

THE HISTORY OF RADIO STATION WTAR:
THE PIONEER YEARS, 1923-1934

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
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GEORGE EDWARD LOTT, JR.
1970

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

THE HISTORY OF RADIO STATION WTAR:

THE PIONEER YEARS, 1923-1934

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Major professor

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF RADIO STATION WTAR:
THE PIONEER YEARS, 1923-1934

By

George Edward Lott, Jr.

WTAR began broadcasting to Norfolk, Virginia in September of 1923. In so doing it became the first radio station in Virginia, and for several years it was Virginia's only radio station. Up to the point when this study was undertaken no detailed historical consideration had been given to either WTAR or any of the other early radio stations in Virginia.

This study represents the first step in the study of early radio in Virginia. To reduce the problem to a workable size the study of WTAR centered on programming, touching those other areas of radio only insofar as they presented concerns which overrode the station's programming. This study also limited the length of time which was subjected to concentrated research. Nineteen thirty-four was chosen as the year in which to end this study for three reasons: (1) it was the year in which the founder of the station retired; (2) it was the year in which the station affiliated with N.B.C.; (3) it was the year in which the station's

programming character changed through the dissemination of large quantities of national network programs.

The first eleven years of WTAR's history was researched primarily through the two major Norfolk newspapers, the Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch and the Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark. Additional information was secured through interviews with several individuals who were active with the station during the 1923 to 1934 era.

The story of the first eleven years of WTAR's life represents a catalogue of the difficulties with which a small station had to cope during the formative years of the radio industry. WTAR was originally owned by the Reliance Electric Company, a small electrical repair shop. This fact meant that the financing of a speculative venture, such as radio, was a taxing undertaking, and WTAR was put in a position of having to provide a good deal of its own support almost from the outset. This necessity placed the station in a position of close contact with the Norfolk business community at an early stage in the station's development, and the good working relationship which developed allowed the station to outlast the two attempts at establishing competing radio stations which arose during these eleven years.

In 1930 WTAR was forced to become aware that, even though the station and the business community were pleased with the success of WTAR, the listeners were demanding a better,



higher quality service. The ugly battles which were waged during the first quarter of 1930 were ultimately settled before the Federal Radio Commission in Washington, and the station recovered from the bad press it received to improve its operations through the early part of the 1930's.

When the station's founder, Jack Light, retired from active management of the station in early 1934 the Norfolk Newspapers, Inc., which had purchased the station, appointed the first businessman-broadcaster who had ever been associated with the station. Campbell Arnoux's business expertise brought a new era of success, in both the financial and programming activities of WTAR. His advent, and the actions which he took within a few months of his employment, marked the end of WTAR's Pioneer Years.

From 1935 to April of 1950, when WTAR television went on the air, the radio station continued to improve, and, most notably, it increased the quantity and quality of the public service programming it broadcast to the Tidewater region of Virginia during and following World War II. In a real sense, however, it was a different station, doing different kinds of things, during this second phase of its existence.



THE HISTORY OF RADIO STATION WTAR:

THE PIONEER YEARS, 1923-1934

By

George Edward Lott, Jr.

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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1970



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1971

Accepted by the Faculty of the Department of Speech,
College of Communication Arts, Michigan State University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy degree.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David C. Ralph". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Director of the Thesis

Guidance Committee: David Ralph, Chairman
Winston Oberg
Gordon Thomas
Arthur Weld

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When a work of this nature is finished tradition dictates that the author devote a few pages to a disposition of the effects which any number of individuals have had upon both the author and the study during the course of its completion. So it is that these next few pages appear. In a kind of random order the author wishes to bring the following individuals and institutions to the reader's attention:

Mr. Arthur Weld, Television-Radio Department, Michigan State University. Weld is one of those rare individuals in contact with a world whose sense of reality and practicality are brilliantly combined with a highly respectable sense of scholarship. As the director, de facto, of the research of which this volume represents the culmination, Weld went out of his way to handle mechanics and politics, leaving the author far freer to research and write than most candidates for the Doctorate could ever hope to be. His criticisms were prompt, forthright and valid; his encouragement appropriate and well-timed. The author could have hoped for no more and would have suffered with any less.

Drs. David Ralph, Gordon Thomas and Winston Oberg, the other members of the author's guidance committee. Because of

the distance interposed between the author and the members of his committee the opportunity for misunderstanding and conflict were great. However, these sought to smooth over such opportunities, each demonstrating more times than the author could count that they would aid the completion of the project as much as they could.

Dr. Kenneth Hance, Department of Speech, Michigan State University. Dr. Hance retired from Michigan State prior to the formal completion of the author's work. His hand is, therefore, not as visible in this work as it might otherwise have been. However, his effect on the author as adviser and teacher cannot be underestimated. One's career as student and scholar cannot be anything but richer for having been in contact with a man of Hance's pre-eminence and ability.

Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, Interlibrary Loan Department, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary. In the author's short career as a scholar he has rarely found a librarian as competent, pleasant and eager to help as Mrs. Smith. Her efforts saved countless hours of travel and dollars of expense, and she never failed to secure with dispatch that which the author sought.

The Administration of the College of William and Mary. Had it not been for the College's enthusiastic desire to keep the author's work-load less than that of the average graduate assistant's, this study would have taken much longer to complete.

James W. Sawyer, Director of Television-Radio, College of William and Mary. Sawyer permitted the author to use departmental office supplies, office equipment, photocopy facilities and postage, thus preventing, or perhaps postponing, the author's economic collapse.

Lee Coleman Kitchen, President of the WTAR Radio-TV Corporation, and Joel Carlson, Director of Community Affairs, WTAR Radio and Television. Both gentlemen did all they could to facilitate the research involved with this study, to the point where the author became somewhat embarrassed when he could not complete his efforts with more speed. Carlson, on many occasions, went out of his way to be of assistance, and his knowledge of radio in the Tidewater, Virginia area was more useful than he will ever know.

The Staff of the Sargent Memorial Room, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, Virginia. Had the author not come in contact with these individuals he would have been unable to discover the efficiency with which the staff of the Swem Library worked.

Jack Light. One is hesitant to use the word "amazing" to describe a man because the word has ceased to have any vivid meaning because of overuse. Yet, there is really no other word which accurately describes Jack Light. In 1970, when the author interviewed him, Light was approaching his ninety-first birthday. He is totally blind and partially deaf, yet he is eager to talk of his early years in Norfolk radio, and he recalls events with accuracy and lucidity.

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He is not given over to boasting and exaggeration, yet he is not overly modest. He is proud, and rightly so, of what he did in the eleven years during which he guided WTAR. The fact that he went blind in 1934, but continued to actively work for the station for another twelve years, is almost sufficient testimony to the man himself.

Tom Hanes, H. B. Bennett, Trafton Robertson and Adele DeFord. Each of these persons was able to convey a spirit of the times to the author which made a lot of yellowed newsprint much more meaningful. They were most kind to have taken time from their days to chat with the author about their connections with WTAR. In his own way each added valuable information to this work.

The Staffs of the National Archives and the Public Reference Room, Federal Communication Commission. The concentrated education the author received at the hands of these individuals concerning the most efficient methods of doing research through the Federal Government made that aspect of this work an experience which cannot be forgotten.

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Thomasch. Quantitatively the Thomasches provided room, board and transportation during the Washington phase of the research for this study. Personally, through their hospitality, they were able to change frustration into enjoyable companionship.

Isabelle, Teddy and Susan Lott. Their existence provides the reason for doing what had to be done.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1. LIST OF TABLES	ix
2. WTAR Program Schedule for Week of February 1, 1925	
3. I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. NORFOLK AND TIDEWATER: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	14
III. IN THE BEGINNING	30
IV. TRIAL AND SUCCESS	41
V. THE REST OF THE TIME	62
VI. DIFFICULT AT BEST	74
VII. THE DAWN	94
VIII. PROGRESS	111
IX. 1928: CHAOS AND CONTINUITY	129
X. QUIET BEFORE THE STORM	150
XI. THE STORM	163
XII. ORDERLY PROGRESSION	201
XIII. EPILOGUE AND COMMENTARY	221
SOURCES CITED	238

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	Page
1. WTAR Program Schedule for Week of December 8, 1924	75
2. WTAR Program Schedule for Week of February 9, 1925	76
3. WTAR Program Schedule for Week of October 2, 1927	124
4. WTAR Program Schedule for Week of December 4, 1927	125

rate that it is easy to forget how young radio is, and how much younger still is television. But this is not the mass media scholar and scholar's eye's perception of a historical truism:

Radio, in its brief span, has made no better use of its time than has been so busy making history that the historical efforts have been made to make the history.

A respectable segment of material has been written which is devoted to the various historical aspects of the life of broadcasting, but the existing work still contains holes in the fabric of the past. There have been considerable contributions by the personalities who achieved fame during radio's

¹Heber G. Wiley, "The History of Radio Station WJL from 1922 to Television" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1957), p. 2.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within the heated, and sometimes irrational, discussions of the places and functions of the mass media in the twentieth century United States, it is somewhat sobering to stop for a moment to reflect on the fact that radio, the oldest of the electronic media, has been used in its present fashion for only fifty years. So much has happened at such a fast rate that it is easy to forget how young radio is, and how much younger still is television. From the standpoint of the mass media scholar and student, Wolsey's comment is a veritable truism:

Radio, in its less than fifty years of active life, has been so busy making history that few organized efforts have been made to record that history.¹

A respectable amount of material has been amassed which is devoted to the various historical aspects of the life of broadcasting, but the existing works leave sizeable holes in the fabric of the past. There have been innumerable contributions by the personalities who achieved fame during radio's

¹Heber G. Wolsey, "The History of Radio Station KSL from 1922 to Television" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1967), p. 2.

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early years and during its so-called "Golden Age." These works, such as Gross's I Looked and I Listened, Husing's Ten Years Before the Mike and most recently Higby's Tune in Tomorrow are highly valuable, but they do have certain inherent shortcomings.¹ The information which they contain is highly biased and verification is difficult. They do, however, provide the kind of "first-person" accounts which can add the human element to historical research which lacks direct contact with the people involved with the events of the past.

Scholarly works devoted to the history of broadcasting represent an unfortunately small portion of the total research into radio and television. There are the works of Gleason Archer, a number of personality studies, such as Woolley's analysis of Murrow, Kendrick's biography of Murrow and Chester's study of Kaltenborn, and a growing number of institutional studies, beginning with Shaw's study of WJR, including the works of Caton, Lichty and Rimes, and concluding with the most recent addition, Wolsey on KSL.² Perhaps the most

¹Ben Gross, I Looked and I Listened (New York: Random House, 1924); Ted Husing, Ten Years Before the Mike (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1935); Mary Jane Higby, Tune in Tomorrow (New York: Cowles Education Corporation, 1968).

²Gleason Archer, Big Business and Radio (New York: American Historical Company, 1939); Archer, History of Radio: to 1926 (New York: American Historical Company, 1938); Thomas Russell Woolley, Jr., "A Rhetorical Study: the Radio Speaking of Edward R. Murrow" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1957); Alexander Kendrick, Prime Time: The Life of Edward R. Murrow (Boston: Little, Brown

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significant piece of scholarly work done to date is Barnouw's three-volume history of broadcasting.¹ This represents the most intensive historical survey of the industry yet undertaken, and it must become a standard reference work for any student of broadcasting's history.

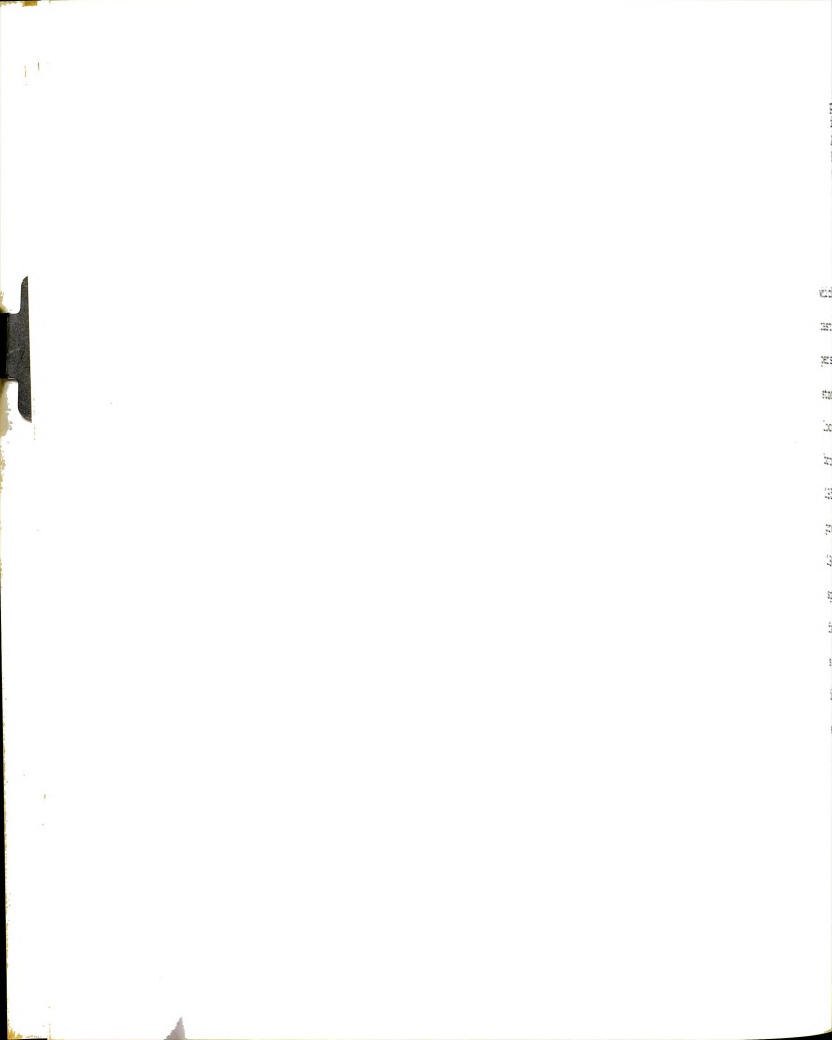
Implicit in all these published and unpublished works is a national significance which might be attributed to the person, trend or institution. Thus it is that Lichty begins his study of WLW with a quote from Newsweek magazine which equates the history of WLW with the history of radio,² and so it is also that Wolsey, in speaking of KSL says that the significance of the station is dependent upon the fact that it

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and Co., 1969); Giraud Chester, "The Radio Commentaries of H. V. Kaltenborn: a Case Study in Persuasion" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1947); Charles Gordon Shaw, "The Development of WJR, the Goodwill Station, Detroit" (unpublished Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1942); Chester F. Caton, "Radio Station WMAQ: a History of Its Independent Years (1922-1931)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1951); Lawrence W. Lichty, "The Nation's Station: A History of Radio Station WLW" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1964); Robert P. Rimes, "WWJ--the World's First Radio Station--a History" (unpublished Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1963); Heber G. Wolsey, "A History of Station KSL from 1922 to Television" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1967).

¹Erik Barnouw, A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Volume I, to 1933 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Barnouw, The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States, Volume II, 1933-1953 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Barnouw, Volume III, in preparation as of August, 1970.

²Lichty, p. 1.



produced many programs of national award-winning merit, including the oldest continuous radio program in America; and developed broadcasting specialists who have made major contributions to the national networks, the National Association of Broadcasters, many regional networks and individual stations, a world-wide commercial shortwave complex, the Hollywood motion picture industry, and numerous educational institutions.¹

One ought not to seek to minimize the broad effects which stations such as WLW and KSL have had on American broadcasting, but while national issues, institutions, events and personalities are indeed important they do not tell the whole story. The strength of radio in the United States lies in the local station. Hundreds of first steps were taken by local broadcasting stations in the 1920's, and while radio in the 1930's and 1940's is most fondly and fervently remembered for programs and events of national and international scope, the 1950's, 1960's and 1970 have reversed the situation. When one speaks of the strengths and weaknesses of radio, of its failures and accomplishments he is speaking of the local radio stations. For this reason there is a lasting historical value in the study of the growth, development, achievements and errors of the nation's local radio stations. While his context is somewhat different, Caton recognised this in 1950 when he said that his study of WMAQ in Chicago would cease when the station was purchased by the National Broadcasting Company, for from that point forward WMAQ and N.B.C. became one and the same thing.²

¹Wolsey, p. 3.

²Caton, pp. 2-3.

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This study of WTAR is of the same mold as Caton's, and even those of Wolsey, Rimes and others insofar as they relate the local station's interrelationships with the communities which it serves. But the history of WTAR is different from all of these because WTAR is located in a different city in a different part of the country, because it serves a different group of people with different needs, desires, goals and ambitions, and because it was founded, nurtured and shaped by men with different ideas and concepts about what radio ought to be and what it ought to do.

Taken alone this study, or any of the others cited above, provides a partial picture of the community in which each is located; but the real value of each of these, and future studies of a similar ilk, is that, taken together, they offer a picture of what has happened to local radio over the years. It should not surprise the reader that WTAR, or the others, operated at times independently of the national discussions and issues which other historians have identified; but one ought not to be surprised either by the fact that, in instances, the stations have acted in similar ways but for different reasons. Studies of this nature, by identifying these variances of behavior, help to put the national problems, solutions, personalities and institutions into perspective.

It is important, at this juncture, to note that time is an important factor in this, or any other, kind of historical research. As years pass records, log books and correspondence,

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carefully organized and filed at one time, become dead weight and are disposed of as the way is cleared for material of the present and the future. The "stuff" of history, the raw material upon which research thrives, is lost, and with the loss the present is deprived of the ingredients for a complete picture of the past.

As time does its work on the inert matter so it must also have its effect upon the people who have been involved with the activities of the past. It takes no great mathematical aptitude to realize that those who were active in radio in the 1920's are, by 1970, approaching the termination of their natural lives. There is nothing to say that the memories of these men and women will always add invaluable material to the history of radio, for years can dull the mind as well as the body. But unless one speaks with these pioneers one will never know if they have something to offer or not. As Barnouw says:

It is not too early to chronicle how the broadcast media have grown, both as instruments of expression and as industries; who has risen to leadership in them, and how; what these media have told us, about ourselves and our world; what struggles have been fought, open and hidden, for their control.¹

Indeed it is not too early, and it will never be too late, but the optimum time is swiftly slipping from the grasp of the historian. This is as true in Virginia as it is in other states. Six commercial radio stations are licensed in

¹Barnouw, I, p. 5.

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the Commonwealth of Virginia which went on the air during broadcasting's first decade, 1920-1929. Of these, WTAR, in Norfolk, is the oldest, having first broadcast in September of 1923. The other stations are WBBL, Richmond and WDBJ, Roanoke, 1924; WRVA, Richmond, 1925; WTVR, Richmond, 1926; and WGH, Newport News, 1928.¹ Not one of these stations has been the subject of any organized historical consideration or analysis, although the general subject of early radio in Virginia has been briefly treated.² This study seeks to add to the knowledge of local radio in the United States and also to start the study of the history of radio in Virginia. It is "The History of Radio Station WTAR, The Pioneer Years, 1923 to 1934."

Ideally, the history of an institution, regardless of the scope of its influence, should cover all aspects of the institution's life over the space of time it has been in existence. However, achieving the ideal is not always possible in one piece of research. In the instance of WTAR it is necessary to limit both the space of time and the number of aspects under consideration in order to begin to tell a reasonably intelligent and coherent story of a station which will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 1973.

¹Broadcasting Yearbook, 1969 (Washington: Broadcasting Publications, 1968), pp. B-176-B-181.

²James R. Short, "Catwiskers and Kilocycles: Tuning in Virginia Radio Stations of the Twenties," Virginia Cavalcade, V, No. 2, Autumn, 1955, pp. 26-32.

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The first limitation imposed is one of time. This study treats the history of WTAR from 1923 through 1934 in detail, and it summarizes, briefly, the history from 1935 through 1950, the year in which television was introduced into Norfolk. The cutoff date of 1934 for the intensive analysis is not entirely arbitrary. That was the year in which the founder and first manager of WTAR lost his sight and went into semi-retirement, yielding primary responsibility for the station's direction to a new man. The year 1934 was also the one in which WTAR joined the N.B.C. network, and the year in which it started to carry heavy percentages of network programming. That year, in a very real sense, represents the end of an era in WTAR's history, just as the year 1950 also represents the end of an era for the station.

The second limitation imposed on this study concerns the choice of the frame of reference through which the station's life will be revealed. There are a number of possibilities for this frame of reference, all equally valid, but in this instance the programming of WTAR has been chosen for reasons which Lichty expresses quite well:

Programs, after all, are the essence of broadcasting. This is the part of broadcasting that ultimately touches the largest number of people. Programs are the product of broadcasting. Only through programs are audiences attracted to listen to broadcasting stations. And only through these audiences do broadcasting stations survive as business enterprises.¹

¹Lichty, p. 2.

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Once this choice is made other aspects which are involved with the station's existence are precluded from detailed consideration. There is here no detailed analysis of the engineering or technical aspects of the station's history. Likewise, business operations, general management policies, sales efforts and organization will not be separately treated nor considered in detail. However, each of these will come into play as it has related to, or has had a direct effect upon, the programming of WTAR and the station's service to the Norfolk Community.

The primary sources for information relating to WTAR during the period 1923 through 1934 are the two Norfolk newspapers, the Ledger-Dispatch and the Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark. Almost from the beginning of WTAR the Ledger-Dispatch has had a close working relationship with the station, and this has meant that the paper, in the early years, was unusually alert to the events in which the station was involved. Because of the competitive situation between the Virginian Pilot and the Ledger-Dispatch the Pilot was much less willing to regularly report information about the station. However, if events were such that the station was involved in a conflict of one sort or another, as it was several times, the Pilot was prepared to report the conflict in great detail. These two papers taken together, then, provide a large body of raw material from which the history of WTAR can be refined.

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A second important group of sources of information about WTAR is the people who have been involved with the station over the years. It is fortunate for this study that a number of men who were actively involved with WTAR during its early years are still alive, and living in the Norfolk area.

Foremost among these is Jack Light, WTAR's founder and first manager. Additionally there is H. B. Bennett, the owner of the original amateur station which he and Light converted to WTAR; Tom Hanes, former Sports Editor and Managing Editor of the Ledger-Dispatch, and the man who did most of the sports on WTAR during the period under close scrutiny.

There is one usual source of information for research of this nature which is very limited in the case of WTAR: station logs, memos, letters, files, etc. The station has rather erratically maintained scrapbooks which consist almost entirely of newspaper clippings. Jack Light says that he used to have a great deal of material, but he has given it away and has no idea where it is now. A number of people at the station, when asked about old materials, were sure that something must be around, but in the course of the two years during which the research was conducted no such materials ever turned up. This is truly unfortunate, and it serves to emphasize the point made about the need to do historical research into early radio as soon as possible.

The files of the Department of Commerce, the Federal Radio Commission and the Federal Communications Commission

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were useful for this research only to a minor degree. Most of what was obtained from these files served only to verify facts obtained from the newspapers, facts whose verity was never seriously questioned in the first place. In some instances the government files provided specific dates where only month and year had been previously known, but very little new information was uncovered in the direct dealings with the Public Records Room of the F.C.C. However, certain hearing transcripts were directly obtained through Dr. Hardy Allen of the Federal Records Center in Suitland, Maryland.

The method involved in the research for this study is not overly complex, but it is time-consuming. The process was as follows:

First, the available information at the station was secured and catalogued. As the quantity of information at WTAR was small this step was less significant than might be the case in other instances. The second step involved the long and arduous task of reading the two daily Norfolk newspapers in order to discover what was written about WTAR. The speed with which this step can be accomplished increases as the researcher becomes familiar with the layout of the papers, as he discovers the most probable days of the week when, and locations in the papers where, information about radio in general and the station specifically was usually published.

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Once the information from the station scrapbooks and the newspapers had been catalogued, the personal interviews were undertaken. Appointments were made through an individual at the station who was asked to act as liaison between the researcher and the station. The interviews were tape recorded, the tapes were then transcribed and the information catalogued and filed. The trips to Washington, D. C. were then made to secure whatever information was available there.

