**Before They Were Famous**

**They first starred in ads:   
Haley Joel Osment -- Pizza Hut commercials, age 4   
Reese Witherspoon -- local commercials for flower shop, age 7   
Alyson Hannigan -- McDonald’s and Oreos commercials, age 4   
Chris O’Donnell -- McDonald’s counter boy, age 17 (served Michael Jordan). *(World Features Syndicate)***

**In her first television appearance in 1954, Lauren Bacall recited the poem “Casey at the Bat.” *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 9)***

**Lucille Ball was at one time the “Chesterfield Girl,” a spokeswoman for the cigarette, and became hooked on them. When she did I Love Lucy, she kept her Chesterfields in a Philip Morris box, so as not to offend the sponsor of the show. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 113)***

**Six movie stars who worked in a barbershop: Henry Armetta, Charlie Chaplin, Perry Como, Greta Garbo, Harry Langdon, and Yves Montand. *(Wallace/Wallechinsky, in The Book of Lists #3, p. 304)***

**John Bartlett found many of his memorable entries for his Quotations by working in a bookstore which he later bought. *(Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 32)***

**Baseball: Memories came back for managers Rene Lachemann of Florida and Marcel Lachemann of California during last week’s owners meeting at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. Their father was a chef there, and as youngsters they worked in the hotel kitchen. *(Tracey Ringolsby, in Rocky Mountain News)*  
Baseball catcher Mike Piazza remembers the days of being batboy when the Dodgers came into Philadelphia to play the Phillies, dreaming one day of playing at Veterans Stadium. Now Piazza will be heading to Philadelphia, just outside his hometown of Phoenixville, not only as the starting catcher in the baseball All-Star Game, but the most popular player in the entire National League. *(Rick Hummel, in St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1996)***

**Bill Belichick, the head coach of the Cleveland Browns, became one of the best strategists in football as defensive coordinator of the Super Bowl champion New York Giants. But back in 1975, Belichick was just another college graduate looking for work. When he heard that Baltimore Colts head coach Ted Marchibroda needed someone to analyze game film. Belichick offered to do the job for nothing. “I worked 16-hour days for bed and board -- and a lot of football,” Belichick recalls. “I didn’t mind. All I wanted was to be a coach, like my dad. His work ethic, was ingrained in me. He taught me not to squander opportunities. *(Frank Litsky, in New York Times)***

**Irving Berlin, one of America’s great songwriters, taught himself to play the piano by practicing in a saloon where he worked as a singing waiter.  
*(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 385)***

**Albert (“Cubby”) Broccoli, the phenomenally-successful producer of the James Bond movies, was once a coffin salesman. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 36)***

**Garth Brooks is a legend of country music; his recent comeback single, “More Than a Memory,” became the highest-debuting single on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart, hitting No. 1 on its first appearance in September. Many people don’t realize, though, that not very long before his record-setting debut album, “Garth Brooks,” was released, he was working as a salesman in a boot store. *(Samantha Waver, in Tidbits, November 12, 2007)***

**Not everyone knows that George Burns once did the voice of the horse on the old “Mr. Ed” TV show. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**James Cagney’s first professional stage job was as a chorus girl wearing a red wig and tutu in a female impersonation act. *(Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks, p. 84)***

**Curtis L. Carlson (worth $1 billion) had a newspaper route and was a $110-per-month soap salesman before starting Gold Bond Trading Stamps and acquiring the Radisson Hotel and Country Kitchen chains.   
*(Paul Craig Roberts, in Reader’s Digest)***

**At the age of 12, Andrew Carnegie worked as a millhand for $1.20 a week. Half a century later, he sold his steel company for nearly $500 million. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 58)***

**Legendary lover Casanova founded the French state lottery. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Six who were cheerleaders in high school: George W. Bush, Michael Douglas, Kirk Douglas, Steve Martin, Jimmy Stewart, and Trent Lott.  
*(World Features Syndicate)***

**Kim Basinger, Raquel Welch, Dyan Cannon, Carly Simon and Steve Martin were all cheerleaders. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 91)***

