was on contract to do network commercials. After high school Graham attended the University of California for one year but, as was perhaps inevitable, he left college after a year to start an acting career back in Seattle.

In 1937 Graham was hired by CBS to work for their Hollywood radio station KNX. Graham quickly became known for his exceptional voicing abilities and had regular work as an announcer for the radio shows of stars such as Rudy Vallee and Nelson Eddy. He also worked with Disney, MGM and Warner brothers giving voice to a variety of animated characters. His voice seemed to have endless permutations to the point where, in one show, *Night Cap Yarns*, where he played **ALL** the characters.

While Graham truly lived up to his nickname, “the man of a thousand voices,” he also found a few roles in various films, but it was radio that was his main bailiwick. On radio Graham is best known for his role as the wandering vaquero in *The Romance of the Ranchos* and for his portrayal of *Jeff Regan, Investigator*. But he also claims credits on *Lum and Abner*, *The Cavalcade of America*, *The Columbia Workshop*, *Command Performance*, *Stars Over Hollywood*, and *The Whistler*.

Graham is known to have worked on at least 57 movies and three documentaries, mostly doing uncredited voiceover work. He did earn the lead role in the 1943 movie *The Adventures of Cosmo Jones*. This was a result of a radio show of the same name, in which Graham wrote and played all the parts. However, live parts were elusive, perhaps due to his small stature; 5’ 7” and 125 lbs. In addition, Graham co-created with Van Des Auteis the programs *Satan’s Waitin’* and *Sing for Your Supper*.

Graham’s life ended tragically. Two years after divorcing his wife in 1948, he committed suicide on September 2, 1950. Friends discovered him dead of carbon monoxide poisoning in his own car at his own home. His will made it clear that his motive for taking his life was because Mildred Rossi, an animator at Wald Disney, could not decide whether “he was good enough for her or not”. He left much of his estate to his ex-wife.

Information for this biography was taken from the Internet Movie Database, *Billboard* magazine, the Tralfaz blog, and Wikipedia.