Lastly the raw material was organized for written presentation. As the study was conceived of as being a history of WTAR with a primary emphasis on programming, this consideration formed the basis for the first decision concerning inclusion or exclusion of specific facts. In most cases, however, this first decision was tempered by decisions based on the over-all usefulness or relevance of the material. Thus it was that some research data have been included which cannot be classified as programming-oriented, e.g., the material relating to the sale of the station in 1928. This event was deemed of sufficient importance to the life of the station to warrant inclusion, even though it had little apparent effect upon programming. Similarly, there was some material which could easily be classified as programming-oriented, but which was not included, e.g., some general programming material was excluded from the chapter dealing with 1930 and WTAR's rather heated public relations battle with the people of Norfolk. In this instance, that which the

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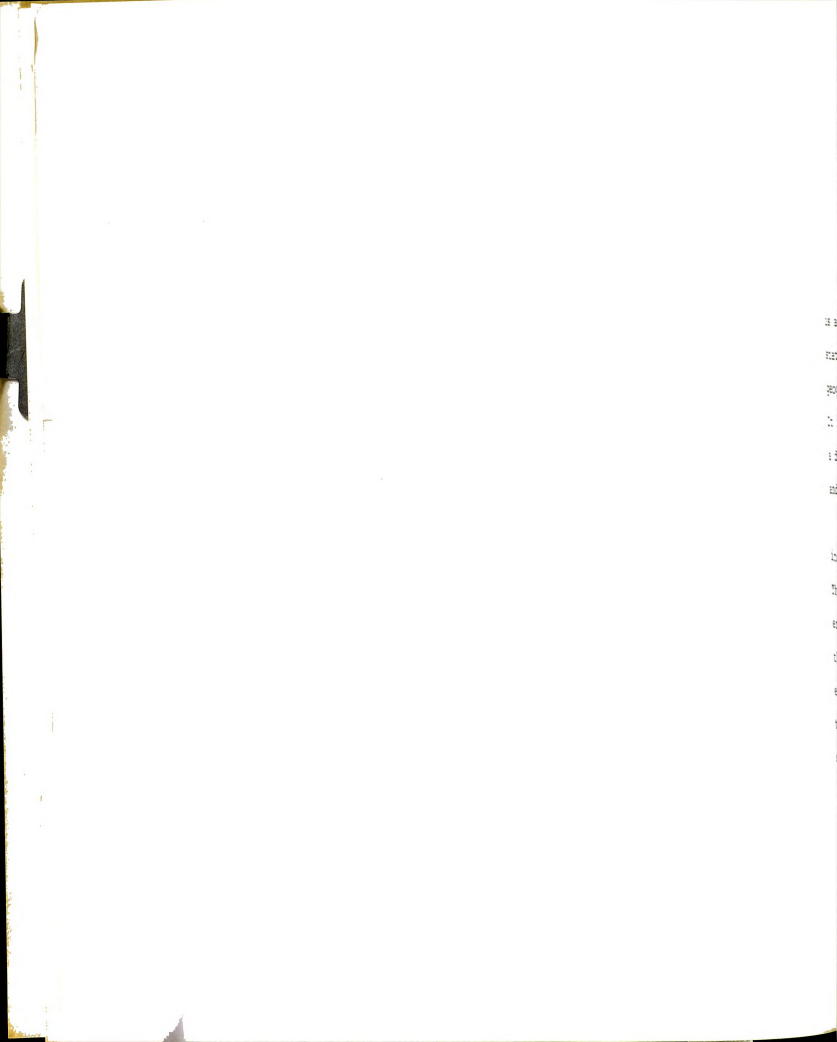
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station broadcast would have had little, if any, effect on this single important and crucial issue. This over-all approach is relatively personal and loose-knit, but it is the only realistic pattern to follow when dealing with people and the events with which they were concerned.

The report of the history of WTAR is roughly organized into four parts: Historical Background; Station History, 1923 through 1934; Station History, 1935 through 1950; and Commentary. Each of these parts, with the exception of the history of the 1923 through 1934 period, is represented by a single chapter.

The material offered for the 1923 through 1934 period is divided into ten chapters. A chapter is devoted to each year, with the exception of 1924, which necessitated two chapters, and the years 1931 through 1934 which were covered in a single chapter. The organization of the material within each chapter varies with the year or years under consideration. The variance is affected by the events which occurred. Certain years were treated entirely chronologically, while others were treated topically. It was felt that this flexible organization permitted the best exposition of relevant information while keeping the events in a proper perspective.

Virginia is commonly thought of as being in the South. Yet the northern-most point in the state is almost as far



CHAPTER II

NORFOLK AND TIDEWATER: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As was mentioned in the preceding chapter, this study is a history of a radio station which is unique among radio stations in the country because the social, political and geographical conditions into which it was born are unique. It is, therefore, most appropriate to devote some space to a description of the region into which WTAR was born in 1923, and to which it has been broadcasting ever since.

This chapter, however, will not attempt to give an all-inclusive picture of the history of the state of Virginia. The colony, and later the state, is too old to make such an endeavor practical, and Virginia has contributed so much over the years that a brief summary would not do justice to her efforts. Rather, this chapter will offer enough background to allow the reader to gain some insight into Norfolk and its surrounding area so that he might be better able to understand why WTAR was what it was during the first eleven years of its existence.

Virginia is commonly thought of as being in the South. Yet the northern-most point in the state is almost as far

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north as Columbus, Ohio. Virginia occupies a position in the middle of the Atlantic Seaboard, yet her western-most point lies farther west than Detroit, Michigan. Her population is as diverse as the state is vast.

In the southeastern part of the state, the James River and a number of smaller rivers flow into the Chesapeake Bay to form the harbor of Hampton Roads, beyond a doubt one of the most magnificent natural harbors in the world. It consists of the water bounded on the south by Norfolk and Portsmouth, on the north by the peninsula between the James and York Rivers, and on the east by Old Point Comfort at the tip of this peninsula. The Hampton Roads area is part of a larger geographical area known as Tidewater. In its most strict geographical sense Tidewater refers to those portions of the coastal plain contiguous to the Chesapeake Bay and those rivers whose waters are affected by the tides of the Bay. The outer boundary on the west of this broad section is determined by those points where falls prevent further tidal action on the rivers: the "Fall Line." This line runs from Georgetown, in Washington, D. C., south to Fredericksburg and farther south to Richmond. The eastern boundary is Virginia's Eastern Shore. Thus, geographically speaking, Tidewater consists of roughly the eastern one-third of the state.¹

¹Paul Wilstach, Tidewater Virginia (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1929), pp. 18-20.

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This description, however, is too broad for this study, and, indeed, it is far broader than a number of popularly accepted definitions. Whichard says, "We of the Hampton Roads area refer glibly to our section as 'Tidewater Virginia'."¹ When WTAR refers to itself as "The Voice of Tidewater" it is the Hampton Roads area to which it addresses itself. It would seem, therefore, appropriate to construct the background for the history of WTAR by relating the history of Hampton Roads. Yet there are problems with this approach. One might assume that the histories of the regions contiguous to Hampton Roads would be relatively similar. Such, however, is not the case. Norfolk, the city of license of WTAR, shows a development which is almost exclusive of the development of Newport News and Hampton, the two cities which are separated from Norfolk by only five or six miles of water. This difference in history, in background and development, has created a highly unusual situation. To the people living in southeastern Virginia, Tidewater tends to refer to the area which lies south of the James River, north of Elizabeth City, North Carolina and east from Suffolk, Virginia to the ocean. The land which lies between the James and the York Rivers is called "The Peninsula," and the residents of the towns on the Peninsula, Newport News, Hampton, Yorktown, Williamsburg,

¹Rogers Dey Whichard, The History of Lower Tidewater Virginia (2 vols; New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1959), II, p. 1.

Norfolk: Historical Southern Port (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1931), p. 1.

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ing with James City and York Counties, consider themselves
 ct from the people who live in the political complex
 ch encompasses Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Virginia
 ch, Suffolk and Nansemond County. This complex extends
 n Hampton Roads in the north to the North Carolina border
 he south. Indeed, the Norfolk area has been closer, in
 ns of political and economic ties, to northeastern North
 lina than it has been to the Hampton Roads communities
 h of the James River.

When the English colonists arrived in Virginia to estab-
 Jamestown in 1607, they were appropriately impressed
 the Hampton Roads harbor.¹ However, they did not choose
 establish their settlement in this harbor. They moved
 her inland, along the James River, to a point a little
 than half way between the present cities of Newport News
 Richmond. Ultimately, settlements grew up around Hampton
 s. The first was Hampton;² the second, Newport News.³
 as not, however, until 1680 that the colonial legislature,
 r pressure from the English Crown, passed a measure to
 urage the establishment of towns. As a result of this
 slation Norfolk was created in 1682.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 102-103.

²Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion, American Guild
 es (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 227.

³Ibid., p. 260.

⁴Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk: Historical Southern Port
 am, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1931), p. 4.

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In the years between the establishment of Jamestown and the purchase of the land for Norfolk, the colonial plantation economy had dictated that the Peninsula, or the land between the James and York Rivers, would be the location of large estates given over to raising tobacco. The estates had become self-sufficient economic units, each one with easy access to a body of water which would permit the direct loading and shipping of the main crop. There had been no real need for towns or cities, and there was no real need for a port.

The land between the James and the North Carolina border was likewise devoted to farming, with the exception of the land which is east of Suffolk. Here is located the Great Dismal Swamp, an inland, fresh-water mire, originally twice the size of the state of Rhode Island,¹ extending into North Carolina, and suitable for little other than logging and fishing.² Therefore, the area which ultimately was to become Norfolk found itself separated from the other populated areas of Virginia by geographic as well as economic factors.

Even though Norfolk was, nonetheless, admirably suited as a trade center, her initial commerce was from whatever agriculture was carried on in the neighboring counties. The amount of such commerce was insufficient to warrant a large

¹Herbert J. Davis, The Great Dismal Swamp (Richmond, published by the author, 1962), p. 23.

²Ibid., pp. 96-97.

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d busy port.¹ The initial growth which Norfolk experienced, then, was not due to Virginia at all. It came about primarily because of the geography of North Carolina.² In the northeastern part of this state, the possibilities for water navigation through a myriad of inland waterways were unlimited, but there was no ready access to the ocean for anything but the smallest of vessels.³ Therefore, Norfolk became the seaport for eastern Carolina, and her progress was dependent upon this trade and trade with the West Indies. From 1682 to 1776 Norfolk thrived on this trade.⁴

The outbreak of hostilities between the colonies and England was bound to have an effect upon Norfolk, if for no other reason than that the West Indian trade would be cut off. These circumstances were to be much harder on the town. In 1776 the British burned most of Norfolk, and what was left was destroyed by Virginians to prevent the British from using it as a base.⁵ When the war was over the situation was little improved. Trade restrictions continued, and Norfolk was not to regain her pre-revolutionary stature for almost a century.

¹Wertebaker, p. 31.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 32.

⁴Ibid., p. 362.

⁵Williams S. Forrest, Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Norfolk and Vicinity (Philadelphia: Linday and Blakeston, 1933), pp. 79-85.

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re were indeed times when the situation appeared to be improving. From 1794 to 1807 there were upheavals in Europe and a resulting demand for neutral shipping. Norfolk filled the need and prospered; but the War of 1812 ended the prosperity. Further trade restrictions were instituted, and, seriously, the ports of New York, Baltimore, Boston and even Philadelphia were achieving a competitive dominance.¹ During the period when Norfolk was unable to exploit her natural port facilities, the State of Virginia appeared to be doing everything it could to make the situation worse. The state itself was falling on hard times by the 1830's.² Wealth and population were both falling off; and to attempt to remedy the situation a program of internal improvement was begun in 1831, but the efforts were doomed to failure.³ The real needs of the state were obscured by vicious sectionalism. Water transportation was pitted against rail transportation, west against east, agriculture against industry, and little was accomplished. The whole state suffered from the situation, but Norfolk suffered more.⁴ The desperately needed rail connections to the interior of

¹Wertenbaker, pp. 158-181.

²Ibid., 190-192.

³Jean Gottman, Virginia at Mid-Century (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1955), pp. 113-114. Gottman agrees with the conclusions reached by Wertenbaker, but he comments that Wertenbaker's presentation is somewhat colored by the fact that he was a native of Norfolk.

⁴Wertenbaker, pp. 190-192.

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the state, and efforts to construct such facilities were consistently thwarted.¹ The result was that the commerce which once went through Norfolk was being diverted to other ports along the east coast. Baltimore was becoming the major port of Virginia.²

The period of internal improvements was for many states and cities marked by glorious success. For Virginia, and especially for Norfolk, it was a time of wasted opportunities and bitter disappointment.³

During this period when Norfolk was looked upon as an ugly step-child by the rest of the state the port city turned again to eastern Carolina. If Baltimore was to be the port for Virginia, then perhaps Norfolk might become the port for a significant section of North Carolina.⁴ The Norfolk newspapers made no bones about the fact that there was much to be said for annexation to North Carolina, and, indeed, in 1852 the Norfolk Argus openly put forth such a proposal.⁵ But this was not the right time for such ideas. In fact, it was already too late.

¹Whichard, I, pp. 464-465. It was not until 1850 that a rail link could be established to Norfolk, and that was from Weldon, North Carolina. And it was not until 1858 that this line was finally joined to existing lines to Petersburg and, thereby, to Richmond.

²Wertenbaker, p. 196.

³Ibid., p. 204.

⁴Ibid., p. 196.

⁵Ibid., p. 220.

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When the Civil War broke out Virginia desperately needed
 that she should have built during the previous three
 decades, but little was there. Norfolk found that she neither
 loved nor had anything in common with the Planter Aristocracy
 which ran the state, even though she was a part of the south.¹
 Her loyalties during the Civil War were with the Confederacy,
 but her contributions were minimal. From May of 1862 through
 the end of the war she was occupied by Union forces, for in
 that year the Confederates abandoned the city and the Union
 army took over unopposed.²

Norfolk's recovery after the war, however, was rapid.
 Her river trade was restored almost as soon as the shooting
 had stopped, and what trains she had were running again in
 1866.³ The extensive rail connections which were needed were
 finally built by 1881, and by the decade of 1880 Norfolk was
 able to surpass the Fall Line Cities of Fredericksburg and
 Richmond.⁴ By 1885 three railroads served Hampton Roads, and
 their primary cargo was coal. From that time to the present
 her coal, from the fields in western Virginia and West
 Virginia, has been one of the most exported of commodities.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 216.

²Whichard, I, p. 471.

³Ibid., p. 472.

⁴Wertenbaker, p. 304.

⁵Ibid.

was finally going well for Norfolk in the last years of nineteenth century:

The half century from 1865 to 1915 are [sic] vital in the history of Norfolk. Prior to this period the town had been the victim of one malicious whim of fate after another. While other Atlantic ports, although less favorably located and possessing inferior harbors, had outdistanced her in the race for wealth and power; while New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore counted their populations by the hundreds of thousands, Norfolk had remained an unimportant town of from ten to twenty thousand people. The burning of the town in 1776, the loss of the West India [sic] trade, the absorption by New York of her import trade, the invention of the steamboat, the blocking of all attempts to connect the town with the interior by rail, the yellow fever epidemic of 1855, and the Civil War, had been successive blows too severe to be parried even by the most enterprising and alive of populations.

Now, however, these misfortunes were but unpleasant memories.¹

A survey of Norfolk's history impresses one with the disasters which have befallen the city throughout the years, this is not the most crucial point which can be extracted from the facts. What is most significant is that most of these misfortunes, with the exception of Acts of God,² have been brought upon Norfolk by the state of which the city has been a part. This forms the historical basis for the rather persistent division which has existed whereby Norfolk was regarded as Virginia's ugly step-child. The spiritual separation is obviously hard to overcome, but the physical separation can be minimized. However, efforts to join Norfolk

¹Ibid., p. 331.

²Among these have been a number of Yellow Fever epidemics and hurricanes, three of which hit in the 1930's. See Ambaker, pp. 206-210; Whichard, I, pp. 505-506.

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sically to the rest of the state have been slow. The swiftness with which rail transportation was brought to the region demonstrates this point, but there is a further example. As late as 1929 there was no bridge across the James River between Richmond and Newport News. In that year a span was completed between Newport News and Nansemond County, north of Suffolk and west of Chesapeake.¹ It was not until 1957 that a second structure was built to link Norfolk with the Hampton-Newport News urban complex.²

The visitor travelling through the southeastern portion of Virginia is struck by two rather dominant features of the area: the absolute pervasiveness of the history which has unfolded on the Peninsula and in Tidewater, and the omnipresence of the military. The present concentration of the military in this region of Virginia is, to some degree, both a function of this history and of geography:

Military establishments abound, their situations determined by the proximity of the federal capital, in many parts of Tidewater, linking Washington to the Hampton Roads area. . . .³

As early as 1801 the federal government recognised the importance of Tidewater as a location for some naval operations. That year a small marine yard, built by Andrew Sprowle,

¹Wilstach, p. 28. Wilstach is most impressed with the fact that, in 1929, so few bridges had disgraced Tidewater's natural beauty.

²Whitchard, I, p. 494.

³Gottman, p. 139.

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purchased and converted to the U. S. Naval Shipyard at
 port, located in Portsmouth on the south branch of the
 abeth River.¹ This yard was destroyed during the Civil
 and later rebuilt and enlarged.

Little else was done of a military nature until the
 t of World War I. As the involvement of the United States
 eased, "the advantages of Norfolk for both ocean and rail-
 traffic induced the Federal Government to establish there
 greatest army base in the country."² Shortly thereafter
 Navy established a tremendous naval base in Norfolk, which
 in 1941 to become the headquarters of the Atlantic Fleet.³
 the United States became an active participant in World
 I Hampton Roads became a major troop embarkation point.⁴
 ng World War II Norfolk was little different from any
 American seaport except for the fact that there was a
 ant fear that something like Pearl Harbor might happen
 mpton Roads. The area became almost an armed camp on
 ant alert.⁵

¹Whichard, II, pp. 2-3.

²Wertenbaker, p. 337.

³Ibid.

⁴Park Rouse, Jr., "Newport News in the Nation's Wars,"
 wport News' 325 Years, ed. by Alexander Crosky Brown
 ort News, Virginia: Newport News Golden Anniversary
 ration, 1946), pp. 336-337.

⁵Whichard, I, p. 510.

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Today little of this military presence has disappeared. The headquarters of the Atlantic Fleet is still located at the Norfolk Naval Base. The Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth is active. Also, on the Norfolk side of the harbor are the Oceana Naval Air Station near Virginia Beach, Fort Story, Camp Pendleton and the U. S. Navy Destroyer and Submarine Piers. Across the harbor are Fort Monroe, the headquarters of the Continental Army Command, Langley Air Force Base, the United States Army Transportation at Fort Eustis, the Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown and a number of smaller installations on both sides of the harbor.

The twentieth century has also seen Norfolk develop into one of Virginia's industrial centers. With the development of the port facilities and the availability of rail transportation it was natural that industry should follow. Norfolk is no longer just a seaport for a highly agricultural region of the country. In the decade of the 1920's, when WTAR was just beginning, the trend toward industrialization was becoming noticeable, although just the beginnings were evident. The most significant industrial contribution in the pre-WTAR years was made in 1886 by Collis P. Huntington when he established the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company, four years later to be renamed the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. Huntington was also responsible for bringing the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad's coal terminals

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to Newport News.¹ The location of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, along with the C and O Piers, massive influx of the military and the appearance of other heavy industry, was turning Hampton Roads into an active center of commerce. But in 1923, when WTAR went on the air, the dominant economic pattern in Virginia was agricultural. Wilstach, writing in 1929, describes the area as follows:

Physically, Tidewater is little changed. . . . At heart it has continued consistently pastoral. It has been the home and the delight of the country gentleman. Except at its edges it has known almost nothing at all of town or city life. At these edges, not early, but eventually, rose Norfolk and its extensive urban neighborhood, Richmond, Fredericksburg, Alexandria and Washington. Away from this rim, however, Tidewater has had merely its crossroads. . . .²

The story of Norfolk is one of relative hardship, missed opportunities and political and economic neglect. Wars, silence and economic narrow-mindedness delayed the development of a port on one of the most functional of natural harbors. Norfolk was created in 1682, but it was fully two hundred years before her natural assets and resources were exploited by the state of Virginia. The end result of this situation was to set Norfolk and its surrounding section of the state apart from the rest of Virginia, even apart from the

¹"A History of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company," in Newport News' 325 Years, ed. by Alexander McKay Brown (Newport News, Virginia: Newport News Golden Anniversary Corporation, 1946), pp. 35-47.

²Wilstach, pp. 26-27.

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Peninsula which lies across the Hampton Roads harbor. To this day this effect is still noticeable.

While wars have been destructive to Norfolk, the First World War reversed the trend. This war brought prosperity to the city in terms of establishment of bases for military activities and war-associated production. The Second World War increased this economic activity to an even greater extent.

By the 1920's, then, Norfolk was no longer a city in search of an identity, but neither had she completely established herself on strong foundations. What made Norfolk different in the early part of the 1920's from what she had been before was that she was now aware of the potential for greatness which she had. Norfolk was a proud city, but not necessarily proud of what she had accomplished in the past. Norfolk was proud because of what she knew she could accomplish in the future. She no longer needed to be second best to any other area of the state. Virginia needed Norfolk by the decade of the 1920's, and Norfolk would do whatever was necessary to be an admirable and productive part of the state.

This kind of urban psychology was an ideal one into which to introduce radio. Not only were the people who founded WTAR interested in making the station prosper, but the entire city saw the station as another vehicle which could carry the greatness of Norfolk. Businessmen saw the station as a means for promoting the economic assets of Norfolk. Local citizens

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helped as they could because Norfolk, after all, was the home of Virginia's first radio station, and for a while its only one.

But, sometime during the 1920's, the station fell out of step with the city. Prosperity brings sophistication, and WTAR aided the development of this sophistication. Ultimately, however, the station was no longer good enough for the people of Norfolk, and they were almost willing to forsake WTAR for stations in other cities which would bring to Norfolk the kind of quality programming which the people felt they deserved.

In the beginning, however, all that had happened to Norfolk throughout its history made the resident of the city proud to say nothing more than: "We have the only radio station in Virginia."

In 1919 Bennett went to work for the Bell Telephone Company at the plant at Newport News. In 1921 Bennett gave up mining engineering, moved to Norfolk, and began to work for the Norfolk and Western Railway. Light also

¹Barnouw, I, p. 56.

²H. B. Bennett, personal interview at Aved Electronics Company, Norfolk, Virginia, March 30, 1970.

³Warner Teyford, "First Citizen of Radio Virginia, Jack Light, Reheals Both Static and Sweet Tones of Long Career," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, September 27, 1946, p. 28.

CHAPTER III

IN THE BEGINNING

In mid-1919 the ban on amateurs was lifted. . . . Within a few months thousands were in operation again. They were scattered in cities and towns throughout the United States. They were determined; perhaps a little angry; above all restless. They would make themselves felt.¹

H. B. Bennett had moved with his family to Norfolk in 18.² As was the case with so many young men around the country at that time, Bennett was intrigued with radio, and was not long after the family became settled that he set a small amateur station in a shack behind his family's home. From there Bennett experimented with radio and broadcast over his "ham" station, W3GY.

In 1919 Bennett went to work for the Reliance Electric Company at the plant on Harrington Avenue. In 1921 Jack Light moved up mining engineering in West Virginia and moved to Norfolk to be near his son who was in the Navy.³ Light also

¹Barnouw, I, p. 56.

²H. B. Bennett, personal interview at Avec Electronics Company, Norfolk, Virginia, March 30, 1970.

³Warner Twyford, "First Citizen of Radio Virginia, Jack Light, Recalls Both Static and Sweet Tones of Long Career," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, September 27, 1946, p. 28.

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went to work for Reliance Electric, and the two men, Bennett and Light, found a common ground in radio. Bennett designed a small, one-tube radio receiving set, and he and Light started to build the sets. It was a hobby at first, but F. W. Sharp, the owner of Reliance, became interested. Reliance started to offer the sets for sale, and Jack Light was put in charge of radio sales.¹ The demand was such that, before long, everybody in the store was helping to build the sets to keep up with the demand. Even some who had nothing to do with radio came in to watch, at first, and then to lend a hand:

Walter Wilkins . . . was a mechanic with the Buick people, and he used to come over on his lunch hour, all covered with grease and oil, to help us build the sets. We must have built hundreds of those sets.²

By early 1923 Bennett had moved his "ham" station from his home to the Reliance plant. By this time there was something of a radio bug in Norfolk, although the keen interest in radio that was dominant in other parts of the country in 1923 was slow to come to Norfolk. It was March of that year before the Virginian Pilot was able to report the first signs of interest in establishing a station in Norfolk.³ The Norfolk Electric Club proposed, in March, that a broadcasting

¹Jack Light, personal interview at his home, Norfolk, Virginia, April 6, 1970.

²H. B. Bennett, personal interview.

³"More Talk About Radio Broadcasting," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 22, 1923, p. 16.

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station be established at the Navy Yard radio plant. The Electric Club felt that this could be done without interfering with Navy business, and, at first, the Commander of the Fifth Naval District, Admiral Hugh Rodman, was co-operative. However, the plans never reached fruition. Rodman retired, and Admiral Phillip Andrews took his place. Delay was necessary before the new Commander could be approached. Then, in April of 1923, the Navy changed its policy governing the use of its radio stations by private individuals. The naval facilities were no longer available for the uses proposed by the Norfolk Electric Club.¹ The club appealed to business and civic leaders to aid in the establishment of a station similar to the stations which existed in other southern cities. A committee was formed, consisting of William A. Burckard, M. C. Beckner and F. S. Sharpe, but nothing tangible came from its efforts.

Whatever interest there was, however, one of the Norfolk newspapers was going to exploit. On May 2, 1923, the first radio broadcasting column appeared in the Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, consisting of a brief listing of the programs being broadcast by some of the stations then in existence.² Later, the Ledger-Dispatch announced that the returns of the local

¹"Radio Station Asked for City," ibid., April 19, 1923, p. 15.

²"Today's Radio Broadcasting Program," Norfolk Ledger Dispatch, May 2, 1923, p. 17.

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election would be broadcast by the paper over the amateur station of C. T. Mercer in Portsmouth.¹ Thus, the Ledger took its first step into the world of broadcasting. It was the competitive situation which forced the Ledger to take this action, as it was the competitive situation which was to keep the Ledger involved with WTAR until the paper ultimately purchased the station in 1932. The Virginian Pilot was the Norfolk morning paper, and it also published a Sunday edition. The Ledger-Dispatch was the afternoon paper with no Sunday edition. Tom Hanes, Managing Editor and Sports Editor of the Ledger during the 1920's and early 1930's, recalls that the circulation battle between the two papers had the Ledger at a disadvantage because it lacked the Sunday edition.² The Ledger, therefore, became much more promotion-minded than the Pilot, and one of the manifestations of this policy of promotion was the exploitation of radio:

I was fighting the Pilot for circulation and I wanted the Ledger to get as much publicity on the radio station as it could. If I could get it for free I would do what I had to, and if I couldn't, then it would pay.³

It would be a bit extreme to say that the Ledger was primarily responsible for keeping the radio bug alive and

¹Lenoir Chambers and Joseph E. Shank, Salt Water and Printer's Ink (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1967), p. 336.

