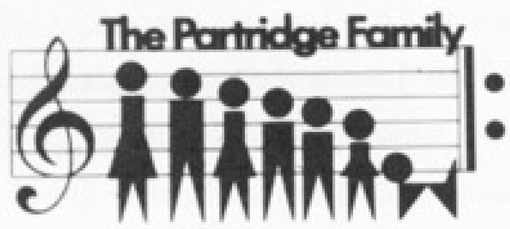
BIRTH OF A FAMILY



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In August, 1969, Bernie Slade had a contract with Screen Gems, the television subsidiary of Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc., to create three pilots a year. Slade, who had previously created "The Flying Nun," "Love On A Rooftop," and "Mr. Deeds Goes To Town" set out to create something that would be different enough to be interesting and familiar enough to sell to a network. Perhaps with "The Sound Of Music" in mind, he decided to try a combination that hadn't been tried before on television – a show that integrated music with a straight story line. The result was a pilot script titled "Family Business" and, with a title change to "The Partridge Family," the script was soon put into production.

The script was sent to Shirley Jones. She accepted the role of the mother saying that she thought "The Partridge Family" had the best chance of success of any pilot script she had ever read. Shirley added that "for a situation comedy, it was written honestly; and the Partridge's weren't a fairy-tale, candy-box family." In the weeks ahead, when just about everyone connected with the show was sure it would be a failure, Shirley did not waver from her absolute certainty that the show would be a success.

With Miss Jones set for the role of the mother, Bob Claver, the show's executive producer, began his search for five children to fill the roles of the