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**Walter Chrysler, another giant in the automobile industry, started as a shop apprentice for a western railroad and became superintendent of locomotive power at 33. At 35 he changed to another firm, at a lower salary. At 37 he changed again, to the Buick Motor Company, this time for exactly half his previous salary. Why did Chrysler keep changing jobs, making less money each time? Not because he was incompetent -- it was for love of the new job. *(Bits & Pieces)* 4279521**

**Confucius was not always a famous philosopher. At age seventeen he was a corn inspector at the markets. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 91)*  
*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**  
Actor Sean Connery once worked as a coffin-polisher. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 36)*What did Sean Connery do before he became an actor? Polished coffins in a woodshop. His medical discharge from the Royal Navy qualified him for money to learn a trade. That was it. Wood polishing. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 201)  
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**Comedian Lou Costello, the roly-poly member of the comedy team of Abbott and Costello, once worked as a prize-fighter. In his early days at MGM, he was a stunt man and once worked as Dolores del Rio’s double. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 36)***

**Walter Cronkite, the dean of television anchormen, hosted the CBS game show It’s News to Me in 1954. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 15)**

**Ted Danson once appeared in a TV commercial as a package of lemon chiffon pie mix. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**As a young actor James Dean earned money for food by testing stunts for the TV show Beat the Clock. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 7)***

**James Dean did a Pepsi commercial. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 18)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Robert De Niro: First acting experience was playing the Cowardly Lion in a Public School 41 production of “The Wizard of Oz.” *(2002 People Almanac, p. 366)***

**Kirk Douglas played a conch ukulele and sang “Mermaid Millie” in Disney’s “20,000 Leagues under the Sea.” *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 9)***

**Actor/director Clint Eastwood was a firefighter, lumberjack, steel-mill furnace stoker, and lifeguard, so he comes by those craggy, manly good looks honestly. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**What was Albert Einstein doing for a living at the time he revolutionized physics with his three historic papers in 1905? Clerking in a Swiss patent office. Took him another five years to get an underpaid professorship at the University of Zurich. But he never did sweat the money matters much. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 243)***

**Before he went into acting, Peter Falk was an efficiency expert with the Connecticut State Budget Bureau. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Pulitzer Prize-winner William Faulkner once worked as a rum runner to make money because he couldn’t find a publisher to publish his novels. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 117)***

**The man who created one of the world’s most sought-after sports cars began his transportation career shoeing mules for the Italian army in World War I. In the 1920s, Enzo Ferrari became one of Italy’s most famous race car drivers and a designer for the Alfa Romeo racing team. In 1929 he started his own racing team, building sports cars only to help finance the team. When he died in 1988, Ferrari had sold fewer than 50,000 cars. *(Uncle John’s Unstoppable Bathroom Reader)*W. C. Fields once worked as a professional “drowner” for the owner of a concession stand in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Fields would swim out into the ocean and pretend he was drowning. A crowd would gather while he was being rescued and revived. The concession owner would sell hot dogs and ice cream to the throng and split the profits with Fields. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 34)***

**At fourteen, Charles Fillmore went to work with a printer in St. Cloud (Minnesota). As a printer’s apprentice, known then colloquially as ‘devil,” he swept floors, cleaned type, and ran a hand press; this feat he would repeat many times when, twenty-one years later, in April, 1889, he and his bride of eight years, Myrtle Page Fillmore, began publishing a small metaphysical magazine called Modern Thought. *(Dana Gatlin, in Unity’s Fifty Golden Years)***

**Hollywood’s biggest stars all had to wait for chance to smile on them, but Harrison Ford nearly gave up. The star of Star Wars, Raiders of the Lost Arkand The Empire Strikes Back didn’t have it so good back in 1967. Times were so tough that he found he couldn’t scrape by on the $150 he made from television bit parts. So he went out and borrowed a book on carpentry, bought a toolbox and moonlighted as a Mr. Fixit. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 7)***

**In a small Michigan town many years ago there was a teenage boy who liked to take watches apart. He had even made his own tools -- a corset stay became tweezers, a single nail and knitting needle became screwdrivers. The farmhouse was drafty, and to keep his feet warm against the wintry blasts, he kept a lighted lantern between them. Soon the neighbors brought in their watches for him to repair, and the thrifty farmers liked his work because he did not charge for it. He loved this precision tinkering and wanted to learn all he could about watches. As he taught himself watchmaking, with his free neighborhood service, he began to imagine possibilities of using the same precision methods to manufacture larger articles, so that their parts would be interchangeable. With interchangeable parts an assembly line would be possible. The modern assembly line was born in that farmhouse. The boy who fixed watches for his neighbors, just for the sheer love of the work, became the man who made millions of motor vehicles. Henry Ford ended up as a rich man, but that was not his goal when he set out to make cars. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Redd Foxx began his comedy career introducing strippers in the 1950s. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 6)**

