



Marjorie Main: The Life and Films of Hollywood's "Ma Kettle"

Michelle Vogel

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She was a slum mother, witty housekeeper, nosy neighbor, meddling maid, town gossip, and most memorably, Ma Kettle. Marjorie Main is best remembered for her portrayal of the farm mother of 15 children and wife of shiftless Pa Kettle. The characters were introduced in the 1945 film *The Egg and I*, and were such a hit that eight films followed. At an age when most actresses' careers are waning, Main's star was just beginning to rise. In real life, Main was as down to earth as characters she played. Her attire on the set and around her house were the same: a simple cotton house dress or jeans. She preferred riding the bus because she enjoyed interacting with regular people--the inspiration for her characters.

This book chronicles Main's childhood on an Indiana farm and the inspirations that led her to the stage. After a distinguished theater career and minor film roles, at age 50 she was offered a long-term contract with premier studio MGM. Details of her acting career and personal life covered here include her marriage to a scholarly widower 26 years her senior, and her work with actor Percy Kilbride, who was the antithesis of his character, the slothful Pa Kettle. A detailed filmography includes cast and credit lists and trivia about each of Main's 85 films.

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