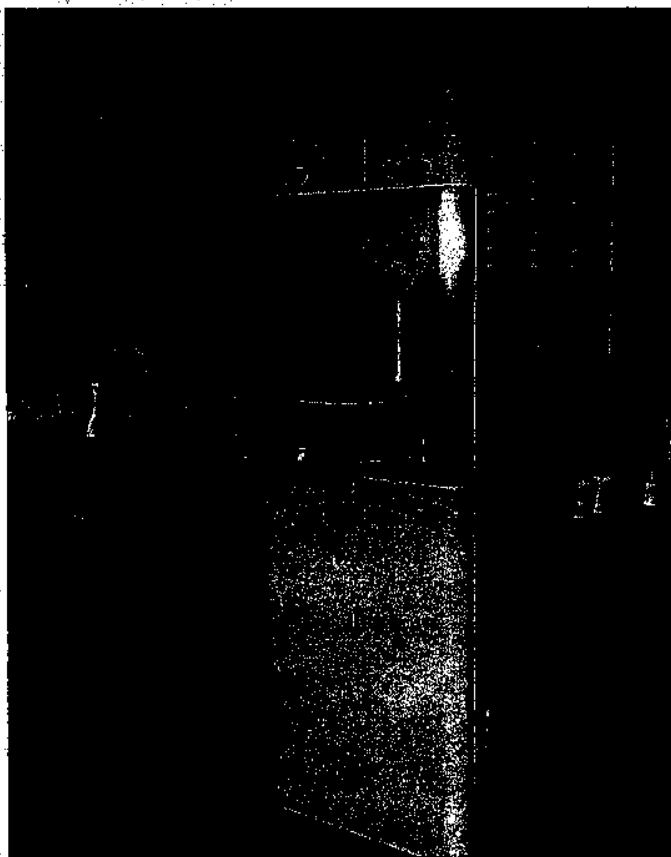


“When microwave cooking becomes established, there is no more likelihood of a return to wholly conventional cooking than a return to oil lamps.”

—DAVID COPSON OF RAYTHEON IN 1955



JEAN OLSEN DEMONSTRATES A RADARANGE MICROWAVE OVEN AT A TRADE SHOW AT THE KNICKERBOCKER HOTEL, CHICAGO.

## Waves of the future

**WHO CAN CONCEIVE** of Thanksgiving leftovers without a microwave? The mind strains to grasp it, and yet the microwave oven took more than two decades to catch on with consumers. It all started around 1945 when RAYTHEON engineer Percy Spencer noticed that a radar tube had melted a candy bar in his pocket. The first commercial RADARANGE, introduced in 1947, could cook a BURGER in a minute, sure, but it also weighed 750 POUNDS, cost thousands of dollars and required a water connection to keep it cool. A stab at the home market in the 1950s failed, but by the late '60s prices and the sheer size of the things had come down enough to make the ovens marketable. Mix in THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT and Americans' zeal for speed and convenience, and you've got a recipe for slow-cooked success. • Cost of Tappan consumer microwave in 1955: \$1,300. Cost of Amana model in 1967: \$495. • Year that microwave oven sales first exceeded gas range sales: 1975. • Number of minutes to bake a marble cake in an Easy-Bake Oven: 12. • Number of seconds of microwave zapping after which a Twinkie will pour out smoke (kids, do not attempt): 30.