WWJ, "THE WORLD'S FIRST RADIO STATION"
A HISTORY

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

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ABSTRACT

WWJ, "THE WORLD'S FIRST RADIO STATION"
A HISTORY

by Robert Preston Rimes

The purpose of this study is to present a systematic narrative of the past events which led to the establishment and subsequent development of WWJ, "the world's first commercial radio station to present regular daily programming."

In addition to an extensive review of the available published literature, this work embodies research from many heretofore unpublished letters, manuscripts, documents, program logs and other sources. It also includes significant data gathered in personal interviews with broadcasters who participated in the founding and/or development of WWJ never before reported. More importantly, perhaps, it offers a comprehensive description and analysis of the station's accomplishments and disappointments within the confines of a single cover.

To fully comprehend the beginnings of Radio Station WWJ, it was necessary to trace the early research of broadcasting pioneers James Maxwell, Heinrich Hertz, Guglielmo Marconi, J. A. Fleming, and Dr. Lee De Forest. The work of De Forest is treated in some detail since his contribution to WWJ's birth was more direct and meaningful than the efforts of other early radio experimenters.

Momentous developments were also made in the wireless transmission of signals by means of telegraph code in Michigan prior to the founding of WWJ. At several port cities, such as Cleveland and Detroit, wireless operators were at work sending messages by radio to ships on the Great Lakes. Of particular significance in this regard was the work of Thomas Clark, who also played a vital role in convincing the management of The Detroit News that a station should be installed in the newspaper offices for the purpose of sending out late-breaking bulletins which arrived too late to be included in the last daily edition of The News.

The great part of this thesis is devoted to the years between August 20, 1920, and December 31, 1962. And, although it is principally the history of a single station, the problems faced by WWJ, as radio was transformed from a toy to a giant commercial and educational force, are typical of the growing pains suffered by countless outlets across the nation.

The evolution of program formats, schedules, broadcasting hours, equipment, and the introduction of mobile broadcasting, time sales, and the myriad elements which, together, constitute a broadcasting station, are reported in detail.

Biographical material, which delineates the careers of several outstanding Detroit broadcasters including: William E. Scripps, founder of WWJ; sportscaster Ty Tyson; newscaster C. C. Bradner; humorist Albert Weeks; dramatist Rex White, and actor Wynn Wright, is also included.

Finally, this thesis is devoted extensively to the controversy concerning the priority of stations, including the disagreement between KDKA and WWJ which has existed for years. It is hoped that new light will be shed on the subject by this study and that the question of which station can justly claim to be "the World's First" has been finally answered.

WWJ, "THE WORLD'S FIRST RADIO STATION"

A HISTORY

By

Robert Preston Rimes

A THESIS

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to describe the events which led to the founding, and the subsequent development of Radio Station WWJ, Detroit.

Since WWJ is regarded by many sources within the communications industry as "The World's First Radio Station," it is immediately apparent that a detailed examination and analysis of its founding is the logical beginning in the study of commercial radio broadcasting history.

Assuming that WWJ is typical of many stations, it must follow that its growing pains parallel and reflect those of outlets which mushroomed in the broadcasting field during the early 1920s.

To the best knowledge of the staff and management of WWJ, such an extensive study of the station's history has never been undertaken. Before this project was begun only fragmentary, incomplete, and sometimes, inaccurate histories existed.

It is hoped that this thesis will fill the urgent need for a comprehensive history of WWJ, and, in turn, broadcasting's very beginnings, within the confines of a single cover.

It seems that nearly every member of the WJ staff helped in the preparation of this thesis by freely contributing information, suggestions and encouragement. Thanks should go to Edwin K. Wheeler, James Schiavone, and Seymour Kapetansky.

Special thanks are extended to the "Associate Editors", to Henry C. Rogers and to my wife, Mary Jane.

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INTRODUCTION

Compared to the Roaring Twenties in which it was born, WWJ and radio broadcasting had a quiet, unassuming birth. Not many attended the delivery on August 20, 1920, just a few close friends who had watched the infant develop under the skilled hands of a few "amateur operators," or "hams," as they are known today.

Although it seems almost beyond belief now, WWJ's parent publication, The Detroit News, did not devote a single word in its columns to the first utterances of this new found miracle, christened wireless telephony, or radio.

While those involved in the first crude broadcasts were proud of the new arrival, a complacent Detroit yawned and turned its attention to the "major" events of the year.

It was 1920. World War I had ended and the cracker-barrel discussions turned, not to radio broadcasting, but to the serious consequences of the 18th and 19th Amendments which, freshly enacted, gave women the right to vote--and nobody the right to sell or consume alcoholic beverages.

Mom was almost delirious over her new solid oak refrigerator which she purchased for "only $26.50," and filled

with sirloin steak at 32 cents a pound.

Meanwhile, parlor crowds gathered to play the popular game of the day, Mah Jongg, while baseball fans huddled to debate the pros and cons of the "Black Sox" world series scandal and recurrent reports about President Wilson's health. On Broadway, Mary Pickford emoted in "Pollyanna," and at the race track a beautiful horse named Man-O-War was in his prime.

Who could be bothered with "this new fangled invention," radio--as the women rolled down their stockings and raised their hemlines?

Who could stop to listen to those noises "comin' from down at The News," as the nation roared into a decade which began with "blind pigs" and "bathtub gin" and which finally ended in economic chaos and depression?

I EARLY EXPERIMENTS

The seeds for WWJ's early growth were planted in 1827 when Savary, experimenting with the transmission of radio waves, found that a steel needle could be magnetized by the discharge from a Leyden jar.[1]

In 1873, James Clerk Maxwell, a Scottish professor of physics, advanced the theory that light and electricity were both waves in the "Ether," traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second.

Following Maxwell was Heinrich Rudolph Hertz, a German professor, who actually proved the existence of radio waves.

> In 1887...he showed that electromagnetic waves are in complete accordance with the waves of light and heat, and thereby founded the theory upon which all modern radio signalling devices are based.[2]

He also built the first transmitter and receiver and sent an electrical impulse across a room.

When a young inventor in Italy heard about Hertz's

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[1] "Broadcasting," Encyclopaedia Britannica (16 ed., 1957) vol. XVIII, p. 885.

[2] Ibid.

famous experiment, he undoubtedly reasoned that if radio waves could be sent across a room, why couldn't they be sent across the Atlantic?

> In 1896, Guglielmo Marconi lodged his application for the first British patent for wireless telegraphy.[3]

After building a transmitter in England, Marconi, in 1901, sailed for Newfoundland where he constructed a receiver.

> At last the fateful day for the experiment arrived. Marconi adjusted his earphones and waited tensely. Across the ocean a dynamo whirred and a telegraph key tapped out three dots, Morse code for the letter "S". With the speed of light, the signal leaped the Atlantic and Marconi heard three short buzzes in his headset. Trans-Atlantic broadcasting had begun![4]

The next great contribution to radio came from J. A. Fleming of England. In 1904, he adapted Edison's light bulb to detect radio signals.

> Fleming's tube was the so-called two-element tube, consisting of an anode and a cathode in an evacuated bulb filled with some gas.[5]

This, said the courts in New York, was the forerunner of the modern radio tube. But it remained for Lee De Forest to add the final third element to the tube, "the grid," in

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Gretta Baker, "Radio Comes of Age," Senior Scholastic Magazine, Oct. 22, 1945, p. 5.

[5] J. A. Fleming, Fifty Years of Electricity, (London: The Wireless Press, 1921) p. 331.

perfecting the "audion" as an instrument for generating, as well as detecting, radio signals. Up to this time all messages had been sent in Morse code. The "audion" made it possible to transmit the human voice.

And although all of the early experiments performed important functions in the development of radio broadcasting, it was the work of Lee De Forest which had the most profound and lasting affect on the founding of WWJ.

De Forest was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, August 26, 1873, the son of Henry Swift and Anna Margaret Robbins De Forest. His father was a minister whose desire it was to have his son follow him in the same profession.

> Early in his boyhood, his father became president of the College for the Colored at Talledega, Ala., where the boy was shunned by the other white boys because of his father's teaching of Negroes.
>
> Being lonely, young De Forest early became interested in experimenting with crude tools. He designed a new farm gate and built a locomotive out of pine boards and barrels. His workshop was the room designed for funerals.[6]

After attending Mount Herman School for Boys, he entered Sheffield Scientific School, Yale, where he enrolled in the first course in electricity to be offered in any American college. He was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Science in 1896, and took his Ph. D., also at Yale, three years later.

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[6]"Lee De Forest, 87, Radio Pioneer, Dies," The New York Times, July 2, 1961, pp. 1 and 32.

Borrowing $30, he set out for Chicago, where he obtained a job with the Western Electric Company. After working hours, De Forest and a friend, Edwin Smythe, experimented in a small hall bedroom, jammed to the door with wireless apparatus.

> Their labors resulted in the invention of a radio receiver, using an electrolytic detector, which made possible the use of headphones for wireless messages.
>
> This was De Forest's first patent, and it made him a close competitor of Marconi. Other inventions involving new principles in wireless detection soon brought him to the front in the wireless field and earned him a reputation in the United States comparable to that of Marconi in Europe.[7]

In 1906, De Forest forged the final link in a long chain of inventions. He was granted a patent for a vacuum rectifier or audion.

In the same year, Gen. H. H. C. Dunwoody discovered the rectifying proportions of carborundum crystals, and Pickard found similar properties in silicon crystals, later used in the famous homemade "crystal sets."[8]

> Also in 1906 came another milestone in radio history, the first voice transmission. Reginald Fessenden spoke over a transmitter on Christmas Eve, using an ordinary telephone instead of a microphone.[9]

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[7] Ibid.
[8] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVIII, p. 885.
[9] Baker, Senior Scholastic, p. 5.

De Forest's audion tube was a versatile instrument, he discovered. Not only did it vastly improve reception in wireless telegraphy, but, with adaptation, it could extend telephone communication across the nation and modulate the voice for wireless telephony transmissions.

To demonstrate its usefulness, De Forest obtained permission to erect a radio-telephone transmitter at the New York Metropolitan Opera House. He placed two microphones at the footlights on stage.

> It was 1909. [Some sources give the date as Dec., 1908, others as 1910] The occasion was the opening night of Enrico Caruso in "Cavalleria Rusticana."
>
> "This transmission of the voice of Caruso," De Forest told years later, "was the first broadcasting of music other than phonograph selections. It was a warm night, and I had invited some half a dozen friends and co-workers to listen to the opera at my home. Caruso sang probably to the smallest audience of his career. The music was obstructed now and then by static disturbances, but the notes of the great singer's voice were clear and beautiful. Although only a few amateurs and ship operators had heard the opera, we knew that it had been a success."[10]

Being the inventor of the audion tube was not without its problems, as De Forest soon discovered.

> The audion itself was the subject of a famous lawsuit in the Federal courts here, in

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[10] "Lee De Forest, 87, Radio Pioneer, Dies," The New York Times, July 2, 1961, pp. 1 and 32.

> litigation with the Marconi Company, in which the court held that the origin of the audion could be traced directly to the Fleming valve, a radio rectifier invented before the audion by Dr. J. A. Fleming.[11]

In 87 years, De Forest never reaped the full financial benefits of his work. He squandered four fortunes and married four times. In 1936, he filed a voluntary petition in bankruptcy, listing liabilities of almost $400,000 and assets of $390.[12]

But, for all of his erratic behavior, De Forest did make a tangible contribution to the founding of WWJ. As he later recalled:

> The threatening war clouds, early in 1917, caused the shut-down for two years of my broadcasting activities, and shortly after the ban on my High Bridge station was again lifted, interference by this, and its imitator station, with Navy Communications around New York prompted the alert and zealous Government Radio Inspector to cancel our pioneer license, on the theory that "there was no room in the ether for more entertainment."[13]

Unable to broadcast himself, De Forest decided to manufacture his small transmitter and distribute it through an agent company which would also install the stations. Radio News and Music was selected to market the equipment and its

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[11] Ibid., p. 1. [12] Ibid., p. 32.

[13] "Dr. De Forest Hails Pioneering of WWJ," The Detroit News, August 21, 1936, p. 1.

president C. S. Thompson traveled the country trying to lease the transmitting equipment.

> Then it was that my loyal emissary, Clarence Thompson, began to proselyte among newspaper owners in the West and South to purchase and install radio broadcasting transmitters, for the editorial edification of the rapidly swelling numbers of listeners around every large city, where the "ham" virus was already becoming epidemic.[14]

After being turned down time and again, Thompson arrived in Detroit in 1919 and found a responsive customer in William E. Scripps, then vice-president of the Evening News Association. As De Forest remembered it:

> None, however, could be interested in so chimerical an idea--none until William E. Scripps, now president of the Detroit News, was approached. His far-seeing vision was quick to grasp the possibilities dormant in this idea.[15]

And others followed suit.

> Other newspapers were not long in the realization of the possibilities for closer, more intimate, approach to their public, which this pioneer example of The Detroit News had set them.
>
> This marvelous medium, the Radio, which was once dreaded as a rival, now reveals itself to be an invaluable, irreplaceable ally in the great work of informing and educating the masses of the people.[16]

But De Forest did not wait for radio broadcasting to

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[14] Ibid

[15] Ibid

[16] Address by Dr. Lee De Forest, Radio Station WWJ, The Detroit News, August 20, 1936, p. 1.

take shape. In 1921, he left his laboratories in New York and sailed for Germany. There he isolated himself to perfect Phonofilm, the name given to his invention for making talking motion pictures.[17]

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[17] Georgette Carneal, A Conqueror of Space (New York: Horace Liveright, 1930), pp. 275 and 276.

II WIRELESS IN MICHIGAN

The Thompson proposal to lease or purchase a De Forest transmitter in 1919 came as no great shock to William E. Scripps. He and his father, James E. Scripps, had been studying the progress of wireless in Michigan since 1902.

Their tutor was a lean, intense young Detroit inventor, Thomas E. Clark. It was Clark, probably more than Thompson or De Forest, who convinced William E. Scripps that The Detroit News should establish a broadcasting station.

As early as 1902, Clark told James E. Scripps, founder of The News, and his son:

> The time will come when you will even sit in your living room and be entertained by music played thousands of miles away. Men will talk across countless miles of waste and water; nations will be drawn closer together because, through this new discovery, they will better understand each other.[18]

And it was later said of Clark:

> No one in Detroit will take greater pride in WWJ than the wireless wizard Thomas E. Clark, for it was he who generated within the late James E.

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[18] Herschell Hart, "Event of 1902 Led Up to WWJ," The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, p. 15.

> Scripps...the spark of intense interest in the vast potentialities of wireless communication.[19]

Born in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, in 1867, Clark was 11 years old when he moved to Detroit with his family. He attended Woodmere Public School and sold newspapers to earn extra spending money.

In 1885, he received his first job with the Detroit Electric Works and five years later he left home for a position in the experimental department of General Electric in Schenectady, New York. While in Chicago with the General Electric exhibition at the Columbian Exposition, in 1893, he met and was impressed by Nikola Tesla, the brilliant Serbian-American, who was conducting crude experiments in the new mystery, "wireless telegraphy."

> "I was tremendously excited," he said, "And I rushed back to Schenectady to rig up a 'hickey' that would throw 'ether waves' through space, which I believed would revolutionize communication. My equaintances called me a crackpot."[20]

Clark returned to Detroit in 1896 to manufacture electrical equipment and to spend much time on Belle Isle, where, free from "interference," he could experiment with sending and receiving sets. And while he toiled at the

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[19]Sheila Wood, "Who's Who," The Detroit News, August 20, 1945, p. 12.

[20]Ibid.

telegrapher's code, trying to make practical application of the principles of wireless, people on the Detroit River front complained that his wireless interfered with their telephones.

Although observers can applaud his genius and vision now, Clark's contemporaries scoffed at his experiments and dismissed him as a dreamer.

> "There goes 'Wireless Clark,'" they would say. "He thinks he can talk through the air without wires." Their smiles of pity were poorly hidden.[21]

After exhaustive tests had proved to Clark that his equipment could hurl messages into space at incredible speed, he approached Senator James McMillan in 1901. A prominent and wealthy Detroiter, McMillan owned the Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Company, which sailed passenger boats between the two cities. Clark presented a complete plan to McMillan for equipping his boats with wireless sets.

> "The senator grasped the idea immediately," Mr. Clark says. "He gave the order for quarters to be fitted up for an operator on the old City of Detroit. And he permitted us to establish our land station on the waterfront near Woodward avenue."[22]

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[21] Robert L. Kelly, "History of Radio in Michigan," The Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XXI (Winter Number, 1937), p. 6.

[22] Ibid

When all was in readiness, a code message was sent from the middle of Lake Erie.

> "Our system was entirely cut and try," Clark remembers. But the next day, Mr. McMillan confirmed the accuracy of the message, and from that time our wireless was a permanent fixture on the D & C boats until 1911 when the equipment of the Clark Wireless Company was ordered removed in favor of United Wireless, a stock-selling organization formed on a national scale."[23]

With his transmitting equipment piercing the static of the Great Lakes aboard the D & C boats, Clark arranged a meeting in 1902 with another possible financial backer of his experiments, James E. Scripps.

> As Clark talked, the editor considered how bankers and men in the streets shook their heads when the young enthusiast's name was mentioned. Wireless telegraphy was only a crude experiment, capable of operating only over short distances. There were those who said it never would succeed; that it was uncanny, impossible, the dream of a flighty brain--and more importantly, a thing in which no money should be risked.[24]

Finally, Scripps and his son William E. agreed to attend a private demonstration of the new system. After hearing wireless messages transmitted between Clark's laboratory in the loft of the old Banner Laundry, opposite the present Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel, to a receiving station

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Hart, The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, p. 15.

located two short blocks away in the Chamber of Commerce Building, at State and Griswold streets, the elder Scripps and his son seemed impressed.

While the younger Scripps examined a drapery to ascertain whether a second operator might be hidden behind it, the elder Scripps took something from his pocket and began writing.

> The young inventor sat motionless, not daring to hope that the scratching of the pen in the editor's hand meant anything to him.
>
> And then Scripps turned to young Clark and held out to him a long slip of paper. The inventor reached for it with trembling fingers--it was a check for $1,000.
>
> "Take it, young man," the editor insisted. "I think you have a good idea there and I want you to have every opportunity to do what you can with it. I don't care whether I ever see the money again--it is my little bit toward helping a little idea become a big, worth-while fact."[25]

In the intervening years between the Clark demonstration in 1902 and the visit to Detroit by Thompson in 1919, wireless telegraphy in the Great Lakes region grew with amazing speed. In 1904, a station, equipped to communicate in code with the ships on the lakes, was established in Cleveland.

> Great encouragement was given the enterprise there by the Lake Carriers Association, and by 1909 there were telegraph stations in the principal ports on all the lakes with equipment on boats out of Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo.[26]

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[25] Ibid

[26] Kelly, The Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XXI (Winter Number, 1937), p. 7.

With the stimulus provided by the ship owners, ordinary citizens, in small numbers, turned to the mystery of science which allowed one to extract coded messages from the air.

> A dominating influence...between 1909 and 1917... was that exerted by a group of radio enthusiasts known as "amateurs" or "hams." For the most part, they were youths of high school age who had contrived antennas in the back yards of their homes. Their wireless shacks were located in a spare room or in the attic. And for many of the refinements now in use in radio broadcasting, the industry must thank some boy's curiosity or a ship's radio operator driven to invention by necessity.[27]

Of course, many failed to realize the ultimate function of the wireless telephone, or radio. Instead of seeing a new amusement enterprise available to every home without charge, some of the early Michigan experimenters examined the commercial application of wireless in point-to-point communication and considered the possibility of its eliminating telephone service by wire.

The increased number of amateur operators was spurred somewhat by the romantic tale of Jack Binns, the radio operator who was the hero of a great maritime disaster in 1909.

> When the steamer Florida collided with the Republic off the Nantucket Lightship during a heavy fog on Jan. 23, 1909, Binns stuck to his post and continued to send out distress calls

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[27] Ibid., p. 10.

> until he managed to bring assistance to the disabled ships.
>
> The story of how he saved about 2,000 lives was widely published in the newspapers of the United States, and the appeal of the circumstances it described was general. In answer to the resulting demand for more information on the fascinating subject of wireless the Detroit Times printed schematic diagrams for the amateur operator; and soon the ranks of these had increased enormously.[25]

Also following the Clark experiment, William E. Scripps' interest grew. Since both he and Clark lived in the same section of the city, they met often to talk about radio. In fact, Scripps learned the telegraph code and took great delight in sending and receiving wireless messages.

As William E. Scripps talked more and more about wireless, his son William J. also began to take an interest in radio and urged his father to buy him a wireless outfit.

> On one of his trips to New York, William E. Scripps bought the desired equipment and it was installed on the second floor of the Scripps home.
>
> The boy's infatuation for this new "toy" knew no bounds. He spent hours at his key, and more hours listening for the voices that he had read would come to him "out of the air." One night his parents heard him running downstairs at full speed.
>
> "Father! Father!" he cried breathlessly, "I heard voices; come up and listen--hurry before it is too late!"
>
> "I was as excited as Bill was," Scripps admitted. "I raced up there, clamped the earphones to my head and listened. No one in the

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[25] Ibid.

> room dared make a sound. And then I heard two or three words--just ordinary words, they were but how they thrilled me!
>
> I didn't know who spoke them--I had no idea to whom they were addressed or really what they meant, but I did know that a voice had come to me through the ether--the first I had heard. Right then I realized that great things would come some day from this science by which we could talk to each other without the use of wire.
>
> "The thought struck me that it would be most interesting for readers of The News if we installed a radio broadcasting set in the office and sent out news events. The more I thought about it, the more convinced I was that The Detroit News must be the first newspaper in the country to have a radio broadcasting outfit."[29]

Thus three generations of the Scripps family had sampled the thrill of radio transmission--James E., William E. and young William J.

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[29]Hart, The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, p. 15

III WILLIAM E. SCRIPPS

One man, the late William E. Scripps, may rightfully be called the father of WWJ. And because of his vision, his name should be added to the list which includes Clark, De Forest, Conrad and others who pioneered the broadcasting industry.

In an atmosphere almost hostile to his tinkerings with automobiles and airplanes, an atmosphere in which other members of The Detroit News board of directors seriously questioned the expenditure of any great sums of money for the purchase of transmitting equipment, Scripps persisted.

> WWJ was the brain child of William E. Scripps, son of the founder of The News...It was not his only "first" in Detroit. He owned the first automobile in Detroit outside of the experimental models. And he owned the first airplane...Will Scripps might have been one of the automotive giants that gave Detroit its fame. He was a born mechanic. But his father insisted that he follow the family tradition and remain in the publishing business.[30]

Although James E. Scripps, William's father, had founded The Detroit News, the presidency of the parent company, The Evening News Association, was handed to a son-in-law, George Booth, rather than the son. As vice-president of The Evening

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[30]Malcolm W. Bingay, Of Me I Sing (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1949), p. 226.

News Association in 1920, Scripps, of course, had a substantial voice in the major corporate decisions.

But Booth ruled the organization and it was only by sheer strength of persuasion that Scripps convinced the company that an investment should be made in the De Forest transmitter.

> George Booth dominated everything he was ever associated with and son Will didn't have much chance to do anything. And so, he did nothing...
>
> It was not until 1929 that Booth, now devoting all his tremendous energies to his Arts and Science foundation, [Cranbrook] relinquished the reins and the son of the founder succeeded his father.
>
> The radio station was his.[31]

Scripps, by nature, was a quiet, modest man who adroitly avoided the spotlight. As one writer characterized him:

> As a youth, the dawning mechanical age fascinated him. He...pioneered as his own pilot, learning the art of flying almost by instinct and without any instruction...a local sensation as he flew over the City until his family forced him to desist [after a near fatal crash at Detroit City Airport.] So it was with radio.
>
> To those who knew him intimately, he was a gentle, considerate and warmly kind friend.[32]

William E. Scripps was born May 6, 1882, in the old Scripps home on Trumbull avenue in Detroit. He attended

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[31] Ibid.

[32] "As We See It -- William E. Scripps," The Detroit Free Press, June 14, 1952, Editorial Page.

Cass high school and other academies, but abandoned his formal education to join his father in the publishing business.

Although he was associated with his father's newspaper for 36 years and finally became President of The News in 1929, journalism was not his real love.

> He was primarily an engineer and, had he followed his natural inclination, probably would have been happy all his life in a laboratory or machine shop.[33]

Before his death, June 12, 1952, of a respiratory ailment, he had been involved in an almost unbelievable number of mechanical projects. As noted, in 1912, he purchased the first privately-owned airplane in Detroit and taught himself to fly it.

Because of his love for power boats, which he often raced, he organized the Scripps Motor Company, one of the nation's finest marine engine manufacturers. He built a 35-foot boat, powered by one of his motors, and almost sailed it to Russia before his family intervened.

Under his direction, The Early Bird, a plane used by WWJ to gather news stories, flew 45,961 miles on 141 assignments during 1936, its first year of operation.

He raised prize Aberdeen Angus, built the Scripps-Booth Motor Car, and encouraged, and sometimes financed, other inventions.

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[33]"W. E. Scripps," The Detroit Times, June 13, 1952, Editorial Page.

Of course, his greatest, most lasting, accomplishment, was the founding and subsequent development of WWJ.

IV WWJ EMERGES

When the government freeze on radio broadcasting equipment was lifted in 1919, Scripps moved swiftly to convince his associates on The Detroit News board of directors that a sending and receiving set should be purchased and installed in The News building.

To aid in the explanation of the problems involved in the venture, Scripps turned to his friend, Tom Clark.

> The recollection of Thomas E. Clark, who maintained a close friendship with the Scripps family, is that about 1919, William E. Scripps talked with him about the matter of purchasing a transmitter. Clark was invited to a meeting of The Detroit News board of directors to present the idea and explain the principles of radio transmission.[34]

The corporate minutes of The Evening News Association do not contain a notation of Clark's appearance before the board. Of course, the entries are very terse and, as a matter of fact, all of the board decisions reached in the three-year period, 1918-1920, occupy only seven pages of the board journal.

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[34]Cynthia Boyes Young, "WWJ-Pioneer in Broadcasting," The Michigan History Magazine Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 413.