**Who worked as a water boy in a mine, as a lumberjack, a garage mechanic, and spent two years acting with a tent show before achieving acting success? Clark Gable. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, The Speaker’s Sourcebook)***

**Actress Greta Garbo toiled as a latherer in a men’s barbershop. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Garibaldi, the great Italian leader, once worked as a candle-maker on Staten Island in New York. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 60)***

**James Garner, the prolific and likeable actor, has not written an autobiography, but perhaps he should – it would be a good read! He sold men’s clothing, modeled bathing suits, worked at a gas station and received a Purple Heart for his military service in Korea – all before finding stardom in the TV shows Maverick and The Rockford Files. *(American Profile magazine)***

**Eight movie stars who worked in a gas station or garage: Dana Andrews, Sebastian Cabot, Clint Eastwood, James Garner, Gene Kelly, Alan Ladd, Dean Martin, and Victor Mature. *(Wallace/Wallechinsky, in The Book of Lists, #3)***

**Their early gigs:   
Sheryl Crow -- elementary school music teacher  
Dave Matthews -- bartender  
Elvis Costello -- computer operator at Elizabeth Arden factory  
Roberta Flack -- public school music teacher  
Madonna -- coat-check girl at Russian Tea Room  
Fred Durst (Limp Bizkit) -- tattoo artist. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
Rube Goldberg, famed for his cartoons of crazy inventions, was a sewer engineer for the city of San Francisco. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 103)*  
  
Before she became an actress, Whoopi Goldberg was a mortuary cosmetologist and a bricklayer. *(Coolquiz web site)***

**Preacher Billy Graham was once considered the best Fuller Brush salesman in North Carolina. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 58)*  
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**What was Ulysses S. Grant doing when the Civil War broke out? Clerking in the family leather store in Galena. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Past performance is usually a pretty good indication of a man’s future potential--but not always. In 1860 a thirty-eight-year-old man was working as a handyman for his father, a leather merchant. He kept books, drove wagons, and handled hides for about $66 a month. Prior to this menial job the man had failed as a soldier, a farmer, and a real estate agent. Most of the people who knew him had written him off as a failure. Eight years later he was President of the United States. The man was Ulysses S. Grant. *(Bits & Pieces)  
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**Before he became one of Hollywood’s biggest actors, Gene Hackman was a cameraman for a Danville, Illinois, TV station. *(Bill Flick, 1997)***

**Richard Haydn, who became a highly successful director and actor, started his show business career imitating fish. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 12)***

**Actress Audrey Hepburn secretly worked with the Dutch Resistance as a youngster during World War II and also performed as a ballet dancer. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Actor Dustin Hoffman was once a janitor, but even that had to be easier than his other job – attendant in a mental hospital. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Before he became a comedian Bob Hope was a boxer known as Packy East. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 2)***

**Houdini’s first performances were doing card tricks and performing as a trapeze artist. *(Betty Debnam, in Denver Rocky Mountain News)***

**Sam Houston was another famous figure who started out as a school teacher. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The long-reigning romantic lead in Hollywood was discovered as a milkman. Rock Hudson couldn’t find acting work so he drove a milk truck to make ends meet. One of his customers was a talent scout who gasped at her handsome deliveryman and sent him off to a screen test. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 6)***

**We might say of Jesus on that resurrection morn, “Master, you are the Christ.” And He could well have replied, “Ah yes, but before I demonstrated mastery, I was a humble carpenter in Nazareth.” *(Eric Butterworth, in Unity magazine, 4-’94, p. 12)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Early jobs of six people:   
Aristotle Onassis -- telephone repairman  
Margaret Thatcher -- research chemist  
Martha Stewart -- model; H. G. Wells -- druggist’s apprentice  
James Ives -- bookkeeper for Nathaniel Currier  
Dr. Scholl - shoe salesman. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
Early jobs of seven famous movie directors:   
James Cameron -- a machinist and truck driver  
David Lynch -- made blueprints for architectural firm  
Billy Wilder -- a journalist; Peter Jackson -- a journatist  
Robert Altman -- made employee training films  
Stanley Kubrick -- still photographer for Life magazine  
Oliver Stone -- teacher and seaman. *(World Features Syndicate*)  
  