²Tom Hanes, personal interview, WTAR Building, Norfolk, Virginia, April 1, 1970.

³Ibid.

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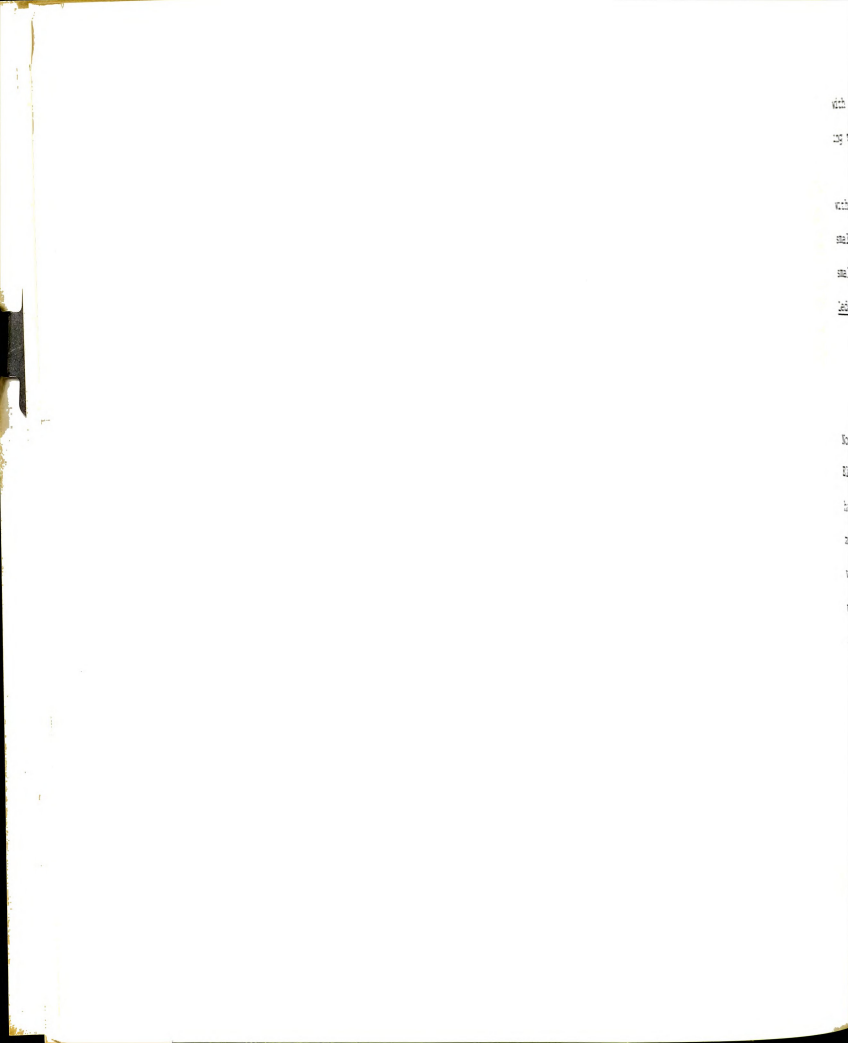
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going in Norfolk, but the fact that it did have a daily column devoted to "Today's Radio Broadcasting Program" certainly did not do any harm. The members of the business communities of Norfolk and Portsmouth were not blind, either, to the benefits which they might reap from a local station spreading the name of Norfolk across the country. In May of 1923, L. C. Herndon of the Norfolk Radio Inspection Office spoke to the weekly luncheon of the Foreign Trades Board. Herndon said that for an initial cash outlay of \$15,000 and annual expenses of approximately \$6,000 Norfolk could have a station like those in other southern cities.¹ And, the Norfolk Electric Club was still trying to establish a station. Near the end of May K. S. McHugh, the General Communication Engineer of the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company spoke to the club about the costs involved in setting up a station. McHugh said that the establishment of a station would require a large investment; he estimated the first year's cost at \$35,000 for installation and operation. McHugh also said that the station could be used only for entertainment and amusement programs; that no advertising could be carried; that no programs provided by mechanical means could be broadcast. After the speech, which could not have encouraged the Electric Club, a committee was formed whose task was to speak to the city government about establishing a municipal station. As was the case

¹"Radio Station to Cost \$15,000," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, May 3, 1923, p. 3.



the previous Electric Club Committee, it produced nothing tangible.¹

While these discussions were going on Reliance Electric, Bennett, Light and others, continued to build their radio receivers. To sell the sets Reliance created a promotional campaign and placed the following ad in the Ledger:

RADIO FANS . . . "Listen In" . . . On Tuesday and Friday Evenings we have special Radio Concerts. Come Out, "Listen In", and inspect our wonderful department.²

The summer of 1923 was quiet as far as the plans for a Norfolk radio station were concerned. Perhaps the Norfolk Electric Club had been discouraged by the costs which McHugh outlined, and perhaps L. C. Herndon had scared the business away when he talked of the difficulties involved with producing material to broadcast over the station. But, whatever reason, no one was doing much. The Ledger continued its columns of radio news, but if one happened to be a reader of Pilot he might have been led to believe that radio had been a fad that had run its course during the spring. It did not receive any significant amount of coverage in Norfolk's morning paper.

Then, on September 21, 1923, WTAR made its first broadcast. It was an event which received little advance

¹"Plans Under Way for Radio," ibid., May 24, 1923,

²Norfolk Ledger Dispatch, May 19, 1923, p. 16.

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While these discussions were going on Reliance Electric, with Bennett, Light and others, continued to build their small radio receivers. To sell the sets Reliance created a small promotional campaign and placed the following ad in the Ledger:

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¹"Plans Under Way for Radio," ibid., May 24, 1923, p. 4-

²Norfolk Ledger Dispatch, May 19, 1923, p. 16.

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publicity and which received no notice in the Norfolk press after the fact. Bennett had turned his amateur station, W3GY, with a power of ten watts, over to Reliance Electric, and the Electric Company gave the station the call letters of WTAR, call letters chosen for their obvious maritime connotations. On September 21, WTAR broadcast a two-hour concert of phonograph records.¹ Norfolk, and Virginia, at last had their radio station.

There is considerable confusion about the broadcasting which took place between September 21, and December 18, 1923, the date of the final dedicatory program. On October 15, the Ledger printed its first story about the station, describing the broadcasts which had taken place to that date as tests. Jack Light, by this time, had been placed in charge of the station, and he had assembled the beginnings of a staff. William C. Aumann was the Program Director, and William M. Uhler was the Chief Operator. The Ledger story said that WTAR would begin putting programs on the air on November 1, with broadcasts on Wednesday and Friday nights from 8:30 to 10:30 and in the afternoons from 4:00 to 4:45.²

From October 15, the date when the Ledger started to give coverage to WTAR, the programs which were aired started to

¹James R. Short, "Catwiskers and Kilocycles," Virginia Cavalcade, Autumn, 1955, p. 28.

²"New Broadcaster to Cover Tidewater," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 15, 1923, p. 6.

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show a composition which made them more general entertainment than engineering tests. On October 19, WTAR presented a program featuring Margurite Bouney and a seven piece orchestra.¹ On October 25 the first of two dedicatory programs was aired. H. H. Rumble, the President of the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce made a speech and entertainment was provided by a twenty-one piece orchestra.² The appearance on radio was apparently not an easy task, at least for Rumble. He stood up before the microphone, read his speech, and then, in the belief that the broadcasting had stopped because he had finished his speech, said, "Thank God, that's over!" Jack Light recalls that incident with a smile, "He was just plain scared!"³ The very next night, October 26, the station was back on the air with a program of local talent. Mrs. Mai Lee Winfree sang "For You Dear," among other selections, Miss Lillian Harmon played several selections on the piano and John Butcher offered his version of "Souvenir" on the violin.⁴

Then, as October turned into November, WTAR went off the air. Technical problems had arisen which had affected the

¹"Orchestra and Soprano on WTAR's Test Tonight," ibid., October 19, 1923, p. 6.

²"Station's First Year Big: Convention World Series Coverage," Virginian Pilot, September 21, 1948, p. 18.

³Jack Light, personal interview.

⁴"Local Musicians Will Broadcast," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 26, 1923, p. 20.

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quality of the transmission.¹ Bennett's transmitter was only ten watts, and its operation depended upon the generation of a sizeable spark. The physical setup of the station was such that the noise from the transmitter, coupled with its low power, might very well have distorted the signal. Jack Light recalled that first studio quite well:

Reliance had a shop where they did all of their automobile business, and they cordoned off a place in the back, oh, I suppose it was no more than twelve-by-twelve. I had the transmitter there, with a rail in front of it, and a curtain, curtains all around the studio area to kill the acoustics. We broadcast everything from there, with just this curtain between them and the transmitter.²

The hiatus also provided Light and his staff the opportunity to procure the necessary tubes to raise the transmitter's power up to fifty watts.³ It took most of November and some of December before the apparatus was put back in order. Then, on December 18, 1923, the station went on the air formally, again. The program consisted of another speech by Mr. Rumble of the Chamber of Commerce, a talk entitled "The Wonder Waves" by Lieutenant H. H. Lippincott, a chaplain in the United States Navy, songs by Charlotte M. Best and readings by Estella May Hoffman. All of this went on the air at

¹"WTAR To Resume Operation Soon," ibid., November 27, 1923, p. 6.

²Jack Light, personal interview.

³"WTAR's Record Studded with Notable Broadcasting Feats," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 27, 1923, p. 6.

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P.M. on the 280 meter band.¹

Three days later WTAR was back on the air again. This

D. C. Harrison of Remington Typewriters, delivered a
on "The History and Golden Anniversary of the Type-
er," and, later on that evening, Mrs. Eva Campbell

ree and Mrs. Clara Covert Smith performed in joint con-

² This second official program, as the Pilot labelled
was apparently a popular success. Comments were received

a large area, and locally the listeners wanted Mrs.

ree to repeat her selection. But the success was some-

tarnished. The Pilot reported that a number of the fans

WTAR to keep up the quality and level of interest in

programs because radios could not pick up anything else

WTAR was on the air.³

With the close of 1923 the "Shade of the Potted Palm"⁴

reached Tidewater, Virginia. WTAR was scheduling broad-

on Monday and Friday nights: lectures at 8:00 P.M. and

arts at 8:30 P.M.⁵ More important, however, was the fact

¹Radio News," ibid., December 17, 1923, p. 5.

²"Local Artists on Program from Station WTAR Tonight,"
, December 21, 1923, p. 6.

³"Radio Station Here Pleases Listeners-In," Virginian
and the Norfolk Landmark, December 22, 1923, p. 16.

⁴Barnouw, I, p. 125.

⁵"As to the music, it was almost all conservatory music:
program director dubbed it 'potted palm music.' It was
music played at tea time by hotel orchestras. It was re-
music. European in origin, it was 'culture' to many
fans." Barnouw, I, p. 126.

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that the new radio station was manned by individuals who were willing to do what was necessary to make the station successful. The efforts they put forth during the coming year demonstrated this.



CHAPTER IV

TRIAL AND SUCCESS

We had all kinds of cooperation with the people around here; everybody was very cooperative. And that was because we were kind of Norfolk's own radio station. We picked up everything that came along. We were a busy bunch.¹

A review of the events in which WTAR was involved in confirms Jack Light's recollections that "we were a busy," and the activity yielded accomplishments with which must be impressed. For here was a small station, broadcasting with only fifty watts of power, located in the back automobile repair shop. During that first year WTAR really had nothing going for it. It lacked heavy financial backing, modern equipment and talent. All it had were a few who were interested in the radio broadcasting business, were willing to try almost anything. In WTAR's favor, was the fact that the station was located in a city was trying to assert itself after centuries of abuse, which saw in this station another means of establishing its Manifest Destiny.

¹Jack Light, personal interview.

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A number of significant events find places for themselves in WTAR's history during that first year, and this chapter, and the one which follows, are devoted to these events. The division of material is somewhat arbitrary, yet there is a logic behind it. This chapter considers three events which are more significant than the ones in the following chapter, events which increased the station's knowledge of the broadcasting technique and which brought the station a certain notoriety: the establishment of a series of remote broadcasts from area churches; the broadcasting of the Virginia State and National Democratic conventions; and the creation of the first regularly scheduled program series, sponsored by the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce.

Church services, sermons, chapel services and choir recitals were an obvious source of programming material for WTAR for a number of reasons. Programming of a religious nature was probably highly acceptable to a listening audience which proudly and enthusiastically waved the moral fabric of prohibition and which actively supported blue laws which would close gas stations and movie houses on Sundays. So it was, also, that the clergy saw the opportunity, through WTAR, to extend the Word and the Promise to uncounted hundreds, perhaps thousands, who heretofore had been unwilling or unable to actively participate in the matters of the Spirit. And, lastly, religious programming had a continuity of nature which was lacking in programs of amateur performers and the

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speeches of businessmen, educators and community-minded individuals. Until the problems of broadcasting from locations removed from the main studio were overcome, however, it was still necessary to convince those who could present such programs to travel to the Reliance Electric Company, but once remotes were technically, legally and economically feasible, church services represented nicely packaged programs that needed little more than the placement of some sort of instrument to pick up the sound.

The first indications of religious programming carried by WTAR appear in January of 1924. On Monday the eighteenth Dr. H. H. Kratzig, Superintendent of the Union Mission delivered a talk.¹ The Union Mission is a community-supported organization which provides room, board and spiritual aid to society's cast-offs. The association between the Mission and WTAR was a long one, extending fully through the twenties, and the sermons and programs presented over the station under the Mission's auspices were representative of all major Christian denominations save Roman Catholic, the Jewish faith and even included representatives of at least one colored church and a wide variety of city officials and politicians. The Reverend Dr. Ira D. S. Knight, Pastor of the Park Place Baptist Church in Norfolk, in the introduction to a collection of sermons delivered through the Mission Radio Program in the

¹"Forty Local Musicians on Radio Bill Tonight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 18, 1924, p. 6.

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latter part of the decade, described the goals of Kratzig in this manner:

It was his desire to spread abroad the Gospel of Jesus Christ that gave these sermons a hearing, limited only by the range of the broadcasting station from which they were issued.¹

The significant event of 1924 in the realm of religious programming was associated with Dr. J. B. Winn of the Ghent Methodist Church. Winn's first appearance on WTAR was in February of 1924 when he delivered a eulogy to Woodrow Wilson.² Two days later, on February 7, 1924, Forest W. Sharp, the President of Reliance Electric Company, announced that beginning the following Sunday WTAR would broadcast religious services weekly at 4:00 P.M. The initial service would be conducted by Dr. Winn, and, after that, the denominations would be rotated.³ As matters turned out the Reverend Guy Newberry spoke in place of Dr. Winn, but, aside from that, the program went off as planned.⁴

The religious programs were established as a regular feature, but each program, for the early part of the year,

¹Henry H. Kratzig (ed.), The Voice of Norfolk: Radio Messages from the City's Foremost Preachers (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1929), p. vii.

²"Southern Serenaders and Dr. Winn at WTAR," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 5, 1924, p. 3.

³"Church Services by Station WTAR," ibid., February 7, 1924, p. 5.

⁴"Mrs. W. Harvey Clarke to Speak by Radio Tonight," ibid., February 9, 1924, p. 6.

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was broadcast from the studios of the radio station. It was not until May that WTAR announced that it would broadcast services directly from the Ghent Methodist Church. The newspaper article which carried the announcement took note of the fact that the upcoming broadcast on May 11 would mark the "first out-of-the-studio broadcasting done in Virginia." The church would be connected with the WTAR transmitter by means of telephone lines supplied by the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company.¹

It is possible to assume that one of the reasons for such a broadcast not having taken place sooner was that it was not until April that WTAR became licensed by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, thereby permitting WTAR to utilize the phone lines of the Chesapeake and Potomac, a member of the Bell System.² Obtaining such a license, however, was not directly associated with desires to broadcast church services, but, rather, came as the result of the desire on the part of the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce to broadcast a series of weekly booster programs.³ As its part of the agreement with the Chamber of Commerce WTAR agreed to substantially

¹"WTAR Will Broadcast from Ghent Methodist," ibid., May 3, 1924, p. 15.

²"WTAR Gains Rights to Radio Patents," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 3, 1924, p. 3.

³"Chamber Plans to Employ Radio," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 3, 1924, p. 4.

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ove its transmitting equipment,¹ and it is for this reason the AT&T license was obtained. The benefit which religion the Norfolk area derived from this arrangement was purely dental.

The same day on which the Ledger-Dispatch announced the ce from the Ghent Church, the Pilot also carried a similar y. The Pilot reported that other stations throughout the e, and in North Carolina, were expected to hook into the dcast.² Such plans have a dubious basis in fact, at best, most probably represent wishful thinking on the part of

It is doubtful whether the line charges for such a dcast could have been borne by WTAR, the Ghent Church, or ther of the station in existence at that time. The fact the plans were never mentioned again in either paper ates that such plans were probably the dream of someone acquainted with neither the economics nor technical rements of making such a broadcast.

On May 11, the Sunday evening service of the Ghent Metho-Church was broadcast, along with a musical prelude, t from the church. The parishoners were not disturbed e equipment was as much out of sight as possible, and

¹"Radio Programs Begin April 15," Virginian Pilot and the
nk Landmark, April 2, 1924, p. 5.

²"Ghent Methodist Will Broadcast Sermons by Radio,"
May 3, 1924, p. 14.

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Everything was conducted in a normal manner.¹ The broadcast was successful from Dr. Winn's standpoint for the public response was favorable, and the letters he received indicated that the telephone relay was quite clear.² The next Sunday evening service would again be carried over WTAR, and when Winn announced this he made public a letter from one of the audience who appreciated the previous Sunday's program:

When they can bring the Word into the home for those whose affliction keeps them within four walls, . . . it is just the beginning of a greater era in the spread of the gospel.³

WTAR had broadcast its first remote, and all who were contacted by it seemed pleased with the results. Initially, the pattern which developed was that of one church broadcast for a number of weeks, and in some cases, months at a time. Ultimately, however, a weekly rotational pattern was established, and this presented another minor problem for

Light:

What happened was this: we had all the churches we were broadcasting come into a panel at the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company office. It was a kind of patch panel. I used to have to go down there personally to plug in whatever church we were broadcasting, and we alternated among them every week. The telephone company

¹"Sermon Broadcast from Pulpit," ibid., May 12, 1924, p. 5.

²"Preacher Pleased with Success," ibid., May 13, 1924, p. 6.

³"Radio Again to Carry Sermon Tomorrow Into Hundreds of Homes," ibid., May 17, 1924, p. 6.

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wouldn't do anything else but furnish the lines; they wouldn't have anything to do with the switching of the lines.¹

The perfection of remote broadcasting techniques opened a wealth of programming possibilities for WTAR. There was virtually nothing that WTAR could not broadcast in the Norfolk area now, as long as the money was available to pay for the telephone lines. Nonetheless, with the advent of the "static season,"² or summer months, WTAR sharply curtailed its regularly scheduled programming times.³ It would be on the air only on Tuesday evenings for the Chamber of Commerce program. However, events were to take place in Norfolk and in New York City which WTAR could not pass up, especially when the means were available to exploit them.

In 1924, the United States Senator from Virginia, Carter Glass, was to be a favorite son candidate for the Democratic Presidential Nomination. The Norfolk press, perhaps dreaming of thoughts of political glory and significance returning to the Old Dominion, considered him to a "dark horse."⁴ Thus it

¹Jack Light, personal interview.

²"Static season" was a popular term used by the Norfolk press during this time to describe the atmospheric difficulties one encountered during the summer months when attempting to receive distant radio stations.

³"WTAR Billed Weeks Ahead," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 6, 1924, p. 9.

⁴"The Nation Looks to Virginia," Editorial, Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, June 10, 1924, p. 4. "In the event of a deadlock between Smith and McAdoo at the New York convention his [Glass's] chances to secure the nomination are exceptionally favorable."

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was that when the State Democratic Convention was scheduled to be held in Norfolk, and when Senator Glass was scheduled to be a speaker, WTAR saw an opportunity to substantially increase its audience by broadcasting the State Convention.¹ Glass's supporters were pleased with the publicity which they would get through WTAR's broadcast, but they were interested in bigger things. For a time there were hopes that a chain of some significant size, headed by WEAH, might be convinced to carry the Senator's speech, but the plans were put together too late, and the facilities were not available.² It was, therefore, up to WTAR to carry the message of the Glass Campaign as far as the station's 100 watts would travel.³

At 2:30 P.M. on June 11, 1924, WTAR went on the air from the Armory in downtown Norfolk. The station was on the air until 5:48 that afternoon, and listeners in the Norfolk area heard the speech of Senator Glass, along with addresses by State Democratic Party Chairman Harry Flood Byrd, Lieutenant Governor J. E. West and other party luminaries. The writer in the Ledger-Dispatch stated in no uncertain terms that many

¹"Keynote Speech of Carter Glass to be Broadcast," ibid., June 6, 1924, p. 1. "'The fact that Virginia may furnish the next Democratic candidate for President has greatly aroused the interest [in the convention] to [sic] Virginians,' said [State Party Chairman Harry] Byrd."

²Ibid.

³WTAR had raised its power to 100 watts during the improvement campaign associated with the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce programs, infra., pp. 56-61.

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times throughout the day the radio listeners could hear what was going on better than those who were in attendance.¹

Carter Glass left Norfolk, carrying the Virginia delegation committed to him at the National Convention, to be held at Madison Square Garden in New York at the end of June. The interest in the political events which would take place up north was tied to the chances of Senator Glass, and many, both in Virginia and outside the state, felt his chances to be good.² WTAR would certainly benefit if it could bring the activities of that convention to at least a part of Virginia. Further, as the summer heat intensified it would be more and more difficult for the listeners to pick up other stations in the north which might be carrying the convention. It was, after all, the "static season."

It is one thing to have the desire to do something, and it is quite another to have the means available to make the desire a reality. WTAR was certainly not one of the richer stations in the country. It was owned by a small electric company which did not have large amounts of money to invest in the operations of the station, and, while some external financial support was coming in through sponsored programs,³

¹"Radio Fans Receive Convention Speeches," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, June 12, 1924, p. 9.

²"Glass Would Be Strong Candidate, N. Y. World Holds," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, May 28, 1924, p. 1. In spite of predictions, Glass never got more than 35 votes on any one ballot in New York.

³Jack Light, personal interview.

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this was not enough to pay for the network connections to the WEAJ chain which was broadcasting the convention. The discussion of how WTAR was to broadcast the national convention was, therefore, essentially academic.

If, however, the convention itself could not be broadcast, then certainly some sort of news could be carried which would help to capitalize upon Glass's candidacy. Because relations between WTAR and the Ledger-Dispatch were good an arrangement was worked out whereby the afternoon paper would broadcast a summary of the convention over WTAR at 10:00 each evening until the nominations were made.¹ The arrangement was certainly better than nothing at all as far as the station was concerned, and the Ledger-Dispatch was clearly enthusiastic about its first venture into the world of broadcasting. On June 25, the following was blazoned across the top of the Ledger's front page:

RADIO FANS TUNE IN ON WTAR, NORFOLK, EACH NIGHT AT
10 O'CLOCK FOR LEDGER-DISPATCH SUMMARY OF DEMOCRATIC
CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS.²

On June 26 and 27 identical promotional headlines were prominently displayed on the Ledger's front page. But all of this time Light and his fellow engineers at WTAR were trying to bring the results of research being done by KDKA and WGY to Norfolk. In 1923 Frank Conrad at KDKA and other engineers

¹"Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR to Broadcast Convention Summary," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, June 25, 1924, p. 1.

²Ibid.

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at General Electric began experimenting with the use of short waves as a means of carrying chain broadcasts. The experiments were successful within limits, for while great distances could be achieved the quality of the signals was not the best.¹ The experiments continued into 1924, and one of the events upon which both KDKA and WGY were experimenting was the 1924 Democratic Convention. On June 28, 1924 the efforts of these two stations were utilized by WTAR as the Norfolk station started to rebroadcast the proceedings in New York from KDKA and WGY short wave broadcasts.

Jack Light claims personal credit for most of what WTAR did during the Democratic marathon:

What I did was to make up a short wave set out of odds and ends, and I copied WGY and KDKA, whichever one had the important things on, and whichever one I could pick up, and we did the whole thing. I even took the receiver home at night.²

Aside from the first couple of days of the convention, WTAR did broadcast the convention, and that meant that the Ledger-Dispatch summaries were no longer strictly necessary. The paper, however, continued to derive promotional benefit from the station's activities. Each day during the greater part of the events in New York the Ledger-Dispatch announced on its front page that both the paper and the station were broadcasting the convention.³

¹Barnouw, I, p. 151.

²Jack Light, personal interview.

³Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, June 28, 1924, through July 5, 1924, passim.

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The quality of the broadcasts was not the highest, but that was not as important as the fact that ". . . by listening carefully the words of the various convention speakers can be understood."¹

Through 103 ballots for the presidential nomination and one for the vice-presidential nomination the Democrats trudged in New York, and WTAR carried all of it up to the point at 3:24 A.M., July 10, when the convention was adjourned sine die. Just prior to the convention's conclusion the Ledger-Dispatch reported that the station operators were beginning to object to the long hours which were being forced upon them, but the reporter was assured that the personnel would see the job through to its conclusion.²

WTAR's efforts during this period were well received by the listening audience, if the following incident is any indication. On the evening of July 8 the station broke away from the convention to present a program by the Portsmouth Choral Society. Station personnel indicated that they received so many negative phone calls that they hastened the program to a conclusion and returned immediately to broadcasting the convention.³

¹"Norfolk Radio Fans Get Convention News," ibid., July 1, 1924, p. 4.