Reconstructing the conversation which occured between Clark, Scripps, and the other board members, it is quite possible that it followed this pattern.

> "What shall we use for broadcasting?" the board of directors asked.
>
> And William E. Scripps, then vice-president of the board, answered:
>
> "News bulletins."
>
> "And then--?" the board members queried.
>
> "Household information by our editors," replied Mr. Scripps.
>
> "But will people listen to talks all day long?" he was asked.
>
> "Probably not," he answered. "But we will entertain them, too, with recordings of the world's great voices and orchestras.[35]

It is known that Scripps' plan to purchase the transmitter was given an icy reception by the board, but he was undaunted and he sent Clark to New York to purchase the necessary equipment. Clark, unfortunately, was unsuccessful in obtaining a transmitter and The News later made its own transaction.

In mid-1919, Scripps again advanced his proposal to the board, this time more clearly defining the purposes of a transmitting station. He suggested that the equipment could be constructed by The Tesla Company of Detroit.

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[35] Robert Kelly, and Edwin G. Boyes, "In the Public Interest," A History of the Radio Activities of The Detroit News from 1920 to 1941 (Typewritten manuscript, WWJ Files), p. 10.

PURPOSE OF THE DETROIT NEWS RADIO PHONE

To promote, develope [sic], and encourage the use of radio in newspaper work.

To provide:
First; A reliable news service for all ship and shore stations of the great lakes region.
Second; Weather bulletins
Third; A means for publication of ship positions reports.
Fourth; Concerts and entertainments for the above named stations.
Fifth; A reliable means for broadcasting such information as may be of benifit [sic] to navigation or the various land stations.
Sixth; A means to improve amateur radio. This is to be provided by publishing data on improvements, and the availibility of accurate tuning instruments.
Station is to be in charge of a commercial first grade operator, or operators. Station will be open for a limited time each day which will be changed as is found necessary.

In order that the above may be carried out to the best of our ability, wave langths between 600 and 1,600 meters are necessary. As there is very little naval business in this region, these wave langths should be granted.

The best equiptment [sic] that can be secured will be used thru-out the station.

The telephone transmitter is to be a three kilo-watt set designed and built according to the Bureau of Standards report on radio phones, and the General Electric specifications for their radio phone, type C. G. 4,000. Said telephone [transmitter] to be constructed by The Tesla Company, Detroit, Michigan.[36]

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[36]W. E. Scripps, Purpose of The Detroit News Radio Phone, Interoffice memo, 1919, (Inaccurate punctuation is contained in original copy), p. 1.

Happily for Scripps, this plan was approved with a single exception. Rather than having the Tesla Company assemble the transmitter, it would be leased by WWJ from De Forest Radio Telephone & Telegraph Company through its agent, Radio News and Music, Incorporated.

> WWJ came into existence through a contract made by The Detroit News with the Radio News and Music Co., of New York, early in 1920 (April). Under that contract a small broadcasting set manufactured in the De Forest Highbridge laboratories was shipped to Detroit in May.
>
> The contract with Radio News and Music, a firm composed of C. S. Thompson and John F. Hubbard, provided that tubes were to be furnished to WWJ without extra charge. For some reason, the tubes burned out with such frequency that most of the money received from The Detroit News went to the De Forest Co.[37]

The leasing of the equipment from Radio News and Music brought both short-range and long-range misery to The Detroit News.

In a letter dated June 2, 1920, Radio News and Music advised The News:

> The third, and final, shipment of the apparatus for wireless telephone transmitting station was shipped to your address today by the De Forest Company at our order.
>
> This Company has arranged with Mr. Michael D. Lyons, secretary of the Detroit Radio Association, 463 Green avenue, for the installation of the apparatus. His instructions

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[37]C. S. Thompson, The Life and Works of Dr. Lee De Forest (New York: Smedley Press, 1931) quoted in The Detroit News, December 21, 1930, p. 1.

> for the installation are contained in the box holding the transmitter, shipped to you from the factory on May 28th...
>
> P. S.---The installation should not require more than a day or two at the outside.[38]

Unfortunately, this transmitter was lost in the mails and a second one was constructed by De Forest and shipped.

> Since the transmitter shipped May 28th has not yet been located, the Radio News and Music Company is sending another radiophone transmitter July 15th.
>
> We are very sorry that this delay has taken place and wish that you would assure Mr. Scripps that the station will be completed shortly. When it is completed we can arrange for an operator, hours of operation, etc., with him.[39]

Even after the transmitter arrived, The News continued to have problems.

> We regret to say that we are not too well pleased with the service your company has rendered thus far. Your representative, Mr. Lyons, directed for us a one horse aerial and we have seen nothing of him since. The sending set finally arrived and our own electrician and Building Supt., who happens to be a wireless bug, made the installation.
>
> On August 18th we wired you as follows: "Phone set in operation. Please instruct operator report for duty."
>
> To this we received no reply, so proceeded to find our own operator and he has now been on duty for over three weeks. Since then we have maintained the station at our own expense, buy-

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[38]Letter to The Detroit News from C.S. Thompson, President, Radio News and Music, Inc., June 2, 1920, WWJ Files.

[39]Letter to T. McGuire, Evening News Association, from Michael D. Lyons, 463 Green Ave., Detroit, July 12, 1920, WWJ Files.

> ing the necessary bulbs, etc. at a local electrical store. We should like to have you explain to us just how you wish maintenance charges for this station to be handled. We judge the simplest method would be to deduct this expense from the monthly payments due you.[40]

Although the disagreements with Radio News and Music offered temporary irritations which were finally resolved, the leasing of the equipment had some serious, far-reaching effects. In studying the priority of radio stations, most historians have relied on the United States Department of Commerce records to determine which station was on the air first. Since the equipment used by The News in its initial broadcasts was licensed to Radio News and Music Company, Inc., a license bearing the name of The Detroit News does not appear in the official records of the Department of Commerce until 1921 when the station cancelled its agreement with Radio News and Music.

After The News station was in operation, Radio News and Music advertised that it would equip other newspapers with transmitters. An immediate response came from the Kansas City Star, the Pittsburgh Sun, the Louisville Courier-Journal, the Baltimore Sun and other newspapers. But no stock had been sold in Radio News and Music, and the necessary

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[40]Letter to Radio News and Music Co., Inc., New York, from Warren S. Booth, Asst. Business Manager, The Detroit News, September 11, 1920, WWJ Files.

financing that had been expected by the two owners did not materialize. Therefore, no contracts could be made with the other newspapers, and Radio News and Music folded[41]

WWJ, however, was firmly established. It paid Radio News and Music, after some disagreements, $750 for the installation of transmitter and monthly rental charges less the cost of transmitter maintenance which averaged less than $20 per month.[42]

As always there was a human paradox in WWJ's early beginnings. Thomas E. Clark, who had helped immensely in the struggle to establish the station, visited the studios on January 7, 1937. Clark, by this time was 71 years of age, and William E. Scripps guided him carefully through the halls. Does it not seem strange that The News reported the next day:

> Oddly enough, the occasion marked Clark's first visit to the studio building, which stands today as something of a symbol of his early faith. In fact, it marked his first visit to a broadcasting studio anywhere. Through the years he has been content to work alone in the

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[41]L. S. Stevenson, "Life of De Forest Gives WWJ as First in Field," The Detroit News, December 21, 1920, p. 1

[42]Letter to W. S. Booth, Asst. Business Manager, The Detroit News, from C. S. Thompson, Radio News and Music, October 3, 1920, WWJ Files.

> vast field of radio experimentation, which for him meant the silent hours in the laboratory. There is still so much to learn, so much to do![43]

Clark died in November, 1962, in a Detroit-area old folks home.

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[43]George W. Stark, "Dawning of Radio Miracle Recalled by WWJ Visitor," The Detroit News, January 8, 1937, p. 10.

V THE FIRST BROADCAST

Although WWJ has always celebrated the anniversary of its first broadcast on August 20, 1920, the station was broadcasting several weeks before that date. It would be more accurate to establish an anniversary sometime between July 15 and August 15 when the station actually began operation. In any event, information on both WWJ's "actual" first broadcast and its "official" first broadcast is extremely limited.

According to most sources, three young men took part in the "actual" epic event: operator Frank Edwards, "announcer" Elton Plant and "record spinner" Howard J. Trumbo. As Elton Plant remembered it:

> About two years after I joined The News the Managing editor called me into his office and said he had heard me singing around the conference room. The editor said they had to have someone to work with Francis Edwards, who was, as the managing editor put it, "the mechanic fellow on that radiophone gadget of Willy Scripps."
>
> That was what I found myself doing. At the time I objected to the job. I still wanted to be a writer and asked if this was going to interfere. I was told, "For goodness sakes, no. This is after hours." At

> that particular time I was a senior office boy and endeavoring to do a little sports writing...I was seventeen.[44]

Operator Frank Edwards had been hired when Radio News and Music failed to provide an "engineer" as they had promised.

> Edwards and I worked on the radio in the old filing room where they kept the bound files of the newspaper...
>
> For weeks we didn't know if we were getting out on the air. There wasn't anybody specially appointed to report back and we didn't get fan mail. This was the experimental stage of radio prior to August 20, 1920, before the newspapers' regularly scheduled programs got under way.[45]

Although Plant, as an office boy, was assigned to work part time in the "radiophone department," Edwards was told to devote his entire energies toward getting the station on the air.

> Edwards was being paid for this work although I do not know if he was on the News payroll or whether he was working directly for Mr. Scripps; but he was giving his full time to the radio job. He was always tinkering around with it but did no work for the newspaper proper. He was the engineer - although at that time we called them "hams."[46]

Howard J. Trumbo was not a Detroit News employee, and he offered his services as a member of the original crew with-

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[44]Elton Plant, tape-recorded interview by Frank E. Hill, Oral Research Office, Columbia University (Windsor, Ontario, Canada), May, 1951, transcript Plant's files, p. 3.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., p. 4.

out compensation. His regular job was as manager of the Edison Shop, then located on Woodward avenue next to the present Telenews Theater.

> I got into radio quite by accident. Frank Edwards came in the shop one day to buy a phonograph horn, which looked a lot like one of our modern megaphones. He said they were going to use it on the new transmitter that had been set up in The News building for sending out wireless messages. I gave him an old horn that was laying around the shop and he seemed very pleased. He invited me over to The News to have a look at the rig.[47]

Before Trumbo made his first visit to The News, Plant and Edwards continued their experiments with the new transmitter.

> Up to that time only talking was done--such as "Testing, one, two, three, four"..."If you are hearing this will someone please call," we used to say--and that chatter was part of my job. We'd say that over and over again...
>
> We would get the odd call in those early days...but from right around the News.
>
> I didn't take radio too seriously and I don't think many around the newspaper did--except Mr. Scripps...He was quite thrilled about the whole set-up. Apparently he did see in it far more than the rest of us.[48]

Arriving at The News to see the rig, Trumbo suggested that instead of talking into the mouthpiece of the transmitter

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[47]Howard J. Trumbo, tape recorded interview by Robert P. Rimes (Ferndale, Mich.), July 12, 1962. Tape recording Rimes' files.

[48]Plant, Interview.

that phonograph records might be played into it. He offered to lend the station an Edison phonograph and provide a selection of Edison recordings each evening for use in exciting the transmitter.

Thus, with borrowed equipment and a makeshift crew, WWJ was ready for its first official broadcast, August 20, 1920.

The equipment used on the first broadcasts could have been placed conveniently on a small kitchen table. The transmitter was a De Forest OT-10, similar to those he had been selling to the Navy since 1914. With a power rating of 20 watts, it operated on 200 meters. The power supply was derived from a 150-watt, 500-volt direct current generator, driven by a quarter horse-power motor.

Placed next to the transmitter was the receiving set which contained a three-coil regenerative circuit, using a primary, secondary and "tickler," the coils being of the honeycomb type. By attaching coils of various sizes to the front of the receiving set, the operator was able to receive signals on pre-set wave lengths.

The amplifier, which was located next to the receiving set, was of the tube detector type, with one stage of amplification.[49]

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[49]"First Dance Held to Radio and the First Transmitter," The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, p. 13.

The microphone was an integral part of the transmitter and was mounted near the top of the transmitter's 18-inch-high facing plate, resembling a telephone mouthpiece of the 1920s.

> The broadcast range of this first outfit was limited and under the best conditions was not more than one hundred miles. It was estimated that there were about three hundred operators receiving in the area covered... These radio amateurs were among approximately twenty thousand in the entire country. Their apparatus, usually one and two tube regenerative circuits, were used only to communicate with each other.[50]

The payment of $750 to Radio News and Music, following the installation of the original transmitter, seemed like a high price to pay when one examines the cost of the equipment which The News elected to lease rather than purchase.

OT-10 Transmitter (with tubes)	$325.00
Multi-wave Tuner (without coils)	77.50
Coils (plug mounted, $1.40 to $3.60 depending on wave length, several required)	25.00
Rack (for coils)	3.50
Type P-300 Combination Audion-Ultraudion and 1-step Amplifier (without tubes)	67.50
Tubes for Amplifier @ $7.00	14.00

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[50] Young, The Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 414.

Earphones	14.00
Total	$528.50

Shipping, wiring, installation, antenna extra[51]

The one possible logical explanation is that the $750 mentioned in the letter to Radio News and Music was also payment for a similar broadcasting outfit installed in the Scripps home. The Scripps transmitter was a Type-O which had a slightly smaller front panel with a transformer and a rectifier tube mounted thereon. It was less expensive than the OT-10 and sold for $260. By combining the cost of the station's transmitting outfit with the Scripps rig,[52] one arrives at a total figure of $991.50 plus installation.[53]

Using this logic, the $750 figure denoted a real bargain. By contrast, the building, erected in 1936 to house the station, cost $1 million.

Unfortunately, no accurate records of the features which comprised WWJ's first "official" broadcast August 20, 1920,

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[51]The De Forest Radio Telephone & Telegraph Co., De Forest Trustworthy Radio Receiving Apparatus Catalog G, New York, 1920, pp. 37, 42, 49 & 51.

[52]The two transmitters are constantly being confused. The Scripps outfit appears on the cover of a booklet recently published by the station where it is identified as WWJ's first transmitter. The OT-10 is housed at the Detroit Historical Museum.

[53]De Forest Catalog G, p. 51.

exist. Through the use of fragmentary information it has been possible to piece together a general description of the event, but no claim is made as to the absolute accuracy of the specific details.

Announcer Elton Plant, who had been working for several weeks with Frank Edwards to prepare the station for its first broadcast, decided that the event wasn't really of too much importance and he went on vacation. The job of announcer fell to managing editor Malcolm W. Bingay.

> Let us pause for station identification. The first in the world was WWJ. That date, August 20, 1920, has been legally established in court and gives this Detroit News station the authentic right to its claim of proud priority.
>
> Here I will take a bow for myself. I had the dubious honor of being the first broadcaster and the first program master of ceremonies. And looking down through the years at my long line of successors throughout the world, may God forgive me![54]

Using the phonograph borrowed from the Edison Shop, Trumbo placed a record on the turntable and waited for the signal to spin it. He had selected several records, among them "Roses of Picardy" and "Annie Laurie."[55]

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[54] Bingay, p. 224.

[55] The Detroit News, Radio Station WWJ, Detroit, 1931, (Station Promotional Booklet), Hereafter, Radio, p. 1.

With Plant gone, Bingay stood before the large end of the megaphone-like horn. The small end of the horn was attached to the mouthpiece of the De Forest transmitter with a rubber ring which resembled a tire ashtray holder. When Bingay finished speaking, he would turn the wide end of the horn toward the speaker of the phonograph. Thus, the music would span the distance between the phonograph and the transmitter and, hopefully, be received by the audience.

With earphones in place, Edwards made a few last-minute adjustments on the receiving and transmitting equipment and glanced up at the clock on the wall. It was nearly 8 p.m.

Bingay leaned toward the horn, and, with a nod from Edwards, began speaking.

> "This is 8 MK calling. (The call letters were changed later to WBL and finally to WWJ) This is the radiophone of The Detroit News, 8 MK, calling."[56]

Edwards gave a smile of approval. The first broadcast had begun. For an hour, until 9 p.m. it continued

> Several concerts programs have been given...received mostly by Detroit amateurs. Some of the lake, ore, and passenger ships have heard the concerts also. Notice of the concert is usually given with the voice, then

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[56]Robert P. Rimes, "The Night Radio Was Born," The Detroit News, August 21, 1960, Sec. E, p. 1.

> the title of the piece to be played is followed by a phonographic record played into the transmitter. Between phonographic records, late news items are given out.[57]

This is undoubtedly the pattern which the first broadcast followed.

As the last strains of "Roses of Picardy" died, Bingay again spoke into the large end of the horn.

> "How do you get it?" he asked. And a medley of voices came back through the darkness. "It's coming in fine. We're getting everything loudly and distinctly."
>
> Following this exchange with the receiving set used to get the audience response , a member of The Detroit News advertising department played "Taps" and WWJ first broadcast had ended.[58]

In perhaps 30 Detroit homes, listeners, who were fortunate enough to own homemade receiving sets, had heard the broadcast, after carefully adjusting condenser dials, and cleaning generator brushes. Neighbors, gathered around the receivers, were undoubtedly awed by the mysterious power which enabled their hosts to receive voices, and even music, from the air.

Some of the most advanced students owned transmitting, as well as receiving equipment. Henry B. Joy, a wealthy Detroit

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[57]William Peck Banning, Commercial Broadcasting Pioneer-The WEAF Experiment (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,1946), p. 49.

[58]Radio, p. 1.

enthusiast, who maintained his own broadcasting laboratory in his home, and Clyde Darr, who was one of the first Detroiters to take to the air, were in the audience on August 20.

> Others who "pounded the brass" in the old days and whose enthusiasm built wireless and radio [in Michigan] were Ed Densteadt, [once] in charge of radio for the Detroit Police Department, George Norris, Fred Bornman, and Ed Clark, [once] chief engineer of radio station WMBC in Detroit.[59]

No one, of course, could predict the impact that this first broadcast would have on the culture and living habits of America. Who could have dreamed, in 1920, that two blackfaced comedians, who called themselves Amos and Andy, would stop traffic and telephone calls at 7 p.m. every evening? Certainly not the young men who were involved in the establishment of WWJ.

Edwards gave up radio and went into the plumbing business in Detroit. As of this writing, he is living in Toledo. Plant returned to his home in Canada and took a job as a newspaper reporter on the Border Cities Star (now the Windsor Star). Oddly enough, he also participated in the first broadcast made by CKLW, Windsor, in 1932. He is probably one of the few men who have the distinction of opening two stations. As of this writing, he owns Elton Plant Advertising, Ltd. Howard

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[59]Kelly, The Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XXI (Winter Number, 1937), p. 9.

Trumbo couldn't have been more wrong.

> Because the Edison Shop was doing such a land office business in phonograph records, and had patented one of the most advanced recording techniques available in 1920, I saw the promise of a bright future as manager of the shop. Seven years later, in 1927, the Edison Company faltered and finally failed. It was driven out of business by, of all things, radio![60]

Trumbo then tried to make a living by repairing sets, but was forced to relinquish this business when the broadcasting stations offered to perform the same service free. With this blow, Trumbo gave up radio completely and recently retired as Plant Engineer for Faygo Beverages. As of this writing, he lives in Ferndale, Michigan.

Lyons, who had installed the transmitter aerial, abadoned radio and went into the priesthood. In 1927, he left Detroit to serve in the Patna, India, mission field as a Jesuit scholastic and was ordained four years later at St. Mary's College, Eurseong, India, After 19 years as a missionary, he returned to the United States in 1946 to write articles on the plight of the Indians. According to the Detroit Jesuit information center, he later resigned from the priesthood and returned to Calcutta where he married an Indian woman. His exact whereabouts is not known.[61]

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[60]Trumbo, Interview

[61]Rimes, The Detroit News, August 21, 1960, Sec. E, p. 1.

Among the handful of listeners on August 20, 1920, was a high school student, keenly interested in every phase of radio broadcasting.

> Albert B. Allen waited attentively at his station. Suddenly the receiver spoke, at first a bit stringy, but Allen's adjustment of the instrument soon toned it, making it distinct and plainly audible in an adjoining room.
>
> Allen now is a member of WWJ's engineering staff--and has been for the past 33 years.[62]

On Tuesday, August 31, 1920, following 11 days of one-hour, nightly programs featuring the great voices of the day--Caruso, Melba, Galli-Curci and others, The Detroit News made the first announcement of its newly completed wireless telephone. While most of Michigan wondered whether a young attorney general, Alex J. Groesbeck, would succeed in his race for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, The News announced in front page headlines:

THE NEWS RADIOPHONE TO GIVE VOTE RESULTS

Amateurs Over Michigan Are Invited to
Give Wireless Parties and Hear
"Voices in the Night"

> The Detroit News, tonight, will announce the results...of the State, Congressional and County primaries over southeastern Michigan, using its newly completed wireless telephone.
>
> The messages will be carried by real "voices of the night." Throughout the Lower

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[62] Ibid.

> Peninsula possibly, within a radius of 100 miles of Detroit, hundreds of wireless telegraph operators and enthusiasts will listen and get the results...
>
> While the voice will be used instead of the telegraphic code, no special apparatus will be needed to get the messages. As shown by tests last night, when an operatic concert... was attempted, the results achieved by use of the ordinary wireless telegraph receivers was quite astonishing...
>
> Every wireless operator in Michigan, Ohio and Ontario is invited to open up his receiver and participate in the enterprise... (for) tonight's demonstration will be...in a sense, epochal. A hundred years from now, perhaps, all news will be transmitted by wireless telephone; who knows?...
>
> Here is the essential data needed by the listening operators to get results.
>
> The wave length which will be used throughout the demonstration will be 200 meters.
>
> The first messages sent out will start at 8 o'clock tonight. The voting polls do not close until that time, but it is thought best to send miscellaneous matter for some time before the first election results are announced, so that operators may get their instruments in perfect attune.
>
> During the first hour operators wishing to talk with The News for instructions or to report results may do so. The official call for The News is "8 MK."
>
> Beginning at 9 o'clock, the first election bulletin will be sent out. Other bulletins will be sent on the hour and half hour from then until midnight.[63]

Thus, the first publicly announced radio broadcast was made by WWJ, complete with local, state and congressional primary election returns, plus general news bulletins and "live"

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[63]"The News Radiophone To Give Vote Results, "The Detroit News, August 31, 1930, p. 1.

entertainment.

On the following day, September 1, in what was probably the first review of a radio broadcast, the station's parent publication breathlessly reported on page one:

LAND AND WATER HEAR RETURNS BY WIRELESS

The Detroit News Radiophone Sends Spoken Word on Election to Stations and Ships Out on Lakes[64]

After comparing the event to the dreams of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, the story related:

> The sending of the election returns Tuesday night was fraught with romance and must go down in the history of man's conquest of the elements as a gigantic step in his progress. In the four hours that the apparatus, set up in an out-of-the-way corner of The News building, was hissing and whirling its messages into space, few realized that a dream and prediction had come true. The news of the world was being given forth through this invisible trumpet to the waiting crowds in the unseen market place...
>
> Promptly at 8:10 p.m. [ten minutes late] The News operator threw on the transmission current and called into the mouthpiece that, previous to the arrival of the election bulletins, amateur radio operators were to be treated to an electro-aerial concert. An ordinary phonograph was drawn close to the apparatus and a record started.
>
> No sooner was the selection completed than the headpiece of the receiver began to click...Streams of amateur operators began to send in their thanks and those that lacked

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[64]"Land and Water Hear Returns by Wireless," The Detroit News, September 1, 1920, p. 1.

> transmitting equipment, rushed to their telephones to call The News office...
>
> "Your concert is coming in fine, "they said. "Let's have the election results as soon as they come in..." A uniformed messenger hurried into the radio room. The steamer W. A. Bradley had heard over the waters of Lake Erie the voices of two singers from the Broadway-Strand Theater and the first tidings of the gubernatorial race.[65]

As the steamer Bradley confirmed, a young singer, Charlie Nelson, had made history as the first man to sing on WWJ. And his female partner, whose name has been lost, became the first woman to sing on the station. Following their engagement at the Broadway-Strand Theater, they quietly disappeared into oblivion.

Although it was exciting to read that the broadcast had been a huge success, the most important paragraph in the story appeared in bold-face type beneath the headline.

> The Detroit News wireless service...will be a regular part of The News service to the public. The service will start nightly at 8 o'clock and will run until 10. Late news developments will be flashed and between bulletins there will be songs and musical selections. Those who have receiving sets should invite their friends and neighbors to listen.[66]

The decision to broadcast nightly had been made. No longer would the radio station be laughingly called "Scripps Plaything." After hours of work, months of frustration and disbelief, the station was at last a reality. WWJ, and radio broadcasting as we know it today, had been launched.

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

VI GROWING PAINS 1920-1921

Following the decision by The Detroit News management to make the station a permanent part of the organization's service to the community, the staff began its never-ending search for program material.

On September 1, 1920, baseball news was presented for the first time, along with news bulletins of foreign affairs and progress reports on the various political campaigns being waged across the country. Five days later, on September 6, the results of the Dempsey-Miske fight were broadcast within 30 seconds of the time when the news was received from ringside by telegraph code.

To monitor the signal being sent out by the station, Howard Trumbo may have unwittingly established the first rating service. While the station was in operation, Trumbo would board a streetcar and ride all over the city visiting the homes of those listeners known to have receiving sets. He would make notes if the station was being, or not being, received with full and clear signal.[67]

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[67]Trumbo, Interview.

Charles F. Hammond, Jr., who had been at the controls of his receiver in Grosse Pointe when the first broadcasts were made, proved that WWJ was getting into his area of the city when he invited some of his friends to attend a dancing party at his home on Friday, September 4, 1920. Reporting the event a few days later, The News said:

> Double sorcery was at work at the home of Mrs. Charles F. Hammond, 180 Parker avenue, Friday night, when a dozen young persons... gathered to dance by music sent out into space by The Detroit News radiophone.[68]

Further proof that the station was reaching its audience came on September 10. The Detroit Radio Operators organization held a meeting in The News building to thank the station's management for its radio service. At the meeting the Operators agreed to cease sending after 10 p.m. for the benefit of The News bulletin broadcasting.

As might be expected there was also some resentment in a few quarters of the newspaper office as columnist H. C. L. Jackson humorously recalled.