One of my first office jobs was cleaning the windows on the envelopes. *(Rita Rudner)*  
Early jobs of famous entertainers:   
Brad Pitt -- “chicken” at an El Pollo Loco restaurant  
Steve Buscemi -- a New York City fireman  
Chrisma Carpenter -- San Diego Charger cheerleader  
Matt LeBlanc -- in Heinz commercials, age 20  
James Marsden -- Versace model  
George Eads -- middle school drama teacher  
Van Diesel -- New York club bouncer, age 17. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
Early jobs of six entertainers:   
Raquel Welch -- weather girl on San Diego TV;   
Jack Nicholson -- ran errands at MGM:   
Dustin Hoffman -- psychiatric-ward attendant;  
Roberta Flack -- schoolteacher;   
Duke Ellington -- sold peanuts at Washington Senators baseball games; Johnny Cash -- appliance salesman. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
Early jobs of successful business people:   
Kemmons Wilson (Holiday Inn founder) -- once sold popcorn;   
Mary Kay (Ash) -- sold encyclopedias door-to-door;   
Chuck Williams (Williams-Sonoma) -- building contractor;   
Paul V. Galvin (Motorola founder) -- once sold popcorn;   
H. Ross Perot -- broke horses;   
Tom Monaghan (Domino’s Pizza founder) -- sold fresh fish door-to-door. *(World Features Syndicate)*  
Early jobs of five leaders:   
Benito Mussolini -- schoolteacher;  
Boris Yeltsin -- construction worker;   
Deng Xiaoping -- Renault factory worker in France;  
Ho Chi Minh -- cook on a French ship;  
Mao Zedong -- library clerk. *(World Features Syndicate)  
\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Andy Johnson was a tailor who made his own clothes--until he became President of the United States. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 86)***

**James Earl Jones swept the floors of an off-Broadway theater and took other jobs so he could spend his days studying drama at the American Theatre Wing. *(John Culhane, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Boris Karloff’s first film role was as a five-dollar-a-day extra (a Mexican soldier) in a 1919 non-horror silent movie His Majesty the American. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 9)***

**Comedian Danny Kaye made his school-boy stage debut as a watermelon seed. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 34)***

**Mack Sennett, producer of the Keystone Cops and other famous films, began his career playing the hind legs of a stage horse. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 11)***

**John Werner Kluge, immigrated to the United States from Germany. He went to work on Ford Motor Company’s assembly line and later sold shoes before building radio and TV giant Metromedia. *(Paul Craig Roberts, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Alan Ladd had a hot-dog stall known as “Tiny’s” – he was only five feet, six inches tall – before breaking into films. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 8)***

**In their movies together, Laurel and Hardy always played two likeable buffoons. Before the two of them got together however, Oliver Hardy generally played villainous “bad guys.” *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 34)***

**Jay Leno’s regulars know he once made a living as a car mechanic. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**David Letterman started out as an Indianapolis TV weatherman. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 21)**

**Jim Leyland tells the story about he and Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa taking a limousine ride to Yankee Stadium for a World Series game 15 years ago when both were perophytes. “Ever been in a limousine before?” asked somebody in the party of Leyland. “Yessir,” Leyland said. “When I was driving for Perrysburg (Ohio) Funeral Home.” *(Rick Hummel, in St. Louis Post-Dispatch)***

**Liberace started out by giving concerts at high schools under the name of Walter Busterkeys. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 58)*  
  
Madonna once sold Dunkin’ Donuts. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**David Geffen, the music magnate, worked in the mailroom of the William Morris Agency. H. Ross Perot was an IBM salesman. Curtis L. Carlson, son of a Swedish immigrant grocer, started the Gold Bond Trading Stamp Co. with a $50 loan and became a hotel, restaurant-chain and marketing billionaire. *(Peter Lynch and John Rothchild, in Reader’s Digest)***

