

## November 1, 2021

The Addams Family is a fictional household created by American cartoonist Charles Addams in 1938. They were originally published in The New Yorker magazine between 1938 and 1988.

Charles Addams drew some 1,300 New Yorker cartoons, but only 58 of them featured the unnamed family who remained anonymous until just before the television show debuted.

Addams's popular 1959 collection, Dear Dead Days: A Family Album, features the primary six characters, but the television patriarch's name of "Gomez" didn't come in until actor John Astin adopted him. Addams preferred the name Repelli, a play on repellent. Charles Addams also suggested Pubert to be Pugsley's name, but network censors found it too risqué.

In accordance with Addams's wishes, he was cremated, and his ashes were interred in the pet cemetery of his estate "The Swamp".

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**Vampira** - Maila Nurmi was born Maila Elizabeth Syrjäniemi (pronounced Soory-ya-nemy) in Gloucester, Massachusetts. However, during her career, Nurmi claimed to have been born in Petsamo, Finland. The daughter of a Finnish immigrant, Nurmi was raised in Astoria, Oregon and relocated to Los Angeles in 1940 with hopes of being an actress. On Broadway, she gained much attention after appearing in the horror-themed midnight show Spook Scandals, in which she screamed, fainted, lay in a coffin, and seductively lurked about a mock cemetery. She also worked as a showgirl for the Earl Carroll Theatre.

In 1953, the idea for Vampira character was a result of Nurmi attending choreographer Lester Horton's annual Bal Caribe Masquerade in a costume inspired by **Morticia Addams** in The New Yorker cartoons of Charles Addams. Her appearance caught the attention of television producer Hunt Stromberg, Jr. He wanted to hire her to host horror movies on the Los Angeles television station KABC-TV. The name Vampira came from Nurmi's husband, Dean Riesner, a former child actor in silent films and later the screenwriter of *Dirty Harry*, *Charley Varrick*, *Play Misty for Me*, and many other movies and television programs. On April 30, 1954, KABC-TV aired a preview, *Dig Me Later, vampira*, at 11:00 p.m. The *vampira Show* premiered on the following night, May 1, 1954. When her KABC series was cancelled in 1955, Nurmi retained rights to the character of Vampira and took the show to a competing Los Angeles television station, KHJ-TV.

On June 15, 1954, Nurmi appeared as Vampira in a horror-themed comedy skit on *The Red Skelton Show* along with Béla Lugosi and Lon Chaney, Jr. Although Nurmi did not receive billing, she played Malice on *The Honeymooners* sketch with Peter Lorre as Ralph and Red Skelton as Ed during the *Red Skelton Show* on January 18, 1955. She also starred in a guest spot on the April 2, 1955 episode of *The George Gobel Show*. Her best remembered film appearance was in Ed Wood's *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, as a Vampira-like zombie.

Nurmi also ran as a candidate for Night Mayor of Hollywood with a platform of "dead issues".

By 1962, Maila Nurmi was making a living installing linoleum flooring. According to Nurmi, "And if things are slow in linoleum,

I can also do carpentry, make drapes or refinish furniture", she told the Los Angeles Times.

In the early 1960s, Nurmi opened Vampira's Attic, an antiques boutique on Melrose Avenue where she also sold handmade jewelry and clothing. She made items for several celebrities, which included Grace Slick from *Jefferson Airplane* and the Frank Zappa family.

In 1981, Nurmi was asked by local Los Angeles station KHJ-TV to resurrect her Vampira character for television. In return for receiving an Executive Producer credit, she worked closely with the producers of the new show. In time, Nurmi left the project over creative differences when the producers would not hire Lola Falana to play Vampira. According to Nurmi, this was because the station cast comedic actress Cassandra Peterson in the part without consulting her. "They eventually called me in to sign a contract and she was there", Nurmi told *Bizarre* magazine in 2005. "They had hired her without asking me. Cassandra would go on to become popular as Elvira - Mistress of the Dark.

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## **21 Chester Place - The Addams House**

Construction began in November of 1887. It was officially listed in the 1888 Los Angeles City Directory off of Adams Street, in Los Angeles, California, on 2.25-acres that was just east of St. James Park. Built in what is today called the West Adams District, just southwest of downtown, it was located in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, with most buildings being erected between 1880-1925.

In 1911, newlyweds Gorham Tufts Jr., and his new millionaire widow bride, Jenny Henry Scranton-Roe purchased the house. They moved into 21 Chester Place in April 1911, with Gorham's two sons from a previous marriage.

1915 Los Angeles City Directory – First year in directory that shows that James H. and Lillian Adams are living in the house (first set of renters). Lillian continued to live there until 1932.