> We saw, with a flare of resentment, radio arrive. We didn't mind it when The News started WWJ. That was all right. But we certainly did object to the amount of space the paper subsequently gave over to promoting radio.

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68. "First Dance Held to Radio and the First Transmitter," The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, quoting The Detroit News, September 18, 1920, p. 15.

> Back in '20 there were a lot of folks, who today are chronic radio listeners, who were saying that radio never could be anything but a rich man's plaything, a mere bauble. That's what they were saying.
>
> What we were saying couldn't be quoted in a Family Newspaper. Not when we were saying how we felt about all that lovely space that could have bloomed into reports about murder, mayhem, arson and such, written by the "Crime Hounds" [a group of young reporters which included Jackson] who, to be blunt about it, were in the habit of referring to WWJ as the "peanut whistle."[69]

Other "firsts" were established by the station in September, 1920. Whether important or not, The News carefully reported each item--usually on page one.

> What was doubtless the first want ad ever sent to a newspaper by radiophone was received for insertion by The Detroit News, through its radiophone department Friday night. It came from Albert Allen, station call 8 WA,...and was sent for his father. The message distinctly picked out of the night read:..."For sale--One pair of prism binoculars, 12 power. James P. Allen, 435 Bagg street."[70]

In an attempt to present live music, as well as phonograph selections, Howard Trumbo agreed to bring two of the Edison recording artists to the station for live concerts. Charles Mixer of the Edison Laboratories was invited to the

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[69]H.C.L. Jackson, "Listening In on Detroit," The Detroit News, August 20, 1945, p. 48.

[70]"Picked Out of the Air a Want-Ad for The News," The Detroit News, September 4, 1920, p. 1.

studio to play his violin over the air to compare studio production with that of phonograph records.[71] His appearance on September 18 was followed a few days later by a "vocal concert" given by Mabel Norton Ayers. She has often been given the distinction of being the station's first "live" singer, which, of course, isn't accurate since Charlie Nelson, as previously noted, holds that honor. Her "concert" was unusual, however.

> Miss Ayers, who is with the Edison Recreation studio in Chicago, sang several solos and also duets with the phonograph. She sang "Ave Marie" and "The Last Rose of Summer," with Madame Marie Rappold, and "Annie Laurie," with Anna Case, their voices being reproduced by the records.
>
> The concert, the first of a weekly series, was the first one in which the natural voice and the phonograph were used together over the radiophone. Operators reported that it was clear and distinct.[72]

Sports continued to fill important gaps in the broadcasting schedule as a code transmitter was installed on the judge's platform for the Gold Cup Races on the Detroit River on September 11. Sent to The News building, the results were decoded and broadcast by the crew in the studio. On October 5, the scores of the World Series baseball games between Cleveland

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[71]Young, The Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 416.

[72]"Sings for Wireless," The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, p. 15.

and Brooklyn were aired for the waiting baseball enthusiasts.[73]

It was about this time that Howard Trumbo was asked to leave the station. As he recalled:

> I had provided phonograph records for the station from the Edison Shop. Before each record, Elten Plant would say something like--'this is Edison recording star Miss Mabel Norton Ayers singing such-and-such a song. It is Edison record number so-and-so. And when I brought the stars to the studio, they were also identified as being Edison recording artists. I was grateful that they mentioned it on the air, because I'm sure it helped sales. But Mr. Stark [George W.] told me one day that I'd received enough free publicity and that the station would no longer need my help.[74]

Climaxing a political battle which had been waged throughout the fall, Harding rolled up an enormous majority over Cox in November, 1920. Although the voters had made the decision as to who would occupy the White House, the coverage of this event triggered a broadcasting controversy which went undecided for more than 15 years. Even though WWJ had been on the air for more than four months, a second station, KDKA in East Pittsburgh, Pa., which began broadcasting on November 2, 1920, is often given credit for being the "first" station to

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[73]The Evening News Association, Radio Staff of the Detroit News (Detroit: The Evening News Association, 1922), hereafter, radio staff, p. 9.

[74]Trumbo, Interview.

inaugurate regular programming. And the Harding-Cox election coverage is often categorized as the "first" program. A complete discussion of the disagreement is contained in a later chapter.

In answer to many requests from interested readers, a "Radio Department" column made its first appearance in The Detroit News on November 19. It offered information on the construction and/or purchase of "radiophone receivers" and the methods of achieving the best reception once a station had been installed. Since the response to the new editorial department was instant and enthusiastic, it became a regular feature of The News which, with a substantial shift in the tone of its material, continues today.[75]

By December, 1920, the number of radio listeners had greatly increased in Detroit and the surrounding communities. Small boys asked Santa Claus for receiving sets, and the station programmed special holiday music to its growing audience. Using countless varieties of cereal-box coils, ear-trumpet design loud-speakers, batteries, wires and gadgets of every description, the "magic" was being extracted from the air.

> Without a great deal of mechanical ability, a radio devotee could put together a crystal

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[75]Kelly and Boyes, Appendix.

> detector set, complete with cat's whisker, for less than $8.00. A vacuum detector set could be built for less than $60.00[76]

Some purchased the components for their receivers from local radio shops, which, by this time, had sprung into business all over Detroit. With the heavy demand, parts were seen in short supply.

> Because electrical shops couldn't supply enough headphones to meet the rush of new radio listeners, there grew up quite an epidemic of pilfering of telephone receivers--mostly from apartment house phones. So enthusiastic were these beginners that many scrupulously honest souls indulged in this petty thievery. With a single wire antenna strung in the room or attic, a coil on an oatmeal box, a piece of silicon or galena with a cat's whisker, sic and a telephone receiver, the would-be radio operator was able to participate.[77]

To ring in the new year, 1921, in joyous fashion, The News turned to Detroit attorney Louis Colombo whose "resonant tones" were heard in a "melody of cheer" that "went out across uncounted miles over the invisible ether."[78]

The Detroit News had completed its first calendar year of broadcasting and several notable milestones had been reached--at a net loss to the corporation of $3,063.92. Of course, this

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[76]Rimes, The Detroit News, August 21, 1960, Sec. E, p. 1.

[77]Young, The Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 417.

[78]Radio Staff, p. 9.

amount is paltry when compared to future losses. In its first eight years of operation, the station sustained a net loss annually of nearly $80,000. By 1928, the management had invested $466,386.27 or nearly a half million dollars in the operation and had not earned a dime in return. It is one thing to be a pioneer and quite another to back one's convictions with money in such huge amounts.[79]

Editorially claiming that the radio station offered another means by which The News could serve its public, a contributing factor to WWJ's existence in the very beginning hinged apparently on its proven ability to sell newspapers.

> Shortly after WWJ's initial program in 1920, The News editors conceived the idea of using this new "miracle" to sell papers. They started "Tonight's Dinner" by the household editor, a 15-minute talk which included suggestions for dinner as well as suggestions for saving in the kitchen. This has been successful in interesting women in The News and its features.[80]

Could the station possibly have sustained itself as a complete philanthropic venture? It seems doubtful when one reads:

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[79]Edwin L. Tyson, Station Manager, Affidavit Filed with the Federal Radio Commission, November 7, 1928, p. 1.

[80]Fred Gaertner, Jr., Managing Editor, Detroit News, "Station WWJ Strong Promotion Arm for Detroit News Since 1920," Editor and Publisher, July 27, 1935, p. 11.

> The name "The Detroit News" always is appended to the call letters, "WWJ," thus always keeping in the listeners' minds the name of the station's owner and sponsor. As pure institutional advertising alone, the constant "drip, drip of the water on the stone" idea has been of great value.[81]

Although WWJ continues to identify itself as The Detroit News station, it long ago became far more valuable to the parent organization and not just an extension of the newspaper circulation department.

While the WWJ news bulletins were reporting the major events of 1921--Harding's inauguration, the Sacco-Vanzetti trial and the Dempsey-Carpentier boxing bout at Boyle's Thirty Acres--the original transmitting set was found to be inadequate for the increasing requirements of the station. It was completely rebuilt early in the year.[82]

Experiments in programming continued with the sending of music by radiophone to a banquet being held at the Masonic Temple on January 13, and the same service was provided for the Highland Park High School on February 3.[83]

In June, 1921, further improvement was made in the transmitting equipment with the installation of a two-wire

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Kelly and Boyes, p. 74.

[83] Radio Staff, p. 10.

antenna, 290 feet in length, which was stretched between The News building and the Hotel Fort Shelby, located in the next block. This innovation was tested; and to the delight of the staff, reception reports poured in from listeners all over the United States. The News receiving set heard broadcasts by government stations as far away as Bordeaux, France; Nauen, Germany; Rome and Hawaii.[84]

It was about this time also that one of WWJ's most popular program features, "The Town Crier," was introduced. As Elton Plant recalled it:

> The first "starred" radio newscast at WWJ was billed as "The Town Crier" show. Rex White wrote the news items and I read them. I would ring the Town Crier bell while Rex clapped coconut shells to simulate the horse's hoofs on which the Town Crier arrived. This was the beginning of "sound effect" experiments at WWJ...I was the original Town Crier on radio, but only for two or three weeks because I booted a couple of words one night, and then Rex was doing it...and later it was Albert W. Weeks. It has been recorded that Al was the original Town Crier, but not so...When Weeks took over he wrote the news items in his style and did the broadcasting himself as well. They developed him right into the character and he was unusually good at it.[85]

Also, in mid-1921, The News radiophone department decided to organize its programs on a more elaborate scale.

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Plant, Interview, p. 20.

Heretofore, the shows had been restricted to phonograph music and news bulletins with an occasional guest. Since the "official" staff of the station consisted of a radiophone editor and two technical men, other members of The News organization volunteered to book visiting theatrical talent.[86] Managing editor Malcolm W. Bingay, city editor George Stark and reporters Robert Kelly, Rex White, Al Weeks, Elton Plant and others, haunted the local theaters, vaudeville houses and amateur theatricals searching for talent.

> When working on the radio full time in 1921 my job, along with announcing, was getting some of the program talent. When I first went up there I actually scouted for some of the talent among people I knew, people who were studying music with me. I would bring them over. I remember I brought my singing teacher over, Francis Firth. They liked him and he did a couple of programs a week for a bit.[87]

By December, 1921, the recruiting drive for talent was ended as performers of every description poured into the station. Song pluggers, who paid singers to perform songs in order to sell more copies of the sheet music, used The News facilities often. And well-known performers, who were in Detroit for theater appearances, readily agreed to visit the station, without

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[86]Radio Staff, p. 10.

[87]Plant, Interview, p. 21.

fee, in order to promote the paid local appearances.

From evening programming that could be described thus:

> The usual concert, interspersed with news bulletins, will be given tonight and every night except Sunday. Musical selections are changed nightly, and are chosen to cover a great variety--grand opera, musical comedy, voice, band, orchestra and solos.[88]

WWJ began to present increased "live" programming.

Completely unpredictable, however, was the response given to the microphone by the stage stars who consented to appear on the "live" shows. Ernest R. Ball, composer of "Mother Machree," "Love Me and the World is Mine," and other songs, was appearing with the Keith circuit on the stage of the Temple Theater in 1921. He agreed to perform in the WWJ studios on December 13 and his reaction to the microphone was typical.

> The receiver microphone is not a very appreciative instrument, at least in appearance. One can't tell from the looks of [it] whether his number is liked or not.
>
> This was quite baffling to Ernie Ball. He sang one or two of his most popular numbers, heard no applause and finally looked at the telephone [microphone] in a manner that registered blind rage. And then he stuck out his tongue at the instrument, which seemed to relieve his feelings a lot, for he swung immediately into another selection.[89]

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[88]"Ship Hears Radio Concert and Lauds News Service," The Detroit News, September 8, 1920, p. 1.

[89]Radio Staff, p. 18

Frank Tinney, noted comedian and monologist, made his first radio appearance two days later on December 15.

> A curious thing in connection with the broadcasting has been the reaction of stage artists to the undemonstrative bronze device into which they pour their songs and remarks. Frank Tinney refused to believe that he was not the victim of a hoax. He feared he was in reality talking for the sole entertainment of practical jokers in the private room where the microphone of the transmitting apparatus was located, until he heard music relayed back by telephone from Windsor, Ont., across the river. Embarrassment, even acute "stage fright," has been noticed in the case of almost every individual who is accustomed to applause as occasional motive power.[90]

Other notable performers and personalities including poet Edmund Vance Cooke, comedians Van and Schenck (Dec. 19), and Fannie Brice (Dec. 21) made their radio debuts on WWJ. Miss Brice, who appeared as a singer with the Old Newsboys' Band, later gained national fame for her portrayal of the mischievous "Baby Snooks."

The program schedule, in which these personalities were placed, was arranged according to the following timetable.

11:30-11:55 a.m. Music phonograph

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[90] Ibid.

3:15 - 4:00 p.m.	Reports of the Livestock, grain, Liberty Bond and stock markets, the foreign (money) exchange and the weather report.
6:25 - 6:30 p.m.	Music to "tune up" instruments [correctly dial the station — much the same as early television's test pattern]
6:30 - 6:45 p.m.	Standard bedtime stories read by Mabel Clara Miles.
6:45 - 7:00 p.m.	Repetition of 3:15 program
7:00 p.m.	Beginning of program of entertainment.[91]

This schedule was maintained daily, except Sunday, during the closing months of 1921.

Still another segment in the program expansion of December, 1921, was the procuring of Finzel's Orchestra and other musical organizations with several members, including the Pier Ballroom Orchestra under the direction of Arthur Black. It became common practice for Detroiters to stage "wireless parties" at their homes and dance to the "live" music emitted by the radio receiver.

As 1921 hurried to a close, WWJ presented Christmas Eve services with Governor Alex J. Groesbeck, Mayor James Couzens, the Rt. Rev. Charles D. Williams, D.D., Bishop of the Episcopal

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[91]"Lake Vessels 'Pick Up' News Wireless Melody," The Detroit News, December 19, 1921, p. 1.

Diocese of Michigan, and the Rev. Fr. John P. McNichols, S. J., President of the University of Detroit, participating.[92]

And to demonstrate its program diversity, Nancy Brown, editor of the Experience Column (advice for the lovelorn in The News,) made her first WWJ appearance on December 28.[93]

On December 30, a young Hungarian pianist, Gizi Szanto, made her American concert debut on WWJ. From the Conference Room in The News building, where the station was now housed, she thrilled an audience which received her performance at "between 350 and 400 amateur wireless stations, in addition to probably 10 times as many receiving sets." As "an unimpressive megaphone placed with its mouth opened over the strings of the piano caught up the vibrations and carried them to an instrument which flung them out into space,"[94] little did this 17 year-old pianist dream that she was playing the overture to the greatest year of expansion the young

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[92]"Radio Wafts Yule Spirit," The Detroit News, December 25, 1921, p. 1.

[93]"Nancy Brown Thrills Hearers by Wireless," The Detroit News, December 29, 1921, p. 3.

[94]"Lake Vessels 'Pick Up' News Wireless Melody," The Detroit News, December 19, 1921, p. 1.

station would ever experience.

Even though WWJ had rebuilt and improved its transmitter, expanded and refined its programming, enlarged its staff slightly and moved its "studios" from the cramped quarters of the editorial reception room to the more spacious Conference Room, all these accomplishments would pale when compared to those made during 1922. This was the year marked with innovations only dreamed of before.

VII THAT WONDERFUL YEAR--1922

With the possible exception of 1930, no other year in radio history can match 1922 as the period of broadcasting's greatest growth and development. On the national level, one station followed another in an almost frenzied race to find a space on the dial. Locally, WWJ increased its power, hired its first "personality," met the competition of a station introduced by a rival newspaper, expanded its staff and its studios and watched the sale of receiving sets skyrocket.

On December 12, 1921, the News ordered a Western Electric 500-watt #1A transmitter which would operate on the wave lengths between 375 and 600 meters. For the purchase price of $6,680., the station expanded its broadcasting horizons far beyond those obtainable with the De Forest equipment.[95]

The installation of the new transmitter and its first broadcast on January 28, 1922, seemed to herald the beginning of WWJ's greatest growth year.

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[95]The Detroit News "Purchase Order #9549" to Western Electric Company, Detroit, Michigan, December 12, 1921, p. 1.

The magnitude of the visiting stars shown brighter. During a single week in January, Eddie Cantor and members of his company, who were appearing at the Garrick in "Midnight Rounders;" Adele Rowland, who was heading the bill at the Shubert-Detroit, and Clara Morton, of the "Famous Four Mortons," performed on WWJ's evening program. Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones remembered the Cantor broadcast.

> The occasion of the anniversary of WWJ... moves me to reminisce. I made my debut on that station...The night I went on the air for the first time was made memorable for me because I met in the studio Eddie Cantor and the great Dr. Lorenz of Vienna [Dr. Adolph Lorenz, famous surgeon].
>
> Cantor climbed up on a stool and extemporized a string of delightful chatter...
>
> Dr. Lorenz impressed me...he made an appeal for the war children of Europe...
>
> Then I hopped on the stool and recited half a dozen poems.[96]

Among the numerous personalities who trooped into the WWJ studios during 1922 were: movie actresses Lillian and Dorothy Gish; Hollywood producer David W. Griffith; soprano Madame Emma Cleve; Shakespearean artists Edward H. Sothern and his wife, Julia Marlowe; Canada's Governor-General Baron Byng, and dramatist Cosmo Hamilton. The famous in almost

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[96]Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones, "WWJ's Birthday," Successful Living, August 24, 1945, p. 18.

every field could be added to the list, and many were making their first radio appearance.

On February 6, 1922, the famous Shakespearean actor Walter Hampden arrived at the station and agreed to do a soliloquy from "Hamlet" provided that the studio could be cleared of all personnel. This, the engineers explained, was impossible, since they were needed to operate the equipment. Still refusing to appear before anyone in the studio, Hampden and the crew finally reached a compromise. He delivered the soliloquy to the radio audience while locked in the woman's lavoratory with a microphone before him.[97]

Ossip Gabrilovitsch raised his baton over The Detroit Symphony Orchestra on February 10, 1922, and made broadcasting history with the first symphony concert presented by radio anywhere. It has been reported in various station publications that this was also WWJ's first sponsored broadcast. An examination of the financial statements of the Detroit Bank and Trust Company, the alleged sponsor, failed to produce confirmation of this expenditure.

If, however, the Detroit Bank did pay certain fees for the right to have its name mentioned in connection with the

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[97]Elton Plant, tape recorded interview by Robert P. Rimes (Windsor, Ontario, Canada), July 18, 1962. Tape recording Rimes' files.

Symphony concert, this sponsorship would predate WEAF's claim of the first paid radio commercial, August 28, 1922, a 10-minute announcement for the Queensborough Corp. of Jackson Heights, New York.

In any event, the Detroit Symphony broadcast certainly gives WWJ priority over WEAF's claim of the first broadcast of a complete symphonic concert (by the New York Philharmonic, November 22, 1922).[98]

It was also about this time that William F. "Bill" Holliday began to emerge as WWJ's first, full-fledged "personality." Others had priority over him as "announcers" on the station, but Holliday's resonant voice and professional delivery endeared him to listeners as "the voice of WWJ." Malcolm Bingay hired Holliday.

> The pressure of the radio programs was getting too steady with night and day programs. I watched Bill Holliday of the Grace & Holliday Advertising Agency play in amateur shows at the Detroit Players Club. He had the voice and he knew music. That night after the show, I hired Bill.
>
> He became the first full-fledged radio master of ceremonies. The radio rolled into big-time stuff. I lost interest in it because it was not journalism. There was a theatricalism foreign to the local city room where a phony is spotted before he can open his mouth.[99]

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[98]"Me Too, WNBC (Ne WEAF)" Variety, April 11, 1962, p. 51.

[99]Bingay, p. 225.

Bingay was later "exiled" to England as the London correspondent for The News and finally was fired by the newspaper. WWJ's first announcer then returned to the United States and was hired by the Detroit Free Press where he served as Editorial Director until his death in 1953.

But, before he left, Bingay had picked a winner. Only a handful of WWJ performers have earned the adoration heaped upon Holliday. Born in 1892 in Wyoming, Ohio, Holliday attended public schools in Pittsburgh and Tyron, Pennsylvania. He also studied a "course" at Bucknell University. Since his grandfather, Joseph R. Ramsay, had been president of the Wabash Railroad, and his father superintendent of the L. A. & S. Railroad, a branch of the Pennsylvania, it was understandable that young Holliday would be drawn into the traditional family trade.

Because he didn't like railroading and preferred a wider field of personal contact and a medium of creative expression, he landed in the advertising business with the Joseph Richards Company and later joined the advertising department of the Burroughs Adding Machine Company. At Burroughs he edited the Bulletin, a company house organ, under the pen name Bill Bell Blair, a name he used later in Bridle & Golfer, a sports magazine published by Holliday

and his partner, Edward R. Grace.[100]

> He was the man whose voice and personality were recognized, then awaited, and finally beloved in the measureless amphitheater of radio[101]

> Once the first wonderment of the radio was past and it began to come into modern life as a fixed activity, the voice of WWJ or "Bill" soon took on a personality. There was a friendly warmth, an urging gayety about that voice that stirred responsive warmth in the hearts of men and women. From the audience came hundreds of letters thanking the man they knew only as a set of initials.[102]

He was a man of unusual vigor and of unflagging interest in any activity which directly or indirectly touched the public. Holliday was a member of the Players and acted and wrote one-act dramas. And he composed music, played the piano, was active in the Board of Commerce, wrote anything from fiction to statistical articles, and earned a living as an editor, a musician, a reporter, a salesman, a radio announcer, an advertising manager and a publisher.[103]

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[100]"W. F. Holliday Dead," The Detroit News, June 30, 1926, p. 1.

[101]"Friends Carry Holliday to Rest Among the Hills," The Detroit News, July 3, 1926, p. 2.

[102]"W. F. Holliday Dead," The Detroit News, June 30, 1926, p. 1.

[103]George W. Stark, "We Old Timers," The Detroit News August 22, 1941, p. 8.

In addition to serving the station as "its voice," Holliday was also Program Manager and chief talent scout, and, at the same time, operated a successful advertising agency, Grace & Holliday.

One of the performers during Holliday's reign, Dr. Lucienne Monfort, a concert pianist, recalled her experience some years later.

> I remember it all so well...William Holliday was master of ceremonies, announcer, and almost everything else, even to appearances as singer and piano player...On my first program appeared Frank Morgan, then a Bonstelle actor and afterward to become famous in the movies...
>
> Once the concert was over, everyone stood around staring at the telephone. It began to ring. In those days, anything even approaching entertainment was sure to produce a storm of calls from hearers, most of whom seemed astonished that they had heard anything at all.[104]

Another "personality" who gained local radio fame in early 1922 was Albert Lorem Weeks, known to the audience as "The Town Crier." Although he did not reach the public stature enjoyed by Holliday, Weeks' broadcasts drew much acclaim for their originality and wit.

Weeks was born in Rochester, New York, on May 31, 1888. He attended Eastern High School in Rochester and was graduated

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[104]"When Radio Was A Marvel," The Detroit News, August 21, 1945, p. 12.

from Central High School in Detroit in 1906. Four years later, he received the Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan.[105]

Beginning his career on the staff of the Detroit Free Press in 1910 as a reporter, he later moved to the now defunct Detroit Tribune in 1912 as telegraph editor and soon became city editor. In 1913, he joined the staff of The News where he served successively as a reporter, drama editor and literary critic and where his work gained for him an international reputation.

As WWJ's "Town Crier," a label which previously had been worn by Elton Plant and Rex White, Weeks employed a ringing bell to herald his newscasts, which were filled with humor and satirical observations on the happenings of the day.

In 1926, he left The News and WWJ to take the editorship of the Bridle & Golfer, the magazine published by his old friend, Bill Holliday, and which was devoted to sports, theater, literature, finance, fashions, society and humor.[106] Following Holliday's death, Weeks became editor of the Playgoer, and from 1929 to 1932, he was given complete charge of

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[105]"Albert Weeks Named Magazine Editor," The Detroit Free Press, March 15, 1926, p. 24.

[106]Ibid.

Metropolitan Motion Picture Company's creative, directing and voice recording activities. He never returned to broadcasting, which had given him his greatest fame.[107]

Cast aside was a talent which George W. Stark later described as "antic genius"[108] and a show called "the most popular feature of the programs."

> Perhaps the most popular feature of the programs, at least until the organization of The Detroit News Orchestra, was the Town Crier. At first he held to the traditions of bellmen, and gave a nightly digest of the day's news, with running comment. His whimsicality was so appealing that fancy ultimately took precedence over fact. The anonymity which at first characterized the Town Crier could not be maintained...[109]

The first interest displayed by WWJ in joining with other stations in a network came February 13, 1922, when Warren S. Booth, then Assistant Business Manager of The News and as of this writing President of the Evening News Association, sent a letter to W. S. Gifford, then Vice-President of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company

> Mr. [F. M.] Ryan [who had installed the new 500-watt transmitter for The News in January] said that he understood that you would soon be organized

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[107]"Al Weeks Joins Staff of Picture Company," The Detroit News, July 31, 1932, p. 16.

[108]George W. Stark, "We Old Timers," The Detroit News, August 21, 1941, p. 1.

[109]Radio Staff, p. 20.

> to distribute to all of these stations by wire speeches and the like, which are of national importance, and to broadcast by radio from each of these stations. This is indeed a very interesting development and The News is aware that if your company goes into this, it will do so in a whole-hearted way...
>
> We are wondering whether we could come to some agreement whereby The News would be connected by wire with your sending station and broadcast these special things along with your own radio stations scattered about the country. Of course there would not be any great number of events of national interest but when these occurred, it would certainly be greatly to our advantage to be hooked up with your system.[110]

Apparently Gifford did not respond immediately to Booth's highly original suggestion, but ultimately this very arrangement linked WWJ and WEAF in the first national network of stations.

On March 1, 1922, the local U. S. Radio Inspector, S. W. Edwards, sent a request to the Commissioner of Navigation asking that The News be allowed to change its call letters. As he explained the problem:

> The Detroit News... has had a great deal of difficulty with the call letters WBL which have been assigned to their station. They have shown me a number of cards and letters from distant points in which it is stated that the call letters of the station do not carry well and are not easily distinguishable. This newspaper has requested me to take up with the Bureau the matter of a change in call

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[110]Letter to W. S. Gifford, Vice-President, American Telephone and Telegraph Company, from Warren S. Booth, Asst. Business Manager, The Detroit News, February 13, 1922, WWJ Files.