**In what show did Lee Majors get his first acting job? “The Big Valley,” 1965. The day he walked on that set was the first day he’d ever acted in anything. He’d been a playground instructor. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 83)***

**Actress/sex symbol Jayne Mansfield was a concert pianist and violinist before she became what some people labeled “the poor man’s Marilyn Monroe.” (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Original occupation of helter-skelter criminal Charles Manson was gas station attendant. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Alice Sheets Marriott began working in her husband’s root beer stand and helped turn it into a global corporation. It was 1927 when she married J. Willard Marriott and went to work as bookkeeper in a Washington root beer stand he had opened. A few months later, as weather cooled and business wanted, she got recipes from the chef at the Mexican Embassy and began cooking spicy food. The stand was renamed. The Hot Shoppe and became a chain that eventually grew to 100 stores in 11 states. The last one, in Marlowe Heights, Maryland, closed in December. The Marriotts eventually branced out to other businesses, principally hotels, and Marriott today comprises five companies with combined annual sales of $20 billion. *(Associated Press)***

**Dean Martin had been a coal miner, a boxer, a gas station attendant and a millhand. In 1946 he decided to sing and landed a club date. He then met a guy named Jerry Lewis and the rest is history. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 26)*  
Steve Martin, the silver-haired “wild and crazy guy,” sold balloons, Mouseketeer ears, and Davy Crockett coonskin hats at Disneyland for a few years. (*Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks, p. 106)***

**Speaking of craggy good looks, actor Lee Marvin was a plumber and a U.S. Marine. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Actor Walter Matthau’s first stage job was to play an old Jewish woman because he had a high voice. His only line was “Mazel tov!” (“Good luck” in Yiddish.) *(Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks, p. 107)***

**Louis B. Mayer began as a junk dealer from Minsk. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 12)*  
Charles Mayo, of the famed Mayo Medical family, began his career at age nine by administering ether during operations. *(The World Almanac of the USA, p. 166)***

**While Ray Kroc was building the McDonald’s empire, scores of “crew” who started off behind the counter also thrived. Fred Turner, now chairman of the board, worked the grill at Kroc’s first restaurant in 1956. Ed Rensi, president of McDonald’s U.S.A., started in Columbus, Ohio, earning 85 cents an hour. *(Per Ola & Emily D’Aulaire, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Ed McMahon was once a bingo caller. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 116)***

**Before she became Israel’s fourth prime minister, Golda Meir was a Milwaukee, Wisconsin, high school teacher. *(Jeff Rovin, in The Unbelievable Truth!, p. 175)*  
James Michener was a plumber’s apprentice, a chestnut salesman, and a hotel night watchman in his early years. *(Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks)*  
I packed pineapples at a local cannery in Honolulu, but you got very little applause. *(Bette Midler)*  
  
They once were hobos (defined as not a bum but a migratory worker): actor Clark Gable, author James A. Michener, singer Merle Haggard, attorney Melvin Belli, comedian Red Skelton, entrepreneur Winthrop Rockefeller, and Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. *(World Feature’s Syndicate)***

**Speaking of craggy good looks, actor Robert Mitchum was a heavy-weight boxer. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Mary Tyler Moore began her acting career as “Happy Hotpoint,” a little elf who danced on Hotpoint appliances in television commercials in the 1950s. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 102)***

**Jack Nicholson was in the newspapers long before he became a film star. By chance, Nicholson was working as a lifeguard in New Jersey in the mid 1950s when 11 swimmers were carried out into the Atlantic. Nicholson launched one of the boats and rescued five of the swimmers just as they were about to go under. His picture was on the front page of local newspapers, but Nicholson later said of the rescue that he was so sick “I puked my guts out.” *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 9)***

**Actor Leonard Nimoy once sold vacuum cleaners. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Actor David Niven made his screen debut as a Mexican, wearing a blanket, in the very first Hopalong Cassidy movie. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 9)***

**A producer for RKO studios spotted a beautiful blonde demonstrating refrigerators at a Los Angeles trade show. But he waited too long before signing her and Columbia moved in, whisking her away from the freezer. At first, the new sex star chose the name Marilyn, but the studio decided it was too close to Marilyn Monroe, so she settled on Kim Novak. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 5)***

