"All the News a Citizen Needs."

# The Metropolitan Gazette

**WEATHER**
Fair and cooler today; light winds.

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# RADIO DRAMA OF MARTIAN INVASION SPREADS PANIC ACROSS THE NATION

## THOUSANDS BELIEVE "NEWS BULLETINS" IN ORSON WELLES PLAY ARE REAL — POLICE SWITCHBOARDS FLOODED

### FAMILIES FLEE HOMES IN NEW JERSEY

*Many Listeners Missed the Opening Announcement That the Program Was Fiction*

**NEW YORK, Oct. 30.** — A wave of fear swept across the country tonight when a radio play, presented as a series of news reports, told listeners that creatures from Mars had landed in New Jersey and were destroying everything in their path.

The program was an adaptation of H. G. Wells's novel *The War of the Worlds*, performed by Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air over the Columbia Broadcasting System. It began at 8 o'clock with what sounded like an ordinary evening of dance music.

Within minutes the music was interrupted by "bulletins" reporting explosions on Mars, then a strange object falling near the village of Grover's Mill, New Jersey. Actors playing reporters, scientists and soldiers described tall machines rising from the crater and attacking with a deadly heat-ray.

The play was introduced as fiction, but thousands of listeners switched over from other stations after it had started and heard only the alarming "reports." Many did not stop to check before acting.

Across the country, people telephoned newspapers and police to ask whether the world was ending. In New Jersey, families wrapped damp cloths around their faces against "poison gas" and drove away from their homes. Hospitals treated a number of persons for shock.



*A New Jersey family waits for news on Sunday evening. In many homes, listeners believed the reports were real.*

### F.C.C. TO STUDY BROADCAST

*Chairman Asks Network for a Copy of the Script*

**WASHINGTON, Oct. 31.** — The Federal Communications Commission announced today that it will examine last night's broadcast. Chairman Frank R. McNinch has asked the network to send a copy of the script and a recording of the program.

Some members of Congress called for new rules to stop radio stations from presenting fiction in the form of news. Others warned that the Government must not become a censor of radio programs.

### WELLES REGRETS FRIGHT

*Young Actor Says He Did Not Expect Such a Reaction*

Orson Welles, the 23-year-old director and star of the program, told reporters today that he was deeply sorry for the alarm it had caused.

He said that no one at the theatre had imagined the story would be taken as true. The novel, he pointed out, is forty years old, and the play was meant only as entertainment for the night before Halloween.

At the end of the broadcast, Mr. Welles had told listeners that the play was simply the Mercury Theatre's way of jumping out of a bush and saying "Boo!"

### HOW THE HOUR UNFOLDED

**8:00 P.M.** — Announcer introduces the Mercury Theatre and Wells's novel.

**Minutes later** — Dance music is cut off by a "bulletin" about explosions on Mars.

**Soon after** — A "meteor" lands at Grover's Mill, N. J. A "reporter" describes a creature leaving it.

**Next** — The Martians' heat-ray strikes; "troops" are defeated; New York is "invaded."

**About 8:40** — Station break. The program is again named as a play.

**9:00 P.M.** — Mr. Welles ends with a Halloween message.

### GROVER'S MILL CALM

Residents of the small farming village said this morning that nothing unusual had happened there at all, though cars full of curious visitors arrived during the night looking for the "Martians."

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### EDITORIAL

**The Radio Scare: A Lesson in Vigilance**

Last night's events show how much power radio now holds over the public mind. A newspaper report can be read twice and compared with another; a voice in the living room speaks once, quickly, and with authority.

The broadcasters must take greater care when they mix fiction with the form of real news. But listeners, too, have a duty. Before we run into the street, we should ask a simple question: where does this information come from, and can it be checked?

### INSIDE TODAY

Listeners Tell Their Stories ..... 3
Radio Experts Debate Rules ..... 5
Who Is Orson Welles? ..... 7
Sports ..... 24