

## Betty MacDonald – Of Eggs, Plagues and Cures 1908-1958

Betty MacDonald, was born Ann Elizabeth Campbell Bard March 26, 1908 in Colorado. As a child she lived in mining camps in Idaho, Montana and Mexico, thriving on the rugged life (or did she?). She became one of America's best-loved humorists, dying of cancer February 7, 1958 at 49.

When she was only 12 years old her father died. Betty then lived with her mother and her grandmother. Gammy told and read stories to Betty every night. Betty had two sisters and one brother. Graduating from Lincoln High in Seattle, Betty attended, but didn't complete studies at the University of Washington. Instead she met Bob Haskett and married him in 1927. An insurance salesman, Bob announced on their honeymoon that he had bought a chicken farm! This was a challenging life, essentially a big chore, and Betty never took to it. They lived near Chimacum, a village just south of Port Townsend on the Olympic Peninsula.

*The Egg & I* stories derive from her experiences on the chicken farm. Having had enough, Betty divorced Bob, and moved in with her mother and sister in Seattle, taking her two girls. Betty was the first woman to work for the government at the National Recovery Administration. She married her second husband, Donald MacDonald, in 1942. She wrote nine books.

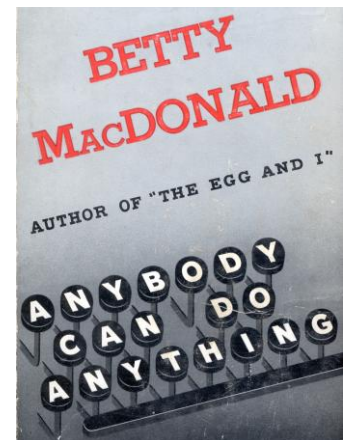
### Betty MacDonald's Works for All Ages:

All works: Philadelphia & NY: J.B. Lippincott Co.

<i>The Egg and I</i>	1945
<i>The Plague and I</i>	1948
<i>Anybody Can Do Anything</i>	1950
<i>Onions in the Stew</i>	1955

### Betty MacDonald's Works for Children:

<i>Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle</i>	1947	Illustrated: Hilary Knight
<i>Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's Magic</i>	1949	Illustrated: Hilary Knight
<i>Nancy and Plum</i>	1952	Illustrated: Hildegard Hopkins
<i>Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle's Farm</i>	1954	Illustrated: Maurice Sendak
<i>Hello Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle</i>	1957	Illustrated: Hilary Knight



**"Cry Baby Tonic," Illustration by Hilary Knight  
from *Hello Mrs. Piggle-Wiggle***

## Works Based on Betty MacDonald's Work:

*The Egg and I* 1947 Betty MacDonald & Chester Erskine – Director  
joint screenplay

Claudette Colbert	Betty MacDonald
Fred MacMurray	Bob MacDonald
Marjorie Mann	Ma Kettle
Louise Allbritton	Harriet Putnam
Percy Kilbride	Pa Kettle
Richard Long	Tom Kettle
Billy House	Billy Reed
Ida Moore	Emily: the Old Lady
Donald MacBride	Mr. Henty
Samuel S. Hinds	Sheriff
Esther Dale	Birdie Hicks
Elisabeth Risdon	Betty's Mother
John Berkes	Geoduck
Victor Potel	Crowbar
Fuzzy Knight	Cab Driver



Betty in the salad days of *Egg and I* royalties – in the Vashon Island garden (setting for *Onions in the Stew*)

Box Office Gross: \$6 million (#8/1947) Academy Award Nom: Best Supporting Actress - Marjorie Main  
This is the film in which Ma and Pa Kettle (Marjorie Main and Percy Kilbride) make their on-screen debut.

### The Ma & Pa Kettle Movies:

<i>Feudin', Fussin' and A-Fightin'</i>	1948
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle</i>	1949
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle Go to Town</i>	1950
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle Back on the Farm</i>	1951
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle at the Fair</i>	1952
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle on Vacation</i>	1953
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle at Home</i>	1954
<i>Ma and Pa Kettle at Waikiki</i>	1955
<i>The Kettles in The Ozarks</i>	1956
<i>The Kettles on Old MacDonald's Farm</i>	1957

### Major Cast Members:

Marjorie Main	Ma Kettle
Percy Kilbride	Pa Kettle
Richard Long	Tom Kettle
Meg Randall	Kim Parker
Esther Dale	Birdie Hicks

Without Percy Kilbride  
Arthur Hunnicutt as Pa's brother – Sedge Kettle  
Without Percy Kilbride

*Onions in the Stew* ...Stageplay

Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock Illinois

### Related Betty MacDonald material:

Ellis Lucia (editor), *This Land Around Us A treasury of Pacific Northwest writing*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1969 Excerpt: Betty MacDonald, *Onions in the Stew*

Blanche Caffiere, *Much Laughter, A Few Tears Memoirs of a Woman's Friendship with Berry MacDonald and Her Family*, Vashon, WA: Blue Gables Publishing, 1992

Clippings: *Seattle Times & Port Townsend Leader*, Feb. 1950

Betty MacDonald to Take Stand in 'Egg and I' Libel Suit  
'I'd Have Beat Her Up,' Witness, 75, Testifies of 'Egg and I' Author

From 'Egg' to the Kettles, MacDonald left her mark,  
Misha Berson, Seattle Times theater critic—Times website

*Nisei Daughter*, Monica Sone...Betty helped her sanatorium friend "Kimi" publish a memoir of Seattle's Japantown and her family's WWII internment.



*Discovering Oregon Originals*  
presentation by David Milholland,  
OCHC President

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