**Actor Chris O’Donnell “who played Robin in two Batman movies) had an early brush with fame. As a model before he broke into the movies, O’Donnell played a McDonald’s counter man who was happy to serve breakfast to superstar Michael Jordan. *(Bob Fenster, in They Did What!?, p. 21)***

**Suze Orman is a “one-woman financial powerhouse,” hails USA Today. From working as a waitress, to climbing the ranks in the investment world, to becoming a best-selling author and Emmy award winner, Suze has translated her experiences into hard-hitting financial advice that will transform your life! *(Get Motivated Seminars, Inc. Brochure)***

**Actor Al Pacino was variously employed as a theater usher, porter, and superintendant of an office building. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Thomas Paine, the English-born pamphleteer of both the American and French Revolutions, once worked as a ladies’ girdle-maker. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 60)***

**Actor-hunk Brad Pitt’s first acting job: He played a chicken, wearing a chicken suit to attract customers to El Polio Loco restaurant. *(Bob Fenster, in They Did What!?, p. 18)***

**Before getting into acting and directing, Sidney Poitier trained as a physiotherapist in a mental hospital. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 92)***

**Unexpected backgrounds of six political leaders:**

**China’s president – star of his college’s ballroom dance team**

**France’s president – once a forklift operator at Anheuser-Busch**

**London’s mayor – once a restaurant critic**

**Outgoing Kyrgyzstan president – a physicist**

**Brazil’s president – ex-factory worker**

**Mexico’s president – led Coca-Cola operations in Mexico. *(World Feature’s Syndicate)***

**Actor Rock Hudson, cartoon tycoon Walt Disney, and crooner Bing Crosby worked for the post office. Hudson as a letter carrier, Disney as an assistant letter carrier, and Crosby as a postal clerk. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Adolph Zukor, head of the early Vitagraph studios and one of Hollywood’s biggest producers, started as an immigrant from Hungary, sweeping out a drugstore. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 12)***

**Quarterback Kurt Warner of the St. Louis Rams went from an Iowa supermarket to the NFL’s pinnacle, winning a Super Bowl and two league Most Valuable Player awards. *(Associated Press)***

**Queen Elizabeth was an eighteen year old mechanic in the English military. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 17)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Oldsters who know about actor Anthony Quinn will tell you he once worked as a preacher for evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Anthony Quinn got his first film part in the 1937 film The Plainsman by pretending to be a Cheyenne Indian. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 8)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Lou Rawls was earning $10 a night, plus free pizza, when a Capitol Records producer spotted him at Pandora’s Box Coffee Shop, and signed the silken-voiced singer to do Muddy Water. The next year, Rawls won a Grammy for his hit, Dead End Street, “a record notable for his semi-spoken vocal, which predated rap by a decade and a half” and made Rawls a major black voice in the white marketplace. *(The Week magazine, January 20, 2006)***

**Ronald Reagan saved the lives of 77 people when he worked as a lifeguard. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 257)***

**John D. Rockefeller, who made millions of dollars during his lifetime, started out in life hoeing potatoes at four cents an hour. *(Sunshine magazine)*  
Nelson Rockefeller’s income at age 8-10: For shining shoes in house -- 5 cents a pair; for killing flies in house -- 10 cents for every 100; allowance -- 30 cents a week (Dad required part for charity, part for savings). *(Carol Madigan and Ann Elwood, in When They Were Kids)***

**Pat Sajak was a local TV weatherman before he was discovered by Merv Griffin and selected to host Wheel of Fortune. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 14)**

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Colonel Sanders before he got into finger lickin' chicken: was a streetcar conductor, private soldier in Cuba, sold insurance, worked on a farm, railroad fireman, sold tires, owned service station, ran steamboat ferry, and practiced law. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Colonel Sanders came up with the famous recipe for chicken in the late 1930s for Sanders Court and Cafe, his roadside eatery in Corbin, Kentucky. Back then, the motel and restaurant business seated 142 people. In 1998, more than 10,300 KFC stores generated about $20.6 billion. *(Associated Press)  
\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Vidal Sassoon’s early clients as a haircutter were mostly prostitutes. *(Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks)***