According to the 1940 Census, Paul and Helen Grafe were renting 21 Chester Place. They were there for around 25 years until the city forced them out. They were the occupants of the house during the transition from neighborhood to college campus (in the early 60s), as well as during the time when Hollywood came knocking to use the house in a Motion Picture. Just a few months later, television producers came knocking on the door to use the house for a TV sitcom called "The Addams Family."

The house was sold and demolished sometime between June and October in 1967. Where the Addams house once stood, is today a track and field for the Frank D. Lanterman High School.

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**The Addams Family** - Episode Title: Mother Lurch Visits The Addams Family. Aired on ABC Friday evening at 8:30PM on January 15, 1965.

The television series was shot in black-and-white and aired for two seasons in 64 one half-hour episodes from September 18, 1964 to September 2, 1966. The series was filmed at General Service Studios (today known as Sunset Las Palmas Studios) located at 1040 North Las Palmas, Hollywood, California.

"Thing" was played by the hands of Ted Cassidy and the show's assistant director Jack Voglin. When Lurch and "Thing" had scenes together, Voglin's hand was used for "Thing". Cassidy's hand was used for all other "Thing" scenes.

**Carolyn Jones** - was Charles Addams' personal choice to play Morticia on *The Addams Family*. She was born Carolyn Sue Jones in Amarillo, Texas. She was spotted by a talent scout at the Pasadena Playhouse, which led to a contract with Paramount Pictures. In 1953, she married aspiring filmmaker Aaron Spelling\*. Having little success as an actor, Carolyn urged him to become a writer. She constantly promoted his scripts whenever she could. Eventually, Spelling was ultimately hired by Dick Powell. By 1965, the two had divorced, but remained friends.

\*Aaron Spelling would go on to produce and executive produce shows such as *Family*, *Charlie's Angels*, *The Love Boat*, *Hart to Hart*, *Dynasty*, *Beverly Hills, 90210*, *Melrose Place*, *7th Heaven*, and *Charmed*. He also served as producer of *Mod Squad*, *The Rookies* and *Sunset Beach*.

In 1953, Jones was cast in the film *From Here to Eternity*. Unfortunately, a bout with pneumonia forced Carolyn to withdraw from the film. The role went to Donna Reed who would go on to win the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. Jones did achieve success with *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* from 1956. That same year, Alfred Hitchcock cast her in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. The following year, Carolyn made a memorable appearance in *The Bachelor Party* which earned her an Academy Award nomination. In 1958, she won the Golden Globe Award and the Laurel Award for *Marjorie Morningstar*. In her post-Addams Family years, she auditioned for *Three's Company* in the

role of Mrs. Helen Roper, but lost to Audra Lindley. Regarding her role as Morticia Addams, she said, "I loved that show. I was sorry to see it go. Morticia was the perfect role for me because my sense of humor is just slightly off-center."

**John Allen Astin** - attended Washington and Jefferson College where he graduated from Johns Hopkins University and did graduate work at the University of Minnesota. Has played Gomez Addams on three different series: *The Addams Family*, *The New Scooby-Doo Movies* and the 1992 version of *The Addams Family*. He played a lead role on three television series: *I'm Dickens, He's Fenster* (with Marty Ingels and Emmaline Henry) ; *The Addams Family* and *Operation Petticoat*.

**Jackie Coogan** - was born into a family of vaudevillians. While performing on the stage, he was spotted by Charlie Chaplin who gave him a small part in *A Day's Pleasure* from 1919. The film *The Kid* from 1921 with Chaplin and Coogan was very successful. Jackie Coogan was a popular child star throughout the 1920's. When his father died, his mother married Arthur Bernstein, who was his business manager. When Coogan, then 21 years old, wanted the money that he made as a child star in the 1920s, his mother and stepfather refused his request. Jackie filed suit for the approximately \$4 million that he had made. Under California law at the time, he had no rights to the money he made as a child. He was awarded only \$126,000 in 1939. Because of the public uproar, the California Legislature passed the Child Actors Bill, also known as the Coogan Act, which would set up a trust fund for any child actor and protect his earnings. By the time he was cast as Uncle Fester, Coogan was 50 years old and nearly broke. After the series ended in 1966, he made numerous television and film appearances.

**Blossom Rock** - Her full name is Edith Marie Blossom MacDonald. She married vaudevillian Clarence Rock in 1926. Their marriage lasted for nearly 34 years until his death in 1960. In 1938, she became established as "Sally" the phone operator in the Dr. Kildare film series with Lew Ayres. Her younger sister was Jeanette MacDonald. The two sisters played vaudeville houses in Philadelphia while still youngsters. After retiring, she lived at the Motion Picture Country Home in Calabasas, California.

