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Rudel, Anthony J. *Hello, Everybody: The Dawn of American Radio*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2008.

When listeners turn on the radio to listen to classical music or to political commentary during election years, they do not know how much they take the radio for granted or how modern society has evolved due to the development of radio broadcasting. In his 2008 book *Hello, Everybody: The Dawn of American Radio*, historical author and former radio host Anthony J. Rudel explores the early days of radio broadcasting in the 1920s and how it changed the course of history through American politics, religion, sports, and entertainment. *Throughout the book, Rudel uses humor and vivid descriptions to go along with exotic and interesting characters to explore the evolution of radio broadcasting, although he fails to elaborate on relevant topics that a historian would read on the subject.*

In his well-researched and informative book, Rudel uses information from primary and secondary sources from the past century to support his claim *that radio broadcasting helped change American society for the better*. From the invention of the Marconi wireless transmitter to the start of the Great Depression, *Hello Everybody* explores the history of radio broadcasting through the eyes of important figures and how they shaped events in American history. When exploring how radio broadcasting helped changed America, Rudel examines the ripple effect American politics (specifically Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover's contributions to the medium) had on the spread of radio stations along impacting radio had on mass media and the general public (e.g. the love/hate relationship between newspapers or how Father Coughlin used radio to spread anti-Semitic propaganda). While the book also examines the background of famous figures ranging from quack doctors to U.S. presidents, Rudel uses his research to help challenge readers on how certain historical individuals were commonly viewed by historians (e.g. Herbert Hoover is infamously known for failing to fix the country's economy during the

Great Depression, but his accomplishments as Secretary of Commerce shed new light on his motivations).

Using his background as a decade-old radio host for WXQR New York, *Rudel uses his sources to explain the history of radio broadcasting and uses them accordingly*. When analyzing the sources in the bibliography, the adequate sources originate from historical books written by Rudel's peers in the last thirty years, newspaper articles published during the Roaring Twenties, and personal memoirs (mainly from Herbert Hoover). To verify the research with his sources within the bibliography, there are detailed endnotes at the very end of the book organized by chapters and it provides a page-by-page breakdown of the endnote which helps the reader learn where the text came from. Due to the massive amount of people, places, and events in the book, Rudel wisely uses a large detailed index sorted in alphabetical orders at the very end of the book and it helps readers search for a specific topic.

Throughout the book, Rudel organizes the fifteen chapters in the book through chronological order and *it helps creates a steady flowing pace and helps the reader better understand the content*. Even though explaining the history of radio broadcasting to a young adult audience would be difficult for an average historian to accomplish, Rudel provides background information and necessary exposition in the first few chapters without unnecessary exposition and refrains from using footnotes to redirect the reader to other sections within the book. To further familiarize readers with the time period, Rudel utilizes important U.S. historical events (the 1912 sinking of the *Titanic* or the Teapot Dome Scandal of 1929) to set the background for the upcoming chapters while avoiding reiterating common knowledge. Since the book was intended for a young adult audience, Rudel uses a humorous tone (demonstrated when

discussing outrageous characters such as Dr. John Brinkley or Sister Aimee Semple McPherson) and simplifies terminology to create a steady-flowing pace and interesting book to the audience.

Once the reader reaches the middle portion of the book, Rudel organizes the chapters into *several categories based on the impact of radio broadcasting: American politics, religion, sports, and entertainment*. While American politics is covered in several chapters due to the government's importance in setting up radio stations across the nation, the entertainment (focusing primary on Rudy Vallee's variety shows and vaudeville shows) and religious aspects (Chapter 10 goes into great detail about shady evangelists and is easily the best chapter in the book due to exploring the business strategies and motivations of evangelists) get their moments to shine and Rudel does an excellent time tying each chapter to one another. Even though major league sports were popular entertainment events during the Roaring Twenties, Rudel only provides radio transcripts of select sporting events (ex. the infamous 1919 World Series) and does not elaborate enough on the impact radio broadcasting had on fans viewing the games.

Even though *Hello, Everybody: The Dawn of American Radio* does a nice job explaining the history of radio broadcasting to the reader, there are several minor flaws since there are instances where there is not enough coverage of certain subjects from a historian's perspective. Since Rudel intended *Hello Everyone* to be read by a young adult audience, he covers only the important aspects of radio broadcasting and events occurring within the United States even though historians would prefer to examine the worldwide aspect of radio broadcasting. While it is important for authors to write their books to readers of different ages and backgrounds, the main reason Rudel uses his writing style for his readers to prevent explaining the technological aspect (how a radio works) or irrelevant historical events (e.g. how radio stations were operated in a third world country). Although Rudel does an excellent job balancing his chapters to his

readers, there are two topics within the book that are not elaborated on enough. The only minor flaws of the book is that Rudel never fully explores the relationship between newspapers and radio broadcasting or discusses how radio broadcasting used by the military. Even though Rudel covers the love/hate relationship between newspaper and radio, he never fully explores the economic impact of radio sales on newspapers and if the newspaper industry was ever threaten of the rise of radio. Since the book is set between the two Worlds Wars, Rudel never explores how the U.S. military used radio broadcasting for their own personal uses or how the technology has evolved to the outbreak of the Second World War and it feels like a missed opportunity for Rudel to explore.

Despite having flaws with its content and organization, *Hello, Everybody: The Dawn of American Radio* is an enjoyable read for any young adult or historian interested in radio or any form of mass media. By exploring how radio broadcasting helped changed American history, Rudel perfectly uses primary and secondary sources in his research and well organized chapters to deliver an enjoyable book. Although the book has minor flaws and does not cover certain topics that historians would enjoy, Rudel balances the content without sacrificing important chapters or impacting the fluid writing style. Once reading *Hello, Everybody: The Dawn of American Radio*, it is Rudel's hope that readers learns how radio broadcasting was developed along with not taking technology for granted the next time they listen to the radio.