> letters and they have requested me to ascertain if it will be possible for them to have the call letters of WKL or WWW. It is respectfully recommended that they be granted the change in call letters.[111]

Six days later, a reply was received:

> You will also note your call has been changed from WBL to WWJ. This is about as good as we could do in the matter of call letters and we hope you will find them satisfactory.[112]

Thus, the station's permanent call letters, formerly used by a vessel in the Atlantic Coastal trade, were established. And the legend that the station was named after a person, namely W. J. Scripps, should be put to rest.

Visiting New York on business, W. E. Scripps received a distressing telegram on March 11, 1922.

> RYAN IN TOWN SAYS FREE PRESS IS ENTERING BROADCASTING FIELD SOON AS WESTERN ELECTRIC CAN DELIVER A RADIOPHONE SAME AS OURS. WESTERN ELECTRIC DESERVES CENSURE FOR SELLING SECOND PHONE IN DETROIT. IF THEY INSIST ON SALE THEY SHOULD AT LEAST GUARANTEE US PREFERENCE ON ALL ORDERS FOR NEW MICROPHONES, LOUDSPEAKERS, AMPLIFIERS, TUBES, ETC. WE SHOULD SEW UP BROADCASTING HOURS. ALSO KEEP FREE PRESS FROM ORCHESTRA HALL.[113]

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[111]Letter to Commissioner of Navigation, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C., from S. W. Edwards, U. S. Radio Inspector, Federal Building, Detroit, March 1, 1922.

[112]Letter to Warren S. Booth, Asst. Business Manager, The Detroit News from S. W. Edwards, U. S. Radio Inspector, Federal Building, Detroit, March 6, 1922, WWJ Files.

[113]Telegram from W. S. Booth to W. E. Scripps, Hotel Biltmore, N. Y., March 11, 1922, WWJ Files.

This was indeed unpleasant news for WWJ. For now it would be necessary to share the precious broadcasting band assigned to stations in 1922 with The News' arch rival. Ultimately, The News would be required to curtail its broadcasting day to allow the Free Press to use the same frequency, since the plan for multiple frequencies had not, as yet, been formulated.

To outward appearances, WWJ seemed unconcerned about this turn of events as it continued to present a series of forty Lenten sermons, one each day, which began on March 1. The programs were called "What Lent Means to the Community" and clergymen of all denominations provided the sermons for this broadcasting "first." The Rt. Rev. Michael J. Gallagher, Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Detroit; the Rt. Rev. Charles D. Williams, Episcopal Bishop, and Bishop Theodore S. Henderson, were among those who made addresses.[114]

On March 15, 1922, The News radio station broadcast the country's first "missing persons" report. Albino Tanner Fleming, the 13-year-old adopted son of William Fleming, ran away from home with St. Louis as his destination. The police in several cities were alerted but were unable to locate the

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[114]WWJ, The Detroit News, "WWJ Firsts" (Mimeographed manuscript, 1950), p. 4.

boy. Finally, an amateur operator in Toledo, who had heard the WWJ broadcast, gave the boy's description to the matron of the juvenile detention home in the Ohio city and she identified one of her charges as the missing Fleming boy. A few weeks later, another missing boy, William Dora, was located in almost the same manner. These two incidents suggested the wider use of radio to assist the police in tracking criminals and recovering stolen property. The facilities of WWJ, therefore, were offered to Mayor James Couzens who answered:

> Glad to accept your offer. Until the time comes when we can establish our own sending station, the generous and public-spirited offer of The Detroit News will be gladly accepted. I have watched the development of radio and I can clearly see its immense possibilities in the capture of criminals fleeing the city.[115]

Police Lieutenant Potts, who had first suggested the use of radio for police work in a speech on WWJ December 24, 1921, implemented the plan under the direction of William P. Rutledge, then superintendent of the Detroit Police. Receiving sets were installed in precinct stations and later in Police Headquarters. This development led ultimately to the establishment of WCOP, Detroit, the first police radio station. Rutledge, incidentally, is also generally credited with the idea of communicating with a moving scout car.

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[115] Ibid.

Listeners were so concerned with the plight of Albino Fleming, that the radio debut of a young comedian and wit, Will Rogers, on March 15, was almost lost in the other radio news headlines. Two days later, Emma Calve, the distinguished operatic soprano, made her radio debut on WWJ.

On March 22, 1922, at 9:30 a.m., the Household editor of The Detroit News, Mrs. Myrtle Calkins, stepped to the WWJ microphone and greeted the audience, "Good Morning, Everybody." Thus began one of the most popular women's features heard on WWJ, "Dinner by Radio," a menu-planning program. Originally designed to interest readers in The News women's features, it grew in popularity over the years as evidenced by the mail sent to the women's department by listeners. Before the program began, letters to the department numbered about 300 per week. By 1930, about 3,000 letters a week, or a yearly total in excess of 156,000, were received, giving praise to the program series.[116]

The University of Michigan began extension courses by radio on March 31. Lecturers, arranged by Professor W. D. Henderson, in the fields of public health, public education, modern scientific developments, chemistry and astronomy, were

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[116]Ella Gordon Smith, "Radio Dinners 8 Years on Air," The Detroit News, August 20, 1930, p. 19.

presented by WWJ.[117]

Concerned over the increasing popularity of radio, the Associated Press issued an edict early in 1922 that none of the news supplied by the wire service would be available to broadcasting stations. However, on March 31, when a sleet and ice storm felled telegraph poles and wires, the A. P., and other news services, turned frantically to other means of transmitting stories to member newspapers throughout the state. The International News Service (I.N.S.) sent out reports of the happenings in Lansing using WWJ's facilities and supplemented this service with a few bulletins sandwiched between commercial correspondence over the Chicago wire of the Western Union, the only line that did not go down during the storm. The Associated Press and the United Press got most of their March 31 news through during a three-hour lull between the storms when the lines were temporarily repaired.

On Saturday, April 1, with the storm still raging and the lines down again, the A. P. swallowed its pride and sent its Detroit correspondent, David J. Wilkie, to the WWJ studios. Wilkie hurriedly wrote the news copy and the WWJ announcers read it, while A. P. subscribers at the Adrian Telegram, the Lansing State Journal, the Jackson Citizen-Patriot, and other

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[117]Kelly and Boyes, p. 81.

out-state newspapers, hired court stenographers to copy the items. Papers all over Michigan carried the line, "Special Dispatch by WWJ Radiophone," on several stories Saturday night, Sunday and Monday, when the regular means of communication were re-established.[118]

Through the use of old newspaper clippings, a typical program of March, 1922, has been reconstructed. Although much of the material is corny and dated now, it seems worthwhile to trace a single program from beginning to end in order to examine the elements of entertainment which comprised an offering by WWJ during this period. A description of the program, printed the next day, might have read like this:

Five members of the Detroit Players gave a novel wireless concert last night that was enjoyed here and across the North American continent. The evening started off when William Holliday announced that the evening had been turned over to these gentlemen and that he would not be held responsible for anything that happened. The first number announced was a lecture on wireless telephony by Al Weeks, who for many years has made a deep study of this marvelous science.

WEEKS: Noah was the first wireless operator, with his dove. The second was Ben Franklin, who got so mad when lightning struck

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[118]"Radiophone Gives Michigan Papers News When Sleet Fells Wires," Editor & Publisher, April 8, 1922, p. 12.

his new kite that he founded the Saturday Evening Post. Of course, all you movie fans know what amperes are having seen Theda Bara. And Watts are very hard to get rid of as they are so tiny. Ohms have grown so greatly in popularity that a Better Ohms Week was recently held in Detroit. I'd like to leave with one last warning to the amateurs. Don't wind your armature too tightly or you'll break the mainspring.

William C. Lerchen, baritone, sings two of his favorite songs, "Tommy Lad" and "Mah Lindy Lou".

(Loud Applause from the group gathered around the studio.)

John J. Plath delivers the Kipling poem, "Gunga Din," and "The Shooting of Dan McGrew."

HOLLIDAY: Who's next? Ah, there's Sam Slade. Whatcha goin' do, Sam?

SLADE: Guess I'll recite Gunga Din.

HOLLIDAY: No, you can't do that. Jack Plath just gave us our Gunga dinner (chuckles).

SLADE: Oh, well then, guess I'll sing a song. (The basso renders the aria from Simon Boccanegra, by Verdi, and to repeated demands from callers on the telephones, he responded with "The Miller.")

Walter Boynton was next announced with his 'cello. (There followed a terrific argument with the surrounding players, who insisted it wasn't a 'cello, that the last time they saw it--it was a nice little blond violin. They wanted to know what Boynton had been feeding it to make it grow so fast.) He finally played Airs by Schumann.

George P. McMahon played "The Modern Maiden's Prayer," Al Jolson's "My Little Bimbo, Down on a Bamboo Isle," and "Farewell, Honey, Fare Thee Well," on the piano.

HOLLIDAY: That concludes the evening's entertainment on the part of the Players. The scheduled time to end this program passed half an hour ago. Goodnight.

The radio audience listened as the Players were applauded by persons calling Cherry 7500 in order to give it over the telephone.

The evening talk on The News Music Memory Contest was made by Miss Edith M. Ruebekam, who lectured on the composers Rubinstein and Liszt. The former's Melody in F and Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody were then played.

And a typical evening's entertainment for a radio listener in 1922 had ended. One wonders if radio has really changed too much in the past forty years.[119]

On April 2, WWJ and the Michigan Agricultural College cooperated in a lecture course by radiophone. David M. Friday, President of M. A. C., said of the broadcasts, "Farmer and city man will be brought closer together--closer than ever before by use of The Detroit News' radiophone."[120]

In an effort to promote reformation and interest his band members in world events, Warden H. L. Hurlburt brought the Jackson Prison Band to the WWJ studios on April 9, 1922.

The band performance shared the same programming log with the Cantata sung at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral.

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[119]Adapted from "Merry Medley Wafted Afar," The Detroit News, March 29, 1922, p. 6.

[120]Kelly and Boyes, p. 81.

During the Easter season of 1922, WWJ entered into an arrangement with St. Paul's, whereby the station would be allowed to broadcast the Easter Cantata sung in the church on Palm Sunday and the morning and evening services on Easter Day.

> Thus the Cathedral was no longer one merely of stone of architectural dimensions, but one whose mystic walls encompassed most of the continent.[121]

When the Rev. Warren L. Rogers stepped to the pulpit of the Cathedral to open the services on April 9, he began a broadcasting series which has continued uninterrupted every Sunday since 1922. Only KDKA's broadcasts from the Calvary Church in Pittsburgh, which began on January 2, 1921, are older. Since KDKA carries only a 15-minute program from the church, WWJ's St. Paul's broadcasts have been honored as the oldest church services in America.

Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians made their radio debut on WWJ May 2, 1922. Waring had appeared at a University of Michigan J-Hop in January, 1922, and William Holliday was in the audience. After the dance, Holliday asked the Pennsylvanians to appear on the station, but it wasn't until May that they were able to accept the offer. Howard Pierce, production manager of the Kunsky-Trendle theatrical interests, heard the

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[121] Radio Staff, p. 13.

broadcast and offered Waring and his group a week's engagement at the now defunct Paramount Theater. The group played the week for which they had contracted and 12 additional weeks.

> Small wonder that Maestro Waring has a warm spot in his heart for Detroit and WWJ. He may call his boys the Pennsylvanians, but their start was really made in Michigan.[122]

Of course, Waring's contribution to WWJ was far more important than the program he presented on the station. While he was at WWJ, Holliday revealed to Waring that he was looking for an assistant program manager--someone who could also help him with the growing announcing chores. Holliday also wanted to train a likely successor, since he hoped to leave the broadcasting field in order to devote more time to his advertising business. In talking with Waring, Holliday discovered that they both had grown up in the small town of Tyron, Pennsylvania, and that they had a mutual friend, Edwin Lloyd Tyson. Waring suggested, so the legend goes, that Holliday hire Tyson. This remark by Waring would bring to WWJ, on May 17, 1922, one of the station's best-known voices.

Born May 11, 1888, in Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania, "Ty" Tyson attended Tyron High School and Penn State College for two years studying forestry. In addition to two years of military service with the 28th Division in World War I, Tyson worked for a time in the retail coal business, a wall paper and stationary

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[122]George W. Stark, "WWJ Link to Past Honored by Waring's Michiganders," The Detroit News, September 20, 1936, p. 3.

store, as a paper maker in the West Vace Paper Mill and as a Mercantile Appraiser for Blair County Pennsylvania.

In the spring of 1922, after developing successive allergies to the fields of endeavor as outlined above, Tyson received the following telegram:

> COME TO DETROIT AS MY ASSISTANT STOP
> SALARY ATTRACTIVE STOP BILL HOLLIDAY STATION WWJ[123]

Unemployed at the time, Tyson couldn't afford to ask questions, and so he wired back:

> WHEN?

Holliday's reply case right to the point:

> AT ONCE

And so, without knowing what broadcasting was, Tyson became a broadcaster. Before he retired in March, 1953, after more than three decades as a WWJ personality, Tyson had endeared himself to legions of listeners. Few persons in the entire spectrum of broadcasting won more friends than "Ty." When he celebrated his 25th Anniversary in broadcasting in 1947, this plea was published in The Detroit News.

> Jerry Moore, assistant manager of the Fort Shelby Hotel wants to emphasize that the banquet Monday night at the hotel in Ty's honor is an invitational affair.
>
> Moore's telephone has been ringing constantly with calls from persons who want to buy blocks of tickets for the event. He says if they sold tickets, they would have to stage the banquet in Briggs Stadium.[124]

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[123]Mel Wissman, "Ty Tyson Biography" (typewritten manuscript), WWJ files, p. 1.

[124]"Tyson Honored After 25 Years on Radio," The Detroit News, May 25, 1947, p. 4.

In the same article, it was also noted that five Detroit radio stations, other than WWJ, would salute Tyson; and the list of those persons attending the banquet reads like a Who's Who of Detroit's most famous citizens.

Although Tyson drew countless announcing assignments during his long and distinguished career with WWJ, including broadcasts of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the opening of the Ambassador Bridge and the arrivals of Presidents and other famous persons, it was his sports broadcasting, especially his play-by-play descriptions of baseball games, which gained for him his greatest recognition.

VIII COMPETITION COMES TO DETROIT

Since radio stations by the dozens were being established across America, it was inevitable that The News would one day have competition on the Detroit broadcasting scene. What had been a rumor on March 11, 1922, became a reality on May 4, when the Detroit Free Press announced that it would begin programming on its new station, WCX. The official notification came to The News in a letter from D. B. Carson, Commissioner of the Bureau of Navigation.

> There is enclosed a copy of the schedule of hours of your station and that of the Detroit Free Press. The original of this copy was attached to the license of the Detroit Free Press which was issued today.[125]

On Thursday evening,[126] May 4, the Free Press signed on at 8:30 p.m. with an elaborate program which included appearances by Michigan Governor Alex Groesbeck, University of Michigan President Dr. Marion Leroy Burton, Free Press poet-humorist Edgar A. Guest and a group of performers, including Valbert P. Coffey, pianist, who later gained considerable

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[125]Letter to The Detroit News from D. B. Carson, Commissioner, Bureau of Navigation, Washington, D. C., May 4, 1922, WWJ Files.

[126]Preliminary tests were made May 2.

fame as a member of the WWJ staff.[127]

The News, as might be expected, lashed out at WCX in an editorial which attempted to explain the muddled situation.

> Only one wave length had been allotted by law for broadcasting. That was 360 meters. For another station to start in there would have to be legislation providing for the use of some other wave length and the present naval regulations do not provide for that. So there was nothing else for the Department of Commerce to do but allot hours of sending until such time as Congress can provide by law still other wave lengths.[128]

The limited commercial license, which was issued to The Detroit News on April 6, 1922, carried the schedule by which the three existing stations in Detroit had agreed to share the available broadcasting times using the same wave length. The third station was owned by the Ford Motor Company and was used for "narrowcasting," or the transmission of "interoffice" information between the company headquarters in Dearborn to other plants and offices around the city. It was not considered a hinderance to the WWJ operation, probably because no entertainment was presented and because the Ford Motor Company did not sell newspapers, as the Free Press did.

At the Office of the Radio Inspector in the Federal Building, Detroit, WWJ Chief Engineer Howard E. Campbell

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[127] "Detroit Free Press' Radio Opens," Detroit Free Press, May 4, 1922, p. 1.

[128] "WWJ--An Explanation," The Detroit News, May 4, 1922, p. 12.

agreed with representatives from the Ford Motor Company and the Free Press, that the following schedule would be maintained for the three month period, April 5, 1922 to August 5, 1922.[129]

Free Press	News	Ford
8:00-9:30 a.m.	9:30-10:30 a.m.	10:30-11:45 a.m.
2:00-3:00 p.m.	12:05-12:45 p.m.	12:50- 2:00 p.m.
4:15-5:00 p.m.	3:00- 4:15 p.m.	10:00-11:00 p.m. (tentative)

Evening hours to be divided as follows:

Week of May 1: News 7:00-8:30 p.m. (Provided Free Press is ready to operate)
Free Press 8:30-10:00 p.m.

Week of May 7: Free Press 7:00-8:30 p.m.
News 8:30-10:00 p.m.

These weeks to be alternated for the evening hours.

Sundays:

Sunday, May 7: Free Press 9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
News 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
Free Press 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.
News 6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

Sunday schedule of hours to be alternated each week.

Ford later withdrew from the division of time schedule, leaving only the Free Press and The News to partition the broadcast day.

The News operation was obviously shaken by the Free Press intrusion as reflected in its editorial pages.

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[129]Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Radio Service, License For Land Radio Station No. 239, Class Limited Commercial, April 6, 1922, typewritten insert.

> This was the situation when the Detroit Free Press decided to break in on The Detroit News and demanded of the Government that it, too, be allotted hours...
>
> Beginning tonight The Detroit News will go on its new schedule of hours and it has every hope, with its superior equipment and long experience in the business, of continuing the service it has built up for its readers...
>
> The News simply presents the facts in the present situation...(so that its readers) may understand that the coming interference with their happy hour with their radio sets is in no way any fault of this paper.[130]

The founding of the Free Press station was part of a national growth in the number of broadcasting outlets in early 1922. On March 10, 1922, there were 67 licensed radio broadcasting stations in the United States. And on April 26, just 47 days later, 210 stations were on the air. An average of three and one-ninth stations were put on the air every day, including Sundays, during the 47-day period.[131]

Much of the interest in establishing broadcasting stations was kindled by the "boom" in the sale of receiving sets and the component parts used for the construction of sets. And for each rise in the number of receivers, there appeared to be an equally large demand for an increase in the number of transmitting stations.

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[130]"WWJ--An Explanation," The Detroit News, May 4, 1922, p. 12.

[131]Jay G. Hayden, "Broadcasting Stations Jump to 210 in Month," The Detroit News, April 26, 1922, p. 1.

By November 1, 1922, the national situation had become almost impossible with 564 stations licensed to operate. A survey made in February, 1923, showed that about half the stations licensed to that time were associated with radio or electrical concerns. Next in importance came educational and religious institutions, newspapers and publications and department stores. The greatest mortality rate was among stations operated by radio and electrical concerns.[132]

The existing radio laws, which had been specifically designed to regulate the use of wireless telegraphy by the maritime industry and a few wireless experimenters, did not adequately provide for the new application of radio to program broadcasting, and confusion in the licensing of stations and assignment of wave lengths was the result.

With the growth of radio in 1922, there were in force rules established by the London International Radio Telegraph Convention and two federal laws, all enacted 10 years before in 1912. The laws and agreements were aimed primarily at regulating the maritime use of the wireless, particularly at promoting safety at sea.

The administration of radio licensing was under the Department of Commerce, and the Secretary of Commerce had been

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[132] Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol IV, p. 207.

given certain power to make regulations. But the extent of his power was not clear, nor was his authority.[133]

In order to obtain information concerning the problems in radio which needed government attention, the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, called a series of general conferences. The first was held February 27 and 28, 1922, and about 50 stations attended the meeting. Very little was accomplished and the confused situation which plagued Detroit broadcasting became commonplace across America.

By the time that the second National Radio Conference was called March 20 through March 24, 1923, the number of stations had dropped slightly to about 550, but most were crowded together into narrow wave bands, and conditions of interference had become almost intolerable. The conference divided itself into committees which brought forth recommendations dealing with increasing the frequency band allocated to broadcasting to include all the range from 550 to 1350 kilocycles, the classification of stations according to the quality of service rendered, and the establishment of a geographical zoning basis for frequency assignments.[134]

The Department of Commerce put into force regulations which broadly carried out the recommendations of the conference, and broadcasters noted a slight improvement. Nearly 12 years would pass, however, before the government fully came

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[133] Ibid., p. 213

[134] Ibid., p. 213

to grips with the broadcasting situation, although minor changes were made along the way.

IX THAT WONDERFUL YEAR, PART 2

The opening of the Free Press station in 1922 was only one of the problems The News had to grapple with in order to maintain its service.

Staging what was tantamount to a revolt, the theater owners in Detroit issued an edict that any performer in any of the local stage shows who dared participate in a radio program at WWJ would automatically be barred from the theater.

> I tried to argue with them that instead of hurting the show business, radio would help it. They also said The News was crazy for promoting it because it would cost us circulation. We argued that, instead, it would help circulation...
>
> Radio broadcasting was barred from the ball parks because it would hurt attendance. I won over Frank J. Navin, owner of the Detroit ball club, to the idea that it would popularize baseball and bring in larger crowds.[135]

There were, of course, notable exceptions to the order from the theater owners, but it soon became abundantly clear that WWJ must tap other sources of talent.

In keeping with this conclusion, The Detroit News Orchestra was organized on May 28, 1922, with 16 pieces.

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[135]Bingay, p. 228.

It is believed that this was the first orchestra formed solely for the purpose of broadcasting.[136] It was later decided that the orchestra would also make personal appearances. After its first "in person" performance June 12, 1922, it was hailed for offering itself without expense to churches and civic organizations. Under conductor Otto E. Krueger and concertmeister Maurice Warner, the ensemble, all of whose members had achieved distinction with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, entertained nightly on WWJ and became an established audience favorite.

Two days after the formation of The Detroit News Orchestra, WWJ took the blame as well as the credit for beginning physical training programs by radio.

With the hiring of Bill Holliday and the development of other station "personalities," it was decided that the radiophone department would no longer operate as an appendage of the city room. By mid-1922, the radio department had grown sufficiently in size and stature to be divided into four sections patterned somewhat after the organizational structure of a newspaper department.[137]

Administrative

Department Editor and Supervisor
Charles D. Kelly

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[136]"WWJ History Told In Brief," The Detroit News, June 16, 1941, p. 16.

[137]Radio Staff, p. 10.

Editorial

Reporter Elton Plant
Reporter G. Marshall Witchell

Program

Program Manager and Announcer
William F. Holliday

Asst. Program Manager and Announcer
E. L. "Ty" Tyson

Technical

Chief Radio Engineer
Howard E. Campbell

Engineer-Operators
Edwin G. Boyes
Walter R. Hoffman
Keith Bernard

Others

Secretary Genevieve Champagne
Stenographers--As required

Following the expansion of the staff, larger quarters were needed. Thus, the station was moved from its temporary studios located in a second floor Conference Room to the fourth floor of The News building. Slightly more than 3,000 square feet of space was divided into editorial and executive offices, instrument and operating room,[138] laboratory, phonitorium[139] and producing studios.[140]

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[138]Master control room.

[139]Auditorium or a larger than usual studio.

[140]Radio Staff, p. 10.

To uncover new talent for the growing needs of the station, an elaborate system of auditions was established in June, 1922. Those wishing to appear on WWJ were first interviewed by Bill Holliday or Ty Tyson in the "booking office," which was part of the executive suite of offices. Usually, unknown performers were given an audition in the studio under simulated broadcasting conditions. If successful, the performers were asked to report to the phonitorium, a spacious room between the operating room and the studios, on the evening of their scheduled appearance to wait their turn, along with others on the program. A large blackboard indicated the name of each performer and his place on the evening's "bill."

Acting also as stage managers, Holliday and Tyson called the performers, in turn, to the adjoining main studio. This was a room 26 feet by 28 feet, made echo-proof by the application of a felt padding, two inches thick, on the walls and ceiling. Friar's cloth drapes hung over the doorways and windows. Also in the studio were two grand pianos, an upright piano, four or five phonographs of various makes, music stands, cabinets and a reading desk.

In order to cue the entertainers, a box-like, electrically operated, device was used. Connected to the engineer's desk, it allowed the operator on duty to signal the performer with such legends as: "farther from the phone," "louder,"

"softer" and "stop."

A smaller studio, furnished with a reading table, a chair and a signal box, and likewise sound deadened, was reserved for speech making and news broadcasts.

The microphone for the performers and announcers resembled a mantel clock with the working parts concealed beneath a cloth screen, about six inches in diameter.[141]

After auditioning before the WWJ staff, a young baritone from Owosso, Michigan, made his first radio appearance on the station June 9, 1922.[142] Although the engineer on duty reported his performance as "lousy" it never became a campaign issue when Thomas E. Dewey later ran unsuccessfully for President of The United States.[143]

Former President Herbert Hoover also made his radio debut on WWJ in 1922 when he came to Detroit to deliver an address in behalf of the Red Cross at St. Paul's Cathedral. Since Hoover was then the Secretary of Commerce and headed the government agency which licensed stations, WWJ was especially eager to broadcast his address. Unfortunately, however, Hoover walked down the aisle of the church and stepped

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[141] Ibid., p. 12.

[142] Some sources give the date as July 3, 1922.

[143] "WWJ History One of Firsts," The Detroit News, January 11, 1949, p. 17.

to the pulpit, rather than the chancel where WWJ had located its microphones.