**Ted Cassidy** was 6' 9" tall. He played one season of college basketball in Florida at Stetson University in the 1950s where he averaged 17 points and 10 rebounds a game. Provided the voice of Lurch in the 1973 animated series *The Addams Family*. Jackie Coogan did the voice of Uncle Fester. Cassidy was also Lurch in an episode of *Batman* titled *The Penguin's Nest*. Cassidy narrated the opening credits of television's *The Incredible Hulk* and provided the Hulk's growls and roars for the first two seasons.

An accomplished musician, Cassidy moonlighted at Luby's Cafe at the Lochwood shopping center in Dallas, playing the organ to entertain patrons.

Lurch was supposed to be silent, as in the Charles Addams cartoons, but during the shooting of the pilot, when Ted made his very first appearance at the sounding of the gong, he ad libbed the now famous line, "You rang?" in his deep trademark voice.

When he wasn't on-screen, Cassidy played "Thing", the hand who assisted the Addams' household.

In 1965, Cassidy released a seven-inch vinyl on Capitol Records with two songs; "The Lurch", written by Gary S. Paxton, and "Wesley," written by Cliffie Stone and Scott Turner. He introduced

the dance and performed the song "The Lurch" on September 11, 1965 on *Shivaree*, and again on Halloween of the same year on *Shindig!*

His theatrical work included *Mackenna's Gold* (1969) and *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* (1977) among others, but his most memorable role was as "Harvey Logan" in *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid* in 1969. He also co-wrote the screenplay for 1973's *The Harrad Experiment*, in which he made a brief appearance.

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**Lisa Loring** and **Ken Weatherwax** as Wednesday and Pugsley.

**Ellen Corby** - Among her 265 film and television credits, Ellen Corby will always be remembered as Grandma Walton in *The Waltons*. She grew up in Philadelphia and left for Hollywood in the early 1930's to become an actress. She began her career working as a script assistant for twelve years.

In *I Remember Mama* (1948), Corby won a nomination for Best Supporting Actress. She had replaced Jessica Tandy as Aunt Trina after Tandy dropped out of the project in order to pursue a role in *A Woman's Vengeance*.

She once said "I can't go anywhere without meeting someone I worked with. When the children on 'The Waltons' heard that I worked with Laurel and Hardy, I was in". Corby's husband (from 1934 to 1944), Francis Corby, was a cinematographer at the Hal Roach Studios on many films of Our Gang and Laurel & Hardy. Ellen appeared as an uncredited extra (very briefly) in Laurel & Hardy's *Sons Of The Desert*.

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**The Munsters** - Episode Title: Herman's Diving Test - Aired at 7:30PM on Thanksgiving evening, Thursday, November 25, 1965 on CBS.

This episode was filmed on Stage 30 at Universal Studios. Other shows filmed on this stage were *Leave It To Beaver*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *The Bionic Woman*, *The Rockford Files* and the courthouse interior for the feature film *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

*The Munsters* was produced by **Joe Connelly** and **Bob Mosher** who created or developed many television programs such as *Tammy*, *Ichabod and Me*, *Calvin and the Colonel*, *Blondie*, *Bringing Up Buddy*, *Pistols 'n' Petticoats* and *90 Bristol Court*, which consisted of three situation comedies airing in back-to-back-to-back half-hour programs -- *Karen*, *Harris Against the World* and *Tom, Dick and Mary*. *Leave It To Beaver* is their most remembered credit.

Kayro (or Kayro-Vue) was primarily a television production company that produced *Leave It To Beaver* as well as a series of *Blondie* films. Their only animation endeavor was 1961's *Calvin and the Colonel*. Kayro was for the first names of their wives (Joe's wife Kathryn or Kay and Bob's wife).

**Joan Marshall** - (Phoebe Munster) - was signed by CBS and appeared on such television shows as *The Jack Benny Program* and *The Red Skelton Hour*. Joan was a regular on the 1959 television series *Bold Venture* as the character Sailor Duval. It was The producers decided that Joan Marshall's Phoebe looked too much like Morticia Addams. As a result, her Munster character

was replaced. Among her other television credits are *77 Sunset Strip*, *Hawaiian Eye* and *Maverick*. She also worked as Barbra she also appeared as Lt. Areel Shaw in the Star Trek episode "Court Martial". Streisand's personal assistant on the 1976 film *A Star Is Born*. Joan Marshall was married five times and had three children with her first two husbands.

**Nate "Happy" Derman** (Eddie Munster) - was too nasty as Eddie according to the producers. He was replaced. In addition to this one time appearance on *The Munsters*, he had small parts on *Mr. Ed*, *The Jack Benny Program*, *The Joey Bishop Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies* during his brief career.