²"Radio Owners Want Politics WTAR Learns," ibid., July 9, 1924, p. 2.

³Ibid.

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Barnouw indicates that this 1924 Democratic Convention was something of a turning point for broadcasting in the United States:

The stations that had become associated with AT&T via transmitter purchase or licenses and were prepared to pay the substantial line charges won the radio spotlight. They became the prestige stations. . . . On the other hand, stations not participating in these chain developments were slipping into a lesser role.¹

WTAR did not find itself in either of the camps which Barnouw describes, because it neither associated itself with the chain which was broadcasting the convention, nor ignored the battle at Madison Square Garden altogether. It is, therefore, difficult to classify the benefits which accrued to the station from its rather monumental efforts. WTAR provided a service which its audiences seemed to want, witness the Portsmouth Choir incident, but the convention did not make WTAR the sort of prestige station about which Barnouw writes. Even the technical efforts it put forth were not to yield great return because short wave broadcasting as a means of station interconnection did not prove to be generally feasible.

The only easily identifiable, positive asset which came from this convention was that a working relationship had developed between the Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR. For the few

¹Barnouw, I, pp. 150-151. See also, William Peck Banning, Commercial Broadcasting Pioneer: The WEAJ Experiment, 1922-1926 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), p. 241.

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times that the Ledger broadcast its convention summaries the journalists and the broadcasters found that they could work together to their mutual benefit. It would be well into 1925 before the station and paper would be hooked up permanently by telephone lines, but the 1924 Democratic convention provided the first steps toward such a working arrangement. As a postscript to the convention story it is interesting to note that the Virginian Pilot did not mention the convention broadcasts of WTAR at all during the better than two weeks during which the convention was in session.

Whatever kinds of successes WTAR might have achieved as a result of the convention broadcasts would be looked upon as insignificant and unimportant, in the long run, if the station could not capitalize on them in some fashion. The easiest and most logical way to do this would be to provide additional programming in which the increased potential audience would be interested. In retrospect one might be tempted to say that the additional programming ought to be of the regularly scheduled variety, and that the time was ripe for WTAR to institute such programming. However, that which Barnouw describes as the national norm in programming for the first half of the 1920's¹ is applicable to WTAR and Norfolk. The time was ripe for regularly scheduled programming, but economics and an insufficient evolution in the programming art

¹Barnouw, I, pp. 125-135, passim.

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itated against the obvious. In a sense, then, the fact that WTAR did have a program which appeared weekly under one title and which sought a constant goal, or theme, made it somewhat exceptional.

These Chamber of Commerce "Booster Programs" came on the air some months prior to the conventions,¹ and, therefore, their existence cannot be looked upon as the result of a desire by WTAR to exploit the convention successes. Nonetheless, the programs did serve two masters. Because they were in progress prior to the summer cutback of programming, and because they were the only programs on the air during the summer, they provided WTAR with the only means for keeping an audience which the conventions lured to the station. From the Chamber of Commerce's point of view the programs presented a way for the Tidewater area to turn itself into one of the commercial centers of Virginia.

As described in Chapter I, above, the history of Norfolk was characterized by neglect and missed chances. By the 1920's, however, the tables were turning, and Norfolk was beginning to achieve some of its long-dormant potential. The businessmen of the area were obviously interested in promoting Norfolk in the eyes of the surrounding states and in encouraging its growth from within. The logical agent to carry out this work was the Chamber of Commerce, and the

¹"First Booster Program WTAR's Offering Tonight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 15, 1924, p. 10.

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logical means for this agent to use was radio. The commercial interests were not blind to what radio might be able to do for them as evidenced by the efforts they had made the previous year toward starting a Norfolk station.¹ In spite of this, the Chamber of Commerce did not make the first move toward the establishment of a program series.

It was WTAR which approached the Chamber of Commerce with the idea of using radio to sell Norfolk. In March of 1924 the station proposed that the Chamber use the station one night a week if the Chamber would supply the programming for that night. The President of the Chamber of Commerce, T. P. Thompson, liked the idea, but he delayed accepting it until he could be sure that other civic organizations in the area would cooperate. It was along with this initial proposal that WTAR announced that it planned to increase its power "shortly" to 100 watts, probably as an incentive to get the Chamber's acceptance.²

The Chamber of Commerce accepted WTAR's proposal less than two weeks later with an announcement that it would put on a program from 8:00 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. composed of speeches and musical entertainment,³ and, somewhat later,

¹Supra, p. 34.

²"Chamber Plans to Employ Radio," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 11, 1924, p. 4.

³"Chamber Accepts Offer of Use of Reliance Radio," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 21, 1924, p. 3.

April 15 was set as the premiere date.¹

In the meantime there was some concern over the quality of WTAR's transmissions. It will be recalled that after the second official program in December of 1923 listeners said that when WTAR was on the air nothing else could be picked up.² With an organization interested in putting Norfolk's best foot forward such technical shortcomings could not have been looked upon with favor. Thus, WTAR agreed to make some technical improvements prior to the first Chamber of Commerce program.³ The signing of a license agreement with the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, which would place WTAR ". . . on a parity with the other stations of the country . . . ," was one of the means toward such improvement.⁴ The specific nature of the improvements is no longer known, but the evidence available indicates that they were associated with the transmitter and antenna systems, as these were parts of the broadcasting process over which AT&T had patent control. The increase in power, from fifty to 100 watts, was associated with this program, and there can be little doubt that the

¹"Booster Radio Starts April 15," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 2, 1924, p. 5.

²"Radio Station Here Please Listeners-In," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 22, 1923, p. 16.

³"Radio Programs Begin April 15," ibid., April 2, 1924, p. 5.

⁴"WTAR Gains Right to Radio Patents," ibid., April 3, 1924, p. 3.

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Chamber of Commerce was a strong motivating force behind WTAR: the announcement of the license signing was made neither by F. W. Sharp, President of Reliance Electric Company, nor by Jack Light, Manager of WTAR, but by J. L. Nottingham, the Chairman of a special committee of the Chamber set up to arrange the programs for WTAR.¹

With the approach to the April 15 premiere the details of the first program were being worked out. It would go on the air at 7:30 P.M. and would run until at least 10:00 P.M. The principal speech would be made by T. P. Thompson, President of the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce, at 9:30, and the topic would be "The Community of Hampton Roads." The remainder of the program would be filled with stock, produce, road and maritime reports along with musical selections.²

Refinements were made as the series progressed. The Chamber decided that Virginia history was an appropriate topic for the program, and, therefore, the last Tuesday of each month would contain an historical lecture of some sort. The first of these would take place on April 19, and it would feature Dr. J. A. C. Chandler, President of the College of

¹Ibid. Nottingham announced that WTAR would increase its power by 150%, i.e., from fifty to seventy-five watts. The actual increase was to 100 watts.

²"First of Booster Radio Programs Set for Tuesday," ibid., April 13, 1924, II, p. 2.

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William and Mary, speaking on "Historical Tidewater Virginia."¹

The entertainment came from a variety of sources: church choirs, cello, piano and organ solos, the Elk's Minstrels, the Navy Band and music from the Hawaiian Music School Orchestra. The speeches made by the prominent business people in the area were not the sort which would interest a general audience, but then, they were intended to bring business to the area: "Norfolk and the Panama Canal as Great Factors in World Trade" and "Norfolk, Largest Distributor of Seafoods" were among the topics treated.² And, at least one audience participation scheme was presented to see just how successful the programs were:

Prizes will be given by members of the [Cosmopolitan] Club to the first businessman living outside the State of Virginia; the first woman living outside the State; and the first motorist living in Virginia who advise the station by letter that they have heard the program by radio.³

The series continued on WTAR into June of 1925,⁴ and it was revived from time to time in later years. The fact that

¹"Chandler and Lee on Radio Program," ibid., April 27, 1924, II, p. 1.

²Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 27, 1924 through June 7, 1925, passim.

³"Cosmopolitan Club to Give Program from WTAR Tues.," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 12, 1924, p. 9.

⁴"Final Chamber Radio Program," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, June 7, 1925, III, p. 7.

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it continued for over a year indicates that the Chamber of Commerce was convinced of its success. The program was eliciting responses from as far away as Colorado to the west and New England to the north, while the speeches on Virginia history by Dr. Chandler were definitely increasing area tourism.¹

From the standpoint of the station the series must have been viewed as a success also. As has been mentioned, the Chamber of Commerce program was the only program on the air during the summer of 1924, and without that it is doubtful that WTAR could have held the audience which it had garnered through the first half of the year. From a technical standpoint the Chamber provided the incentive for the station to make the improvements which were surely needed if the station were going to remain viable. But, in the long run, the factor which was most important was intangible. As was the case with WTAR and the Ledger-Dispatch during the conventions, WTAR and the business community found that they, too, could work together for mutual benefit. In 1925 and 1926, when WTAR's time would become available for commercial sale on a broad basis, the contacts made during the Chamber of Commerce series with Norfolk businessmen would not be lost. And when some serious public relations problems would arise at the outset of the 1930's it would be the Chamber of Commerce which would be the only voice speaking in defense of WTAR.

¹"Radio Advertising Proving of Value to Hampton Roads," ibid., November 13, 1924, p. 14.

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CHAPTER V

THE REST OF THE TIME

On balance, and with the perspective of time, the events of 1924 described in the previous chapter would probably classify that year as a good one, especially considering that it was the station's first year on the air. But one cannot, and indeed ought not to, ignore what transpired during the vast majority of the days, weeks and months when conventions and materials for remote broadcasts were not available. For it is only through a kind of balanced picture that one can appreciate the difficulties with which radio had to deal in those early years.

WTAR was growing up in an era which did not demand of radio that it provide a constant, never-ending service to the audience. If there was nothing to be broadcast then the station would just shut down,¹ or, as was the case with WTAR, the station would simply set up a very limited broadcasting schedule and alter it when the need arose. As Jack Light, Forest Sharp and the others at the Reliance Electric Company looked at the amount of time the station was on the air during

¹Barnouw, I, pp. 134-135.

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most of 1924 they must have had thoughts, more than once, that they had gotten involved in something that was not going to warrant the investment of time and money.

A more detailed description of WTAR in 1924 can be divided into two periods, unequal in length but distinctly separate. The first period ran from January of that year through the first part of September. The conventions and church remotes were broadcast, and the Chamber of Commerce programs were begun, during this period, but there was a great difference between that programming and the rest of what was broadcast during those nine months.

The second period ran from the end of September through December. These three months saw a distinct upturn in both the quantity and quality of programming as WTAR started to exploit some different kinds of programming sources which brought a trickle of income to the station and a kind of regularity of service to the audience.

Late in December of 1923 the principals of WTAR had announced that the station would broadcast on Monday and Friday nights at 8:00 and 8:30. The 8:00 period would be devoted to lectures; the 8:30 period would be devoted to concerts. The programming at this time might not have been spectacular, nor even noteworthy, but radio was still new to Norfolk, and the people with sets would listen to just about anything, especially since they could not pick up anything else when WTAR was on the air. By the end of January the

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Virginian Pilot felt that it could report that "radio fever" reaching epidemic proportions in Norfolk, that it was more than golfing.¹

It was in January that WTAR ran a test for the Old Bay Steamship Line. The Old Bay ran passenger boats on overnight trips to Baltimore, Maryland, and it asked WTAR to put on a special program to see if radio might not be installed as a permanent entertainment feature of the Old Bay ships. Friday, January 18, 1924 was chosen as the night for the experiment, and the Western Electric Company installed six loudspeakers from palm room to dining salon" aboard the "State of Virginia" bound for Baltimore. At 7:45 the program began with the Reverend Dr. H. H. Kratzig delivering a speech entitled "Who is the Greatest Among Us?" Tazewell Taylor also spoke "To Old Bay Friends." Entertainment was provided by Carroll Trant, a 14-year-old Norfolk violinist who played a medley of popular liars, and by the Symphonia Club of the Vanderherchen Conservatory. As an added attraction WTAR monitored the Burgh Post radio station, which was broadcasting the heavyweight championship fight between Harry Greb and Johnny Carson. As each round ended a summary of the action was read by WTAR. "All were delighted with the "service," even though the ships dynamos caused some interference.²

¹"Fascination of Radio Swells Ranks of Army of Eager Listeners-In," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, January 20, 1924, IV, p. 5.

²"Radio Program Entertains Bay Steamer's Passengers," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 21, 1924, p. 12; "Radio Program Heard on Ship," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 21, 1924, p. 2.

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February of 1924 saw the first of many alterations in the WTAR broadcasting schedule. Beginning immediately, the station announced, it would increase the number of hours it would broadcast per week, and it would also add afternoon programs to its schedule. As of February 8 WTAR would broadcast on Tuesday and Saturday nights and Friday and Sunday afternoons.¹ The afternoon programs would begin at 3:30 on Fridays and at 4:00 on Sundays; the evening programs would begin at 8:00.² The Sunday broadcasting period was established to accommodate the religious programs described in the previous chapter, but the reasons behind the choices of the other days and times have become obscure.

From February through the early part of April the broadcasting schedule remained relatively constant, with the exception of one change. In March WTAR added what it called "Owl Concert," to be aired from 11:30 P.M. to 1:30 A.M. on Sunday nights.³ There might have been some sort of local popular demand for such late night programming, but the reason for the "Owl Concert" most probably was to give the station an opportunity to see how far its signal would carry

¹"Four Programs Weekly by WTAR," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 8, 1924, p. 3.

²Reliance Electric Company Ad listing the schedule of WTAR, Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 10, 1924, IV, p. 8.

³"WTAR Plans Owl Concert," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 22, 1924, p. 9.

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under the most ideal of circumstances. Distance was a relatively important ingredient of broadcasting during this time. Most stations, including WTAR, delighted in boasting of how far their programs carried, and listeners were much more interested in hearing a program from a distant station than from a local one.¹

The programming set up for the Old Bay Line in January was indicative of the norm for this period. Local service clubs got their members to give talks on a wide range of topics; and these same clubs, along with independent amateurs, provided the musical entertainment. Occasionally a performance by a professional group was arranged, such as the dance programs presented by the Meyer Davis Monticello Hotel Orchestra or the Jolly Jazz Orchestra,² but most often the programming was put on by the likes of the Boy Scout Orchestra, the Dokkie Quartet or the Bruno Club Band, a group composed of mandolins, plain and steel guitars.³

In April WTAR instituted the first of two programming cutbacks. It cancelled its Friday and Sunday afternoon broadcasts, remaining on the air on Tuesday, Saturday and

¹Tom Hanes, personal interview.

²Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 29, 1924, p. 10, and March 11, 1924, p. 4.

³"Boy Scout Orchestra on Radio Program Tomorrow," ibid., February 22, 1924, p. 4; "Dokkie Quartet on Radio Bill," ibid., February 16, 1924, p. 9; "Bruno Club is WTAR's Headliner for Tonight," ibid., January 25, 1924, p. 13.

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day evenings.¹ The second programming reduction took place between April 12 and the middle of June when the station announced that, during the "static season", it would be on the air Tuesdays only for the Chamber of Commerce programs.²

June, July and August heard conventions and speeches on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce once a week from WTAR and little else. A prize fight in September, just prior to the station's first birthday, would at once herald a significant improvement in WTAR's programming and mark the end of those most difficult nine months of 1924.

The Post-war Decade was a great sporting era. . . . Promoters, chambers of commerce, newspaper-owners, sports writers, press agents, radio broadcasters, all found profit in exploiting the public's mania for sporting shows and its willingness to be persuaded that the great athletes of the day were supermen. Never before had such a blinding light of publicity been turned upon the gridiron, the diamond, and the prize ring.³

Norfolk was no different from the rest of the country regard to sports. Tom Hanes, in 1924 the Sports Editor of the Ledger-Dispatch, was convinced of the fact that the afternoon paper was able to compete effectively with the morning Virginian Pilot because the Ledger was a strong sports

¹"Cosmopolitan Club Will Give Tonight's WTAR Bill," ibid., April 12, 1924, p. 17.

²"WTAR Billed Weeks Ahead," ibid., June 21, 1924, p. 9.

³Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday (New York: Bantam Books, 1959), p. 146.

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²Ibid

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It was in the sports arena that WTAR utilized the friendship of the Ledger-Dispatch again, this time with the added dimension of Hanes. Hanes knew Jack Light and a number of the people at Reliance Electric and WTAR. When asked to help out the station in a sports broadcast he was willing because he was a friend, but also because, "It didn't hurt my vanity much, and it gave my sports page a little prestige, or so I thought."² The work which Hanes did for WTAR was done strictly on his own, not at the request of the Ledger, although the paper probably did not mind the free publicity it received.

Hanes' first venture into sports broadcasting was a prize fight, but not one of great significance. On Thursday evening, September 11, 1924, Luis Firpo and Harry Wells were to engage in a twelve-round match from Boyles Thirty Acres in New Jersey. That afternoon, in an article well down on the Ledger's second page, was the announcement that WTAR would broadcast the fight.³ Nothing more was said about WTAR's broadcast either in the paper of that date or in the following afternoon's edition, and, for obvious reasons, the Pilot never mentioned the broadcast at all. As it turned out, however, the fight was broadcast with enough creativity so that it warrants a

¹Tom Hanes, personal interview.

²Ibid.

³"Radio Fans to Sit in On Fight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 11, 1924, p. 2.

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le more note than it received at the time:

I was doing the fight broadcast and got the boys at the station to fade in some screams and yells from a recording. I was picking the fight up from the Associated Press ticker, and I'd wait until the round got through before I'd broadcast it. I'd get the fight started, and then we'd fade in those crowd sounds and cheers and give it a real ringside atmosphere.

Well, the next day, after we did this the first time, I saw somebody downtown, and he asked me if I'd heard the fight. I told him, "No, I hadn't." He said that he had heard it the night before right from ringside. I asked him what station was doing it, and he said WTAR. I said, "No, they didn't do it from ringside at all."

He said, "Don't tell me, 'cause I heard it!"

I said, "Don't tell me, 'cause I broadcast it!"

Well, he was absolutely certain he'd gotten it from ringside.¹

The Firpo-Wells fight was one of those sporting events which drifts into oblivion as time passes, and, likewise, the broadcast might be allowed to drift in a similar direction if it were not for the theatrical flair for which Hanes is responsible. This fight was the first try at sports broadcasting for both WTAR and Tom Hanes; both would do more in the future.

One of the big sporting events of any year is the World Series, and, the 1924 World Series was the first one in which WTAR became involved. WTAR broadcast that series using the sort of techniques developed for the Democratic convention.

KDKA was broadcasting the games by short wave, and used its short wave receiving apparatus to do the

Tom Hanes, personal interview.

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¹WTAR
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rebroadcasting of the entire seven game series between Washington and New York.¹ This was the first World Series broadcast by WTAR, but it was the last broadcast involving short wave relay. The next year the Ledger-Dispatch would reap a promotional bonanza from the series while having Tom Hanes do a recreation from the Associated Press accounts.²

September of 1924 saw the advent of additional regularly scheduled programs over WTAR, but, more importantly, these programs were the first of a commercial nature broadcast by the station. Late in the month WTAR announced that it would begin broadcasting during the daylight hours again. There would be three programs daily beginning September 22: an organ concert during the noon hour from the Norva Theater, a late afternoon orchestra recital from the Norva Theater, and a program of phonograph records and local talent from the Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company of Norfolk.

The plans for the Norva Theater programs called for a telephone line to be run from the station to the theater; and the station would broadcast the music being performed at the theater.³ The programs were not produced specifically for broadcast but were being performed for the general public.

¹"WTAR Will Broadcast Entire World Series," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 4, 1924, p. 9.

²Ibid., October 3, 1925, through October 17, 1925, passim.

³"Daylight Radio Program Arranged," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September 21, 1924, p. 1.

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The theater most probably paid for the telephone lines in return for the publicity it would receive over WTAR. The organ concerts were aired at 12:30 P.M., and the Norva Theater Orchestra went on the air at 5:00 P.M.

The Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company programs were the first strictly commercial programs which WTAR carried. They were created with the idea of selling Brunswick radios, and each day, Monday through Saturday, from 1:15 to 1:45 in the afternoon, the store produced a program from a small studio in its radio showroom which was broadcast by WTAR and then picked up by the Brunswick radios in the Paul-Gale-Greenwood showroom. The financial aspects of the arrangement are lost now, and it is even difficult to pinpoint the length of the series. WTAR was not mentioned in the radio listings of the Virginian Pilot until the end of November, and the Ledger-Dispatch radio listings show a program listed simply as "music" beginning at 1:15 P.M., but this mention occurs only on an irregular basis. The only positive assurance there is that the programs were carried at all comes from the fact that the Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company placed an ad in the Pilot daily, and the programs over WTAR are mentioned in this ad, at first regularly, then spasmodically. The last time they are mentioned is October 18, 1924,¹ but a story about WTAR in the Ledger-Dispatch of

¹Advertisements for Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company, ibid., p. 2, daily from September 21, 1924 through October 18, 1924.

October 28, 1924 mentions that the station is carrying a program sponsored by the Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company.¹

By the end of October WTAR had added another feature to its program schedule: dance music from the Monticello Hotel, played by the Dave Garson Orchestra. The program was carried twice a week, on Tuesdays from 10:00 P.M. until midnight and on Fridays from 9:30 until midnight.² Eventually the Tuesday evening program was dropped, and the Friday evening program was moved to Saturday night. This series lasted through January of 1925.³

In November the station broadcast the returns of the general election, but without calling on the assistance of the Ledger-Dispatch. WTAR arranged to have Western Union install a wire to the station, and station personnel read the returns.⁴

December brought the first Radio Show to Norfolk, an exhibition of radio sets and associated apparatus all assembled to exploit the growing interest in the new medium. There would be more to the show than just equipment to look at, however. John Gates, the director of the show, arranged for entertainment, and with that added inducement WTAR took on the

¹"Will Radiate Dance Music," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 28, 1924, p. 2.

²Ibid.

³"Last Monticello Program from WTAR Tonight," ibid., January 31, 1925, p. 9.

⁴"Will Radiate Dance Music," ibid., October 28, 1924, p. 2.

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job of broadcasting from the Armory during the afternoon and evenings while the show was in progress. Music was presented by the Maury High School Band and the Happy Radio Six Orchestra, led by John Gates, and comedian Tommy Teefey appeared. In the case of this remote broadcast WTAR chose not to use telephone lines, but rather used an auxiliary transmitter to feed the program back to the station. When the show closed on December 13 WTAR claimed that 600,000 people had heard the programs from the Armory.¹

By the end of 1924 WTAR was on the air between sixteen and seventeen hours per week, an increase of about 400% over its output of programming at the beginning of the year. The year had been one of experimentation, primarily. There had been extensive technical experimentation, much of which improved the quality of the station's signal, some of which brought programs to the Norfolk audience which they otherwise would have missed. It had also been a year of programming and business experimentation, as relations were initiated with one, perhaps two, firms for commercial broadcasts. It was an uphill battle, and the battle was not over by any means, but, on balance, it had been a very good year.

¹Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch and Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 4, 1924 through December 14, 1924, passim.

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CHAPTER VI

DIFFICULT AT BEST

WTAR was to have trouble on a number of fronts during 1925. The program offerings were small and of a consistently uninspiring quality, and the public was to demand better, if not from WTAR then from another station. The reasons can undoubtedly be traced to the Reliance Electric Company's inability to adequately finance a radio station and to the Norfolk area's inability to supply sufficient quantities of talent. The fact that the audience was listening to, and apparently enjoying, the radio stations from across the country placed WTAR in the situation of having to compete with these bigger and better financed operations, and WTAR would have to finish second best in any sort of comparison.

By the end of 1924 WTAR's programming line-up for one week was as is shown in Table 1. During this particular week the programs carried at 8:30 P.M. and 8:45 P.M. were from the Radio Show, but similar kinds of programs were being broadcast without a special event.

During the first quarter of 1925 the schedule had been decimated to include only what is shown in Table 2. The programming which WTAR offered of an entertainment nature

TABLE 1
WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF DECEMBER 8, 1924.

WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF DECEMBER 8, 1924¹

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TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6:00	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	
7:00	Dinner Music ²	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	Dinner Music	
7:30							
8:30	Chamber Program ³	Maury High School Orch	Red Deer Club	Portsmouth Talent	Christian Endeavor Union	Norfolk Talent	
8:45	Happy Radio Six Orch	Happy Radio Six Orch	Happy Radio Six Orch	Happy Radio Six Orch	Happy Radio Six Orch	Happy Radio Six Orch	
10:00		Dance Program ⁴			Dance Program ⁴		

¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 7, 1924, III, p. 13.

²Music provided by the Happy Radio Six Orchestra all week.

³Special Chamber of Commerce Program in honor of the First Annual Radio Show.

⁴Music provided by the Monticello Hotel Orchestra, directed by Dave Garson.

TABLE 2
WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF FEBRUARY 9, 1925¹

TABLE 2
WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF FEBRUARY 9, 1925¹

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5:55	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	Weather and Tides	
6:05					Art Gilham Pianist	Art Gilham Pianist	
7:30		Weekly Cotton Market Review					
8:00		Chamber Program					

¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 8, 1925, p. 5.

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appeared on the weekly Chamber of Commerce programs or was randomly spotted throughout the week, as in the case of the appearance of Art Gilham during the week set forth above. The two commercial ventures which had appeared in the latter part of 1924 were gone, and there was nothing to take their places. But the picture, however dark, was not totally black. Two brief rays of light showed forth, and, because of the programming void which otherwise existed early in the year, they are worth noting.