It was impossible to hear the broadcast since Ed Boyes, the engineer on duty at the Cathedral, could not interrupt the Secretary's speech to ask him to move to the chancel. Meanwhile at the studios bedlam prevailed until Corley W. Kirby desperately dictated a memo to the Cathedral's secretary over the telephone. The secretary typed the note and Boyes hurried through the crowded church and slipped the note to Hoover. When the benediction had ended, Hoover was ushered into an anteroom where he delivered his complete talk again--this time for the waiting radio audience.[144]

Wendell Hall, "the Red-headed Music Maker" and author of the song, "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'," took a bride on June 18, 1922, and the ceremonies were broadcast by WWJ from St. Paul's Cathedral. This is believed to be the first wedding ceremony aired by a radio station.[145] Oddly enough, WGN, Chicago, also claims to have broadcast Wendell Hall's marriage, February 6, 1924.[146]

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[144]"Hoover's First Radio Talk Was Made Here, Over WWJ," The Detroit News, February 5, 1933, p. 14.

[145]Kelly and Boyes, p. 84.

[146]"1922-Year Radio's Population Soared," Broadcasting Magazine, May 14, 1962, p. 110.

On October 4, 1922, the first game of the World Series was broadcast by WWJ and thousands gathered in Grand Circus Park to hear the results on WWJ's Super-Megaphone, a huge wooden contraption that magnified the sound.

The first detailed report of a football game was carried by WWJ on October 21, 1922. Two contests, the Michigan-Ohio State and the University of Detroit-Boston College, were heard while scores of other games were given at the quarters.[147]

As the year 1922 drew to a close, WWJ and radio broadcasting could look back on a period of monumental growth. From a squeaky babe in arms, its tubes nurtured and coddled so as not to blow out during an important program segment, WWJ had taken on a certain sophistication. With its more powerful 500-watt voice, it could be heard with clarity and distinction.

WWJ had come of age.

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[147]Kelly and Boyes, p. 86.

X THE FORMATIVE YEARS

While the French psychotherapist Emile Coue's auto-suggestion craze, "Every day, and in every way, I am becoming better and better," and the dance madness, "The Charleston," were sweeping the country, WWJ introduced the silent screen's greatest lover, Rudolph Valentino, who used his premiere radio appearance on February 9, 1923, for a verbal slapping of the movie industry. "Seventy-five and more percent of the pictures shown today are a brazen insult to the public's intelligence," he said of the industry which had given him world-wide fame.[148]

In May, 1923, WWJ further improved the quality of its transmission with the purchase and installation of a Western Electric 1-B 500-watt transmitter. Although the new equipment did not represent an increase in power, it did serve to improve the clarity of the signal.[149]

To extend the broadcast range of the St. Paul's Cathedral programs, the WWJ engineers constructed a "Little

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[148]"Valentino's 1st Broadcast," The Detroit News, May 21, 1961, Sec. G, p. 5.

[149]Young, Michigan History Magazine, p. 426.

Church on Wheels," which was nothing more than a wagon with a gigantic receiver mounted on it. With the new equipment, which went into operation in June, 1923, it became possible to receive the broadcasts from St. Paul's in any part of the state. The rolling church was also fitted completely for services, including communion and baptismal rites.

Also in mid-June, 1923, the arctic explorer Dr. Donald MacMillian left on an extended journey which would take him within a few degrees of the North Pole. WWJ and a handful of other stations across the country were selected to re-broadcast Dr. MacMillian's reports from the frozen wastelands.

A third event of importance in June, 1923, was the first broadcasts of the Belle Island Band Concerts. Herman Schneman and his concert band provided the music which was piped to four other city parks in addition to being broadcast by WWJ. Although it is doubtful that the concerts have been carried since 1923 without interruption, they were a regular weekly feature on the WWJ summer schedule as late as 1962.

Recognition of WWJ's constant insistence on nearly perfect technical operation came at the close of 1923 when the Bureau of Standards, in December, selected the station as one of six broadcasting properties to serve as "Frequency Standards."

> The six broadcasting stations listed below have attained the goal of varying not

> more than 2 kilocycles from the assigned frequency as recommended by the second National Radio Conference. WWJ, Detroit, read 19 times, showed a frequency variation of .1 percent.[150]

By 1924, WWJ was coping with fierce local competition. WJR, which was founded in Pontiac, Michigan, in 1922, by Jewett Radio & Phonograph Company, had formulated an attractive program schedule. A share agreement had been signed with the Detroit Free Press and both stations, WCX and WJR, were heard on the same wave length until 1929 when WCX was absorbed and the call letters dropped. WWJ also shared the wave length until 1925, when it was moved to 850 KC.

WXYZ had begun operations as WPHC under ownership of George Harrison Phelps in 1923. In addition to controlling the station, Phelps also headed a successful Detroit advertising agency.

Located in the suburb of Royal Oak, just north of Detroit, WEXL began broadcasting in 1924 under the call letters WAGM and the ownership of A. C. Miller and his son, Robert. Although its signal penetrated the Detroit market, it has continued to identify itself with Royal Oak throughout its long operation.[151]

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[150]United States Department of Commerce, Radio Service Bulletin 13-14 U. S. Bureau of Navigation (Washington D. C., Dec. 1, 1923).

[151]"History," Broadcasting Magazine, August 1, 1949, p.74.

WJLB, now a foreign language station, was founded as WMBC in 1924 with studios located in the Addison Hotel in Detroit.

In February, 1924, the public was invited to attend a series of lecturers on the technical aspects of radio broadcasting conducted by WWJ's Chief Engineer. The response to the classes was overwhelming as more than 1,500 students crowded into the station for each session. To add to the public knowledge of radio, The News introduced, on February 3, a complete section in the newspaper devoted exclusively to broadcasting information. Countless set diagrams and articles concerning voice transmission and reception were published.

Whereas WWJ had reported the results of the Gold Cup by code from the judges' stand two years before, the station went directly to the races in August, 1924. At the microphone overlooking the course, Ty Tyson gave a graphic description of the action involved in the regatta on the Detroit River. The Tyson broadcast was also fed to KFTU, "the station on board George Harrison Phelps' yacht," and to receiving sets and loudspeakers placed at several locations along the waterfront. During the races, WCX-WJR gracefully agreed to remain silent to that WWJ could use their shared frequency without interruption.[152]

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[152]"Regatta By Radio," The Detroit News, August 24, 1924, p. 16.

The exercise programs, also first heard two years before, were expanded into a regular daily feature in 1924.

> Beginning Monday, at 8:00 a.m. and continuing daily at the same hour, Roy J. Horton, director of physical education of the Detroit YMCA, will give lessons in the "Daily Dozen" or setting-up exercises to the radio audience. These lessons will be about 15 minutes duration.[153]

At the third radio conference, October 6, 1924, Secretary of Commerce Hoover gave an indication of the scope of the industry in his opening speech.

> Radio has passed from the field of an adventure to that of a public utility. We have, in fact, established an entirely new communications system, national in scope. At the end of four years, 530 stations are in operation, making radio available to every home in the country. The sales of radio apparatus have increased from a million dollars a year to a million dollars a day. It is estimated that over 200,000 men are now employed in the industry and the radio audience probably exceeds 20 millions of people.[154]

Ty Tyson again made sports headlines on Saturday, October 25, 1924, with a play-by-play description of the Michigan-Wisconsin football game from Ferry Field, Ann Arbor. With advanced ticket sales guaranteeing a sold-out stadium, Fielding H. Yost gave permission to WWJ to broadcast this single U of M game. Michigan beat Wisconsin 13 to 6 and before the next

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[153] "WWJ to Present Daily Dozen," The Detroit News, February 24, 1924, p. 8.

[154] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol IV, p. 213.

U of M game so many requests had been received for tickets, due to fan interest aroused by the first Tyson broadcast, that permission was given to broadcast play-by-play reports of all home games.[155]

The Michigan games have been heard continuously every fall on WWJ since 1924. Although the station has often claimed that this was the first play-by-play radio report of a football game, it was not. The Princeton-Chicago game, broadcast October 28, 1922, the University of Chicago-University of Kentucky game, aired by WMAQ, Chicago, and several other football broadcasts, pre-date Tyson's report of the University of Michigan game in 1924.

On November 4, 1924, the Detroit News and The American Foundation began a fund drive with the slogan, "Let Every Sighted Person Help the Sightless via Radio." The campaign was designed to place a radio in the home of every blind person in Detroit and before the drive had ended more than 100 radios had been collected, repaired and delivered by WWJ.[156]

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[155]"Questions and Answers," The Detroit News, July 6, 1945, p. 26.

[156]Kelly and Noyes, p. 89.

XI WWJ JOINS A NATIONAL NETWORK

By 1925, when the fourth radio conference was held, the pressure to license more and more stations was becoming almost unbearable. The main topic of discussion at this meeting centered around an effective means of keeping additional stations off the air. In spite of the recommendations of the conference against the granting of new licenses, the Department of Commerce was almost powerless, under the existing broadcasting laws enacted in 1912, to stop the wave of new stations which was sweeping the country. The final upheaval came when a Chicago station, without authority, began to broadcast on one of the channels allocated to Canada. Moving swiftly, the Department of Commerce brought suit againt the station in court and lost!

It was now abundantly clear that legislative action would be required to put teeth into the antique radio laws.

On New Year's day, 1925, WWJ broadcast a play-by-play description of the Stanford-Notre Dame football game in Pasadena, California.

> By combining broadcasting service with continuous wire service direct from the playing field, the station was able to bring to Detroit homes first hand the game that The

Detroit News described as being "remarkable" and "full of thrills."[157]

WHB in Kansas City informed The News on January 4, 1925, that it had entertained radio fans in Missouri by rebroadcasting WWJ's programs on New Year's Eve. This is believed to be the first time that WWJ shows were heard on another station.

Broadcasting on a new wave length of 352.7 meters or 850 kc in January, WWJ added an hour program at noon featuring Jules Klein's orchestra from the dining room of the Hotel Statler and Jean Goldkette's Victor Recording Orchestra was heard for an hour in the evening originating from the Graystone Ballroom.

Although officially licensed and in operation since August 18, 1921, WKAR, the Michigan State University station, received a substantial boost in power in January, 1925, when The Detroit News donated a valuable 500-watt transmitter to the college station. The News Orchestra was sent to East Lansing for the inaugural broadcast with the new equipment.

In February, 1925,[158] WWJ joined 11 other radio stations across the country for the first national broadcast

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[157]Young, Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 428.

[158]Some sources give the date as February 8, others as February 13, 1925.

carried by WWJ. The chain of stations had been formed on June 7, 1923, but WWJ waited nearly two years before signing the agreement to rebroadcast "network" programs. It is difficult to understand why the station waited to join the "chain" since Warren S. Booth, as noted earlier, had inquired about the proposed plan on February 13, 1922.[159]

> The chain originated as a result of the plan of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T) to experiment in long-line broadcasting transmission...
>
> Using the telephone lines of AT&T's engineering division, the Bell Laboratories, WEAF broadcast programs that were carried by a series of affiliated stations in the East and Middle West.[160]

Violinist Renie Chemet is generally regarded as the first soloist on the first network program carried by WWJ.

In a letter to The Detroit News, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover said of the AT&T network:

> I congratulate The Detroit News upon its entry into the field of nation-wide broadcasting. Simultaneous broadcasting of high class programs is an important step toward perfecting of service to the listening public which must be the final aim of every station.[161]

As a member of the newly formed national loop, WWJ

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[159]See Booth letter to Gifford, p. 70.

[160]Young, Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 428.

[161]Kelly and Boyes, p. 92.

broadcast the presidential inauguration ceremonies for Calvin Coolidge on March 4, 1925, along with 20 other stations from Boston to San Francisco.

The free testing of receiving sets by the WWJ engineers was discontinued on March 1, 1925. The announcement in The News explained:

> The News radio engineering staff will thus be enabled to devote their entire time and energy to the further development of station WWJ and the expansion of the broadcasting service given the radio public through linking The News station with WEAF.

Readers of the paper were advised that dealers in the city were now able to furnish this service to their customers. Advice through the mail and in the "Questions and Answers" column of the Sunday Radio Section would be continued, The News article pointed out.[162]

Since WWJ was now a network affiliate, it became necessary for the station to establish its first rate structure. WEAF in New York, the flagship station, was charging its local clients $500 per hour for broadcast time.

> In the summer of 1925 the schedule of rates for some of the stations in the WEAF Network was as follows:
>
> | Station | Per Hour Rate |
> |---|---|
> | WEAF | $500. |

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[162] "WWJ to Discontinue Free Set Testings," The Detroit News, March 1, 1925, p. 1.

Station	Per Hour Rate
WEAI	$250.
WOO	200.
*WWJ	200.
WCAP	150.

For the facilities of all stations in a network commercial broadcast the charge was $2,600. an hour, instead of $2,900. if each were used individually.[163]

Although the network offered some programs on a scale never before enjoyed by the local listeners, the major burden for filling the broadcast day still rested with WWJ. A long procession of local talent and visiting celebrities filled the available time. Visiting the studios in April and May, 1925, were such diverse attractions as poet Edwin Markham, a Wisconsin University troupe of 10 professional performers and 80 students, Judge Florence Allen of the Ohio Supreme court and Mrs. Ford Smith of the Detroit Federation of Women's Clubs. Others included Kendell Hall, "The Red-Headed Music Maker," James A. Drain, National Commander of the American Legion, and three world trade experts, Dr. Julius Klein, Percy D. Owne and C. H. Cross. If the programs were not creatively exciting, at least they were varied, and an eager audience absorbed them.

On June 28, 1925, WWJ's power was increased to 1,000

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[163]Gleason L. Archer, History of Radio to 1926 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1938), p. 360.

watts with the purchase of a Western Electric 6-B transmitter; and letters of appreciation from grateful listeners flooded the station. To celebrate the increase in power, WWJ staged a special program on July 1, which featured The Detroit News Orchestra under the baton of Otto Krueger with Templeton Moore as the tenor soloist.

Probably one of the first ratings to determine the popularity of one station over another occurred in 1925. Before beginning the Atwater Kent artist course, Mr. Kent asked for and received, from AT&T, figures on the potential radio audience the programs could expect to attract. Data supplied by AT&T ranked the stations, based on the number of receiving sets within one hundred miles of the transmitter, in the following order:

Station	Listeners[164]
WEAF (New York)	2,000,000
WEEI (Boston)	1,000,000
WOO (Philadelphia)	900,000
WCAE (Pittsburgh)	750,000
WWJ (Detroit)	700,000

Apparently Mr. Kent was impressed by the audience figures for he arranged thirty Sunday night recitals which were carried on an 11-station network at a cost of $120,000., which was paid by the Atwater Kent Company.[165]

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[164]"WWJ Among First," The Detroit News, October 24, 1925, p.1.

[165]Banning, p. 261.

> The Atwater Kent Program could not fail to set a standard of quality that would command universal acclaim for the sponsor. That it became an instant success is now a matter of historical record. Thus Sunday evening concerts were given at 9:15 through WEAF... (and) WWJ. Reinald Werrenrath, Madame Louise Homer, and Toscha Seidel were among the first artists listed on the program.[166]

The year 1926 was marked with program innovations that ranged from a series of five-minute talks by Edith L. Hilderbrant called "Tips on Spelling," to the broadcast of the Department of Parks and Recreation checker tournament--move by move!

On August 13, 1926, WWJ was placed on the "Honor Roll" of radio stations by the Department of Commerce for maintaining a constant frequency with high accuracy.

Veteran sportscaster and announcer Ty Tyson was named manager of the station in 1926, a position he held until 1929, when the pressure of his many other activities and a radical change in The News management forced him to relinquish the title.

Also in 1926, AT&T sold its flagship station, WEAF, to the Radio Corporation of America, and the network of stations formed by AT&T in 1925 became the core of the National

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[166]Archer, p. 363.

Broadcasting Company's chain. On November 15, 1926, WWJ signed, as an original affiliate of NBC, an agreement which is still in force today. The first line-up of stations was later given the designation, The Red Network, when NBC established a second chain, The Blue Network.

With the pact signed with NBC for national programs, WWJ again decided to improve its signal by erecting two steel towers, one atop The News building and another on The News garage across the street. An antenna wire, 140 feet long, was stretched from the top of one tower to the top of the other, 265 feet above the ground. Preliminary tests on November 6, 1926, and full operation in December showed that the new towers substantially improved the station's signal range.

By now, six stations were sharing the audience in the Detroit market. The sixth station had been added by Ernest F. Goodwin on October 7, 1925, with the call letters WJBK and studios located in Ypsilanti, Michigan. WJBK joined a group which included WJR, WXYZ, WEXL, WJLB and WWJ. Sixteen years passed before another AM grant was made in the area[167]

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[167]"History," Broadcasting Magazine, August 1, 1949, p. 76.

[illegible]

The broadcasting industry, on both a national and local level, was bright as the year 1927 moved on to the calendar. Even though the problem of interference loomed large, the legislative debate in Washington gave promise that a resolution of the difficulties was close at hand. The National Broadcasting Company made the picture look even more rosy with the announcement on January 11, 1927, that it would invest 5 million dollars in improving and enlarging the facilities of the network.[168]

In January, WJJ moved to the University of Michigan campus for the presentation of a series of "Michigan Night" programs which featured the University of Michigan glee club, talks by instructors, and a variety of musical programs from Old University Hall.

The long-awaited radio legislative action came on February 23 with the passage of the Radio Act of 1927. The Act took the power of licensing stations away from the Department of Commerce and placed it in the hands of a five man commission, appointed by the President. Empowering the Federal Radio Commission to license stations, assign frequencies, establish areas of service and determine locations,

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[168] Kelly and Boyce, p. 101.

the Act also gave birth to the now famous broadcasting phrase when it ordered that a station would be licensed only if "public convenience, interest and necessity will be served thereby."[169]

> One of the commission's first projects in setting up an improved system of regulation was to prepare new forms for all types of applications for licenses and construction permits. All stations were required to submit new applications for licenses.[170]

On the basis of rendering public service, WWJ was the most popular station in the country, according to a Detroit News poll published March 15, 1927.[171]

WWJ	DETROIT	3,027
WTAM	Cleveland	2,652
KDKA	Pittsburgh	2,298
WJZ	New York	2,213
WEAF	New York	2,177
WGY	Schenectady	1,996
KYW	Chicago	1,507
WLW	Cincinnati	1,285
WJR	DETROIT	1,272
WCX	DETROIT	1,182

The balloting was undertaken for 10 days among Detroit area listeners and the results of the poll were sent to the Federal Radio Commission in Washington, D. C.

On April 19, 1927, Ty Tyson took the WWJ listeners to Navin Field for the station's first play-by-play broadcast of a baseball game. With the team bouncing around in the second

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[169] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. IV, p. 213.

[170] Young, Michigan History Magazine, Vol. XLIV, December, 1960, p. 431.

[171] "WWJ Favorite of Radio Fans," The Detroit News, March 15, 1927, p. 1.

division, the late Frank J. Navin, president of the Detroit Base Ball [sic] Company, hoped that the radio broadcasts might stimulate some additional interest in the Tigers.

> Ty went on the air. No one knew what the results would be. And Ty admits he wasn't at all sure of the listening reaction to his style of verbal base ball reporting. But the broadcast registered from the first. Well enough, and increasingly well enough, so the station carried it for eight seasons before a sponsor came along. Carried it until Ty was as integral a part of base ball in Detroit as is the stadium itself.[172]

In the past few years, the station has claimed that this description by Tyson was the first radio play-by-play report of a baseball game. Unfortunately, several other stations have priority over WWJ in this regard, including KDKA in Pittsburg.

Thereafter, however, Tyson became a Detroit baseball tradition, broadcasting all Detroit home games in 1927 and with differing arrangements for many years after.[173] And although he received other announcing assignments, none could match his popularity as a sports broadcaster.

> Statistics are vital, but they somehow fail us, because they neglect to reproduce the booming friendly voice, with its passion for accuracy, its quick recognition of color; the voice that brought the whole wide exciting field of competitive sport into the home and made the broadcaster's name [Tyson] a household word and dearly loved.[174]

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[172] H. C. I. Jackson, "Listening In on Detroit," The Detroit News, p. 55.

[173] In 1930, 1931 and 1932, the Sunday games were banned on radio and in 1933 Saturday, Sunday and Holiday games were not carried.

[174] George W. Stark, "Tyrone Tradition Fades From the Air," The Detroit News, February 26, 1953, p. 42.

A measure of Tyson's audience popularity came in 1934. In that year, the Tigers won the pennant and more than 600,000 listeners petitioned the National Broadcasting Company to have Tyson announce the World Series. Judge Kenesaw Landis, then Baseball Commissioner, refused the pleas of the fans, explaining that since the Tigers were participants in the playoffs it would be unfair to have a local personality do the broadcasts. For the next two years, 1935 and 1936, however, Tyson did the play-by-play of the Series on NBC and was heard coast to coast.[175]

Tyson, surely one of WWJ's greatest voices, was silenced only once in his long and distinguished career. In late 1926, he raided the family refrigerator and discovered a hard, high-studded biscuit. Opening his mouth wide, he placed the biscuit in it, and then realized that he was unable to close his mouth. A visit to the dentist the next day repaired the damage but his mouth continued to bother him until a doctor wired it shut for 10 days to give an injured membrane an opportunity to heal.[176]

In April, 1927, the newly formed Radio Commission began issuing temporary licenses to all broadcasters and, in the assignment of wave lengths, adopted the plan of separating all broadcasting stations by a frequency of 10,000 cycles and placing all stations on frequencies that were multiples of 10 kilocycles. It was hoped that the new assignments would ease

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[175] Ibid.

[176] "Tough Biscuit Tough on WWJ," The Detroit News, January 3, 1927, p. 3.

the chaotic national situation with stations piled one on top of another in an almost frantic struggle to be heard by the growing radio audience. But the problems which the new assignments created for WWJ were outlined in a report submitted by the station's Chief Engineer Walter Hoffman.

> Nine stations were assigned to the wavelength of 352.7 meters, (850 kcs), and while the national situation may have been improved by this placement of stations, a great deal of harm has been done to us. Our past performance of splendid programs, reliable service, priority, seem to have been entirely overlooked...To allow the (Pittsburg), Newark and Clearwater (Fla.) stations to operate on this wave is an injustice.[177]

Hoping to change the situation, Warren S. Booth, then Treasurer of the Evening News Association, sent a letter to The News' Washington correspondent, Jay G. Hayden, asking him to bring the wave assignment inequity to the attention of the Radio Commission.

> To put it briefly, we are not as well off now as we were before the change. (It is significant) that Station WWJ is the Red Network outlet for Toledo and vicinity, it being the station on the network nearest to that community...(The) interfering stations are listed.[178]

The Radio Commission responded favorably to WWJ's suggestion and on June 15, 1927, issued an order for the station to broadcast on 920 kilocycles. This was a most satisfactory

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[177] Walter Hoffman, Report, of Trip of Radio Engineer to Toledo to Determine Extent of Interference with Broadcasting Service of Station WWJ, May 4, 1927, p. 1.

[178] Letter to Jay G. Hayden, Detroit News Washington Bureau, from Warren S. Booth, May 6, 1927, WWJ Files.

frequency since the interference complaints stopped and WWJ recaptured much of its lost audience.

It was almost expected that WWJ would have good fortune in convincing the Radio Commission that it should be given special treatment in the assignment of wave lengths. Rear Admiral William H. G. Bullard, the Commission chairman, was from the Michigan district and well aware of the station's pioneering efforts. However, from WWJ's viewpoint, Commissioner Henry A. Bellows suddenly loomed as the powerful member of the Commission.

On August 29, 1927, Commissioner Bellows sent a letter to the station suggesting that WWJ exchange wave lengths with WCC in Davenport, Iowa. The proposed shift would return WWJ to 850 kc, a frequency the station had just left in June and which had caused them untold miseries.

> In order to eliminate interference reported from the operation of WGY, Schenectady, on 790 kilocycles and WWJ, Detroit, on 800 kilocycles, and also to eliminate the serious interference between WIL, Chicago, on 870 kilocycles, and WCC, Davenport, on 850 kilocycles, it is suggested that WWJ and WCC exchange frequencies...
>
> The proposed shift seems advantageous all around. I shall be grateful if you will let me know what you think of it.[179]

Many of the staff members believed that Commissioner Bellows was making the change in frequencies simply to insure the confirmation of his appointment to the Commission.

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[179]Letter to Radio Station WWJ from H. A. Bellows, Commissioner, Federal Radio Commission, August 29, 1927, WWJ Files.

> Mr. Edwards [local radio inspector for the Commission] does not want to be quoted in any way, but the conclusion reached during the course of our conversation was that WOC is not only chafing because of the interference occurring between them and WLS, but also because of the necessity of dividing evening hours with WHO, and exchanging frequency channels with us might free them of this requirement also.
>
> It appears that Mr. Bellows, who is one of the unconfirmed members of the Federal Radio Commission, is trying to improve a situation confronting two of the most important stations in the district which he represents, and thus help to pave the way toward the confirmation of his appointment, by securing the backing of these stations, but at the expense of conditions in other districts.[180]

Despite mountains of correspondence from Warren S. Booth, H. Ponting and H. E. Scott, giving arguments to the contrary, WWJ was returned to 850 kc on the dial. WWJ remained on this frequency from September 15, 1927 to September, 1928, when it was again moved by the Federal Radio Commission--this time to 820 kc. It is quite possible that many broadcasters who endured similar situations with the FRC wondered if the new agency solved as many problems as it created.

Probably one of the most significant documents to emerge from the early FRC hearings was a report from the American Engineering Council. The lengthy analysis, prepared by the Radio Broadcasting Committee of the Council, embodied many of the principles subsequently adopted by

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[180] W. D. Hoffman, "Exchange of broadcasting frequency with WOC," Departmental Communication Memo, September 2, 1927, pp. 1 & 2.

the Commission. On the Broadcasting Committee were such distinguished contributors as Calvert Townley, J. H. Dellinger of the Bureau of Standards and David Sarnoff, who later became head of the Radio Corporation of America.

Taking up the questions of frequency assignment, share-time agreements, "national" radio stations, clear channel allocations, and other problems facing broadcasting, the report predicted, with amazing accuracy, the final solutions to many of these seemingly insolvable dilemmas.[181]

Commissioner Orestes H. Caldwell lamented the alternatives left to the FRC after hearing the Committee's report.