Grandpa, Eddie Munster, and Herman Munster, played by Al Lewis, Butch Patrick, and Fred Gwynne, respectively, weren't what the producers had in mind at the start.

**John Carradine** was in the running for Herman Munster.

**Bert Lahr**, the actor who played the lion in the movie "Wizard of Oz," was the first choice for the role of Grandpa.

**Billy Mummy** was the first choice for the role of Eddie Munster.

**Beverly Owen** - appeared as Marilyn Munster for the first 13 episodes. After leaving the show, she married producer Jon Stone in 1966 and had two daughters during their marriage. They divorced in 1974. Beverley earned a Master degree in Early American History in 1989.

The first season's opening credits were a spoof on *The Donna Reed Show's* opening sequence.

**Fred Gwynne** - In 1954, he made his first film appearance in an uncredited role as Slim in the Academy Award winning feature *On the Waterfront*. Gwynne also made a memorable appearance on *The Phil Silvers Show* in the episode "The Eating Contest" as the character Corporal Ed Honneger. After his second appearance on this show, this led writer-producer Nat Hiken to cast him in the sitcom *Car 54, Where Are You?* as Patrolman Francis Muldoon.

Gwynne was quoted as saying in later life, "I might as well tell you the truth. I love old Herman Munster. Much as I try not to, I can't stop liking that fellow". Herman Munster was ranked #19 in TV Guide's list of the "50 Greatest TV Dads of All Time."

In addition to his acting career, Gwynne sang professionally, painted, sculpted along with writing and illustrating children's books. His final film appearance was in the 1992 comedy as Judge Chamberlain Haller in *My Cousin Vinny*.

**Yvonne DeCarlo** - was born Margaret Yvonne Middleton on September 1, 1922 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Her nickname was "Peggy" because she was named after the silent film star Baby Peggy (Diana Serra Cary). Originally, she wanted to be a writer.

She chose her own stage name by using her middle name and her mother's maiden name of De Carlo. She later explained that she changed her name because she did not look like the all-American girl next door.

Received fifth star billing (after Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner, Anne Baxter, and Edward G. Robinson) in Best Picture Academy Award nominee *The Ten Commandments* (1956), the most important and famous film of her career and one of her personal favorites.

Took the role of Lily Munster on *The Munsters* (1964) to help pay husband Bob Morgan's medical bills. Morgan, an actor and stuntman, had suffered near-fatal injuries while filming *How the West Was Won* (1962). By her own admission, De Carlo never imagined, at the time, that Lily Munster would become one of her most famous roles.

By the time she replaced Joan Marshall in the role of Lily Munster, both Fred Gwynne and Al Lewis were not pleased. They had never met her and were intimidated by her reputation as a Hollywood glamour queen. They changed their minds when they noticed she really could play comedy.

Though Al Lewis played De Carlo's father on *The Munsters* (1964), Lewis was actually one year her junior.

Holds the distinction of portraying the wives of both Moses (Zipporah) and Herman Munster (Lily).

**Al Lewis** - was a hot dog vendor at Ebbets Field, the former ballpark for the then Brooklyn Dodgers. He also worked as a salesman, waiter, pool room owner, store detective, circus clown and vaudeville performer.

Although he claimed to have a Ph.D. in child psychology from Columbia University, the university has no record of it, under his stage name or his real name, Alexander Meister.

In 1949, at the suggestion of a friend, Lewis turned to acting and joined the Paul Mann Actor's Workshop in New York. Lewis worked in burlesque and vaudeville theaters across the country, which eventually led to Broadway. By the 1950s, television was becoming popular and Lewis took advantage of the work appearing on almost every "live" show out of his home base of New York City. His most memorable roles in television were Officer Leo Schnauser on *Car 54, Where Are You?* and Grandpa on *The Munsters*.

Lewis wanted to audition for the role of Grandpa Munster on the 1988 *Munsters Today* television program. He was told that he was too old for the part. Lewis responded, "The man is 200 years old for \*\$@%\$\*!"

**Pat Priest** - was born Patricia Ann Priest on August 15, 1936 in Bountiful, Utah. Her mother, Ivy Baker Priest, served as United States Treasurer from 1953 to 1961. She also was California's State Treasurer from 1966 to 1974.

She was one of several women who auditioned for the role of Mary Ann Summers on *Gilligan's Island*, which went to Dawn Wells.