In early January a man wandered into Dr. H. H. Kratzig's Union Mission. That he was a foreigner was immediately evident because no one could understand a word he said; and, because he was incomprehensible, no one was able to figure out what to do for him or how to help him. The credit for taking the step toward the ultimate solution must probably go to Dr. Kratzig, by that time a relative veteran of radio broadcasting in Norfolk. He decided to take the lost soul to WTAR, get him to broadcast and hope that someone could identify the language he spoke.

On Monday, January 7, 1925, the Ledger-Dispatch printed a small story about the plans,¹ and that evening the "Mystery Man" was brought down to the WTAR studios at Reliance Electric Company. The plan almost proved unfeasible before it was put into action because the language barrier was so

¹"To Broadcast Voice of Mystery Man," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 7, 1925, p. 14.

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²Ibid.

high that the WTAR staff had great difficulty explaining, through the wildest gesticulations imaginable, what they wanted this man to do.¹ Eventually, perseverance won the day, and the man spoke into the microphone. Shortly, the phone rang. A barber on Main Street, Frederick Folden, had heard the broadcast and recognised the language. Folden came to WTAR and talked with the man to discover his story.²

His name was Oxecula, and he was a Lap Finn, a naturalist by profession. He had left his homeland, bound for Japan on the first leg of a world tour. His ship put in at Baltimore, and Oxecula disembarked. Before the poor man could return to the ship it had weighed anchor, and Oxecula was stranded. Somehow he found his way to Norfolk, to the Union Mission and to ultimate rescue.

The second bright spot during the first quarter of 1925 also belongs in the public service category. This, however, was the result of some planning, not the result of luck. The Port of Norfolk means boating and shipping, as means both of commerce and means of pleasure. Larger commercial vessels which plied the waters of Hampton Roads and the Chesapeake Bay had personnel trained in receiving and decoding the weather and tide information sent out by the United States Navy. However, the smaller craft were not so blessed. They either

¹Jack Light, personal interview.

²Ibid.

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lacked the proper equipment or the trained personnel or both, but most often they had a standard radio receiver on board for entertainment. For this reason WTAR worked out an arrangement with the weather station at Cape Henry in 1924 whereby the information on weather and tides would be made available to WTAR so that the station could present a weather program Monday through Friday at 5:55 P.M.¹ Mail indicated that this service was greatly appreciated by the skippers of the smaller craft, and, therefore, the decision was made to increase the service. Another program was put on the air at 12:30 P.M., and the information in each of the programs was increased.²

April, May and June saw little variation in the programming pattern described above. WTAR was broadcasting the weather and tides program twice a day, and the Chamber of Commerce continued its weekly efforts toward a better and more prosperous Norfolk. But although the regularly scheduled programming was minimal during this period, WTAR was available for special programs, especially if they were commercial in nature.

¹There is a discrepancy in the air time for this program between the program listings as shown in Table 1 and the newspaper article describing it, and it is impossible to determine which is correct.

²"Weather News for Small Craft," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 14, 1925, p. 9: "Station WTAR Will Add to Weather Report," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 15, 1925, IV, p. 8.

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The D. Pender Company was a regional grocery chain, and in April of 1925 it opened its 200th store. To celebrate this event D. Pender put on a buffet supper and gala entertainment program, arranging for WTAR to broadcast it from 9:00 to 11:00 P.M. from the Norfolk Armory. The program was as follows:

- 9:00 Southern Night Hawk Orchestra.
- 9:10 T. P. Thompson, President of the Chamber of Commerce, "The Value of Pender's Organization to Tidewater."
- 9:20 Jesse Gray--better known as "The Elder Cobb"--Performing Comedy Sketches.
- 9:30 Mrs. Frantz Naylor, President of the Norfolk Women's Club, "The Relation of Pender's Organization to the Housewife."
- 9:40 The Southland Jubilee Singers.
- 9:50 W. O. Saunders, Associate Editor of Collier's Weekly, and Owner of the Independent, Elizabeth City, North Carolina, "A Fellow North Carolinian."
- 10:00 The Southland Jubilee Singers.
- 10:15-12:00 Dancing
Announcer R. W. Coates "The Voice of Hampton Roads."¹

The program represented the greatest concentration of entertainment broadcast by WTAR since the Radio Show of 1924, and, therefore, the "D. Pender Special" was a high-water mark for the first half of 1925. In addition, the fact that WTAR received some income for carrying the program makes it equally notable.

During May the station reorganised the regularly scheduled programming it was carrying. The relative popularity of the

¹Advertisement for D. Pender Company, Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, I, p. 8; "Pender Celebration to be broadcast Over Radio Tuesday Night," ibid., II, p. 7, April 12, 1925.

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weather program at 5:55 P.M. probably was the factor which initially caused WTAR to add some small amounts of entertainment to the schedule immediately following that program.¹ Occasionally other non-entertainment features were added during this later afternoon hour, such as the "Weekly Review of the Cotton Market."²

By June the programming had settled into a fairly predictable pattern. The station was on the air only one hour a day, from 5:55 P.M. to 6:45 P.M., and that hour consisted of the weather and tides, daily produce reports from the Virginia Department of Agriculture, baseball scores and local entertainment. The weather and tides broadcast at 12:30 P.M. had been dropped sometime in June, and by the end of the month the schedule had been slightly altered. Programs would now begin at 6:25, instead of 5:55, and would run until 7:30, rather than 6:45, but the content would remain unchanged.³

The format for this hour of daily programming was flexible enough so that it permitted a fair amount of variety. For several weeks in July the Navy presented once a week programs of interest to naval personnel. At other times there

¹Supra, Table 2, p. 76.

²Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark and the Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April, May and June, 1925, passim.

³"WTAR Is Heard in Schenectady," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, June 20, 1925, p. 20; "WTAR Changes its Schedule," ibid., June 27, 1925, p. 19.

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were speeches on banking, bank courtesy and cooking, and the entertainment came from a number of amateur sources.¹

The month of August presented another opportunity for WTAR to participate in a special event. The occasion was the Democratic primary, and WTAR and the Ledger-Dispatch banded together to broadcast the election returns. The station went on the air at 8:00 P.M. and was scheduled to remain on most of the evening, with the Navy Band providing entertainment during the slack points.²

At some date shortly after the election returns WTAR went off the air, and no mention was made of the fact until August 22, 1925, when the Ledger wrote that the station had been off since the early part of the month for repairs. The article concluded on a rather ominous note: "Those who control WTAR's destiny have not yet decided how often, and at what times, the station will work when it is in operation again."³ Through the rest of August and most of September WTAR was silent, and late in September the Pilot wrote that "for nearly three months extensive improvements have been underway at the big plant at 519 W. Twenty-first St." A new antenna system had been installed, and other less obvious repairs had been made.

¹Ibid., July 4, 1925 through July 26, 1925, passim.

²"Election Bulletins," ibid., August 4, 1925, p. 1.

³"WTAR Getting Overhauling," ibid., August 22, 1925, p. 20.

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The programs for the new season had not been set yet, but Reliance Electric Company hoped to have the station back on the air by the middle of October.¹ Within a week, however, opportunity would knock, and WTAR would not be in a position to refuse to open the door.

It was more difficult for the Ledger-Dispatch to compete with the Virginian Pilot on the sports pages than anywhere else. Most of the games or matches were held in the afternoons, and it was difficult, at best, for the afternoon newspaper, i.e., the Ledger, to provide current sports news. It was necessary to ". . . make up an angle the next day" on most sports items.² When the World Series came around each year the Ledger probably felt this weakness exposed more than at any other time. In 1925, however, the paper decided to do something about the situation. If it could not print the late news about the series, then it would keep the name of the Ledger-Dispatch before Norfolk residents by having the paper broadcast the games. And it went a step further. It hung a gigantic scoreboard in front of its Plume Street Building and placed loudspeakers around it, hoping to get a crowd to gather in front of the newspaper building to hear the game and to keep up with the statistics.

¹"WTAR to be on Air Again Within Two Weeks," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September 27, 1925, III, p. 8.

²Tom Hanes, personal interview.

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1925, p. 10

On Saturday, October 3, 1925, the Ledger announced its plan for the series. The broadcasts would be done by the paper after having received the reports through a "telegraph relay system" made possible by the Associated Press. It was, in short, to be a recreation of the events in Pittsburgh and Washington. The station had been pronounced fit for operation and expected to cover a 200-mile radius with its 100 watts of power.¹

The Series began on October 7 and ran through October 15 with two postponed games between beginning and end, and to have read the Ledger during this period one might be led to believe that everybody in the city was crammed on Plume Street looking at the scoreboard and listening to the men of the Ledger Sports Department describe the games. The paper was going to get as many miles out of its investment of time and money as it could. It claimed that the "telephone bell" was constantly ringing, that phone calls had been received from up to 100 miles away and that a flood of letters had come to the paper all highly complimentary toward the station and the Ledger-Dispatch, of course.²

The Pilot had gotten in on the act, too; but, if the amount of bragging done is any indication, it finished a poor

¹"Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR Ready to Broadcast Series," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 3, 1925, p. 24.

²"Scoreboard and Radio Delight Fans," ibid., October 8, 1925, p. 10.

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¹"Virg
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1925, p. 1.

²"Worl
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ond. It, too, had put up a score board in front of its
lding, but little mention was made of it once the Series
rted.¹

When the Series was finished, when Pittsburgh had come
m behind to win the last three games to beat Washington,
minor euphoria of the successful broadcast hung on in
folk. Forest Sharp, President of Reliance Electric
pany, stated in no uncertain terms that the 1925 World
ies broadcast was the most successful programming that
R had done since the 1924 Democratic Conventions. He had
ters to support his case, too: H. L. Jacobs of Suffolk
te the station, "'Fine, clear, perfect, wonderful, great
some of the expressions . . . I heard this afternoon
le WTAR was broadcasting the World Series,'" and L. D.
ry of Colerain, North Carolina wrote "'I wish to thank you
the good broadcasting you have been doing the last few
,'"²

Suddenly, too, Forest Sharp was a spokesman for local
dcasting in the national dialogue over the viability of
r-power stations:

Our experience with the series . . . has convinced me
that however hot the argument of local stations versus

¹"Virginian Pilot Scoreboard to Flash Games, Play by
" Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 7,
p. 1.

²"World Series Broadcasting Rings the Bell," Norfolk
Dispatch, October 17, 1925, p. 24.

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ibid., October

super-power stations grows, there remains a distinct field of usefulness for local broadcasting plants.¹

One cannot fault WTAR for this sudden burst of optimism and enthusiasm, for the Series was an oasis in the programming desert in which WTAR found itself in 1925. The station had broadcast something which its audience thought significant, and the audience had responded. And the World Series of 1925 had thrown the Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR back into each other's arms. The paper could not deny the results which its broadcasts had brought, and, in fact, it appeared to be so impressed that it immediately sought to continue the relationship. Just ten days after the Series ended the Ledger announced, in front page headlines, that beginning that Saturday it would broadcast college football scores over WTAR along with ". . . brief accounts of several of the larger games in which Virginia and Carolina colleges figure."²

But the situation was still rather grim from the station's point-of-view. It had been off the air most of August, all of September and all of October, except when it was doing the World Series broadcasts. As October closed WTAR put its cards on the table. Jack Light was interviewed by the Virginian Pilot and said that it had cost the Reliance Electric Company \$7,500 to run WTAR during 1925 and that there

¹Forest Sharp quoted, ibid.

²"Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR Broadcast Football Scores," ibid., October 24, 1925, p. 1.

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¹Jack
Station," 1
1925, p. 11

²"New
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³"WTAR
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practically no income to offset these expenses. His
 statement was to the point:

It would be a regrettable thing for the community if we were compelled to silence the 'Voice of Hampton Roads,' . . . but unless sufficient paid programs are assured by November 8, we will be forced to shut down.¹

WTAR must have received enough encouragement for it did shut down. In fact it was back on the air in November church services for the first time in over a year. The North Methodist Church would be installing a new pastor on Monday, November 15, and WTAR installed a special line to broadcast the Reverend C. J. Harrell's first sermon. If all to go well with that broadcast then the services would be a regular Sunday feature over the station.² Technical difficulties did develop with the first broadcast, but, after several weeks of testing, they were corrected. Epworth would continue.³

By the last half of November WTAR had resurrected its P.M. broadcasting program, but it was more sophisticated. It contained the market reports as it had before, but there was news from a studio built in the Ledger-Dispatch

¹Jack Light, quoted in "Public Must Support WTAR, Or Lose on," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 30, p. 16.

²"New Minister to Broadcast from Epworth," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, November 9, 1925, p. 14.

³"WTAR Plans 2 Music Nights Next Week," ibid., December 1925, p. 10; "Epworth Going On Air Again," ibid., December 1925, p. 10.

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Building on Plume Street. And another new program appeared about this same time: a concert, apparently broadcast only once, by the Raymond Hanbury Orchestra on Tuesday, November 24.¹ The situation was improving, although in absolute terms the station was on the air only slightly more than it had been during the spring and early summer.

What WTAR did not need, at that point in time, was competition from another radio station, but somebody wanted to compete. His name was M. T. Elliott, owner of the Elliott Motor Car Company and part-owner of the Elliott-Gilpin Radio Corporation. He saw, in the rather difficult situation in which WTAR found itself, an opportunity to successfully involve himself in radio. There were only two powerful radio stations in Virginia and North Carolina, said Elliott, and he felt that Norfolk deserved better than what it was getting. He, therefore, applied to the Department of Commerce for a license for a 500-watt station to be operated in Norfolk or, preferably, in Suffolk where it could serve Norfolk without undue interference. "Steve Static" bylined a column in the Pilot which announced Elliott's plan, and it was obvious that "Static" clearly favored Elliott over the existing WTAR.²

¹"WTAR Offers Dinner Music," ibid., November 21, 1925, p. 24.

²Steve Static, "Fate of Suffolk Station May be Known Tomorrow," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, November 29, 1925, IV, p. 1.

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Elliott had two problems as he left Norfolk to plead his case in Washington. The first was that he was, in effect, asking to share time with WTAR, and the second was that he had secured an option on a 500-watt broadcasting plant which would expire on December 5.¹ He had, therefore, just under one week to secure a license, but the fact that he was directly demanding time on WTAR's wave length gave the station an issue upon which it could oppose his efforts. The opposition would mean a delay, and a delay would mean defeat.

On Monday, November 30, WTAR moved into action, it authorized H. B. Goodridge to act in its behalf on the matter. Although in a few years Goodridge was to buy WTAR, at this time he did not have any direct connection with the station other than that of close friend of Forest Sharp. Goodridge wrote a detailed letter to the Department of Commerce in Washington, setting forth WTAR's opposition to the new station on WTAR's wave length. He summarized his letter for the press:

The granting of a permit for another broadcasting station in this vicinity . . . without an agreement in advance as to the time of broadcasting programs would naturally bring about a controversial situation and would be extremely detrimental to the advertising of Norfolk.²

¹"Try to Clear Way for New Broadcaster," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, December 2, 1925, p. 1.

²Letter from Forest Sharp to Department of Commerce quoted in: "WTAR Operator Opposes License for Suffolk," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 1, 1925, p. 16.

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On Tuesday the battle lines had been clearly drawn. Elliott reported back from Washington that he had received considerable encouragement from the Department of Commerce,¹ and, indeed, the letter Forest Sharp received from the authorities in Washington seemed to support Elliott's analysis:

The Bureau has received your letter of the 30th ultimo opposing the licensing of an additional broadcasting station in Norfolk, Virginia and stating that if the Department has any intention of granting a license for another station in Norfolk you would like to have the opportunity of appearing before the Department for the purpose of opposing such action.

There seems to be considerable sentiment in Norfolk in favor of a better station there. It is claimed that you are unable to get service from outside stations and that your station does not meet the public demand.

The Department is giving consideration to the demand for better service in Norfolk and if you care to appear personally an opportunity to be heard will of course be accorded to you.²

By Friday, December 4, no decision had been reached in Washington, but each of the parties was mustering support for its cause. The Elliott forces decided to call a meeting of all the radio dealers in the Norfolk area to attempt to get them to support the bid for a new station. L. H. Gilpin, the other part-owner of the Elliott-Gilpin Radio Corporation, was confident of the outcome of the meeting:

¹"Ruling on Suffolk Radio Station Expected Today," ibid., December 2, 1925, p. 16.

²Letter from United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, to Mr. F. W. Sharp, Reliance Electric Company, Inc., December 2, 1925.

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. . . He was certain a majority of the dealers favored the Elliott plan to give Tidewater Virginia a first rate station, with direct wire service to studios at New York where the country's best radio programs are presented. . . .¹

Meanwhile, WTAR was garnering support from those organizations which had been broadcasting over WTAR. The Cosmopolitan Club supported WTAR's position with a wire to the Department of Commerce:

Please do not grant any additional broadcasting license at Norfolk until WTAR and all interested parties are actually heard.²

The Red Deer Club, the Retail Merchants Association, the Reverend H. H. Kratzig and the Norfolk Advertising Board all came out in favor of the WTAR position that no decision should be made until each side had an opportunity to present its case.³

WTAR was fighting the battle well, but it was just a bit too enthusiastic in its opposition, for Forest Sharp felt compelled to issue a statement setting forth the WTAR position:

I desire to correct a seeming impression in the minds of a large number of people that the Reliance Electric Company, as the owner of WTAR, is opposing the establishment of another broadcasting station in this community. We most emphatically are not opposing any station. We would be delighted to see Norfolk, Newport News or any

¹"Radio Declares to Take Vote on New Station," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, December 4, 1925, p. 1.

²Wire from the Cosmopolitan Club of Norfolk, Virginia to D. B. Carson, Commissioner, Bureau of Navigation, Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C.

³"Radio Men Delay Action Regarding Suffolk Station," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 5, 1925, p. 14.

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other city in this territory have a station. What we are opposed to is another station on our wave length. We insist upon reserving that for Norfolk exclusively.¹

Late Friday things were not looking good for Elliott. The radio dealers had not come through with the support he had sought. Indeed they had not even met as originally planned.² Time, too, was working against the new station. There was less than a day remaining on Elliott's option on the new equipment.

Saturday brought no decision from the Bureau of Navigation. The battle was over:

My option on the Western Electric transmitting equipment I wanted to install has expired. . . . I have lost the big cash forfeit put up to secure control of the apparatus and the scheme is dead and buried. It can only be resurrected by some more equipment of the type I want becoming available, and I have no reason to believe that will soon occur.

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I am aware . . . that WTAR represented to the Department of Commerce, when it opposed my license application, that it proposed to increase power and install first class apparatus. It is up to them to come through with what they represented.³

WTAR had met the threat of competition and had defeated it. It would be decades before a second station would permanently establish itself in Norfolk, although it would only be a few years before a station would spring up in Newport News across

¹Forest Sharp, quoted ibid.

²Ibid.

³M. T. Elliott, quoted in: "Suffolk Radio Station Plan Is Failure," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, December 5, 1925, p. 1.

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the harbor. Within five years, however, WTAR would have to do battle again, not with competition this time, but with the public it was serving.

The year ended with WTAR beginning to climb from the abyss that had been 1925. The year had been hard. Programming had been hard to find. The hours on the air had been minimal, and the station had been off the air for close to three months. A competitor had tried to seize part of the station's broadcasting time. But by the end of December things were better. Church services were back on the air. The Ledger-Dispatch was broadcasting daily from its own studio. There were some paid programs. Paul-Gale-Greenwood, D. Pender and the Motor Sales and Service Company all provided programs in one week in December.¹ The Paul-Gale-Greenwood program was one hour filled with Professor T. H. Barritt singing and playing selections on cathedral chimes, oboe, silver saw, musical glasses and saxophone.² It must have been one of the most unique offerings of that year, or any other.

WTAR was not completely established yet, but by the end of 1925 one could safely say that its chances for success were appreciably improved. There must have been many at Reliance Electric who hoped that 1926 would not be as hard on WTAR as 1925 had been.

¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 15, 1925, p. 6, and December 16, 1925, p. 3.

²"WTAR Plans 2 Music Nights Next Week," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, December 12, 1925, p. 10.

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CHAPTER VII

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Whatever else might be said of 1926 at WTAR this much is certain: it was better than 1925. The effort which must have been put forth during 1925 directed toward making the station a viable entity in Norfolk started to yield some results in 1926, and, while in cold statistical terms these results are not readily apparent, one senses that by the end of the year there was the first light of dawn after a hard and cold night.

The first part of January saw a continuance of what had gone before, but by the end of the month new plans were announced. Mrs. Forest Sharp assumed the position of producer for WTAR, her job being apparently to produce a series of Friday night entertainment programs.¹ Jack Light might have been the manager of the station, but Forest Sharp owned it and his wife was a reasonably talented musician not above

¹"WTAR Invites Volunteers for Programs," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 23, 1926, p. 12.

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Mrs. Sharp was worthy of her assignment, however, and on January 23, 1926, she announced that WTAR would hold auditions for talent to appear on the new Friday night series. The first program would go on from 8:00 to 9:00 P.M. Friday, January 29, featuring Anderson's Red Bird Orchestra.²

The program for the twenty-ninth went off as planned, but the next Friday, February 5, there was nothing. Such was the case, too, with each succeeding Friday until March 5. Mrs. Sharp's enthusiasm appears to have outstripped her programming ability. On March 5, however, the series got started again. The Raymond Hanbury Orchestra performed. The next week the colored Glee Club of Raymond Hayes took its turn. Then on March 19 the Rambling Virginians appeared, followed on the twenty-sixth by Rathbone Lodge No. 94, Knights of Pythias.³ The concluding program of the short series was on April 2, presenting John Hartsook, with renditions on the steel saw, and the vocal stylings of Miss Zola Z. Knode, who

¹Joel Carlson, conversations, March 30, 1970 through April 17, 1970, passim. Carlson indicated that he recalls some dissension being created by Mrs. Sharp's appointment to this position at the station.

²"WTAR Invites Volunteers for Programs," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 23, 1926, p. 12.

³Ibid., March 5, 1926 through March 26, 1926, passim. An interesting sociological note is struck with respect to the Raymond Hayes Glee Club. The press always took care to note when a performance was being presented by Blacks, even in the headlines relating to a full story.

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travelled all the way from Princeton, West Virginia expressly for this appearance. The last program was shortened to thirty minutes, from 8:30 to 9:00 P.M. The first half-hour was a program of local talent sponsored by Schneer's, Inc., a Norfolk Jewelry store.¹ It was the first paid program to be aired by WTAR since the one presented by the Motor Sales and Service Company the previous December. The most encouraging aspect of Mrs. Sharp's series was that, when it ended, the void was filled. In the same article which announced the final program it was indicated that Tuesday night dance programs would begin the following week.²

The first quarter of 1926 offers other evidence that WTAR was making serious attempts to get out of its programming doldrums. Since May of 1924 the Chamber of Commerce "Booster" programs had been off the air. In February of 1926 WTAR, guided by the strong hand of Mrs. Forest Sharp, with the title of Program Director, unveiled a plan to get a similar sort of program back on the air. This time the pitch was aimed at the Norfolk Advertising Board, rather than the Chamber of Commerce. On Tuesday, February 9, WTAR would put on a program designed to show the Advertising Board the value of

¹"Visitors Will Appear at WTAR," ibid., April 1, 1926, p. 4; "Steel Saw Artists on Station WTAR," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 2, 1926, p. 8; "Two Programs from Local Station," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 2, 1926, p. 3.

²"Visitors Will Appear on Station WTAR," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 1, 1926, p. 4.

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radio in community advertising. It would go on the air at 10:30 P.M. and would run until 2:00 A.M., or longer. It would have three dance orchestras, other assorted entertainment and short three-minute speeches about Norfolk between the entertainment segments.¹ Additionally, there would be a contest to determine who had heard the program from the greatest distance.²

The program was a tremendous success . . . locally. WTAR was deluged with phone calls from listeners in the immediate area, and requests for songs were still coming in when the station signed off the air at 3:30 A.M. However, the weather was not good for distance, and, evidently, little long-distance response was received.³ Worst of all from the station's standpoint, the Advertising Board was unimpressed. The series never went on the air.

In spite of the difficulties with the Advertising Board program matters brightened for WTAR in April. The Tuesday night dance programs were considered a regular feature after just two weeks on the air, and on April 11, 1926, WTAR was able to announce another sponsored broadcast. This would be produced by the William A. Burchard Company, Norfolk

¹"WTAR To Demonstrate Community Advertising Value," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 6, 1926, p. 24.

²"WTAR To Conduct Distance Test," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 9, 1926, p. 14.

³"WTAR Staff Deluged with Phone Calls," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 10, 1926, p. 2.

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Electrical Contractors, and it would go on the air Saturday nights from 10:00 to 12:30 P.M. Jack Light sounded optimistic, and not a little pleased when he said, "It is not impossible that other local firms may sponsor radio programs from WTAR in the near future."¹

By the time the second of Burchard's programs was to go on the air the Ledger-Dispatch could announce the performers of the Burchard Syncopators and the Parry Concert Singers,² after the good response received from the second program Burchard announced that the programs would continue for the next month at least.³

In May another sponsored program was heard, a one-time concert sponsored by the Phillip-Levy Company.⁴ By May the station was on the air Monday through Saturday with the remnants of its one-hour news and feature programs. These were now only thirty minutes long, with weather, market reports and news at 6:30 and ball scores at 6:45. In addition the station was on the air Tuesday evenings for one hour with a program of dance music and on Saturday evenings with the

¹Jack Light, quoted in: "WTAR To Broadcast Saturday Dance Programs," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 11, 1926, III, p. 10.