> You have advised against widening the broadcast band so to add any more channels... you have advised very wide frequency-separation between all stations that are near each other geographically...
>
> You have pointed out the importance of power in securing good service for the listener...and...advised against much dividing of time. You have thus defined the problem from all sides...
>
> But, if your advice is to be taken by the Commission on all these various points, you will see that you have cut off all avenues of escape for the solution of the present problem of 733 stations, except a reduction in the number of stations that may broadcast.[182]

Out of the hearings, the Commission constructed the following guideposts for determing which stations should or should not be taken from the air.

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[181]Jay Hayden, "Report of the American Engineering Council," Unnumbered Teletype Dispatch, circa. April 1, 1927, pp. 1-10.

[182]Jay Hayden, "Remarks of Commissioner Caldwell at Radio Conference," Unnumbered Teletype Dispatch, April, 1927, p. 1.

1. Power: Stations with power as low as five watts obviously ought to be eliminated and the Commission should give preference generally to the higher powered plants.

2. Priority: The stations which have been in useful operation for a long time should be given preference.

3. Stations which have jumped wave lengths or which have come in since June, 1926, should be given secondary consideration.

4. Program Value: This must be determined by the Commission and include a multitude of factors.[183]

The Federal Radio Commission finally had begun to bring order out of the chaos which had existed when they took office.

While the battle of the wave lengths was going on in Washington, the Detroit audience was thrilled as WWJ broadcast the official welcome of a new national hero, Col. Charles Lindberg. The city took great pride in its native born son and listened intently as WWJ carried the reports of the events from the time he landed in New York on June 9, 1927, through the Lindberg-Detroit reception at Northwestern Field and the Book Cadillac Hotel, August 10, 1927.[184]

The fall radio schedule, announced on September 25, 1927, in The Detroit News, had these attractive features: Regular morning exercises; household talks, supplemented by

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[183] Ibid.

[184] WWJ, The Detroit News, "Outstanding Events and Series Programs Broadcast by WWJ" (mimeographed manuscript, 1950), hereafter outstanding events, p. 8.

suggestions on home decoration; the popular "Michigan Night" broadcasts; sports programs; concerts by local artists; road bulletins; network programs from New York, and news service by The Detroit News. Missing from the schedule was the highly acclaimed Detroit News Orchestra. In its place was The Gypsy Barons Orchestra fully attired in apropos costumes.[185]

In what is believed to be WWJ's first use as an in-school educational tool, Roy J. Snell introduced a unique series of programs which were heard beginning in November, 1927. At a given signal, teachers in selected classrooms would show a series of slides, which by prearrangement, would illustrate a talk being given at the same time by Snell on WWJ. More than 3,000 Detroit school students took part in the experiment which was highly successful. In theory, this crude system could have been the forerunner of teaching by television.

WWJ added to the safety and convenience of highway travel on December 4, 1927, when it began a series of Daily Highway Reports, prepared by the Detroit Auto Association. The publicity for the programs reminded listeners:

> This service is important to farmers, traveling men, interstate tourists and bus travelers. It avoids costly mistakes by information, within 24 hours or less, of changes made in local and national highways.[186]

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[185]Kelly and Boyes, p. 108.

[186]Ibid, p. 111.

With a prelude played by the chimes on Big Ben in London, heard for the first time on WWJ February 22, 1928, the station reflected a foreign, as well as a local, flavor. On February 27, a series of "International Programs" began and on the first program the Welsh people of Detroit heard native music on WWJ. The programs which followed featured folk melodies of other foreign-born groups in Detroit with program listings in The News in the language of the country represented.[187]

"We are now 3,700 feet above Grand Circus Park," Ty Tyson told the WWJ audience early in April, 1928, "And you have been listening to music being played on the plane in which we are riding. You now will hear Mr. Elida Morris Cooper, soprano, singing 'There's Something About A Rose.'" Thus did the station announce its first airborne program which the newspapers hailed as a new era in broadcasting. Aloft with Tyson and Mrs. Cooper were James Burns, who accompanied the soprano on an organ and two radio experts from the U. S. Bureau of Standards, who had hung the radio transmitter from the ceiling of the aircraft to minimize vibrations. The airborne broadcast was made to celebrate the opening of the All American Aircraft Show at Detroit's Convention Hall and it signaled the beginning of extensive use of airplanes by the station, especially in the gathering of "on-the-spot" news reports. While communication between

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[187]Outstanding Events, p. 8.

an airplane and a ground station was not unusual in 1928, this broadcast is generally regarded as the first program ever transmitted through another station to the general audience.[188]

Another significant engineering achievement occurred on July 26, 1928, when WWJ, for the first time in Detroit, transmitted photographs by radio. The system used was invented by Austin C. Cooley, a young radio engineer, not employed by WWJ. Listeners with ordinary receivers were advised that the regular program heard on WWJ between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. would be interrupted by a series of whistles, lasting about three minutes. During the intervals, portrait photographs of two boxers, Tunney and Heeney, who were to battle in New York that evening, were sent from WWJ to the Book-Cadillac Hotel. These experiments developed into facsimile broadcasting, which is reported in detail in a later chapter.

In a speech before the Bridgeport (Conn.) Chamber of Commerce on October 15, 1928, FRC Commissioner C. M. Caldwell outlined the re-allocation orders that would shortly be released by the Commission and which would send WWJ to a new frequency, 920 kilocycles, on November 11. Caldwell asked his audience:

> Shall the radio broadcasting situation be cleaned up now and for all time, and good radio reception be restored to our millions of listeners?

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188. "WWJ Broadcasts in Plane While Soaring Over Detroit," The Detroit News, April 14, 1928, p. 1.

> Or shall radio be allowed to slip back to the confusion of interference and heterodynes which have beset the broadcasting waves for the past two years?
>
> That is the issue before the radio listeners of the United States...For on November 11, the public will have within its grasp a radio set-up with reduced number of stations, for which the people, Congress and radio folk generally have patiently waited all these many months.[189]

Caldwell also pointed out that the new Federal Radio Commission order would entail time-sharing, time-reductions, lower wave lengths and power cuts for several stations. After November 11, he told his audience, only 315 stations, of the 600 licensed at the time of the order, would be allowed to broadcast simultaneously.[190]

Just a month before, in September, 1928, WWJ had been shifted temporily to 820 kc. In a little less then a year, WWJ frequency had been changed four times, denoting some of the confusion that the Radio Commission was creating in its stumbling attempts to seek a solution to the national radio problems.

A critical error in judgement was made by the WWJ management in October, 1928, which would thwart for several years any attempts to secure power increases for the station. Two seemingly insignificant telegrams sealed the station's doom. The first came from Karl Miller of The News Washington Bureau.

189O. H. Caldwell, Speech before the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce, FRC Transcript #272, October 15, 1928, p. 1.

190Ibid., p. 2.

> Geo. C. Sutton, radio commission engineer, notified us today some change apparently must be made in WWJ's wave length assignment. He says Michigan has more than its share of national channels[191] and that WWJ must accept assignment to a regional channel if it does not increase its power.
>
> He says someone authorized to speak regarding WWJ's plans for future should come here at once for personal negotiation with him.[192]

The reply to Miller's plea was terse.

> TELL RADIO COMMISSION ENGINEER WE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO INCREASE OUR POWER STOP PLEASE ADVISE US WHAT REGIONAL FREQUENCY THEY WILL ASSIGN US AND WHAT OTHER STATIONS WILL SHARE WITH US.[193]

This single decision not to increase the power of WWJ when the Federal Radio Commission made the final allocations in 1928 seems to have killed all subsequent petitions by the station to broadcast "nation-wide" with a 50,000 watt or stronger signal.

Several theories, most of them inaccurate, have been advanced as to why WWJ did not increase its power in 1928. First, it must be remembered that the decision not to seek a power increase was made with the understanding that even if WWJ remained at 1,000 watts, it would have nearly a clear-channel anyway. As Karl Miller explained it:

> Geo. C. Sutton, Radio Commission Engineer, said today that in all probability WWJ's new assignment would be 920 kilocycles. This is not

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[191] Clear channels

[192] Karl Miller, Washington Bureau, Unnumbered Teletype to Mr. Gilmore, The Detroit News, October 6, 1928.

[193] W. C. Booth, The Detroit News, Western Union Telegram to Karl Miller, The Detroit News, Washington, October 8, 1928.

> official but is practically certain...Sutton said that 920 kilocycles was "practically a clear wave length," being shared by only two stations, one in Houston and the other in Seattle.[194]

Two additional reasons for not increasing the power of the station were offered by engineer Ed Noyes:

> He suggests that the decision to turn down the offer may have been made because The Detroit News felt it was giving adequate service to its circulation area with its present arrangement, or because the expense of meeting the requirements for a clear channel, i.e., removing the location of the transmitter from the center of population and increasing power, would have meant too great an expenditure.[195]

It is true that the costs of installing a 50 kilowatt transmitter were sizeable. Figures submitted in 1929 show that $248,000.00 would be needed to build a 50,000 watt station and $105,145.00 would be needed each year to operate it. These costs do not include personnel, telephone charges, paid talent and miscellaneous charges.[196] To install a 15 kilowatt station, the cash outlay would have been $158,000.00 with a proportionate reduction in the annual operating expense. By keeping the 1,000 watt transmitter, which was already in operation, comparatively little additional cost was to be incurred.[197]

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[194] Karl Miller, Western Union Telegram to Warren S. Booth, unnumbered and not dated, circa: November 1, 1928.

[195] Young, Michigan History Magazine, XLIV, December, 1960, p.432.

[196] Estimated First Cost 50 Kw, August 21, 1929, WWJ Files, p. 2.

[197] K. H. Teichman, Graybar Electric Company, Price Quotation for 5 Kw Broadcasting Transmitter, August 2, 1929, p. 3.

Had the management given more weight to the advice being offered by its Washington correspondent, the unfortunate situation could have been completely avoided. One letter sent by Jay Hayden predicted with uncanny accuracy the exact course The News should have taken, but which it did not.

> The future development is going to be in the direction of bigger and bigger stations, with more money involved, and that it is going to become, as time goes on, less compatible with the function of a newspaper.
>
> WWJ...possesses an intrinsic value far beyond its physical equipment and the money The News has put into it...I believe that if The News was to close up its station or sell it for a nominal amount it would be surrendering the basis for a splendid business development entirely separate from the newspaper...
>
> The larger radio stations now are making money and they have much larger profits in prospect...In a matter of two or three years at most we will be forced to a decision as to whether we want to abandon broadcasting...or move out into the country and build a station of 20,000 watts or more. And if we wait very long we may not have this alternative for the reason that someone else has preempted the Detroit field.[198]

The opportunity to broadcast with 50,000 watts of power would never come again.

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[198]Letter to Warren S. Booth, Detroit News, from Jay G. Hayden, News Washington Bureau, September 27, 1927.

XIII SCRIPPS COMES TO POWER

In April, 1929, Ty Tyson, who had been manager of WWJ since 1927, turned the responsibilities of running the station over to Robert Kelly who was named acting manager in addition to his duties as Radio Editor of The News.

Kelly was convinced that the station should increase its power and seized upon every opportunity to make his point of view heard.

> Without higher power, we are likely to be gradually pushed into the background by the others. The growth of WWJ should parallel the growth of The News. With a station equal in power to the others we should be far ahead of them because of the ideals of service which we have; they operate for profit only.[199]

Since one of the functions of the station continued to be the promotion of The News circulation, Kelly attempted to weave this selling point into his argument.

> With higher power we would cover all of Michigan effectively...This would help the circulation of The News in the state...In other states the name of The News would become a household word, influencing people planning to move to Detroit in favor of this newspaper.[200]

Finally, he pointed out the revenue advantages of going to higher power.

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[199]Robert Kelly, Interoffice Memo to Herbert Fonting, WWJ Files, p. 1.

[200]Ibid., p. 2.

> Offering the assurance of coverage such as high power would give us the pick of sponsors in Detroit. Our rates could be higher, and I'm certain that we could show a profit on programs and still keep our standards well above the others.[201]

In 1929, George Booth, who had dominated the development of the station during its first nine years of existance in his position as President of The News, retired and turned his tremendous energies toward the founding of Cranbrook. This cultural institute stands today as a testament to the vigor Booth put into his new project.

Quite naturally, William E. Scripps, as vice-president of the corporation under Booth, assumed the presidency and, thereby, became the operating head of the newspaper and the radio station. Changes came quickly to WWJ under the Scripps control.

> When Mr. Scripps did take over in 1929 the operation of the newspaper founded by his father, he did it as a matter of personal duty, rather than through keen desire. His brother-in-law, the late George G. Booth, had retired...and the family obligation fell upon Will Scripps to succeed him.[202]

Whatever love was lost between Scripps and the newspaper, was lavished on the station. This had been Scripps' personal project and he seemed determined to see that the radio station should no longer struggle through life. To do this, several alterations would be necessary.

Although the corporation had refused to increase its

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[201] Ibid.

[202] "W. E. Scripps," The Detroit Times, June 13, 1952, Editorial page.

station's power under Booth's control, WWJ, almost immediately, filed for a 50,000 watt clear channel under Scripps.[203]

Whereas the station had been housed in makeshift quarters with Booth at the helm, the entire physical plant was renovated and improved in 1929 with Scripps in charge. The studios were substantially enlarged and the master control room was moved from The News building to a new location in The News garage. The facilities, thus enhanced, would serve the station until 1936, when a new building was erected.

Other sweeping changes would come during 1929 and 1930, giving WWJ a new vitality which had somehow been lacking before. To the staff, the new boss meant business-radio business!

WWJ issued its first rate card September 1,, 1929. Compared to 1962's six-page booklet, the single-sheet, four inch by six inch 1929 card offers a marked contrast in size and in simplicity of rate structure. The complete 1929 rate card follows:

RATE CARD -- 6:00 PM to 12:00 PM -- September 1, 1929

1.	Once	13-times	26-times	39-times	52-times
One Hour	$340.	$315.	$305.	$295.	$285.
Half Hour	200.	175.	165.	155.	145.
Quarter Hour	125.	100.	95.	90.	85.

2. Basic charges for periods other than between 6:00 P.M. and 12:00 P.M. are one-half foregoing rates.

[203] Frank Scott, Agent and Attorney, The Evening News Association, "Exceptions to Examiner's Report No. 83," Hearings of the Federal Radio Commission, Docket No. 975, p. 2.

3. Local tie-in announcements immediately following New York programs are $25.00. These cannot exceed 20 seconds.

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4. Commissions to recognized advertising agencies on charges for station time--15%.

CONDITIONS OF BROADCAST SERVICE

Talks are limited to 15 minutes and must go on the air before 6:00 P.M.

All evening programs must have a high grade musical setting.

All programs are to be subject to the approval of the Station Manager.

The station will assist in arranging programs and provide announcers at no charge for this service.

Rates printed on this card do not include talent. If talent is obtained by the station it is to be billed to the Client at cost.[204]

These rates remained in effect until June 1, 1930, when they were increased to better reflect the enlarged audience being reached by WWJ.

WWJ's rates reached a peak in 1950, the year of Detroit radio's greatest popularity. Even though television had been introduced into the market in 1947, radio did not feel the impact of the new medium for nearly four years.

The WWJ rate card issued in December, 1950, showed that the class A cost of a one-hour program, worth $340 in 1929, would cost $800.

CLASS A -- 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM[205]

	1 Time	13 Times	26 Times	52 Times
1 hour	$800.	$760.	$720.	$700.
½ hour	480.	456.	432.	420.
¼ hour	320.	304.	288.	280.

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[204] WWJ-The Detroit News, Rate Card No. 1 (September 1, 1929.)

[205] WWJ-The Detroit News, Rate Card No. 31 (December 1, 1950.)

By April 1, 1951, television had begun to make inroads into the radio audience, and the loss in listeners was reflected by a decrease in the class A rates.

CLASS A -- 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM[206]

	1 Time	13 Times	26 Times	52 Times
1 hour	$640.00	$624.00	$608.00	$592.00
¾ hour	384.00	374.40	364.80	355.20
½ hour	256.00	249.60	243.20	236.80

On March 1, 1953, the rates were slashed again, this time to nearly half of the price charged in 1950. Along with the rate cuts, a major shift was made in the class A time periods.

CLASS A -- 7:00 AM to 10:30 PM Mondays through Fridays
3:00 PM to 10:30 PM Sundays[207]

	1 Time	13 Times	26 Times	52 Times
1 hour	$480.00	$456.00	$432.00	$420.00
¾ hour	288.00	273.60	259.20	252.00
½ hour	192.00	182.40	172.80	168.00

Compared to the cost of other goods and services, the cost of purchasing time on WWJ does not demonstrate the general inflationary trend which occured between 1929 and 1962. In fact, WWJ has not changed its one-time, one-hour class A rate since 1953.

Radio advertisers in 1962 obviously no longer buy one hour programs on WWJ, or other Detroit stations, preferring instead to purchase spot announcements of 10-second, 30-second, and 1-minute duration.

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[206] WWJ-The Detroit News, Rate Card No. 32 (March 1, 1951).

[207] WWJ-The Detroit News, Rate Card No. 33 (March 1, 1953).

Prime time on radio in 1962 has also changed. With the increase in the number of automobile radios, "Drive Time," when most cars are on the Detroit Freeways, commands the highest price tag. Even though WWJ does not normally sell one hour programs in class A time, i.e. 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., it continues to publish a rate structure for these time classifications once popular in 1929.

CLASS A -- 6:30 AM to 9:30 AM Monday through Friday
3:00 PM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday[208]

	1-4 Times	13 Times	26-Times	39-Times	52-Times
1 hour	$480.	$464.	$456.	$448.	$440.
½ hour	290.	280.	275.	270.	265.
¼ hour	180.	172.	168.	164.	160.

Programming highlights of 1929 included a week of broadcasting from the first annual International Radio Show at Olympia Stadium beginning September 9. Civic leaders, radio experts and a new comedy team from Chicago, Amos and Andy, appeared on the programs.

On October 21, WWJ took its microphones to Greenfield Village for the "Golden Jubilee of Lights," which marked the 50th anniversary of Thomas Edison's invention. President Hoover, Governor Green and Mayor Lodge delivered speeches which were fed by WWJ to the NBC network.

A third program of importance in the fall of 1929 was the broadcast of the dedication ceremonies opening the Ambassador Bridge. The audience was transported from one end of the

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[208] WWJ-The Detroit News, Rate Card No. 39 (April 1, 1962), p. 4.

bridge to the other for glowing talks by Governor Green and Ontario Attorney-General Col. W. H. Price. As usual, Ty Tyson gave a vivid description of the event. The success of an arrangement with the Canadian National Railways network, which allowed WWJ, as an Associate Member, to carry the Toronto Symphony broadcasts earlier in the year, was extended to the bridge dedication and the Canadians heard WWJ's broadcast along with the Detroit audience.[209]

The increasing amount of advertising which was being accepted by the station was broadcast almost half-heartedly in 1929, as evidenced by a story in The News Sunday Magazine.

> While WWJ does occupy its time to a considerable extent with commercial programs, such features are chosen for their actual merit, and the commercial side is not offensive. Now and then there is a local feature with commercial flavor, but the talent is always carefully picked. These local features are also spontaneous, so far as their initiative is concerned. The News makes no effort to sell WWJ time.[210] italics mine

Despite its attitude toward commercials, WWJ could point pridefully to the audience response to Charles W. Kemp. Billed as a singer, pianist and toothpaste exploiter extraordinary, he "averaged 900 letters a day from folks who admitted their appreciation of Mr. Kemp, and their need of toothpaste." One evening, "he made a special personal

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[209]Kelly and Noyes, p. 118.

[210]Paul H. Bruske, "From Wireless to WWJ," The Detroit News Sunday Magazine, February 2, 1929, p. 4.

appeal and 6,000 letters and telegrams flooded the station with toothpaste orders."[211]

With its studio and technical facilities firmly established, with a program schedule expanded to 16 hours each day, with a professional staff of seasoned broadcasters, with commercial orders trickling into the station from adventurous sponsors, with network committments bringing programs of substance and high interest into the Detroit market and with a management devoted to enlarging and enhancing the local offerings, WWJ stood proudly at the threshold of the 1930s--broadcasting's golden era.

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[211] Ibid.

XIV WWJ'S GOLDEN ERA

With a decade of successful broadcasting completed, the doubts, which had existed among members of the staff and management concerning the station's fruitful operation, disappeared. Although several of The News reporters and editors continued to serve both the paper and the station, WWJ began to sever the umbilical cord which had tied it to the parent publication. The audience, which had once gathered around homemade sets, now relaxed in comfortable living rooms before receivers of elaborate design, and listened to WWJ programs which reflected more ingenious entertainment values.

Several important staff changes were made February 17, 1930, by William E. Scripps. Jefferson B. Webb, distinguished as a salesman and highly respected as an enthusiastic administrator, was named manager of WWJ, in addition to his duties as sales director of The Detroit News. Webb was an ideal choice for he brought to the radio operation wide experience gained as business manager of the Detroit Symphony and a wide diversity of interests in a number of unusual fields.

To balance Webb's business and sales knowledge, E. L. "Ty" Tyson, veteran sportscaster and announcer, was made Assistant Manager. Robert Kelly, who had served as acting manager before Webb's appointment, was returned to his job as Detroit News radio editor and retained on the WWJ staff

as an announcer. The late Herschell Hart, who subsequently gained fame as the radio, and later television, editor of The News, was made WWJ production manager and announcer. His experience in radio dated back to the early days of broadcasting when he had read news items on WCX, the Free Press radio station.[212]

In answer to the increased advertiser interest in WWJ, James C. Ross was made commercial representative. Marion Martin served as staff pianist, organist and program manager. Heading the technical crew, composed of eight control operators and technicians, was chief engineer Walter S. Hoffman.[213]

Harold Priestley, who had begun his radio career with WWJ in 1923 and Franklyn Greenwood, who was both entertainer and actor, formed the balance of the announcing staff in 1930.

The crowd of entertainers, orchestra men, singers, story-tellers and part-time newspaper reporters, who served as program personalities, had varied and unusual backgrounds.

Frank Greenwood and Arnold Tiezan, known to the audience as "Frank and Ernest," entertained each morning with "Breakfast Tunes." "Frank," who played the guitar, was an ex-marine who saw action in World War I. His teammate, "Ernest," who played the piano, had been a church and theater organist

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[212]The Evening News Association, Radio Station WWJ (promotional booklet, 1931), hereafter, Radio Station WWJ, p. 5.

[213]Four of the operators--Edwin G. Noyes, Albert B. Allen, Clin J. Latham and Roger Ellis--are the only remaining members of the 1930 staff who are still with the station in 1962.

for many years before coming to WWJ. Both could sing anything from popular ballads to hymns and each was adept at drawing the humor out of the fan letters read on the program each morning. One of the favorite features of the early program was the "Little Church in the Dell," in which hymns were played on the studio pipe organ, by "Ernest," and sung by the team. A mythical horse, "Old Amber," supposedly brought them to the studio each morning at 6 a.m. and carried them away at 9 a.m.[214]

Most of the remaining morning programming in 1930 was devoted to women's shows conducted by members of The Detroit News staff. Although it is impossible to detail every program in this category, some of the offerings included:

"Tonight's Dinner by Radio" with Mrs. Myrtle Calkins, Detroit News Household Editor--a cooking program. (9 a.m. Monday through Friday).

"Facts About the Kitchen" with Mrs. Ella Gordon Smith, Woman's Editor of The News--various subjects relating to home management and maintenance. (10:30 a.m. Mondays).

"Beauty in the Home," with Edith B. Crumb, News Interior Decorator, and Beatrice Kuenzel, News Household department--answered questions from listeners concerning interior decoration. (10:30 a.m. Tuesdays).

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[214] Radio Station WWJ, p. 8.

"Fashion Talks" with Mrs. Cecil Ross Chittenden, News Fashion Authority. (10:30 a.m. Thursdays).

Other programs and performers heard during 1930-1931 were: The Doyle Kids, Lillian and Frank, reading the funnies each Sunday; The Dixiana Ten with Tobe Gremmer singing southern melodies; Dean Kirk B. O'Ferrall of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral answering religious questions; songs from Tin Pan Alley with Bob Miller and Peggy Nealon; The Sunny Singers; The Spartan Singers (students at Michigan State College); dozens of soloists heard on various programs each week, and baseball and football coverage with Ty Tyson at the microphone.[215]

Where did WWJ find its staff? What type of experience was necessary to be a radio performer or technician during WWJ's golden era? Announcer Harold Priestley was an office boy in the radio department before making an on-the-air appearance; engineer Ed Boyes was a wireless operator on the Great Lakes before joining the station; Les Backer of the orchestra staff had been in vaudeville; Marion Martin had studied piano in Ypsilanti; Ole Foerch, director of the orchestra and one of the three "Melody Men," had been a church and theater organist and leader of the St. Johns (Michigan) town band, and Rex White, author of the weekly WWJ dramas, was an advance man for a "Tom Show," an actor, a wanderer and a newspaper man, before coming to the station.[216]

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[215] Ibid., p. 10.

[216] Russell Gore, "WWJ Has Birthday Party: Here's Peep Behind Scenes," The Detroit News, August 21, 1931, p. 32.

Of the performers who appeared on WWJ in 1930, two, Wynn Wright and Curtiss Custer Bradner, rose to positions of unusual audience popularity.

C. C. Bradner is probably the greatest newscaster the station has ever known. With a twinkling eye and a sharp tongue, he gave the day's news a whimsical, humorous tone, that brought listeners by the thousands to their radios. When he died August 7, 1940, more than 2,000 Detroiters gathered to say their final "goodbyes" to "Brad." As H. C. L. Jackson described him:

> Brad, you see, was himself. And therein, perhaps, lay the chief secret of his charm. Others might pose of posture, or react to surroundings, but, in tavern or palace, in home or office, in good luck or in reversals, Brad was always Brad.
>
> There will be those who think of Brad chiefly as a wit, a man who could catch, in a pat and searching quip, the nub of a complicated situation...(or) for the grip he had on the news of the nation, and the world... (or) who will grin at some apt remark with which he turned the news.[217]

Born in St. Johns, Michigan, September 6, 1878, Bradner attended Northwestern Academy for a year before dropping out of school to take his first newspaper job in 1900. He was a reporter and eventually city editor of the Flint Journal. In 1910, he joined The News staff and except for a year with the Associated Press in California, spent his entire career with the News and WWJ. He conducted a column on the editorial page

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[217]H. C. L. Jackson, "Listening In on Detroit," The Detroit News, August 9, 1940, p. 1.

of The News for many years called "Afterthoughts" and wrote a group of bizarre features which were captioned "The Grouch." Often he is given credit, along with Lex White, Al Weeks, Malcolm Bingay, and several others, for writing "The Town Crier" program on WWJ, which made Al Weeks famous.