**A reporter once said to George Bernard Shaw: “You have a marvelous gift for oratory. How did you develop it?” Replied Shaw, “I learned to speak as men learn to skate or cycle, by doggedly making a fool of myself until I got used to it.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Famous people who sold door-to-door: Abraham Lincoln, Billy Graham, Gary Cooper, Neil Armstrong, and Lyndon Johnson. Lyndon Johnson sold silk stockings. *(Direct Selling Association)***

**Sylvester Stallone used to sweep the lion cages in New York City’s Central Park Zoo to pay his way while trying to break into acting. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 7)***

**John Steinbeck worked as a hod carrier, conveying concrete along scaffolding during the construction of New York’s Madison Square Garden in the 1930s. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 120)***

**James Stewart played the accordion in a tearoom before being offered his first part in a Broadway play. He showed off his little-known skill in the 1955 film The Man from Laramie. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 9)***

**Singer Rod Stewart was a grave digger. (Armchair Reader: Vitally Useless Information, p. 113)**

**Actress Sally Struthers was once the voice of “Pebbles” on The Flintstones cartoons. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 101)***

**Edgar Rice Burroughs sold pencils in Salt Lake City before he moved to California, where he created Tarzan of the Apes. *(L. M. Boyd)*  
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**The philosopher Henry David Thoreau once worked as Ralph Waldo Emerson’s gardener. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 61)***

**Before Henry David Thoreau became a famous writer extolling the virtues of the natural life, he worked as a schoolteacher. When he was reprimanded by the head of the school for being too easy on students who misbehaved, Thoreau chose six students at random and caned them. Then he quit. *(Bob Fenster, in They Did What!?, p. 8)*  
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**Lee Trevino, one of golf’s great players, sharpened his game and competitive spirit as a young caddie. His first games were behind a caddie shed, where there were three holes--one about 100 yards, another about 125 and another about 60. Oftentimes there would be as many as 16 caddies playing for quarters--but only one club. Trevino would hit a shot and throw the club to another caddie, who would take his turn. As soon as he’d hit, he’d throw the club to another caddie. With the club flying around like crazy, it would take as much as 30 minutes to play one 100-yard hole. It was a tough way to learn the game, but Lee Trevino will be the first to tell you that he wouldn’t be where he is today if he had just sat in the caddie shack in his idle moments. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Unlikely first business and products:   
J. C. Penney -- ran a butcher shop  
Mattel -- made picture names  
Thomas Welch -- sold dental supplies   
Milton Bradley -- owned a lithograph company**

**David Buick -- made plumbing fixtures   
Henri Nestle -- manufactured liquid gas   
Oakley (sunglasses) -- a motorcycle parts supplier. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Rudolph Valentino was born in Castellaneta, Italy. He was a waiter in a suburban Los Angeles nightclub when he was discovered for the movies. When he died at the age of 31, the weeping and wailing of feminine fans could be heard around the world. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 203)***

**17 movie stars who worked as waitresses: Jacqueline Bisset, Joan Blondell, Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Olivia De Havilland, Faye Dunaway, Frances Farmer, Joan Fontaine, Lauren Hutton, Glenda Jackson, Madeline Kahn, Maureen Stapleton, Mary Steenburgen, Lily Tomlin, Raquel Welch, Cindy Williams, and Jane Wyman. *(Wallace/Wallechinsky, in The Book of Lists #3, p. 305)***

**Meryl Streep, Dustin Hoffman, Gene Hackman, and Burt Lancaster all started out as waitstaff. *(Noel Botham, in The World’s Greatest Book of Useless Information, p. 8)***

**5 legends of the Wild West:**

**Calamity Jane -- scouted for General Custer**

**Bat Masterson -- boxing promoter**

**Doc Holiday -- went to dental school in Baltimore**

**Frederic Remington -- 1st published art retouched**

**Butch Cassidy -- briefly a butcher. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Kate Winslet’s first role was dancing with the Honey Monster in a Sugar Puffs cereal commercial. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 18)**

**Frank Woolworth, founder of Woolworth’s, hated farming so much that he offered to work in a dry goods store for free just for the opportunity to have a future other than farming. This experience gave him the knowledge that led to his eventually owning over one thousand stores before he died. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 51)***

**Chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. started his working career as a soap salesman. *(Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Book, p. 48)***