²"Four Musical Programs from Station WTAR Next Week," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 24, 1926, p. 36.

³"Mystery Entertainment Tomorrow Night," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 25, 1926, III, p. 10.

⁴"WTAR Presents Double Bill," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, May 1, 1926, p. 25.

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Burchard Syncopators. As of May 9 the Tuesday programs were to be sponsored by the Darst Tire and Rubber Company of Portsmouth and were called "The Willard Battery Hour,"¹ Occasional Sunday features were also aired, but they were scheduled only on an irregular basis. This meant that WTAR was regularly on the air six hours per week. Two and one-half hours of these six were sponsored, indicating that the programming was supplied to the station and the station received a fee for airing them. The remaining three and one-half hours were supplied by the Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch. In this latter case the paper paid for the lines from the Ledger-Dispatch Building studios to WTAR, but the station received no income from the programs.

The month of May brought another event which represents a significant attitudinal change for WTAR. The Loew Theater chain had revealed plans to build a new theater in Norfolk, and WTAR had asked, over the air, how its audience felt about the station putting the stage shows from the theater on the air. In the space of forty-five minutes the station received seventy-seven phone calls all favorable to the idea. Ultimately it also received 100 letters, these also in favor of the proposed programs. Jack Light had checked the plan out with the principals of Loew's Theaters, and they agreed to

¹Ibid., May 1, 1926, through May 29, 1926, passim.

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the idea as long as the theater was put to no expense. The station then went to the Advertising Board, proposing that WTAR would put the programs on the air if the Advertising Board would pay the costs.¹ Nothing ever came of the idea, at least not in this instance, but the significant fact is that for the first time WTAR was not willing to assume the expenses of remote broadcasts by itself. It seems fair to assume that one of two factors could account for this change: either the station was in no financial position to assume these costs, or the station felt that its potential was now sufficiently great that it could demand a return for its programming. Jack Light had performed a quick, and rather creative, statistical analysis of the phone-letter response he had received, and he concluded that WTAR's audience was about 40,000. He hedged a bit by saying, "Well, maybe there wasn't [sic] that many, . . . but there were a lot of them and make no mistake about it."² Light's enthusiasm would seem to indicate that the station was beginning to feel that its time was a valuable enough commodity that it could demand, and receive, payment. At a time when all of WTAR's regularly

¹"Fans Deluge WTAR With Requests for Loew Programs," ibid., May 8, 1926, p. 24.

²Jack Light quoted, ibid. Light had assumed that the responses were roughly equal to two percent of the total audience. On that basis the station would have had to receive around 800 phone calls and letters, a quantity never mentioned or even approximated in the article. Hence Light's need to qualify.

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scheduled programs were being provided the station at no cost, and at a time when two programs were paying for the station's time, the attitude toward these new programs is reasonable. If this was the case, then the assumption was wrong, or, perhaps more accurately, premature. By the end of 1926 it would be more realistic.

The two summers prior to 1926 had seen WTAR go into a kind of hibernation. The summer of 1926 was similar, although the cutback of programming was not attributed to any necessary equipment repairs as it had been in the past. By June 15 the "Willard Battery Hour" was off the air, as was the Burchard Dance Program. From that date until well into the fall the only regularly scheduled programs on WTAR were the Ledger-Dispatch news programs, Monday through Friday now, at 6:30 P.M. It was during this summer quarter that WTAR was touched by the regulatory confusion which governed broadcasting in the pre-Federal Radio Commission days.

In January WTAR had asked the Department of Commerce to grant an increase in power. The request had been placed on file at the time, but it was not granted because the Department of Commerce was somewhat confused as to its authority in the realm of broadcasting. Commerce stated that no action should be expected on WTAR's request until Congress should give the Department the necessary regulatory powers.¹

¹"WTAR Requests Right to Use High Power," ibid., January 9, 1926, p. 22.

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By May the situation was more confused than before. Decisions against the Department of Commerce had been given in two cases by this time, and the result was that radio licenses were generally available without any sort of discretionary limitations imposed by the Secretary of Commerce.¹ WTAR received assurance that its request would be granted as soon as the appropriate legislation was passed by Congress which would correct the shortcomings of the existing laws.²

Congress failed to pass any kind of comprehensive regulatory law by the time it adjourned for the summer of 1926, and the federal broadcasting regulatory situation had worsened. The Attorney-General had issued an opinion regarding the scope of powers of the Secretary of Commerce in the realm of radio, and that opinion made it clear that the powers were very limited under the Radio Act of 1912: Commerce had to grant all requests.³ WTAR could, therefore, move ahead with its plans, if it so chose.

The time was ripe for making such a change. It has been noted that WTAR had established the precedent of shutting down during the summer for equipment modifications. And during the summer M. T. Elliott announced that his plans for

¹Hoover vs. Intercity Radio Co., Inc. 286 F. 1003 (D.C. Cir.), February 5, 1926; United States vs. Zenith Radio Corporation et al., 12 F. 2d 614 (N.D. Ill.), April 16, 1926.

²"License for 1000-Watt Set Promised WTAR," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, May 19, 1926, p. 9.

³35 Ops. Att'y Gen. 126, July 8, 1926.

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other Norfolk station were not as dead as he had thought they were the previous December.¹ There was no legal impediment to WTAR, Elliott² was biting at the station's heels again, but no alterations were made. Economics was the reason given by Jack Light:

We are willing to install new equipment provided we receive assurance from merchants and manufacturers that they are willing to help us defray the expenses of operating by putting on programs sponsored by them.

There's hardly a station in the country that does not get help from some outside sources. Even WJZ, one of the biggest, is putting on programs sponsored by commercial concerns, and is thus enabled to cut down its operating expenses considerably.

Someone must foot broadcasting's bills. We can't do it all. But if we can get help, and I believe we will, the station will be built.³

Some question might certainly be raised about WTAR's absolute dedication toward the goal of increasing its power at this time. From a purely business standpoint it did not make a great deal of sense. The station was not generating a sizeable amount of income by July of 1926, although one could have countered this argument by saying that if the station were of a higher quality, physically, then it would be more attractive to potential sponsors. There must, also, have been a rather nagging question about what the new broadcasting law would do to rein in the infant industry which had

¹Supra, pp. 91-96.

²"Elliott and WTAR High-Power Radio Plans Given Boost," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 17, 1926, p. 26.

³Jack Light, quoted in: "Support Needed by WTAR in Order to Raise Power," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, July 18, 1926, I, p. 9.

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been given its head for close to six years. If the logical minds were to prevail they would say that a wait-and-see attitude was the best. As matters developed, however, the National Association of Broadcasters provided the easy solution for the owners and manager of WTAR. In response to a move toward order by the broadcasting industry itself, the Reliance Electric Company issued the following statement near the end of July, 1926:

Station WTAR, Reliance Electric Company, has received a communication from the National Association of Broadcasters, urging them to sign a pledge not in any way to change their wave length or power, or in any way to operate their station contrary to the agreement held in license issued by the Department of Commerce. As the station is a member of the National Association of Broadcasters, and has been informed that all the members are taking this pledge, the owners of WTAR have signed and forwarded their pledge to the Association.

In a communication from the Commission of the Department of Commerce, which informed us that although the Department, according to the ruling of the attorney-general, has no authority at this time controlling wave lengths or power that a station may use, they have asked us to live up to the spirit adopted by the conference in Washington of all radio interests, and to cooperate with them that he [sic] intended to live up to the license as issued by the Department.

The Station owners feel that if the above is not carried out and a station does contrary to these requests that [sic] if Congress enacts drastic legislation in the fall, it may undo everything that may have been done at great expense.¹

WTAR had been extricated from what might have been a rather difficult situation by the National Association of

¹Statement issued by the Reliance Electric Company quoted in: "WTAR to Keep Present Wave and not Boost Power This Year," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 24, 1926, p. 30.

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Broadcasters. The promises made in January would have been expensive, and rather risky, to keep in July.

The World Series of 1926 was billed as the opening of a very promising fall sports season for WTAR and the Ledger-Dispatch.¹ But the official opening of the season was preceded by the broadcast of the heavyweight championship fight between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney. It was an important bout, but the broadcast would have been very much like the other fight recreations done by the station in those early years if the weather had not been so bad that distant stations, broadcasting the fight directly, could not be picked up. As events developed, WTAR was the only station that anyone in Norfolk could pick up. The broadcast received good reviews from the Ledger-Dispatch, as could be expected. The fight had proven two things, said the paper. First, the day of the local station had not passed: if it had not been for WTAR very few in Tidewater would have heard the fight. Second, it doesn't make a bit of difference how good one's set is: if the weather is bad the best set will not pick up distant stations.²

A little more than a week after the Dempsey-Tunney fight the 1926 World Series began. WTAR and the Ledger broadcast the games between the Yankees and the Cardinals in precisely

¹"Fall Sports Broadcasting Plans are Unusually Promising," ibid., September 16, 1926, p. 26.

²"WTAR Delivers When Others Can't Be Heard," ibid., September 25, 1926, p. 16.

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the same manner as they had the previous year, and with the same apparent degree of success.¹

It will be recalled that, up to this point, all sports broadcasting done by WTAR and the Ledger had been produced by re-creation from wire service teletype or telegraph reports. Nothing had been done by live remote. The reason for this probably is that sporting events of sufficient caliber to warrant an expenditure of funds had not been staged in Norfolk. But during the fall of 1926 three college games were scheduled into League Park, and WTAR and the Ledger broadcast them. In October and November Tom Hanes did the play-by-play for the games between Virginia Polytechnical Institute and the University of Maryland, St. Johns University and the University of Richmond and Wake Forest and William and Mary. Hanes rather enjoys recalling some of the problems he had with those early broadcasts:

Back in those days there was something you could always count on when you would go out to do a remote. You'd be on pins and needles, not knowing whether the engineers from WTAR would show up. Then about three minutes before the kickoff they would arrive, and they'd scatter wires all over the place. Just as the kickoff came they'd stick a microphone in front of your face, and you'd start talking into what always turned out to be a dead mike. It never failed. They'd get things straightened out after a while, but never before the game had started. They just didn't have the staff, and they didn't have the money to do the thing right.²

¹Ibid., October 2, 1926 through October 10, 1926, passim.

²Tom Hanes, personal interview.

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There were times, too, when the difficulties Hanes encountered were not the fault of the station engineers:

The Press Box down at League Field was up on top of the grandstand. It was hung up there with some rusty nails, and it was none too sturdy. Then, they had a little box for me to go into on the roof of the Press Box.

Well, one day I started to go up there to do the game, and along came some of my cronies to provide cheer, comfort and corn whiskey. They didn't report to me directly, though. They got up behind this little box and started pushing it and shaking it, and I knew damn good and well that the thing was going to topple. All it would have taken was one good lunge and off it would have gone from a height of fifty feet. Well, I turned around and started saying some things to these people that should not have been said on the radio. They didn't have any way for me to cut the mike off. They had to get a technician from somewhere to do it. But anyway I was more worried about my neck than about whether my remarks were being broadcast. After that, however, they did do one thing for me. They put in a little gizmo that I could use to cut the mike off if I had some extra things to say.¹

The idea of broadcasting the stage shows from the new Loew's Theater which WTAR had put forth earlier in 1926 was not enthusiastically received by potential sponsors. However, in October new plans along similar lines were made public. The Norfolk Electric Club, a trade organization composed of firms in Norfolk which manufactured, sold or serviced electrical appliances, had worked out an agreement with the Wilmer and Vincent Theaters chain and WTAR whereby the station would do "frequent broadcasts" from the theaters' stages. The Electric Club agreed to assume the costs, and WTAR agreed to

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donate its time. Original plans called for the programs to be rotated among the three Wilmer and Vincent theaters.¹

Less than one week after the original announcement the plans for the new program series were more definite. The programs would be broadcast daily, over the dinner hour, from the Granby Theater, the most convenient location because the Reliance Electric Company had a radio parts store next door to the theater. The Pilot heralded the programs as "a new era in local broadcasting."²

By October 23 the arrangements were firm: the series would begin the following Monday, October 25, and it would consist of organ and orchestra concerts plus the entertainers appearing at the theater. The programs would go on the air Monday through Fridays, from 6:30 to 7:30 P.M. To accommodate the new series the Ledger-Dispatch news broadcasts would be moved to 6:15 P.M.³

On the appointed Monday the Granby Theater Hour went on the air with the following line-up:

6:30-7:10 Organ Selections by S. L. Stambough.
7:10-7:20 Orchestra and organ under the direction of
Walter Hanimer. Selections from "The
Firefly" by Friml.

¹"Electric Club Arranging Local Theater Broadcasting," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 16, 1926, p. 26.

²"Local Broadcast Station to Radio Theater Programs," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 21, 1926, I, p. 4.

³"WTAR Testing Equipment for 'Granby Hour'," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 23, 1926, p. 26.

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7:20-7:30 Madam Roselle, The Carolina Nightingale.²

The costs of the programs were to be borne by the Norfolk Electric Club, and at the time of the original announcement the Club reported that it had already covered fifty percent of those costs.² Later, however, it was revealed that Wilmer and Vincent were also sharing the expenses.³ Regardless of how the technical and production costs were to be broken up WTAR was supposed to donate its time. However, indications are that before the series was to run its course, WTAR was to receive some income in the form of sponsorship by the Gill Coffee Company. Gill Coffee's name never appeared in the program listing of either Norfolk paper, but Jack Light states absolutely that Gill was involved with the series and that WTAR received money from Gill to carry the program from the Granby Theater.⁴

The "Granby Theater Hour" was the most successful program which WTAR had carried to date. It lasted from October 25, 1926 through April 15, 1927 when it was replaced by a series

¹"Granby Theater and WTAR to Begin New Joint Program," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 25, 1926, p. 12.

²"Electric Club Arranging Local Theater Broadcasting," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 16, 1926, p. 26.

³"Will Go On Air at 6:30 from Granby Daily," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 24, 1926, p. 6.

⁴Jack Light, personal interview.

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December of 1926 found WTAR in only a slightly better position than it had been in January. The Ledger-Dispatch news programs and the "Granby Theater Hour" were the sum total of the regular program offerings as 1926 prepared to give way to 1927. However, between January and December a good deal of significance had taken place. The first half of the year had been active with a respectable number of both commercial and noncommercial programs, but the activity had given way, by the middle of June, to a quiet summer.

The fall of 1926 brought programming activity back to WTAR. There was the World Series, a prize fight and the first live football games done by the station. Then, as the year was coming to a close the "Granby Theater Hour" established itself for a four and one-half month stay. The dawn that was 1926 would yield to the light of 1927, and WTAR would be able to see that it was, indeed, on the right path toward success.

¹"Elaborate Radio Program Tonight Promise of WTAR," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 15, 1927, p. 5.

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CHAPTER VIII

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The year of 1927 recorded the establishment of the basis of modern broadcasting regulation by Congress. It was, therefore, a significant year for the broadcasting industry, and it was a significant year for WTAR, too. The struggles, inevitable frustrations and constant programming problems of the past were replaced by significant success. During 1927 WTAR saw new programs, new series, new sponsors, new facilities and even new competition. When the year was over WTAR had made it clear that it was a radio station that was in Norfolk to stay.

In 1926 Jack Light had publicly committed WTAR to an increase in power, but fortunately the regulatory morass in Washington had caused the plans to be shelved. Until new legislation could be passed by Congress WTAR had agreed to do nothing about its power increase.¹ In January of 1927, however, the station started to take the necessary steps toward raising its power, seemingly ignorant, or independent, of what was happening in Washington. On January 29, 1927 the

¹Supra, pp. 101-104.

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House of Representatives passed what would ultimately be called the Radio Act of 1927, and on that same day WTAR announced that it was going ahead with its plans for a 500-watt broadcasting plan, with April 1 established as the tentative date for the initial use of the new equipment.¹ In spite of the public announcement the station informed no one in Washington of its plans. The files of the Department of Commerce show no notification corresponding to this announcement,² and the Federal Radio Commission files show no application for higher power until late in March.³

The fact that the Senate had not passed, nor had the President signed into law, the new legislation did not deter WTAR from going ahead with a gamble which Jack Light had priced at \$18,000.⁴ On February 5 the Ledger reported that the equipment was to be shipped from Baltimore on February 9, and Jack Light expected it to be installed and functioning by March 6.⁵ The Senate did not pass the Radio Act of 1927 until

¹"Station WTAR Will Increase Power to 500 Watts in Spring," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 29, 1927, p. 24.

²United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Records, File No. 1227, passim.

³United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. 2-R-B-380, March 28, 1927.

⁴"Station WTAR Will Increase Power to 500 Watts in Spring," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 29, 1927, p. 24.

⁵"WTAR 500-Watt Set May Be on Air by March 1," ibid., February 5, 1927, p. 24.

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February 18, and Coolidge did not sign it until February 23.¹

On March 6 the Pilot announced that the new transmitter would be employed in the broadcasting of church programs on March 13.² The first broadcast was delayed, however, for technical, not legal, reasons. Tests had been made and, although not ready for use just yet, the new equipment had shown itself to be vastly superior to the existing apparatus.³ The tests had been carried out under a license renewed by the Department of Commerce in December of 1926, indicating a power of 100 watts.⁴

Two days prior to the application for higher power with the F.R.C., March 26, 1927, WTAR broadcast the services of the McKendree Methodist Church using the new equipment. The announcement indicates that the new equipment would be employed, but it does not say whether the full 500 watts would be employed.⁵ Evidence seems to indicate that the station was broadcasting at less than full power, for in a story

¹Frank J. Kahn (ed.), Documents of American Broadcasting (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968), p. 35.

²"WTAR to Use Higher Power Next Sunday in Church Programs," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 6, 1927, I, p. 10.

³"Sharp Tuning Noted in Test of New WTAR," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 12, 1927, p. 26.

⁴United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, Records, File No. 1227, December 3, 1926.

⁵"WTAR's 500-Watt Outfit Goes on Air Sunday Night," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 26, 1927, p. 24.

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announcing that WTAR and the McKendree Church had signed a one-year contract, the Ledger states that the new equipment is not being used to its fullest yet.¹ The article leads the reader to believe that there were still some final technical adjustments which needed to be made, but it seems far more reasonable to assume that the station felt that it would be wise to wait until the F.R.C. had disposed of the new application before boosting its power to the full 500-watt capacity of the equipment. It was a prudent move, indeed, for the original application to the Commission, acted upon on April 14, 1927, was approved for a power of only 100 watts.² It was not until May 2, 1927 that the Commission issued a temporary permit for 500 watts, and not until June 1 that this temporary permit was incorporated into a license.³ When the final authorization came through the station dedicated the new equipment with a four-hour special program.⁴

¹"McKendree and WTAR in Year's Sunday Tie-Up," ibid., April 9, 1927, p. 24.

²United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. 2-R-B-380, April 14, 1927.

³Ibid., May 2, 1927 and June 1, 1927.

⁴"WTAR Announces Summer Schedule," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, May 29, 1927, II, p. 12. The action, changing the temporary permit to a license, was taken by the F.R.C. on June 1, and WTAR dedicated the new equipment that same day. However, they had been planning the event for some time as is indicated by the date of the article describing it. This would seem to indicate that the station must have received some rather solid assurances that its requests would be favorably received in Washington.

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During these first six months of 1927 Jack Light must have been extremely busy. He was involved with the installation and testing of the new transmitter, and he was also involved with the establishment of a sales program at the station. What sales of time and facilities had taken place prior to 1927 were the result of random efforts, evidently conceived on the spot with little advanced planning or organization. In April of 1927, however, the station announced that it was going to actively pursue commercial programs.¹ It was more than a month before any results at all were achieved, but the first was significant. In May the Levy-Page Company, a Norfolk-based furniture store, signed a one-year contract with WTAR for a one-hour program seven days a week and an additional thirty-minute program on Thursday evenings. The daily program would be a broadcast of phonograph records over a new "Electrola Superphonograph," and the evening program would be recordings again, but the emphasis would be on new Victor Company releases. The broadcasts would be produced by a technique developed by the Victor Company:

The electric impulses generated in the electrola by the sliding of its needle in the grooves of the record will be introduced into the WTAR transmitter circuit over telephone lines connecting the station and its new downtown studio.¹

¹"WTAR Available for Commercial Radio," ibid., April 10, 1927, II, p. 9.

²"Record and Radio to Join in Daily WTAR Programs," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, May 14, 1927, p. 26.

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The "new downtown studio" mentioned was one of two built especially for the broadcasts in the Levy-Page store. The second was designed for live musical programs, if the sponsor should desire to broadcast them. Both studios were built of glass so that the people could see what was going on while the broadcasts were in progress.¹

By May something of a summer schedule for WTAR was announced, making the summer of 1927 the first summer during which WTAR had done any significant amount of scheduled programming. There was the "Levy-Page Orthophonic Hour" every afternoon from 4:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M., with the "Levy-Page Victor Program" every Thursday at 7:00 P.M. The Sunday offering of Levy-Page came in the early afternoon. During the summer there would be one program a week from the Norva and Loew's State Theaters, a daily dinner concert from the Hotel Fairfax dining room, a Tuesday evening program from the Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company, the "Willard Battery Hour" returning on Saturday evenings, the "Naturopathic Hour" sponsored by Enoch Cuthrell, a radio dealer from South Norfolk, and the Ledger-Dispatch news programs six days a week. On Sundays, in addition to the Levy-Page program, the station

¹"Use WTAR in Broadcasting New Programs," ibid., May 26, 1927, p. 21. One cannot resist the temptation to mention the similarity between the arrangement at the Levy-Page Store and the current remote broadcasting facilities, usually consisting of a trailer with glassed-in control room so that spectators can see what is being done.

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broadcast the services of the McKendree Church.¹ The fledgling efforts at radio sales had yielded some excellent results for WTAR and also for the Norfolk radio audience.

The new Federal Radio Commission had begun its monumental task of clearing up the broadcasting muddle during the spring of 1927, and one of the early actions of the Commission was a wholesale reallocation of frequencies.² The effect of this initial activity on WTAR was a change in frequency from 1150 kilocycles to 1090 kilocycles at the same time the station's power was increased to 500 watts.³ But during the spring of 1927 a new station, WSEA, was put on the air in Virginia Beach,⁴ and the regulatory rulings in Washington by the F.R.C., aimed at bringing order out of chaos on the national level, would bring chaos to the order which had existed in Norfolk.

In August the F.R.C. changed WSEA's frequency from 580 kilocycles to 1370 kilocycles, and the Virginia Beach station appealed the change to the Commission with the hope of retaining its former frequency.⁵ WTAR was represented at the hearing

¹"WTAR Prepared to Serve Fans During Summer," ibid., May 18, 1927, p. 30; "WTAR Announces Summer Schedule," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, May 29, 1927, II, p. 12.

²Barnouw, I, p. 214.

³United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. 2-R-B-380, June 1, 1927.

⁴"WSEA To Begin Regular Programs," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 17, 1927, II, p. 11.

⁵"WSEA Workers Present Plea in Washington," ibid., August 6, 1927, p. 12.

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in Washington, but the station's attorney did not offer any objections to WSEA's proposals. He was present simply to protect WTAR's interest if they should happen to be jeopardized during the hearings. These interests were most probably connected with plans WTAR had for requesting a change in frequency later in the summer.¹ On August 5 WSEA made its case in Washington, and everybody returned to Norfolk to await the outcome.

On August 16, 1927 the Federal Radio Commission directed both WTAR and WSEA to share time on the new frequency of 1140 kilocycles,² and there was nobody at either station who was not shocked by the result. Jack Light said that this would work an extreme hardship on WTAR, and he stated that the station would not make the change until it was officially notified by the Commission.³ The notification had gotten to WTAR by Saturday, August 21, and that evening both stations went on the air at 6:30 P.M. on the same frequency. The result was not the kind of radio broadcasting which would endear the Federal Radio Commission to Norfolk listeners, but it lasted only a short time. WSEA shut down, and the President of the Virginia Radio Corporation, which owned WSEA, said

¹"WTAR Not Opposed to Restoration of WSEA Wave Length," ibid., August 7, 1927, II, p. 2.

²United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. 2-R-B-380, August 16, 1927.

³"Local Stations to Divide Time on New Frequency," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, August 18, 1927, p. 1.

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that the station would remain off the air until the problems were resolved.¹

The time-sharing negotiations between the two stations had already begun as soon as the Commission ruling had been received. WTAR had proposed alternating hours on a daily basis. WSEA had proposed alternating days of the week, with each station broadcasting every other Sunday.² Neither station liked what the other offered; WTAR stayed on the air, WSEA stayed off the air. Tom Little, the President of the Virginia Radio Corporation issued a statement, as representatives for both sides left for Washington to appear before the F.R.C. on Monday, August 22, 1927:

We will stay off the air until this matter is adjusted by the Radio Commission. Our attorney, Colonel Sands, has gone to Washington to present the case tomorrow morning. . . . We are staying off the air not because WTAR is on, but because we believe the public is due some consideration, and we want to save confusion.³

The Pilot reported the arguments each side would use. WSEA would vigorously protest the fact that WTAR had been on the air while forcing WSEA to shut down, and he would demand equal time with WTAR on the new frequency. WTAR, for its part, would claim that it was the senior station with

¹"Radio Squabble Expected to Go to Commission," ibid., August 21, 1927, II, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Tom Little, quoted in: "Radio Fight Taken to Washington by Warring Stations," ibid., August 22, 1927, p. 12.