Reporter George W. Stark remembered him thus:

> It isn't taxing credulity too much to say that Brad had more friends than anybody in this town. He won them easily and naturally, kept them loyally and with a tender devotion... When radio came along and Brad became instantly identified with that medium, the circle of his voice stabbed the far distances with its staccato punch and its whimsical appeal.[218]

If a list of WWJ's greatest personalities be made, C. C. Bradner's name should certainly be on it.

On November 23, 1930, the formation of a dramatic stock company was announced by WWJ. Its director, Wynn Wright, was the second personality to rise in audience stature during radio's golden era. Wright was a dramatic perfectionist. In addition to directing The Detroit News Players, as the acting group was called, Wright often took the leading role.

So many legends have grown up around Wright, it is difficult to separate the truth from the fiction. One particularly amusing anecdote is told about the sound man who worked with The Players. For a drama on traffic safety, Wright

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[218] George W. Stark, "News Broadcast Originator Is Dead at 61 After Collapse," The Detroit News, August 7, 1940, p. 1.

told the sound man that he needed the sound of screeching brakes, followed by a crash and finally the noise of a human body hitting the pavement. The technician worked fervishly on the project and finally discovered that by running across the studio and throwing himself against the room's beaver-board walls, he could simulate the sound of a human body hitting the pavement. He asked Wright to come to the studio to share his discovery.

Again and again, under urging from Wright, the man ran across the floor and threw himself against the wall, while Wright, with eyes closed, listened in the control room.

"Try it once more," Wright urged, "I think you've almost got it."

Finally, the sound man mustered all of his strength, dashed as fast as he could across the studio, and flung his body against the wall. The wall gave way and he went through it, landing on top of C. C. Bradner's desk which was in the next room. Bradner's typewriter fell to the floor with a crash.

"That's it!" exclaimed Wright, throwing his hands over his head. "That's just the sound we need."[219]

Wright began his theatrical career at the age of 19, assisting Sam Hume at the Arts and Crafts theater in Detroit. Two years later, he enlisted in the United States Navy as a seaman and during World War I was sent to Officer's School,

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[219]F. Ernie Hicca, "Fran Harris' 35th Anniversary Program", August 18, 1955, tape recording in WWJ Files.

and while there assisted in the production of plays for service men at the Community Theater at Newport, Rhode Island. He played "stock" for a year in the "13th Chair" and returned to Detroit where he organized and directed little theater productions for 10 years. Before coming to WWJ, he was director of the University of Detroit theater for two years.

While at the station, he maintained a rigorous schedule, appearing with the Players each Tuesday and Friday evenings and directing The Detroit News Children's Theater heard each Wednesday on the station. Wright later moved to New York as Production Manager of the National Broadcasting Company.[220]

Of course, Ty Tyson continued to attract listeners with his distinctive style. A poll conducted by the Toledo Blade in 1930 showed that Tyson was the third most popular personality in national radio. The voting results were: Graham McNamee, 892; Ted Husing, 297; Ty Tyson, 219.[221]

Rex C. White was another staff member who established an almost impossible schedule for himself. As the staff dramatist, he wrote the first production of The Detroit News Players, "Romance Comes to Broadway," which was performed on November 25, 1930, and all of the group's subsequent dramas which were broadcast every Tuesday and Friday

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[220] Radio Station WWJ, p. 14.

[221] Kelly and Boyes, p. 120.

evenings. In addition, he wrote the Children's Theater plays heard each Wednesday, another radio series, "Nifties of the Nineties," and made regular contributions to the editorial department of The News. He also often appeared on the air.[222]

While WWJ's interesting and entertaining local programs were being improved and refined, the station's competition continued to gain strength.

WJR, which has always been WWJ's keenest competitor, joined the NBC Blue network on April 29, 1927, and was assigned to 680 kc, a channel which was cleared of all stations except KFSD, San Diego, in late 1927. In September, 1927, control of WJR passed from Jewett Radio to G. A. Richards. Two years later, WCX, the Free Press station, was absorbed by WJR and the complete facility moved to the newly-completed Fisher Building, where it remains today. Granted 50,000 watts of power in 1935 on a clear channel, WJR dropped its affiliation with NBC's Blue network and became the Detroit outlet for CBS.[223]

WXYZ was purchased by George W. Trendle and John H. King in 1930. Under the King-Trendle Broadcasting Corporation banner, WXYZ produced some of radio's best known programs including The Lone Ranger, The Green Hornet and Challenge of the Yukon, which were fed to the national network for nearly 20 consecutive years. When WJR dropped NBC's Blue network, WXYZ signed as the Detroit affiliate. It remained with NBC until 1946, when King-

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[222] Radio Station WWJ, p. 14.

[223] "History," Broadcasting Magazine, August 1, 1949, p. 74.

Trendle sold the station to ABC for $2,500,000 cash.[224]

Plans were already underway in 1930 for the construction of Windsor-Detroit's first station, CKLW, which began broadcasting in June, 1932, under the call letters CKCK. Elton Plant, who took part in WWJ's first broadcasts, also appeared on CKLW's first program "Breakfast Blarney," which Plant and his wife conducted for several years.[225]

WJBK, which had been broadcasting from Ypsilanti, Michigan, since October 7, 1925, moved its studios and transmitter to Highland Park, a city completely surrounded by Detroit, in 1930. The station specialized in foreign language broadcasts and sports events until 1947, when it was purchased by George B. Storer as the second station in his growing group operation.[226]

During the period 1928 through 1930, WJR gained national prominence through the work of its outspoken commentator, Jerry Buckley, who was fatally shot in the lobby of the LaSalle Hotel in 1930. The murder was never solved. In 1939, the station was purchased by Booth Radio Stations Incorporated and converted into a foreign language station.[227]

In July, 1930, WWJ offered its facilities for a political broadcast for the first time. The invitation came in

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[224] Ibid.

[225] Plant Interview.

[226] "History," Broadcasting Magazine, August 1, 1949, p. 74.

[227] Ibid.

the midst of a campaign to remove Detroit's Mayor Charles H. Bowles from office. In a letter to Walter B. Cary, Chairman of the Recall Committee, William E. Scripps said:

> We have from time to time been requested during political campaigns of one nature or another to permit political speeches to be made over our station. We have always refrained from so doing, and this is the first time that any speeches of a political nature have been permitted, the exception being those made during the last Presidential campaign which emanated from the National Broadcasting Company.[228]

More than 125 guests jammed the WWJ studios as the station celebrated its 10th anniversary with talks by William E. Scripps, Jefferson B. Webb, Rex White, Michigan Senators James Couzens and Arthur Vandenberg, and entertainment by WWJ staff members and national celebrities Kendall Hall, Charles Hamp and Eddie Peabody. Ty Tyson was master of ceremonies.

The speeches given during the anniversary program August 20, 1930, reveal some of the early growing pains suffered by the station. As Rex G. White reported:

> The anniversary party went off as if by clock work. A very different affair than the things that happened 10 years ago when WWJ was an infant. Programs were pieced together some way in those days, but the building up of a program was often a weird affair with unexpected breaks and gaps and substitutions.
>
> Those of the WWJ studio who remembered the first small beginnings when telephone calls were anxiously waited for, when talent was hard to get, when crystal

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228. "WWJ Gives Radio Time To Cary and the Mayor," The Detroit News, July 12, 1930, p. 4.

> sets were the rule rather than the exception, looked over this party of famous men and women and sighed in satisfaction. There was one "great experiment that had been made good."[229]

William J. Scripps used the occasion for recalling his first contact with radio broadcasting.

> I first heard a spoken word from the ether...about 1918 when I heard just two or three words over an improvised wireless receiving set equipped with earphones. It certainly sounded like a telephone that was out of order.
>
> Believing that rapid developments would be made in this new art and not knowing but that wireless might be a most necessary adjunct to a newspaper in the collection and dissemination of news, I prevailed upon the board of directors of The Detroit News to install a radio transmission and receiving set. Little did we think at the time this first set was installed that what we were doing would revolutionize the home life of this entire nation and that of the world.[230]

Although he might have stretched the truth slightly in his usual comic fashion, Al Weeks remembered:

> I am recalling the afternoon when our program consisted of songs and stories by Leon Errol, Van and Schenck, Bert Williams, Fannie Price and Eddie Cantor. The announcer for this occasion was Will Rogers. And we paid them not a dime, for none of them had ever seen a microphone before and they were eager to experience the thrill of an air debut...
>
> How carelessly and light-heartedly, it seems now, we conducted the affairs of

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229. Lex G. White, "Station WWJ Has Birthday," The Detroit News, August 21, 1930, p. 1.

230. William J. Scripps, Radio Talk Given on WWJ, August 20, 1930, transcript in The Detroit News library.

> the station! Nobody had any stated time on the air. When he finished--in five or ten or thirty minutes--there was somebody else to go on, or the orchestra played.
>
> There was usually somebody to go on. The studio was thronged from morning until night with wistful aspirants for fame on the air, and every soprano whose accompaniment Val Coffey could play had her moment before the mike, often for the first and the last time.
>
> Radio was fun then before it got to be big business[231]

WWJ attempted to secure a grant for 50,000 watts of power from the Federal Radio Commission in September, 1930. According to a report published in the United States Daily, the station centered its argument for the increase in power around two factors, interference and operating loss.

> Because of interference, Station WWJ at Detroit, Mich., has been losing some of its audience and in 1929 sustained an operating loss of approximately $65,000, Warren S. Booth, treasurer [now President] of the Evening News Association..testified before the Federal Radio Commission Sept. 22[232]

Booth also testified that $544,219. had been lost on the operation of the station from August, 1920, to August 1, 1930, which "was partly due to the refusal of the station to accept many commercial programs which the station does not believe come up to the standard.[233]

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[231] Albert Reeves, quoted in a Radio Talk given by Jefferson P. Webb on WWJ (Aug. 20, 1930), transcript in The Detroit News library.

[232] "WWJ Blames Interference for Audience Losses," United States Daily (formerly published in Washington, D. C.) Clipping quoted from Detroit News Reference Dept. under Detroit News Radio-Equipment.

[233] Ibid.

Walter E. Hoffman, chief engineer of the station, gave details on the interference problems being faced by WWJ and pointed out that if the transmitter were placed outside the city limits with its present power of 1,000 watts, it could not be heard across the city.[234]

Testimony offered by Jefferson B. Webb at the FRC hearings give an indication of WWJ's operating expenses in 1930.

> Webb told the Commission that the station has an abundance of good talent, that more than 40 per cent of the programs of the station originate at the station, and that the station is on the air 18 hours a day during the week and 13 on Sundays. He said that the station carries 10 mechanical employes on the payroll and that the station has a talent staff of 32, five of whom are not paid by the station. The regular pay roll of the station, he said, is about $2,122 per week exclusive of extra talent, which sometimes runs to around $2,000. He said that the income from advertising is between $11,000 and $12,000 per month, and that the total operating cost per month ran around $15,000.[235]

Despite Webb's statements to the FRC, by May 1929, WWJ showed a small profit of $1,767.92 for the first time in nearly a decade of operation.

On January 3, 1931, WWJ launched another effort for a 50,000 watt grant, this time basing its request on an allocation which had been "loaned" to the fourth radio district by the second radio district several years before and assigned to KYW, Chicago (now located in Cleveland).

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[234] Ibid.

[235] Ibid.

> Station WWJ...on Jan. 3 filed with the Federal Radio Commission an application for authority to use the maximum power of 50,000 watts, and for a change in frequency from its present regional channel assignment of 920 kilocycles to the cleared channel of 1,020 kilocycles.
>
> Three appeals, all involving Station KYW's assignment to the 1,020-kilocycle channel and contesting the Commission's contention that this channel is "loaned" the fourth zone, now are pending in the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia. In the past year, a half dozen stations in the second zone have sought assignment to this channel on the same grounds.[236]

After mountains of correspondence had been exchanged and hours of hearings had been conducted, the Federal Radio Commission stood firm. In 1928, the FRC had asked The News to increase its power and the answer came back from Detroit--"No." And now it was too late. With the country divided into zones, and each zone given a quota of eight clear channel allocations, the grants had been made. The quota had been filled with stations in Chicago, Cleveland, and elsewhere, operating at high power. WWJ, a pioneer broadcaster, must confine its signal strength to 1,000 watts--a meager voice for the grand old lady of broadcasting. Since taking office in 1929, Scripps had tried to increase the power--and failed.

In 1931, the Wayne County Medical Society began a systematic series of health discussions. Encouraged by

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[236] "Station WWJ at Detroit Petitions For Use of Maximum Radio Power," United States Daily (formerly published in Washington, D. C.), see Footnote 232.

their success, the Society proposed a number of short plays which were given the title, "Dramas of Science." Two years later, in an effort to encourage additional public involvement in the program, a question and answer series was begun which continued for eight years. "Dramas of Science" were followed by a new series in 1936, "Death Fighters." The books of Paul de Kruif were used as source material for "Death Fighters" with the author assisting in their adaptation for WWJ. Coordinated with a campaign against tuberculosis in Detroit, the series resulted in the passage of a bill calling for the expenditure of $200,000 annually to fight the disease. The results of the series were described by de Kruif in his book, "The Fight for Life."[237]

Under the guidance of Jefferson Webb, the program concepts introduced in 1930 were expanded and improved, with performers and staff members polishing and refining their broadcasting skills. As the contributions by the Women's Department of The News dwindled, it became necessary in time to select a performer who could present programs of interest to the station's distaff listeners. Sally Woodward was finally chosen and for six years she aired a daily program series concerned with social, club and homemaking activities.

On February 1, 1934, WWJ introduced the "Minute Parade," one of the longest running commercial programs in broadcasting

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[237] WWJ, The Detroit News, Outstanding Events and Series Programs Broadcast by WWJ, mimeographed manuscript, p. 10.

history. Sponsored by the J. L. Hudson Company, a Detroit department store, it was heard each morning from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. for more than 20 years. Barbara Brooks was the original hostess of the program which featured semi-classical music, interspersed with store news, both institutional and merchandising.

The federal radio regulatory body, the Federal Radio Commission, was disbanded on July 1, 1934, in favor of the Federal Communications Commission, which governs broadcasting in 1962. Under the provisions of the act passed by Congress, seven members were appointed to the Commission to deal, not only with national broadcast regulation, but all interstate and foreign telephone and telegraph communication by wire and radio. The FCC was divided into three divisions, of which one, the Broadcast Division, carries on the functions of the Federal Radio Commission, which the FCC superseded.[238]

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[238] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. IV, p. 213.

XV A GIANT FORWARD STEP--1936

In January, 1936, W. A. Jacoby joined the staff. Better known to the WWJ audience as Radio Jake, he wandered the city streets, with a car-load of equipment, responding to distress calls from radio listeners. With Radio Jake on the job, the station's obsession with the elimination of radio interference was satisfied and hundreds of letters of appreciation poured into WWJ from grateful members of the audience.

> You will recall that I called you in desperation for help on the trouble we are having with radio interference. The situation was so serious that we were facing **real** danger, due to our inability to make clear contacts with approaching planes. You were good enough to send Radio Jake out here to locate the trouble quickly and followed through to have it corrected.[239]

Although Jefferson Webb had announced the construction of a magnificent new building to house the WWJ studios and offices on the station's 15th Anniversary program in 1935, he did not live to see its formal dedication in 1936. W. J. Scripps, son of founder William E. Scripps, served as acting manager of WWJ in the interim between Webb's death and the

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[239]Letter to W. J. Scripps, WWJ, from C. V. Burnett, Manager, Detroit City Airport, circa, February, 1936, WWJ Files.

appointment of Easton B. Wooley, who became manager of the station on September 15, 1936, a day before the new studios were formally dedicated. Wooley had been NBC's director of station relations and he managed WWJ for almost a year, leaving June 1, 1937.

The million dollar structure that opened in 1936 to shelter the WWJ operation rivaled the New York facilities of the major networks. Rising five stories, the building boasted five studios, the largest of which was the Auditorium Studio, seating 340 persons and still in use today. The auditorium occupied nearly half of the first floor, and contained an elaborate lighting system for both the audience section and the broadcasting stage; a projection booth; control room overlooking the stage, and one of two consoles of a huge pipe organ.

On the second floor, separated by translucent glass partitions, were the offices for the station manager, sales and sales manager and a conference room. Located on the third floor were three studios: studio A (30 feet by 40 feet) could accomodate a sizeable audience in addition to the performers; studio B (35 feet by 21 feet), and studio C (21 feet by 12 feet, 6 inches). Studio D (20 feet by 14 feet, 11 inches) on the fourth floor completed the cluster of origination points and shared the floor with studio A observation room, studio A client's room, studio B observation room, a rehearsal room and storage and music rooms.

The fan rooms, radio shop, battery room and organ

chamber occupied the fifth floor and on the lower level were the test kitchen, The Detroit News Home Institute exhibition room, chorus room, dressing rooms and the office of the Home Institute director.

This seemingly detailed description of the various studio and office locations will help to demonstrate the dramatic metamorphosis which the building has undergone since it opened in 1936. Appended to the west side of the original structure is a $2 million, three-level television building. On the second floor of the radio building, the various offices once located there have been converted into a single office for the WWJ and WWJ-TV general manager. Studio B is the only studio still in its original form, with studio A housing the WWJ news department, studio C the tape recording equipment and studio D the station bookkeeping department. Television motion picture film is now developed in the former test kitchen and the radio sales department occupies the space once used for Home Institute displays. It is quite possible, in short, that Albert Kahn, the internationally-known architect who designed the structure, would have difficulty finding his way about the building.

As part of the 1936 expansion program, WWJ also moved its transmitter to a new location on the edge of the city at 8-Mile and Myers Roads. Had it been willing to make the trip in 1928, 50,000 watts, instead of 5,000 watts, of power would have radiated from the 400-foot Blaw-Knox vertical radiator antenna. Designed by Clarence E. Day, the transmitter building,

in its first year, drew 60,000 visitors who marveled at its magnificent murals depicting the various phases of the broadcasting art and its spacious flower gardens which captured several landscaping awards.[240]

The building was also equipped with living quarters for its staff and a studio so that the transmitter could be operated in case of disaster or an interruption in the city's telephone service which would break communication with the downtown studios.[241]

Aloft during WWJ's new transmitter dedication was The Early Bird, the station's news-gathering airplane. The airplane was equipped to broadcast directly to WWJ, which, in turn, could relay the pilot's description of a news event to the radio audience. As C. C. Bradner, Ty Tyson and William Kishler described the transmitter opening on April 16, 1936, from the ground, James V. Piersol, aviation writer of The News, reported the event from the air.[242]

In addition to the main studio building and the transmitter site, WWJ opened a third facility in the Penobscot Building on January 29, 1936. Located here was station WSYWJ, an ultra-high frequency, experimental outlet. The

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[240]"60,000 Visitors See WWJ's Transmitter," The Detroit News, May 30, 1937, p. 1.

[241]Stoddard White, News Release, September 13, 1936, The Detroit News library, p. 1.

[242]"Transmitter of 5,000 Watts Opens a New Era for WWJ," The Detroit News, April 17, 1936, p. 1.

late Carl Wesser was W8WXJ's first operator when it signed on with a power rating of 100 watts at a frequency of 31,600 kilocycles. The station's programming consisted chiefly of public service offerings and Morse Code classes.[243]

Also in 1936, WWJ put its elaborate radio and photographic field car into service--for the first time at the All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron, Ohio. Tagged "a unique journalistic achievement," the 8,800 pound truck was designed to carry a crew of reporters, photographers, radio announcers and technicians to the scene of an important news story. Aboard the mobile unit, in addition to its crew, was a mass of equipment for transmitting the news back to the station and the newspaper. Two pack transmitters, carried in a harness on the reporter's back, were used by the radio announcers for on-the-scene coverage of an event. The unit also contained a photographic dark room where plates were developed and sent to the newspaper from a photo-transmission machine. The Early Bird airplane was also equipped to broadcast from the air, to the ground mobile unit, and thence to the WWJ main studios. In all, six separate licenses were required to operate the jumble of remote apparatus.[244]

Dr. Lee De Forest returned to the WWJ studios in 1936 to help the station celebrate its 16th Anniversary. His speech,

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[243]Pictorial Radio History The Detroit News Ultra High Frequency Services, The Detroit News library, pp. 1-2.

[244]Stoddard White, News Release, August 16, 1936, The Detroit News library, pp. 1-2.

in which he claimed over and over again that WWJ was the first broadcasting station, reopened a controversy that had existed for years. He said:

> Beginnings are always mysterious, and the beginnings of radio are no exception... On this 16th Anniversary of the opening of the first commercial Radio Broadcasting Station in the entire World, WWJ, I esteem it a rare privilege to address a nation-wide, perhaps a world-wide audience italics mine .[245]

Second place, he claimed, went to KDKA.

> So on the night of August 20, 1920, the first commercial Radio Broadcast Station in all of the world was opened.
>
> Not until eleven weeks after its founding did WWJ share the channels of the air with a rival broadcasting station. The honor of being second in a rapidly lengthening procession fell to KDKA of Pittsburgh...and though it has erroneously claimed and been credited with priority among broadcasters, it is still entitled to a place of distinction as one of the pioneers.
>
> But WWJ can tonight point with just pride to its premiere status among all the thousands of radio broadcasting stations subsequently founded throughout the world italics mine .[246]

The De Forest pronouncements, giving WWJ priority as the world's first commercial broadcasting station, caused a furor of activity in the press. Claims and counter-claims came from a dozen different directions. The KDKA-WWJ controversy, over which station began broadcasting first, was launched and still lingers today.

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[245] Dr. Lee De Forest, Speech Given on WWJ, August 20, 1936, transcript in The Detroit News library, pp. 1-4.

[246] Ibid, pp. 3-4.

XVI A QUESTION OF PRIORITY-KDKA OR WWJ?

If broadcasting's beginning had been a revolution, instead of an evolution, the answer to the question of station priority could come quickly and without reservation. However, commercial broadcasting was the outgrowth of hundreds of "ham" stations which operated across the country before and immediately following World War I.

The two leading contenders for the title of the world's first commercial broadcasting station are KDKA and WWJ, although other outlets have been added to the struggle in recent years. The great body of radio history seems to favor KDKA.

> The rise of the radio industry in the United States has been the most remarkable achievement...starting from a single broadcasting station in 1920--the pioneer station KDKA in Pittsburgh...--David Sarnoff, The Radio Industry.
>
> The first regular broadcasting station to be established in the United States was... the station well known as KDKA...--A. H. Burrows, The Story of Broadcasting.
>
> One of the earliest and most successful... stations was KDKA at East Pittsburgh, Pa., owned by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company...--Encyclopedia Britannica.[247]

Motivated by Dr. De Forest's speech at the 16th Anniversary celebration, writers and editors who had perpetrated

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[247] "Science--WWJ," Time 28:23, August 31, 1936, p. 29.

the KDKA myth began to re-examine the facts concerning broadcasting's beginnings. As Time magazine reported:

> Nine radio devotees out of ten have doubtless heard or read somewhere that KDKA was the first regular broadcasting station in the U. S. Great, therefore, was their surprise one night last week when WWJ... splashed over the air a ...program in which it claimed seniority over hoary KDKA....
>
> Neither of the rivals can claim priority except as a commercial station...Lee De Forest...and other pre-war radiocasters were Dr. Frank Conrad of Westinghouse and Robert Gowan of De Forest Radio Telephone & Telegraph...
>
> Unable to get around the solid fact of the Detroit station's priority on the calendar, KDKA argued that it was operating under its present call letters 16 months before WWJ was assigned its present letters on March 3, 1922. Against this was WWJ's claim that it had received its third license (in October, 1921) before KDKA applied for its first. KDKA was, in fact, the eighth U. S. station to be Federally licensed.[248]

Newsweek magazine echoed many of the same arguments and added:

> Neither station could escape a listing of the facts:
>
> | WWJ | KDKA |
> |---|---|
> | 1. First broadcast on Aug. 20, 1920 | 1. First broadcast on Nov. 2 (4), 1920[249] |
> | 2. Night and day program since above date | 2. Programs semi-weekly until Dec. 1, 1920 |
> | 3. Commercial license issued Oct. 13, 1921 | 3. Commercial license issued Oct. 27, 1920[250] |

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[248] Ibid.

[249] Several Westinghouse officials were questioned by Newsweek. Some gave November 2 as the date of the first broadcast, while others insisted that KDKA had begun broadcasting on November 4, 1920.

[250] "Birthdays: WWJ's Sixteenth Anniversary Reopens Old Feud," Newsweek 7:9, August 29, 1936, p. 12.

Even with the facts clearly stated, by Time and Newsweek, other radio authorities who attempted to explain the KDKA-WWJ situation seemed to become hopelessly muddled. The News itself had problems, which prompted this memo from public Relations Director Lee White:

> Nov. 22, we ran on page 1 (col. 4) a story on our application for permission to construct and operate a television broadcasting station. In it, we spoke of The News as being "first to operate regular broadcasting IN THIS AREA." This understatement of our validated claim to having the world's first commercial broadcasting station, hence the oldest broadcasting station existing, was repeated, perhaps not unnaturally, in yesterday's "Newsette."
>
> Election night a commentator in New York, broadcasting over NBC and so over WWJ itself, repeated the hoary and indefensible legend about KDKA, which we corrected on the air next day.
>
> Couldn't we always be correct in The News and on the air?[251]

The Institute of Radio Engineers tried to solve the controversy by tracing broadcasting's complete lineage.

> In the meantime a de Forest radio set had been put into operation by the Detroit News, and on August 31, 1920, this station sent out election returns...before the activities of Mr. Conrad had been transferred to the Westinghouse factory. So the Detroit News station antedates the Westinghouse factory station (KDKA), the Conrad home station antedates the Detroit News, the Cowan home station (in Canining, N. Y.) antedates the Conrad, and de Forest's activities antedate them all. As to which was the "pioneer broadcaster" the reader may judge for himself.[252]

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[251]Lee A. White, Departmental Communication to Fred Gaerther, November 27, 1944, WWJ Files.