Pat was in the San Francisco Bay area, in 1964, when she got the call from Hollywood as a possible replacement for lookalike actress Beverley Owen, the original Marilyn Munster, who was leaving the series to get married. According to Priest, "I tested for the part on a Wednesday, they called me on Thursday, I

signed the contracts on a Friday and started working on Monday. That was my big break.”

Her one-joke premise revolved around her feeling abnormal amid her unusual looking relatives. Other than a few guest roles in such series as *Bewitched*, *Perry Mason*, *The Virginian* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, the acting roles grew scarce. Deemed too old to play Marilyn after the series was canceled (she was 29), she was replaced by redheaded Debbie Watson for the feature film, *Munster, Go Home!* (1966), which included the rest of her series cast.

She appeared with Elvis Presley in *Easy Come, Easy Go* in 1967 and also the cult horror film, *The Incredible 2-Headed Transplant*, which co-starred Bruce Dern and Casey Kasem. She made \$5000 for that role. Pat finally retired from acting in the 1980's, but still attends many of the nostalgic conventions and Munsters revivals around the country. At last report, she was restoring and selling homes in Idaho, where she had lived for over 20 years.

In 1995, Pat Priest made a cameo appearance with her former co-stars, Yvonne DeCarlo, Al Lewis and Butch Patrick in the TV movie, *Here Come The Munsters*. The old cast played the roles of guests in a restaurant where the waiter, Herman Munster (played by Edward Hermann) serves them.

*Here Come The Munsters* (1995) - Edward Hermann (Herman), Veronica Hamel (Lily), Robert Morse (Grandpa), Christine Taylor (Marilyn) and Mathew Botuchis (Eddie).

**Butch Patrick** - was born Patrick Alan Lilley. Utilizing his nickname of Butch and real first name, his agent Mary Grady and his mom Patti created the stage name, Butch Patrick. His early

career appearances included roles on *Mister Ed*, *My Favorite Martian*, *The Untouchables*, *The Detectives*, *Ben Casey*, *Rawhide*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Real McCoys* and *Bonanza*.

In 1975, Patrick left acting to work for his father and began to learn to play the bass guitar. In 1983, he recorded the song, "Whatever Happened To Eddie?", with several instrumentalists and backup singers under the group name "Eddie and the Monsters." Set to the tune of the *Munsters* theme, the song details his life as a Munster.

In "Herman and Dodgers" episode - Ken Hunt was Butch Patrick's step-father. Hunt played the catcher in this episode.

In 2010, Patrick entered a rehab facility in New Jersey to address his 40 year addiction to drugs and alcohol which began when he was a teenager. In time, he beat the addiction and has been happily married since 2016.

**Mel Blanc** - The raven was voiced by Mel Blanc, who at the time was among the most celebrated voice actors in the history of the industry, successfully creating almost 500 unique voices for a long list of cartoons and animated movies.

**Charles Ruggles** - had one of the longest careers in Hollywood, lasting more than 50 years and encompassing more than 100 films. He made his film debut in 1914 in *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* and worked steadily after that. In addition to his many film roles, he appeared on such television programs as *Bewitched*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Burke's Law*, *The Bullwinkle Show* and *The Red Skelton Hour*.

**Irwin Charone** - making his second appearance on *The Munsters* along with five guest roles on *Bewitched*. He served for three years with the Army Signal Corps during World War II. Charone trained for acting at the Goodman Theatre School, the Art Institute of Chicago and the American Theatre Wing of New York.

**Francis DeSales** - His television career dates back to 1950 with over 170 appearances. DeSales, played the regular part of Lt. Bill Weigand on *Mr. & Mrs. North*, plus multiple roles on *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Two Faces West*, *Perry Mason* and *Marcus Welby, M. D.*

In 1965, *The Munsters* was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series, but lost to *The Rogues*. In the 21st century, *The Munsters* received several TV Land Award nominations, including one for Herman Munster as the Most Uninsurable Driver.

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The exterior shots were filmed on the Universal Studios backlot. The house could be seen in the background on many shows such as *Abbott and Costello Meet the Invisible Man* (1951), plus television episodes of *Leave it to Beaver*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Dragnet*; *Murder, She Wrote* and *Desperate Housewives* (2004 - 2012). It was also the home of the family in the Shirley Jones comedy/drama series, *Shirley*.

**Kenneth Strickfaden** was a genius of illusionary special effects from silent films to the golden age of television. He set the standard for Hollywood's mad scientists. Strickfaden created the science fiction apparatus in more than 100 motion picture films and television programs, from 1931's *Frankenstein* to *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Mask of Fu Manchu* to television's *The Munsters*. The skilled technician, known around Hollywood's back lots as "Mr. Electric," once doubled for Boris Karloff in a dangerous scene and was nearly electrocuted.

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