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commercial contracts, and that it should get the hours it wanted, with WSEA using what was left.¹

Rear Admiral W. H. G. Bullard, the Chairman of the Radio Commission heard the oral arguments on Monday and suggested that a three-man board of arbitration be appointed to settle the dispute. WTAR countered by proposing that WTAR be assigned the frequency of 1270 kilocycles, currently assigned to a station owned by Ruffner Junior High School in Norfolk. WTAR would be willing to share time on that frequency as the Ruffner station, WBBW, was silent during the summer and broadcast only occasionally during the school year. Bullard agreed, but both parties asked to have the situation reviewed when their current sixty-day licenses expired in the fall. At the conclusion of the hearing Bullard explained how the situation had occurred in the first place: the F.R.C. had been under the impression that both WTAR and WSEA were owned by the same company. The whole mess was the result of a misunderstanding.² Misunderstanding or not, Jack Light does not warmly recall the days when he and WSEA were competing:

In 1927 another man came in, and he tried to put me out of business. He got all of this talent to leave me by promising to pay them \$80.00 a week . . . that was more than I could give them. He opened up a studio and a transmitter in Virginia Beach and called the station WSEA. But they never made it. They went bankrupt and

¹Ibid.

²"Different Wave Lengths Assigned Norfolk Stations," ibid., August 23, 1927, p. 1.

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could never pay the talent anything, let alone the \$80.00 a week he promised. Then they moved to Portsmouth, and they opened up there with a studio in the old ferry house. They went broke down there. All the time I was broadcasting and didn't have a bit of trouble. They were a pirate station, that's all, and they never could make it.¹

Ironically, a year later WTAR and WSEA were again ordered to share the same frequency by the Radio Commission, but the circumstances had changed by then. WSEA had been off the air for some months. It was not to broadcast again, but both stations went through the motions of protesting to the Commission.²

The fall of 1927 was an exciting one for WTAR. The big event, as far as station personnel was concerned, was the move of the studios to the quarters of the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce in the top floor of the National Bank of Commerce and Trust building in downtown Norfolk. WTAR was to begin its fifth year on the air in high style. The new studios contained the finest equipment, and the walls were hung with the right amounts of heavy cloth to insure the proper acoustics.³

¹Jack Light, personal interview.

²"WTAR Will Protest Time Sharing Plan," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 11, 1928, p. 2; "WSEA To Fight Time Division," ibid., September 12, 1928, p. 1; United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. 2-R-B-380, October 1, 1928; "New Channel Tried by WTAR: Satisfactory," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, November 11, 1928, p. 24.

³"40 Artists on WTAR--Chamber of Commerce Inaugural Program Tonight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 14, 1927, p. 17.

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The move was a culmination of the relationships which extended as far back as 1924, when the first Chamber of Commerce series was broadcast, and which Mrs. Forest Sharp attempted to revive in 1926.¹ The Chamber of Commerce agreed to furnish WTAR with its studio space and in return WTAR agreed to let the Chamber use the station "whenever it desires to broadcast." The close relationship between WTAR and the Chamber of Commerce caused the Ledger-Dispatch to say that WTAR had achieved a "semi-official status as the mouthpiece of mercantile and industrial Norfolk."²

The program produced in honor of the move was spectacular in the broadest sense of the word. The program was the standard format used by the Chamber in the past: entertainment interspersed with short promotional speeches about Norfolk. Only this time the program lasted for seven hours, as opposed to the usual thirty or sixty minutes of the past. A total of fifty-five speakers and entertainers appeared on the program which began at 7:00 P.M. and did not end until 2:00 A.M.³

For all of the production and publicity given to the new move, WTAR was to remain only ten months in the Chamber of

¹Supra, pp. 56-61; pp. 96-97.

²"40 Artists on WTAR-Chamber of Commerce Inaugural Program Tonight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 14, 1927, p. 17.

³Ibid.: "WTAR Receives Plaudits Upon Its New Move," ibid., September 15, 1927, p. 19.

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Commerce quarters. In July of 1928 it announced that it was moving to the Fairfax Hotel.¹

The Chamber of Commerce move was also used by WTAR as the occasion for WTAR to announce its new fall schedule. The most significant feature was the addition of a ninety-minute sponsored program from the Suffolk Branch of the Paul-Gale-Greenwood Company, beginning at noon and consisting of "orthophonic record numbers."² There is little doubt that Paul-Gale-Greenwood took its commercial radio cue from the programs produced by its competitor, Levy-Page.

In addition to the new noon program the station was adding a number of "farm and home" features, which it would place in the Paul-Gale-Greenwood program. And there would be a series of church-sponsored Bible lectures on Sunday, the services of the McKendree Methodist Church and a new series of Sunday programs from the Union Mission.³ As Tables 3 and 4 show there were several other programs carried by WTAR through the fall of 1927, but no details about them are available.

The Paul-Gale-Greenwood programs brought WTAR some minor problems. As is apparent from the description of this new

¹"Fairfax Hotel to House WTAR; Will Move Soon," ibid., July 14, 1928, p. 26.

²"New Programs Scheduled as Radio Season Draws Near," ibid., September 14, 1927, p. 17.

³Ibid.; "Waves to Carry Gospel of Love," ibid., September 14, 1927, p. 16.

TABLE 5
WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF OCTOBER 2, 1927¹

WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF OCTOBER 2, 1927¹

TIME	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SUNDAY
12:00							
1:30	Levy-Page	Paul-Gale- Greenwood	Paul-Gale- Greenwood	Paul-Gale- Greenwood	Paul-Gale- Greenwood	Paul-Gale- Greenwood	Paul-Gale- Greenwood
4:30			World Series	World Series	World Series	World Series	World Series
5:30		Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page
6:30				Health Talk			
7:00	Bible Lecture ²	News	News	News	News	News	News
7:30		Dinner Concert ³	Dinner Concert	Dinner Concert	Levy-Page Victor Pgm Dinner Concert	Dinner Concert	Dinner Concert
8:00	McKendree Church		Warner Radio Hour	Church Music			
9:00		Special Program ⁴	Radio Address ⁵	Cuthrell Hour			Ghent Club Dance Pgm
9:10			Willard Battery Hr				

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¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 2, 1927 through October 8, 1927, passim.²Produced by the International Bible Students' Association.³Dinner Concerts all from the Fairfax Hotel.⁴Dedication of the new studio at the Junior Civic Booster's Club headquarters in Portsmouth.⁵Presented by the Chamber of Commerce. "Willard Battery Hour" normally began at 9:00 P.M.

TABLE 4
WEAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF DECEMBER 4, 1927^a

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

TABLE 4

WTAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF DECEMBER 4, 1927¹

TIME	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12:30		Paul-Gale-Greenwood Correct Time ⁴	Paul-Gale-Greenwood Correct Time	Paul-Gale-Greenwood Correct Time	Paul-Gale-Greenwood Correct Time	Paul-Gale-Greenwood Correct Time	Paul-Gale-Greenwood Correct Time
1:00							
2:00	Levy-Page Union Mission ²	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page	Levy-Page
4:30				Health Talk			
5:30							
6:00	Paul-Gale-Greenwood ³						
6:30		News Dinner Concert ⁵	News Dinner Concert	News Dinner Concert	News Levy-Page Victor Pgm Dinner Concert	News Dinner Concert	News Dinner Concert
7:00	Bible Lecture						
7:30							
8:00	McKendree Church		Warner Radio Hour	Church Music Cuthrell Hour Christmas Pgm	Jubilee Singers		
9:00							Ghent Club Dance Pgm
10:00							

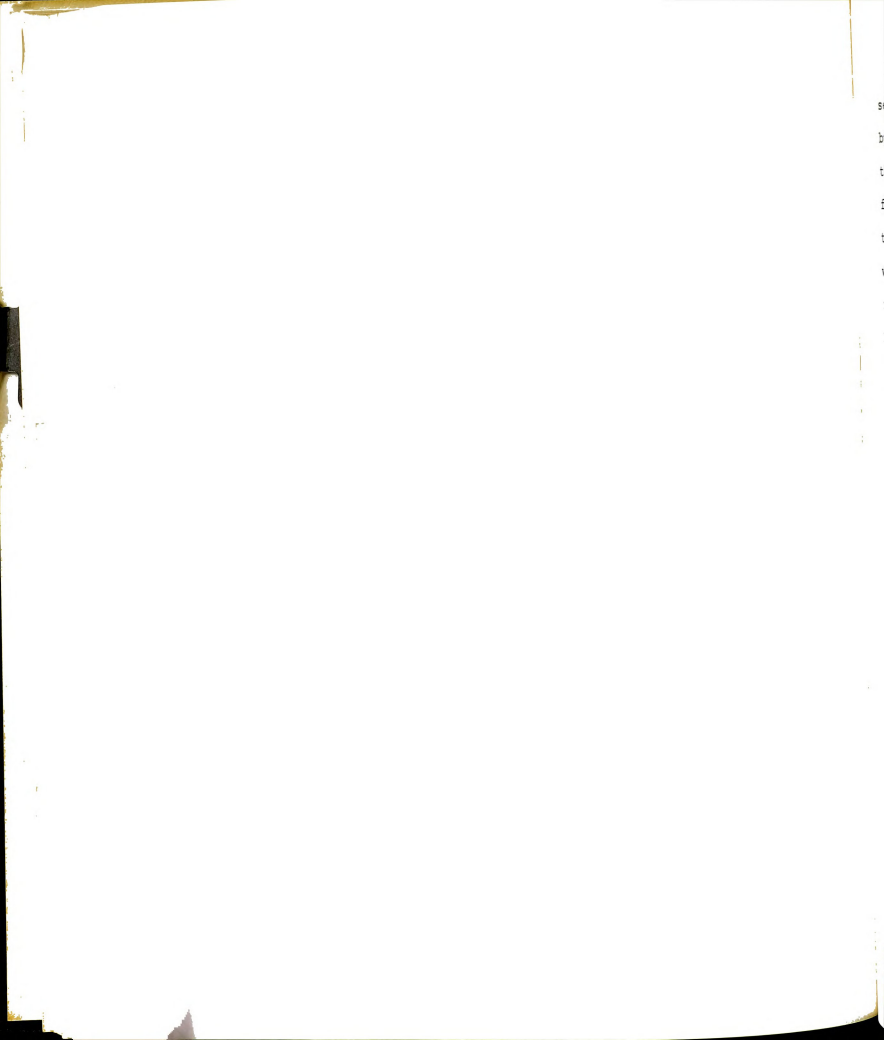
¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 4, 1927 through December 10, 1927, passim.

²Union Mission program ran actually from 4:15 P.M. to 4:45 P.M.

³Paul-Gale-Greenwood Programs were organ concerts from the Granby Theater all week.

⁴WTAR interrupted the Paul-Gale-Greenwood concert for the correct time, but the program resumed.

⁵Dinner Concerts all from Fairfax Hotel.

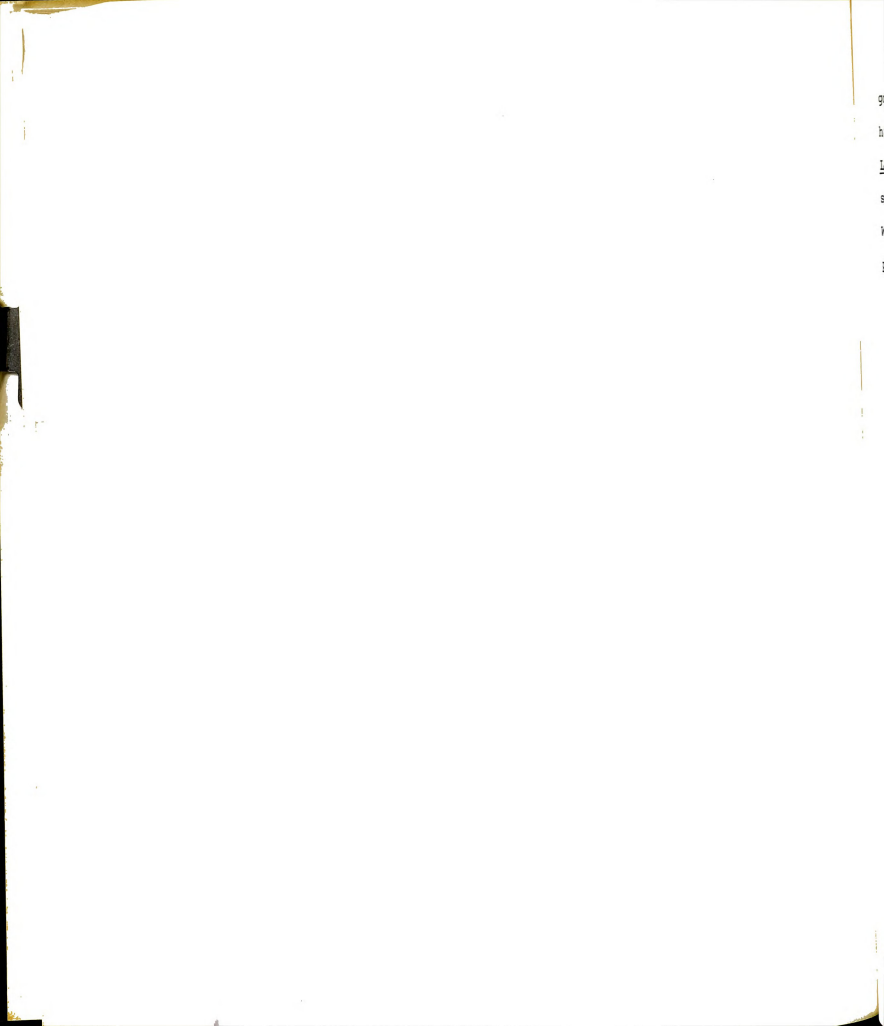


series, it was virtually identical to the one being presented by Levy-Page. The problem arose because the Levy-Page contract with WTAR forbade the station from broadcasting records for any other firm in Norfolk. The dispute centered around the fact that Paul-Gale-Greenwood was a Norfolk-based firm with a Suffolk branch. WTAR was broadcasting the recordings from the Suffolk branch, but that made little difference to Levy-Page. The result was an injunction prohibiting the new series in its existing form. The Pilot described the legal action as a "friendly suit," but WTAR had to alter its arrangement with Paul-Gale-Greenwood to avoid going to court.¹ What had started out as an hour and one-half of recorded music from Suffolk ended up being ninety minutes of organ music from the Granby Theater, but still sponsored by Paul-Gale-Greenwood (see Table 4).

The fall also saw the normal amount of sports activity: a re-creation of the heavyweight fight between Jack Dempsey and Gene Tunney, the 1927 World Series and a Virginia Polytechnic Institute football game, broadcast live from League Park. All of this was done by the Ledger-Dispatch, with the sports broadcasting done by Tom Hanes.² The station

¹"WTAR Injunction has no Effect on Suffolk Programs," Virginia Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, November 12, 1927, p. 14; Jack Light, personal interview.

²Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 22, 1927; September 23, 1927; October 5, 1927; October 6, 1927; and October 15, 1927, passim.



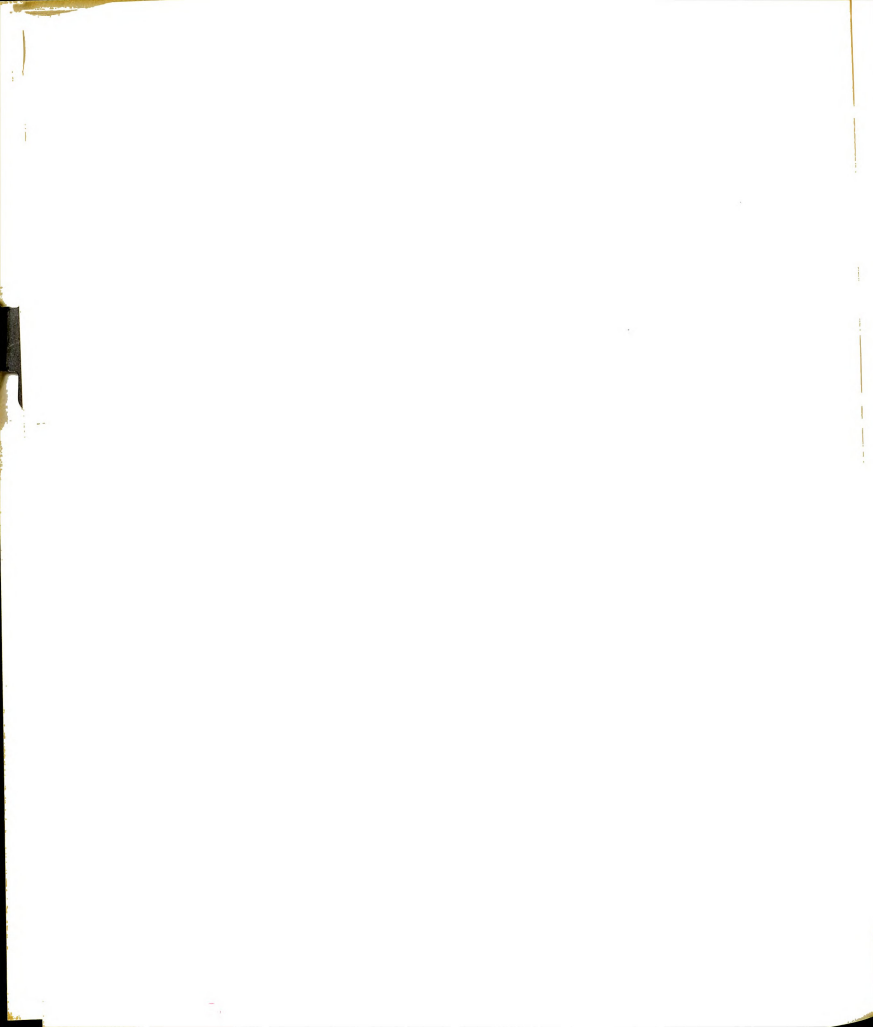
got a good deal of publicity from these broadcasts, as they had in previous years. But this year it seemed as if the Ledger wanted everyone to understand who was primarily responsible for the sports broadcasts which were heard over WTAR. On October 6, 1927, during the World Series, the Ledger printed the following across the bottom of the front page:

FOR THE SERIES: HEAR LEDGER RADIO¹

As WTAR made its move from the Reliance Electric Company to the National Bank of Commerce and Trust Building spokesmen for the station promised listeners that the station would be on the air from forty-eight to fifty hours per week during the winter.² As Tables 1 and 2 indicate the station did not quite live up to these predictions, although it is rather difficult to precisely determine the lengths of some of the programs. Regardless of the discrepancy between prediction and realization WTAR's situation was appreciably improved over what it had been in the past. The station was technically, economically and esthetically stronger than it had been at any time since it had gone on the air. Power had been increased to 500 watts, and the station had a new home with vastly improved facilities. WTAR, by the end of 1927, had a significant number of new sponsored programs and series on the air, and the number of hours broadcast during a week was much

¹Ibid., October 6, 1927, p. 1.

²"New Programs Scheduled as Radio Season Draws Near," ibid., September 14, 1927, p. 17.



greater than it had been even at the beginning of the year. These facts, coupled with the fact that the station was now in a competitive situation which would ultimately mean the demise of WSEA, meant that WTAR was now, definitely, in Norfolk to stay.¹

¹The relatively short life of WSEA, from April of 1927 through early June of 1928, represents an interesting chapter in the history of broadcasting in Norfolk. This study has only dwelt upon those events which forced WSEA and WTAR into uncomfortably close quarters, but the question of why WSEA failed is one which might warrant further research.

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CHAPTER IX

1928: CHAOS AND CONTINUITY

In any chronology of the significant events which compose the history of WTAR, 1928 will stand out as the year in which the station made its first hesitantly positive steps toward network affiliation. Yet there was more to this year than just network relations. The year was an unsettling one for WTAR--the Virginian Pilot called it rough.¹ The station's main studio was moved twice. The reallocation of frequencies directed from Washington caused some degree of ill-will between the station and the people of Norfolk. The Reliance Electric Company went out of business forcing the sale of the station. But when it was all over the station had endured the difficulties and solved the problems. And by the end of 1928 the people at the station could look back on the year and decide that the steps toward affiliation with the Columbia Broadcasting System were the brightest spots of all.

¹"Radio Interest Grows and Sale of Instruments Rivals Record," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, January 1, 1929, III, p. 19.

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The first overt moves made by WTAR toward chain broadcasting took place early in 1927, at roughly the same time that George Coates and Arthur Judson were struggling to make a viable concern of United Independent Broadcasters.¹ In February of 1927 WTAR had gone to the National Broadcasting Company to seek affiliation with one of the two N.B.C. chains. All that was announced at that time was that negotiations were under way, that they had been held up until WTAR could raise its power to 500 watts and that the station would carry only four or five hours of network programming a week so as to leave sufficient time for local material.² The station ultimately raised its power, but the negotiations between N.B.C. and WTAR yielded no tangible results in 1927.

In April of 1928 WTAR announced plans for a one-time affiliation with N.B.C. as a kind of test to see how well the station could function under network circumstances.³ It was to be an unnamed one-hour program from New York, but all available evidence indicates that the program never went on the air. The Norfolk papers never mentioned it again, and, later, when the Ledger was recounting the previous network efforts of WTAR, it claimed that the first broadcast was in

¹Barnouw, I, pp. 193-195. United Independent Broadcasters was the precursor of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

²"WTAR Applies for Membership in Great Chain," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 26, 1927, p. 24.

³"Norfolk's First Chain Broadcast Tomorrow," ibid., April 12, 1928, p. 28.

May of 1928, and that one did not come from N.B.C.¹ WTAR and N.B.C. did not appear destined to be interconnected, at least not yet.²

It was in May that Norfolk finally became part of a network broadcast. On May 13, 1928, WTAR joined a chain that was alleged to consist of ninety-nine other stations created to broadcast an address of Judge J. F. Rutherford, President of the People's Pulpit Association, from Albany, New York.³ The Pilot's facts concerning the size of the network were appreciably in error, however. Later in 1928 WTAR would again carry a speech by Rutherford, and this network was composed of ninety-six stations. The broadcast originated in Detroit on August 5, and the New York Times stated that this network was the largest assembly of stations in history. To prove the point the Times listed a number of other network broadcasts which had taken place, and all were made up of between forty and fifty stations.⁴ In announcing this August fifth network broadcast over WTAR the Ledger overestimated the number of

¹"WTAR to Offer Chain Program on August 5," ibid., July 7, 1928, p. 24.

²WTAR and N.B.C. did ultimately affiliate in 1934, creating a partnership which lasted until 1950. See below, Chapter XII.

³"Norfolk Station Part of National Broadcast Today," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, May 13, 1928, III, p. 11.

⁴"Rutherford Gets Riggest Radio Net," New York Times, July 31, 1928, p. 24.

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stations that were to be interconnected, using the same figure which the Pilot had used the previous May.¹ This would lead one to believe that WTAR, in releasing the information to the press, had seen fit to exaggerate for the sake of emphasis.

The first chain broadcast in which WTAR was involved, the one of May 13, brought forth results which showed that the program was too good, if that degree of success is possible. Listeners wrote to WTAR that Rutherford's speech was of better technical quality than the programs which the station carried normally. WTAR investigated and made some unspecified improvements.²

In the meantime the Judson-Coates efforts toward the establishment of a third national network were encountering constant problems. United Independent Broadcasters had given way to the Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting System when the record company had been persuaded to invest sorely needed capital in the struggling enterprise. The new money helped for a while, but by the time that WTAR had its first contact with the Columbia System in August of 1928 Judson, Coates and others were trying everything they could to keep the venture from folding.³

¹"WTAR To Be In Biggest Radio Chain Tomorrow," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 4, 1928, p. 24.

²"WTAR To Offer Chain Program on August 5," ibid., July 7, 1928, p. 24.

³Barnouw, I, pp. 219-224.

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The third network program carried by WTAR was the acceptance speech on August 22, of newly-nominated presidential candidate Al Smith from the steps of the state capital in Albany, New York, through the Columbia System. The Ledger, again, was slightly misleading in its announcement of the event. The paper said that WTAR would join a network of 100 stations for the broadcast.¹ According to the New York Times 104 stations were to broadcast the speech, but three networks were to be involved: N.B.C. through the WEAJ and WJZ chains and Columbia through a chain which had WOR as its key station.²

By October of 1928 the Columbia Phonograph Record Company had pulled out of the chain which had expropriated its name. The Columbia Broadcasting System had been formed as new interests bought into the floundering concern, and the new company hired William S. Paley, formerly of the Congress Cigar Company, to be its chief executive.³ By October, too, WTAR had carried two more network programs and was actively seeking additional offerings and perhaps even a permanent affiliation.⁴

¹"WTAR a Unit of Vast System on Wednesday," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 18, 1928, p. 22.

²"100,000 Expected at Smith Notification Tonight," New York Times, August 22, 1928, p. 1; ibid., August 22, 1928, p. 24.

³Barnouw, I, pp. 219-224.

⁴"WTAR Seeking More Chain Connections," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 22, 1928, II, p. 20; "Reallocation of Radio Facilities of Country Arouses Local Protest," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September 11, 1928, pp. 1 and 5.