[252]The Institute of Radio Engineers, Proceedings of the Institute, ed. Alfred N. Goldsmith (New York, February, 1925) Vol. XIII, No. 1, p. 123.

Unfortunately, most of the existing books, wholly, or in part, devoted to radio history, are more often a concoction of reminiscences rather than a scholarly report of the facts. Typical of this group is a book, This Thing Called Broadcasting.

> The authors vigorously disclaim the title of radio historians. No attempt has been made herein to write radio history...(and) they have not attempted to decide the grave question of the paternity of radio broadcasting.[253]

After this impressive disclaimer, the authors add to the confusion surrounding priority with this erroneous statement:

> There were many others who took part in the pioneer broadcasting efforts. WWJ, for instance, was on the air soon after the inauguration of regular broadcasting by KDKA.[254]

Gleason L. Archer's book, History of Radio to 1926, is often quoted in support of the KDKA claim of priority. Although Archer's book is indeed an impressive work, it is interesting to note how many times he uses the words alleged and assuming in describing the founding of WWJ.

> A station operated by the Detroit News, is alleged to have antedated KDKA in broadcasting news. It is claimed that on August 31, 1920, a radiophone program was put on the air from an alleged Detroit News wireless telephone station and that the service thus inaugurated

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[253]Alfred N. Goldsmith and Austin C. Lescarboura, This Thing Called Broadcasting (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1930), p. v.

[254]Ibid., p. 34.

> was continued on a regular schedule thereafter. If this can be substantiated [it has been] then KDKA, unless it have other claims to priority, would yield its crown to Station WBJ, the lineal successor of this early beginning. [italics mine].[255]

Dr. Archer mentions that "KDKA was the lineal successor of the Westinghouse experimental station that Dr. Frank Conrad had operated on a schedule for a long time prior to the opening of KDKA."[256]

What Dr. Archer fails to point out is that Conrad, in addition to operating a station long before KDKA went on the air, also operated a station long after KDKA began broadcasting. To quote Dr. Archer:

> He (Conrad) rushed home to his own garage-station 8XK and remained there during the broadcast--"standing by" to pick up the program in case anything should go wrong in the new station.[257]

It was not until 1924 that Dr. Conrad finally transferred his station to Westinghouse Broadcasting Company.[258] Since KDKA and the Conrad station operated simultaneously for four years under different call letters at different locations, it is impossible for one to be the lineal successor of the other.

In studying the priority of stations, most historians, including Dr. Archer, have relied on the chronology of grants

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[255]Gleason L. Archer, History of Radio to 1926 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1938), p. 207.

[256]Ibid. [257]Ibid., p. 204.

[258]"Radio Stations 40 or More Years Old in 1962," Broadcasting Magazine, May 14, 1962, p. 133.

as recorded in the Radio Service Bulletin of the Department of Commerce.

> The author has examined with great care the back numbers of the Radio Service Bulletin prior to November 1, 1921, and is unable to discover any such station, despite the fact that other experimental stations in Detroit not affiliated with the Detroit News are in the listings.[259]

Since WWJ rented its first transmitter from Radio News and Music, Inc., it is true that a station specifically assigned to The Detroit News would not be in the early department of Commerce records. Nevertheless, WWJ did broadcast on August 20, 1920, and has continued to broadcast daily since that date.

> In a publication entitled, Amateur Radio Stations of the United States of America,...on page 150, there appears the name Radio News and Music Company, Inc. of Detroit, Michigan, as the operator of station 8MK with a power of 1,000 watts. Whether this is a station established by The Detroit News is not evident.[260]

This was indeed the station established by WWJ and publicized on the front page of The News on August 31, 1920.

The National Association of Broadcasters, after deferring its decision for several years, finally emerged in favor of WWJ in the Association's 25th Anniversary Bulletin.

> 1920 (Aug. 20) Station WWJ, Detroit (Then 8MK; later WBL; WWJ, July 7, 1922), owned by Detroit News and installed by William J. [E.] Scripps, began operation, broadcasting daily thereafter. Sent out returns of State primary election Aug. 31, 1920.

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[259] Archer, p. 209. [260] Ibid.

1920 (Nov. 2)--KDKA, Pittsburgh (Westinghouse Co.), founded by Dr. Frank Conrad, begins regular schedule of broadcasting with Harding-Cox presidential election returns.[261]

Also supporting WWJ's claim was the dean of radio and television editors, Ben Gross.

> Many newspapers, magazines, and books have credited KDKA with having been the first American station on the air and the Harding-Cox summary as the first broadcast. They are wrong on both counts. WWJ, the radio outlet of The Detroit News, deserves the recognition.[262]

Even with this preponderance of evidence to substantiate WWJ's priority, some publications continue to dodge the issue.

> By year end (1920) WWJ and KDKA were gathering audiences and making claims about which was the first station--a question that still can start an argument among oldtimers in the industry.[263]

> Operating as an experimental station, WWJ in Detroit, went on the air Aug. 20, 1920.
>
> Broadcasting began "officially" with the Harding-Cox election returns aired on Nov. 2, 1920, by KDKA, Pittsburgh.[264]

It is also quite possible that neither WWJ nor KDKA opened the first commercial station. Other outlets which

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[261] National Association of Broadcasters, "Development of Radio Communication Since 1920," Special 25th Anniversary Bulletin (Washington, D. C.: NAB, May 2, 1945), p. 4.

[262] Ben Gross, I Looked And I Listened (New York: Random House, 1954) cited by Herschell Hart, "WWJ and KDKA Argument Settled," The Detroit News, October 8, 1954, p. 36.

[263] "1922-Year Radio's Population Soared," Broadcasting Magazine, May 14, 1962, p. 82.

[264] "Radio's Chronology of Milestones," Radio-Television Daily, December 19, 1962, p. 31.

claim to be as old as or older than either WWJ or KDKA are: KQV, Pittsburgh, (1919); WHA, Madison, Wisconsin, (1917 as 9 XM); WRR, Dallas, (1920); WFY, Oklahoma City, (1920); KFKO, Everett, Washington, (August 17, 1920); KTW, Seattle, Washington, (August 20, 1920); KNX, Los Angeles, (1920); KLZ, Denver, (1920), and KCBS, San Francisco, (January, 1909). There may be additional stations inadvertently omitted from this list.

Of this group, KCBS has built the most impressive argument toward establishing itself as the first commercial station. Its first radio experiments have been traced to voice transmissions made by Charles D. Herrold, principal of a San Jose technical college bearing his name, in January, 1909, under the call letters KQW, which were changed to KCBS in 1949 when the station was acquired by CBS.[265]

KCBS asserts that Dr. Lee De Forest, at the San Francisco World's Fair in 1940, said:

> "That station, KQW, can rightfully claim to be the oldest station of the entire world."[266]

To the rebuttal that the call letters KQW did not appear in the Radio Service Bulletin of the Department of Commerce until January, 1922,[267] KCBS answers:

> Early in experimental stages, the call FN was used. Experimental land licenses 6XE and 6XF preceded the call SJN which was first

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[265] "Population Soared..." Broadcasting Magazine, p. 83.

[266] Ibid.

[267] Archer, p. 393.

used in 1913. And, in 1921, when licenses were first issued under the classification of broadcasting, the San Jose station became KCW. Later it moved to San Francisco and in 1949 the call letters were changed to KCBS.[268]

Perhaps the best answer to the question of priority is this one:

> Dredging up radio's early history isn't an easy job. Radio historians find much that was never documented. The result has been a sort of Abbott-and-Costello routine of "who was on first?"[269]

268"New 'First' Claim: KCBS Predecessor Began in 1909--Greb," Broadcasting Magazine, February 16, 1959, quoting Gordon L. Greb, Journal of Broadcasting, Technical Journal of Broadcast Educators (January, 1959), p. 52.

269Kettelou Peterson, "Radio Looks Back 40 Years," The Detroit Free Press, June 11, 1962, p. 6-D.

XVII MODERN BROADCASTING

WWJ's new studios were formally dedicated on September 16, 1936, with a week-long series of programs featuring many of radio's most celebrated personalities. Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians; Joan Blaine, who played the role of Mary Marlin on the popular soap opera of the same name; soprano Jessica Dragonette, and Broadway stars Ethel Barrymore and Walter Hampden participated in the ceremonies.[270]

Hampden and Miss Barrymore enacted Charles Kennedy's "The Servant in the House," a full-length play which was broadcast by WWJ without cuts or revisions and which required two hours of air time.[271] This was the first of three full-length productions presented by the station. The others were "Jane Clegg," starring Joan Blaine, aired in August, 1937, and a special two-hour version of the religious play, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," broadcast in December, 1937.[272]

A. FACSIMILE AND FM

Beginning August 13, 1938, with the temporary call letters W8XTY, station WWJ undertook extensive experiments

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[270] Goddard White, News Release, September 13, 1936, p. 1.

[271] "The Servant: WWJ, 10:05," The Detroit News, September 20, 1936, p. 1.

[272] "Outstanding Events..." p. 10.

in facsimile broadcasting. A Finch scanner and recorder and a Crosley receiver-recorder enabled the station to broadcast and receive photographs and text material electrically. A facsimile installation was also placed in the mobile unit. Radio editor and former acting manager of WWJ, Robert Kelly, was made facsimile editor. Assuming that newspapers would someday be delivered to the home via this new invention, The News again demonstrated its willingness to invest time and money toward developing a new method of distribution.[273]

Facsimile, although revived briefly followed World War II by WWJ, never proved successful in replacing the neighborhood newsboy and the long and costly experiments were dropped. Ultra-high frequency broadcasts were also suspended in 1946.

Operating on a daytime power of 5,000 watts since 1936, WWJ received a temporary grant to increase its nighttime power to 5,000 watts in May, 1937. In November, 1938, the Federal Communications Commission abolished all temporary authorities, sending WWJ and all other regional channels back to 1,000 watts nighttime. On October 17, 1940, WWJ secured a permanent grant from the FCC which gave it 5 kilowatts of power around the clock. A new 535-foot tower was erected 90 feet to the north of the existing 400-foot tower to accomplish the directional signal pattern approved by

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[273] Pictorial Radio History: The Detroit News Ultra-High Frequency Services, pp. 23-26.

the FCC.[274]

As a result of the new antenna design, the WWJ nighttime coverage area assumed the shape of a Bartlett pear, with a bulge extending generally a few degrees to the northwest and its smaller top pointing to the southeast. This is the nighttime power and coverage pattern maintained by WWJ today, with the daytime power and pattern unchanged since 1936.

On March 29, 1941, WWJ left a channel address, 920 kilocycles, which it had maintained since 1928. Without a great deal of fanfare, it began broadcasting on 950 kilocycles, where it remains today.[275]

It was also early in 1941 when the Federal Communications Commission began to issue licenses for frequency modulation stations. One of the first to apply, WWJ was given a grant under the call letters, W45D, in the initial group of allocations made by the Commission.

Robert Kelly, who had previously served as radio editor, acting station manager of WWJ, facsimile editor and announcer, was named manager of the new FM installation. Don DeGroot was made program manager and a small staff, which would exclusively service the FM operation, was assembled. On November 10, 1941, Edwin K. Wheeler replaced Kelly as manager.

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[274] Sue Hyster, "New Tower Up for WWJ," The Detroit News, March 28, 1941, p. 17.

[275] "Change-Over Not Easy Job," The Detroit News, March 28, 1941, p. 19.

Regular daily FM programming began May 9, 1941, on 44.5 megacycles, under a rate card issued June 1, 1941.

CLASS A--Weekdays: 6:00 PM to 10:30 PM
Sundays: 3:00 PM to 10:30 PM

	less than 26 times	26-51 times	52-103 times	104-155 times	156 or more times
1 hour	$75.00	$71.25	$69.38	$67.50	$65.63
½ hour	45.00	42.75	42.63	40.50	39.38
¼ hour	30.00	28.50	27.75	27.00	26.25[276]

WASD changed its call letters to WENA on November 1, 1943, the "W" denoting a station east of the Mississippi and the "ENA" representing the Evening News Association. Under the new call letters, it issued rate card number 3, reducing its Class A, one-time, hourly rate to $50.00, the half-hour to $30.00 and the quarter-hour to $20.00[277]

Ultimately, the call letters were again changed, this time to WWJ-FM, the FM staff was disbanded and the Penobscot studios closed. Programs presented by WWJ are now simultaneously broadcast by WWJ-FM and commercials are heard on both stations at no additional charge for the frequency modulation listeners.

WWJ-FM has had an application pending before the Federal Communications Commission since May, 1961, for an increase in its effective radiated power from 50 kilowatts to 500 kilowatts.

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[276] WASD, Rate Card No. 2, Effective June 1, 1941.

[277] WENA, Rate Card No. 3, Effective January 1, 1945.

B. WWJ GOES TO WAR

W. J. Scripps, who had served as manager of WWJ from January 17, 1938, to November 10, 1941, was elevated to the newly created position of director of broadcasting for The Evening News Association on the eve of the outbreak of World War II. On November 12, Harry Bannister, who had been sales manager of the station, was named general manager.

As a prelude to the hostilities which were to follow, Russell Barnes, foreign affairs commentator for The News, seated himself at a microphone in London to make a special radio report to WWJ on the conditions which existed in that bombed out city early in November, 1941.

> The broadcast is strictly for this area and WWJ, and will be the first in the memory of National Broadcasting press representatives to be made from London and directed specifically to any station outside of New York.[278]

In the period between Pearl Harbor Day and V-J Day--one hundred and ninety-four weeks--WWJ broadcast the following sustaining programs in the wartime public interest:

621	30-minute programs
1,315	15-minute programs
408	10-minute programs
626	5-minute programs
17,531	Spot announcements[279]

The programs indicated were WWJ local originations

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[278] "Barnes on Air From London," The Detroit News, October 30, 1941, p. 1.

[279] WWJ, The Detroit News, Wartime Report of Programs in the Public Interest (Detroit: circa 1946), p. 2.

National Broadcasting Company programs broadcast by WWJ are not included.

Along with other stations across the country, WWJ complied with government orders for strict censorship of all programs emanating from the Detroit outlet.

> For the last two weeks WWJ has been preparing for censorship restrictions and attempting to anticipate them. All programs have been canceled or altered radically if they were broadcast by persons not fully under the station's control.
>
> The principal program involved was Ty Tyson's "Man on the Street," a quiz program participated in by passersby in front of a downtown theater. A week ago this program was altered so that a daily recording was made of Tyson's interviews, and then, after being checked carefully, each recording was broadcast the following day.
>
> The censorship regulations, however, have made it necessary to discontinue the program altogether, and in place of it, WWJ today broadcast a new program, also featuring Ty Tyson.[290]

WWJ took other steps to aid the war effort. It eliminated the middle commercial from all newscasts to allow more news to be presented; aired frequent reports by Detroit News correspondents S. L. A. Marshall and Russell Barnes on the progress of the fighting; and, with its staff marching off to war in increasing numbers, introduced Fran Harris, probably the first female newscaster to broadcast on a regular schedule.

In August, 1942, it became necessary to reduce the number of broadcast hours. The difficulty of getting transmitter

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[290] "WWJ Complies with U. S. Regulations," The Detroit News, January 16, 1942, p. 4.

tubes made it imperative to conserve those on hand.[281]

Even though the war years were grim, WWJ continued to entertain its local audience with such lyrical groups as the "Yawn Club" sophisto-Cats, under the direction of Paul Leash, with Kaye Foster as Tabby and Franklyn Ferguson as Jughead. Not quite so corny was a young announcer, Hugh Downs, who worked for the station in 1942 and later went on to greater fame as the host of several popular programs on NBC-TV including the "Today Show." Downs was the central figure in an amusing hoax. One day two police officers arrived at the station to investigate an alleged robbery. No one on the staff knew what had been taken, although the officers insisted that the inspector had heard the robbery reported on the air.

> Dawning comprehension lighted the face of the engineer.
>
> "Say," he exclaimed. "I know what that was. Hugh Downs...got off on the fourth floor instead of the third floor when he came to work. He was kidding at the mike about it and he said he thought somebody must have stolen the studio."
>
> A rapid investigation followed. Two blushing detectives returned to headquarters.[282]

On February 1, 1943, WWJ became the first, and perhaps the only, station to ban transcribed announcements and singing commercials, which have since been reinstated.

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281. "WWJ Will Reduce Its Broadcast Hours," The Detroit News, August 7, 1942, p. 1.

282. "Studio Robbery a Joke on Mike," The Detroit News, June 28, 1942, Sec. 1, p. 14.

Manager Harry Bannister considered the ban his greatest contribution to broadcasting, although he, of course, made many other, more significant advances in the local operation.

C. TELEVISION COMES TO DETROIT

At war's end, the WWJ staff increased its efforts, begun in 1943, toward learning every known fact about a "new" method of commercial broadcasting called television.

Radio hardly reacted to WWJ-TV's introduction of television in Michigan on March 4, 1947. Of course, some of the popular WWJ shows, including "Coffee Club" and "Cinderella Weekend," were slightly altered and put on television, but even with the loss of two or three programs, it was believed that radio would continue to be popular despite television's introduction. And it was. As late as 1950, WWJ's basic hourly rate was $800 an hour and WJR continued to charge its clients $1,000, one of the highest radio rates in the nation.

It was not until 1953 that radio really felt television's impact. The steady growth of television receivers in the Detroit market finally reached a sizeable number and captive radio listeners by the thousands left their speakers to squint at television tubes.

Along with the other problems it faced with increased competition from television, WWJ was hit by its first major labor dispute in August, 1950. Picket lines, formed by members of the National Association of Broadcasting Engineers and

Technicians, rimmed the building. After two days, the walkout ended and the engineers returned to their jobs pending State and Federal conciliation conferences.[283] The strike occured on the 30th Anniversary of the station to the day, and the weekly wages agreed upon and paid to the 56 engineers would have operated the station for a year in 1920.

A sales booklet, published in October, 1951, by WWJ, asked the question that was undoubtedly on many broadcasters' lips, "What about RADIO in Detroit?" In analyzing the audience, the booklet pointed out that, despite television, WWJ was reaching more people than ever before:

Number of People in WWJ Primary Coverage Areas[284]

1940	Daytime	3,930,200
	Nighttime	3,451,900
1946	Daytime	4,500,000
	Nighttime	4,000,000
1951	Daytime	4,906,000
	Nighttime	4,336,800

In the same period, 1940-1951, the booklet pointed out, Detroit's per family income had grown from $2,200 to $4,700. In 1951, there was 331,000 more radio homes in the WWJ primary area than in 1940, 207,000 more than in 1946.[285]

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[283] "WWJ and The News Restore Full Service," The Detroit News, August 22, 1950, p. 1.

[284] A Study by WWJ AM-FM, "What About RADIO in Detroit?," October, 1951, p. 3.

[285] Ibid., p. 10.

Despite figures to the contrary, the television audience was growing at an almost unbelieveable rate and promised to submerge radio forever as an effective advertising medium. Set purchases, a good barometer of audience interest, were tipping the scales in favor of television.

Year	RADIO SETS	TV SETS [286]
1951 (4 mos.)	20,100	70,100
1950	83,400	291,100
1949	61,000	93,100
1948	71,800	26,500
1946-47	122,100	5,900
1942-45	111,200	1,500
1940-41	106,600	1,000
Before 1940	189,300	500

Oddly enough, while WWJ struggled for its audience during 1950 and 1951, it won two of broadcasting's most cherished awards, the Alfred I duPont Award and the George Foster Peabody Award, for a program series on alcoholics and another series titled "Protect Your Child."

Recognizing that the upsurge of interest in television would have to be reflected in the corporate structure of the Evening News Association, the radio and television operations were separated into competitive organizations. Each was given its own administrative head, sales force and program personnel, operating under the over-all guidance of Harry Bannister, who was made general manager. Don DeRoot became manager of WWJ.[287]

It took radio almost five years to recover from

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[286] Ibid., p. 17.

[287] "News Radio, Video Split," The Detroit News, October 31, 1950, p. 32.

television's onslaught. Billings, which had sagged in the early 1950's, slowly, and with painful rate cuts, took on new vigor. Sales charts, which had dipped to the danger point, turned upward, and the pessimists, who had pronounced radio dead, suddenly noticed the body taking on new color.

> When, in the 1950's, television absorbed the entertainment stars, radio provided around-the-clock broadcasts of popular and symphonic music, hourly news summaries, play-by-play reports of all major sports events, and such special services as frequent announcements of time, temperature, weather forecasts, and traffic bulletins.[289]

In the midst of radio's rebirth, Harry Bannister left WWJ to join the National Broadcasting Company as vice-president in charge of station relations. He was succeeded by Edwin K. Wheeler, who served the WWJ stations as general manager from 1952 to 1961, when James Schinvone became general manager.

Under Wheeler's guidance, WWJ moved from the cloistered environment of its downtown studios to its first "permanent" remote location, Northland. As the "world's largest shopping center," Northland looked almost gleefully to December, 1955, as its biggest sales month. However, just as record crowds were beginning to gather, the newspapers, which had carried the bulk of the new Center's advertising, went on strike. Realizing the advertising void that had been created, WWJ moved swiftly to fill it. The station was given permission to establish a temporary broadcasting booth

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[289] WWJ, The Detroit News, Don DeGroot, The Birthplace of Broadcasting, 1962, p. 5.

in the hope that WWJ could stimulate shopping interest in its audience. The experiment was a success as thousands of shoppers stormed the Center, and WWJ became a permanent fixture at Northland. When the J. L. Hudson Company opened its second shopping center, Eastland, WWJ was again given broadcast rights. A third remote studio is currently in the planning stages to be located on Woodward Avenue in downtown Detroit.

E. WWJ TODAY

It is impossible to deal historically with the present. For the purposes of this study, however, some of the important innovations of modern radio are detailed here.

Because most Detroiters drive to work on a complex system of freeways, the automobile radio has taken on new significance in 1962. WWJ pioneered the now commonplace expressway reports using periodic bulletins on traffic conditions. And whereas radio's prime time was once the evening hours, the "driving times," when commuters are rushing to and from work, now command the highest rates. Programs specifically geared to the auto audience, such as "The Bumper-to-Bumper Club," first presided over by the late Jim Deland, have gained large followings in America's motor capital.

Mindful of its newspaper affiliation, WWJ places considerable emphasis on news. Unlike the early radio audiences who insisted on whimsical, witty reports, the 1962 radio listener demands that WWJ present news quickly,

concisely and comprehensively. To accomplish this task, WWJ has converted its huge Studio A into a massive newsroom and assembled a thirteen-man staff which is unrivaled in Michigan broadcasting. At its fingertips is a maze of electronic and mechanical equipment for gathering fast, accurate news reports. The news gathering resources of the station's parent publication are available on a daily basis.

Despite industry trends toward standardized programming formats variously titled "Top 40" and "Rock 'n Roll," WWJ has maintained a diversity of programming, and a middle-of-the-road music concept which it currently labels "Total Radio." Probably less traditional than its major competitor, WJR, it nonetheless avoids program extremes--maintaining a basic "adult" appeal. A multitude of offerings give Detroit listeners a wide variety of entertaining radio features.

Stacks of awards and citations attest to WWJ's sense of community responsibility. Reflecting a corporate mandate that the station truly serve its public, WWJ has fostered many public affairs series which have proved both interesting and enlightening.

XVIII A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Radio's growth has indeed been impressive. In 1962, there are more than 3,700 AM and 1,000 FM stations licensed to broadcast. About 126,900,000 home radios and portables are in use, and more than 46,900,000 automobiles are equipped with radios.[289]

> In 1960, latest year for which figures are available, total radio revenue was $597.7 million, the highest in radio history. But, in the same year, 33% of all stations lost money.[290]

In the Detroit area, WWJ shares the broadcasting band, and the market revenue, with 17 other AM radio stations and 22 FM outlets.

And what of the future? Broadcasting Magazine predicts:

> Nobody expects radio to become again the center of family activity that it was in the 1930s and '40s. But neither does anyone think it's apt to go soft again as it did in the early post-television 1950s, or that it'll fail to continue the gradual resurgence it has made since then...
>
> The long-range future is harder to assess-- except that virtually everybody expects the radio business to be far better 10, 20, or 40 years from now than it is today. Most also think it'll be a far different medium.[291]

Broadcasting Magazine did offer some guideposts:

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[289] "Radio at 40 Enters Its Critical Years," Broadcasting Magazine, May 14, 1962, p. 75.

[290] Ibid.

[291] "Radio Feels Confidence in Its Future," Broadcasting Magazine, May 14, 1962, p. 77.

> One feature, however, sticks out more than any other in the long-range forecasts. That's the growing role of the portable radio...
>
> Radio in the future will be far more "personal" than it is already, stations will have more distinct personalities, and advertisers will be better able to pinpoint their audiences by choosing the types of audience they want--and they will spend far more money in radio as a result.[292]

It is evident that radio will grow. The only disagreement lies in what direction this growth will take.

By necessity, commercial radio broadcasters are deeply concerned with a maze of tubes and translators, with advertiser interest or apathy, with the delicate balance between demanding unions and impatient stockholders, with encouraging or discouraging ratings, with impressive or puny returns on investments and with government directives or indecisiveness.

To the listener, however, radio is a familiar place on the dial where one can find humor to relieve sadness, information to replace ignorance, spiritual uplifting to overcome depression, entertainment to banish boredom, and stimulation instead of complacency.

Radio is the laughter provoked by two comedians who called themselves Amos and Andy. Radio is the tears triggered by an announcer as he described the burning of the Zeppelin Hindenburg. Radio is the excitement of a Ty Tyson World Series broadcast; the terror of John Daly's announcement that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor.

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[292] Ibid.

Radio is Fibber McGee's closet, Jack Benny's vault, and Helen Trent's unending problems.

A thread of radio's fabric of history has been carefully, painstakingly woven by WWJ, the infant that raised its feeble voice to an indifferent Detroit in 1920. WWJ, "the world's first radio station." WWJ, the grand old dowager of broadcasting, who now stands majestically each morning and clears her throat. And because she must present a new and vital face to a waiting audience each day, she may be 42 or 142. For she will never grow old.

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