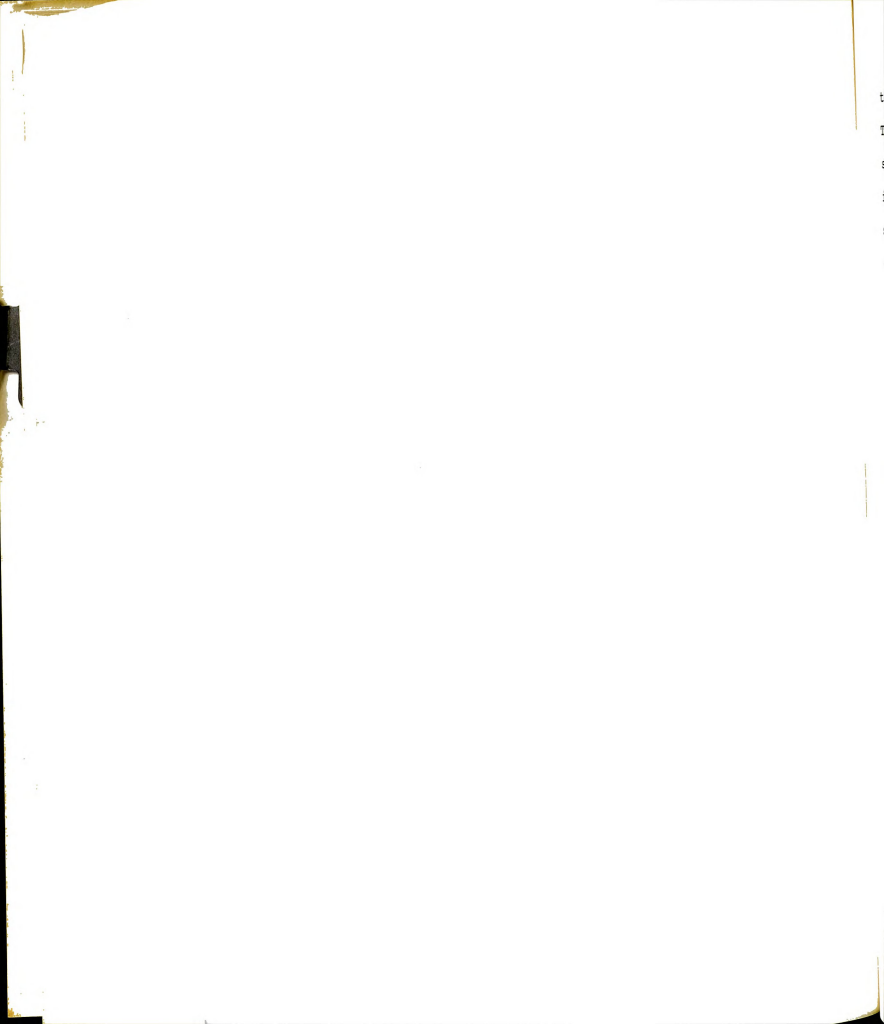


October and November saw two more network programs over WTAR: a nationally broadcast speech by Virginia State Senator Carter Glass and a third evangelistic offering from Judge Rutherford.¹ During these latter months of 1928 WTAR had turned to C.B.S. in hopes of establishing a permanent chain connection, and early in December Jack Light received a telegram from C.B.S. informing him that the station would join the network on December 25 for a one-hour program "befitting the occasion." The C.B.S. venture was not certain of success at this stage, and the network promised WTAR only one program a week initially. Jack Light was sure, however, that the quantity would increase rapidly. As far as financial arrangements were concerned WTAR would only have to pay "the expenses of actual broadcasting" while C.B.S. would cover the line charges.²

Ten days after WTAR announced its new affiliation with C.B.S. the New York Times offered more information about the Columbia network. It was hoped that it would include forty-three stations by January 1, and all the stations would carry

¹"Political Radio Addresses," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 23, 1928, I, p. 2; Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 23, 1928, p. 6; "Rutherford on Air Tomorrow," ibid., November 17, 1928, p. 19.

²"WTAR Awarded Place in Big Radio Hookup by Columbia," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 2, 1928, II, p. 1.



the first program over the expanded network on Christmas day.¹ Two days later the Times reported that the number of C.B.S. stations had grown to forty-nine. The network was split up into six groups: the basic network, consisting of the twenty-seven stations affiliated with Columbia prior to the recent expansion, Southern 1, Southern 2, Southern 3, Far West and Supplementary. WTAR was located in the Southern 1 network, along with WRVA in Richmond and a station in North Carolina.² By the time that inaugural program for the new network was broadcast in January, however, WRVA had dropped off and WDBJ, Roanoke, had been added.³

On a week-by-week basis, between December of 1928 and April of 1930 WTAR gradually increased the amount of time it devoted to C.B.S. programs. By 1930 C.B.S. was on firm enough ground and WTAR was sufficiently pleased with the service that the station signed a five-year contract with the network at an estimated cost of \$28,500 per year.⁴

The half dozen or so network programs which culminated in a consistent partnership with C.B.S. held out only the

¹"Columbia System to Extend Chain," New York Times, December 12, 1928, p. 36.

²"New Columbia Chain Starts on Air Jan. 8," ibid., December 14, 1928, p. 26.

³"New Columbia Chain Makes Debut on Air," ibid., January 9, 1929, p. 34.

⁴"WTAR is Reported in Long Contract with Broadcast Chain," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 12, 1930, p. 2.

promise of more and better programs for WTAR's listeners in 1928. It remained to be seen whether performance would equal the promise. And so, more needs to be said about the programming efforts during 1928 than has been said thus far.

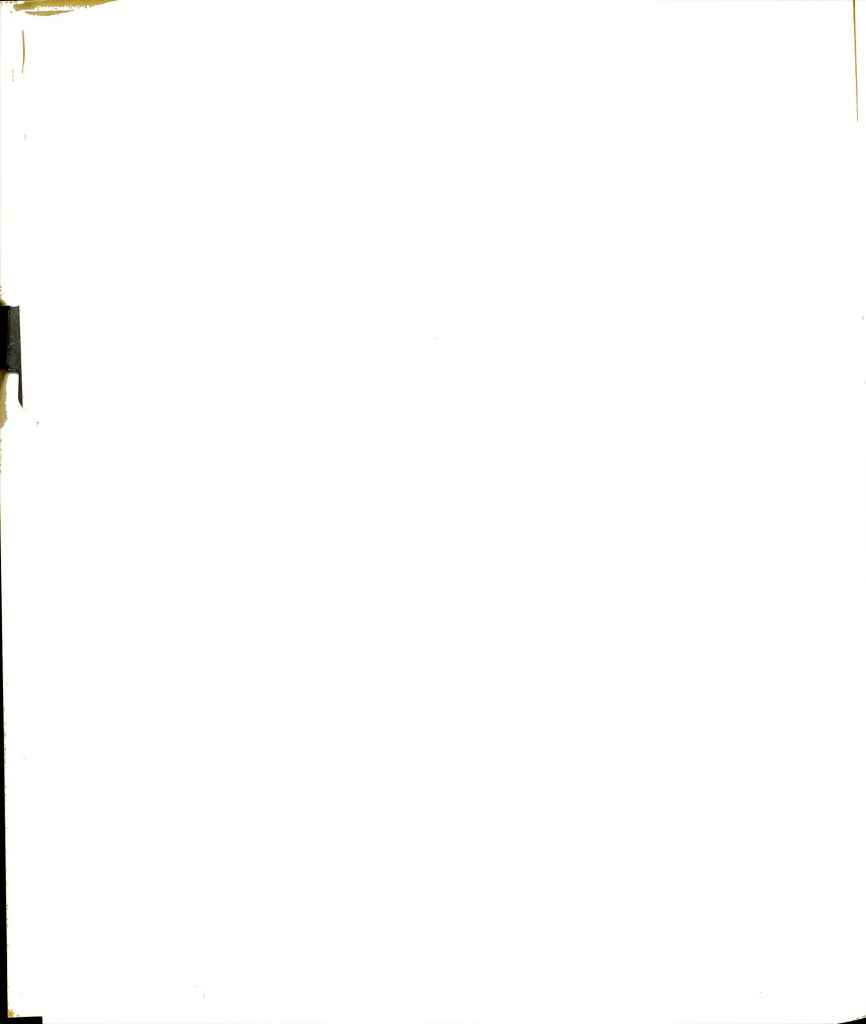
The sponsored programs which had come on the air in 1927 continued into 1928. Both the McKendree Methodist Church and the Levy-Page Company had signed year-long contracts in April and May, respectively, of 1927,¹ and both of these organizations continued on WTAR after the end of that first year. The noon-hour programs started by Paul-Gale-Greenwood in 1927 were discontinued in January of 1928, resumed for a short time in February,² and in September sponsorship of the series, which had been carried on a sustaining basis for some months, was assumed by the D. Pender Grocery Company.³ By the end of 1928, then, WTAR had developed a reasonable list of dependable clients who, judging by the length of time they remained with the station, were achieving the kinds of results they were expecting from radio.

In May of 1928 WTAR moved to exploit programming sources in Virginia Beach. This city has been one of the resort centers of Virginia for many years; and every summer, from

¹Supra, pp. 113, 115 and 116.

²"WTAR Resumes Noon Programs," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 18, 1928, p. 28.

³Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September 2, 1928, p. 8.

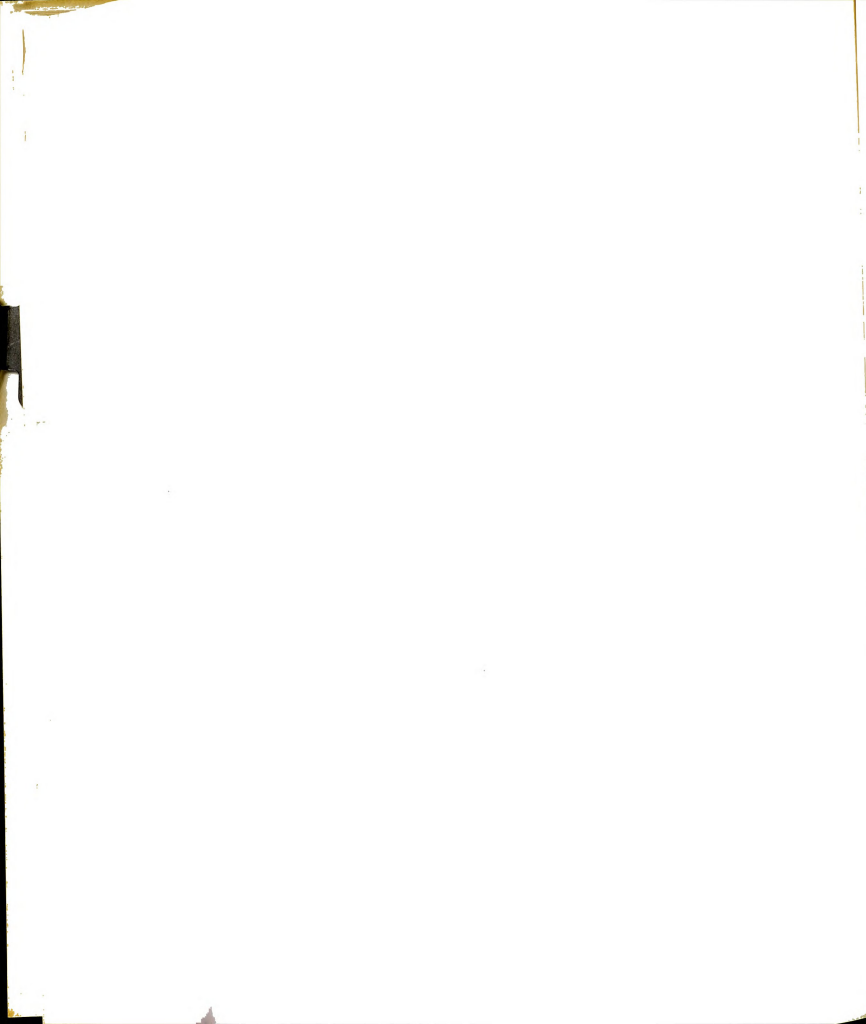


late May through Labor Day, the town, located not more than ten miles from downtown Norfolk, is alive with tourists. In the 1920's the Cavalier Hotel, the city's most prominent resort, and other tourist oriented businesses provided orchestras to entertain visitors after the sun had set and the Atlantic Ocean had cooled. In 1927 WSEA had presented the music of these orchestras, but by the summer of 1928 that station had ceased broadcasting. WTAR moved in to broadcast what WSEA had dropped.

In April the Ledger announced that WTAR was planning to become the "ether mouthpiece" of Virginia Beach as soon as certain technical problems could be overcome. The station was setting up a studio in the Cavalier Hotel and it hoped to begin the Beach programs by May 1.¹ On April 28 the technical problems had been overcome, and the station announced that it would begin broadcasting the music of the Howard Lanin Orchestra on May 1, from 8:00 P.M. until 10:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, and from 10:00 P.M. until 2:00 A.M. on Saturdays.² WTAR's plans had grown between the end of April and the end of May, when the resort season officially opened in Virginia Beach. The station announced that it was planning to broadcast something of all the bands which would be playing

¹"WTAR Planning to Broadcast from the Cavalier," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 14, 1928, p. 17.

²"WTAR Completes Arrangements for Beach Broadcasting," ibid., April 28, 1928, p. 26.



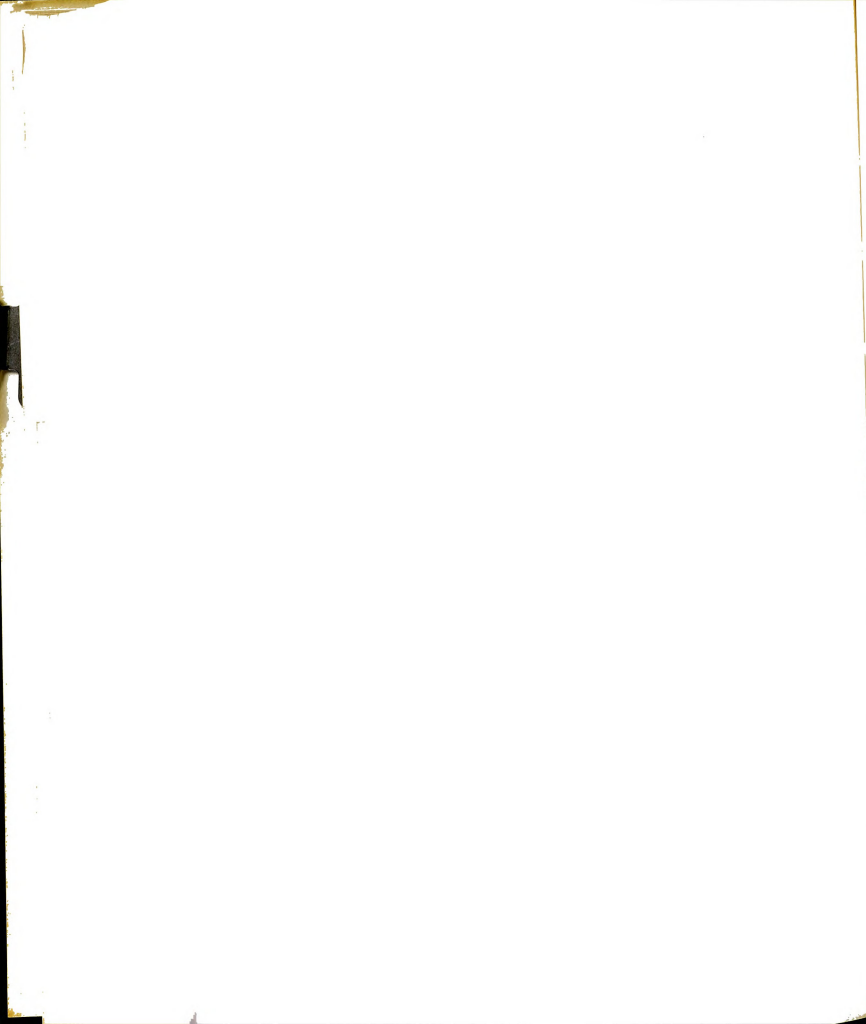
at the Beach during the summer. To this end it had set up another studio at the Seaside Park, and it planned to be on the air from 5:30 P.M. until the early hours of the morning, daily, with just one thirty-minute break.¹ Generally, the station did not quite live up to these predictions. The program listings during the summer show that the Virginia Beach band programs were not on the air as much as had been planned. There were breaks for "studio programs" and for sponsored programs originating from Norfolk.² Nonetheless, the programs presented from Virginia Beach were a welcomed bit of variety and professional entertainment in the WTAR programming schedule.

In August of 1928 WTAR instituted its first early morning broadcasts. There was little publicity or promotion prior to the first broadcast of what was called the "Time Service Program," but the programs represent something of which Jack Light is most proud. If one wished to trace the heritage of the "drive-time disc jockey" programs in Norfolk he need look no further than to WTAR on August 13, 1928. The program was simple and rather unsophisticated: a record or two, the time, a record or two more, the time, and so forth from 7:30 A.M. until 9:30 A.M., Monday through Saturday.³

¹"Dance Music at Beach Will Be Broadcast Nightly," ibid., May 26, 1928, p. 18.

²Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, June, July and August, 1928, passim.

³"WTAR Offers New Service," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 11, 1928, p. 13.



Jack Light recalls that the "Time Service Program" was the first of its type in the country,¹ and he might well be right. The New York Times shows that there were a number of stations in the country on the air as early, or earlier, than WTAR in August of 1928, but none of them broadcast a program of recorded music and time signals.² In a search for "firsts" there is a tendency to over-define categories.

Immediately prior to the premier of the "Time Service Program" WTAR was on the air an average of six hours a day, Monday through Saturday, and two to two-and-one-half hours a day on Sunday.³ This is roughly comparable to the hours of broadcasting produced by the end of 1927, and it does point up the fact that WTAR did not long maintain its originally-promoted schedule of programs from Virginia Beach.

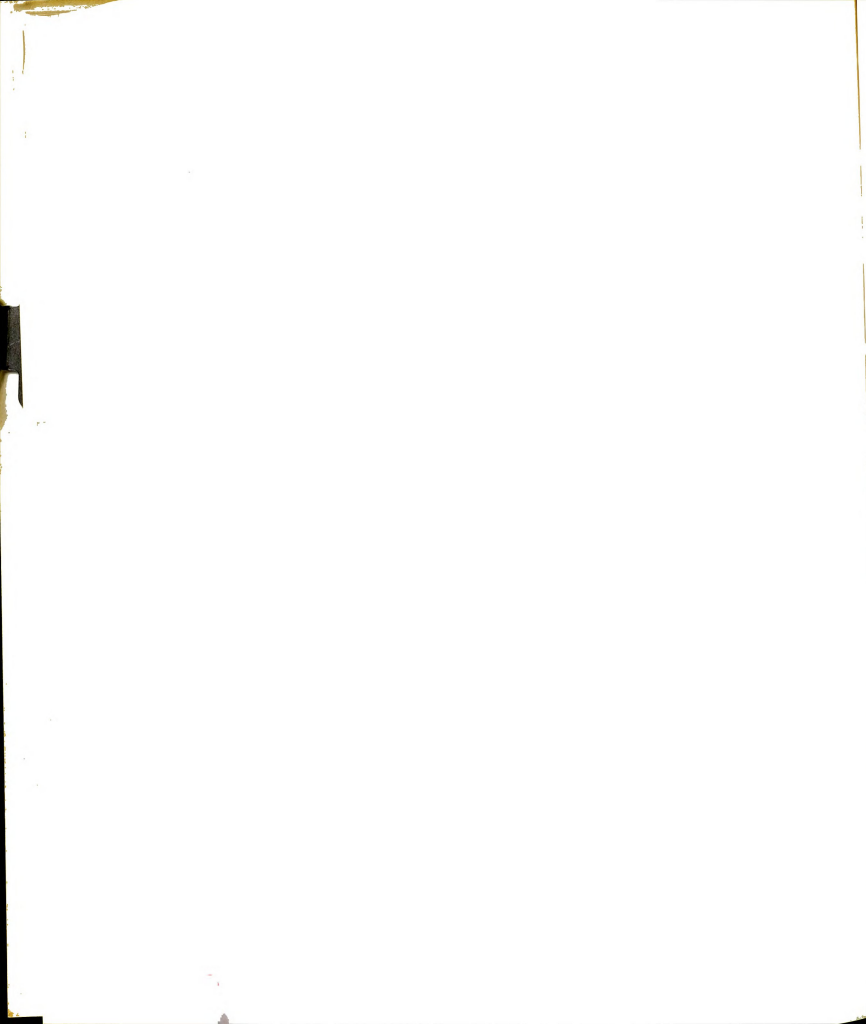
At the outset of this chapter 1928 was described as "difficult" and "unsettling" for WTAR, and it would hardly have been so if what has been said so far were the whole story. There is more. This was the year in which a member of the family, as it were, was lost, and as a result of the death WTAR was put on its own.

It is hard, after many years, to provide an accurate description of the cause of death of the Reliance Electric

¹Jack Light, personal interview.

²New York Times, August 12, 1928, VIII, p. 17.

³"WTAR Offers New Service," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 11, 1928, p. 13; Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, August, 1928, passim.



Company. However, it is probably not too far from the truth to assume that, by the summer of 1928, Reliance had ceased to be an economically useful entity. It dealt primarily in automobile electrical systems, and there were probably too many other companies which could do that sort of thing along with more general automotive repairs.

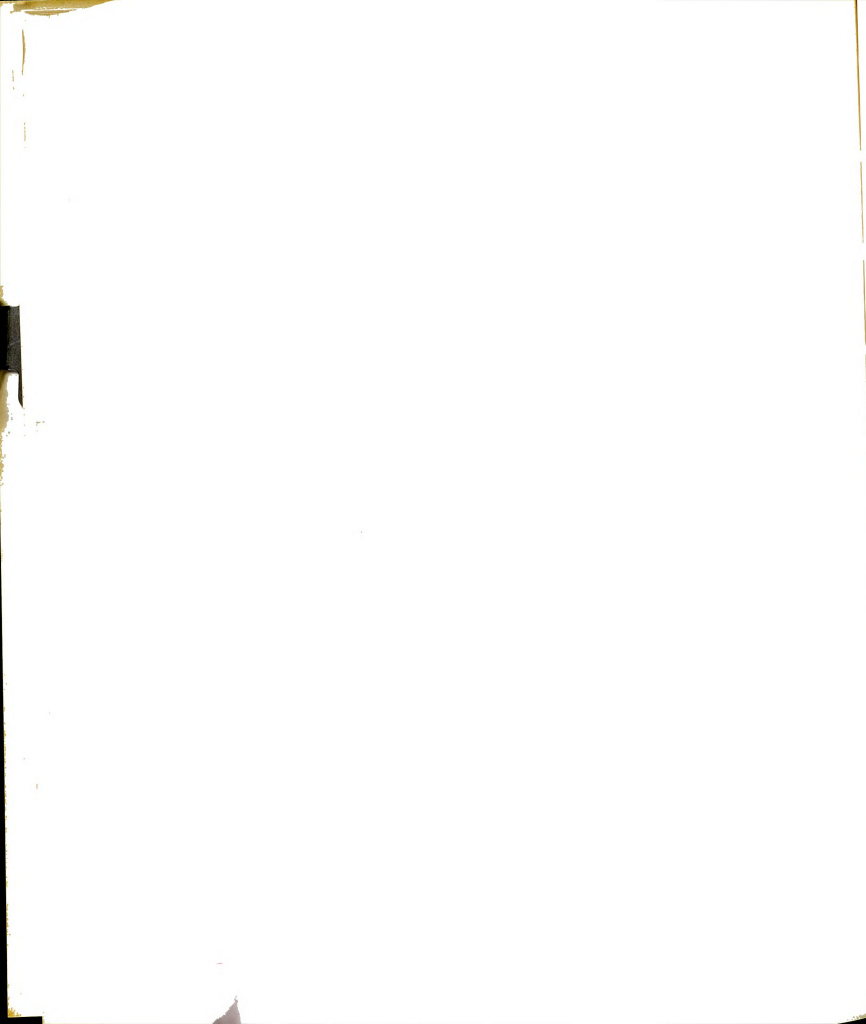
And so it was that the Reliance Electric Company passed away without even the smallest obituary on the business pages of the Norfolk press. The question then arises, "What happened to WTAR?" Newspaper stories about the station give no indication that its ownership had changed, but the files of the Federal Radio Commission show that the F.R.C. approved a voluntary assignment of license to the WTAR Radio Corporation in January of 1929, based on an application for assignment dated October 12, 1928.¹

The WTAR Radio Corporation came into existence on June 11, 1928. It was organized to ". . . buy, lease, own or sell real estate, to own, lease or operate a radio station or stations."² On that same day the Mid-City Holding Company was incorporated to buy, own, lease or sell real estate.³ H. B. Goodridge was the President of both companies, and an attorney, Percy Stephenson was the Secretary of each.

¹United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. 2-A-B-14, January 3, 1929.

²City of Norfolk, Charter Book Number 35, pp. 96-97.

³Ibid., pp. 113-114.



Stephenson's brother, A. Gordon Stephenson was the Vice-President of Mid-City Holding, while that position in the WTAR Radio Corporation was held by H. Brooke Taylor.¹

On June 21, 1928, the Reliance Electric Company transferred five lots of land on Harrington Avenue in Norfolk to the Mid-City Holding Company.² The building housing the WTAR transmitter was on one, or more, of those lots. The same day Mid-City Holding transferred three of the five lots to Percy Stephenson.³ It can reasonably be assumed that the two remaining lots were the site of the WTAR transmitter. The station, then, was owned by the WTAR Radio Corporation, with studios and offices in the National Bank of Commerce and Trust Building and with transmitter located on Harrington Avenue on a site leased from the Mid-City Holding Company.

Ultimately, Goodridge was to buy the interests of Taylor and Percy Stephenson in the WTAR Radio Corporation and become the sole owner of the station.⁴ Goodridge had been involved with Reliance Electric as a part owner,⁵ but he was not a professional broadcaster. Tom Hanes classifies him as an investor who saw in WTAR the opportunity to achieve financial

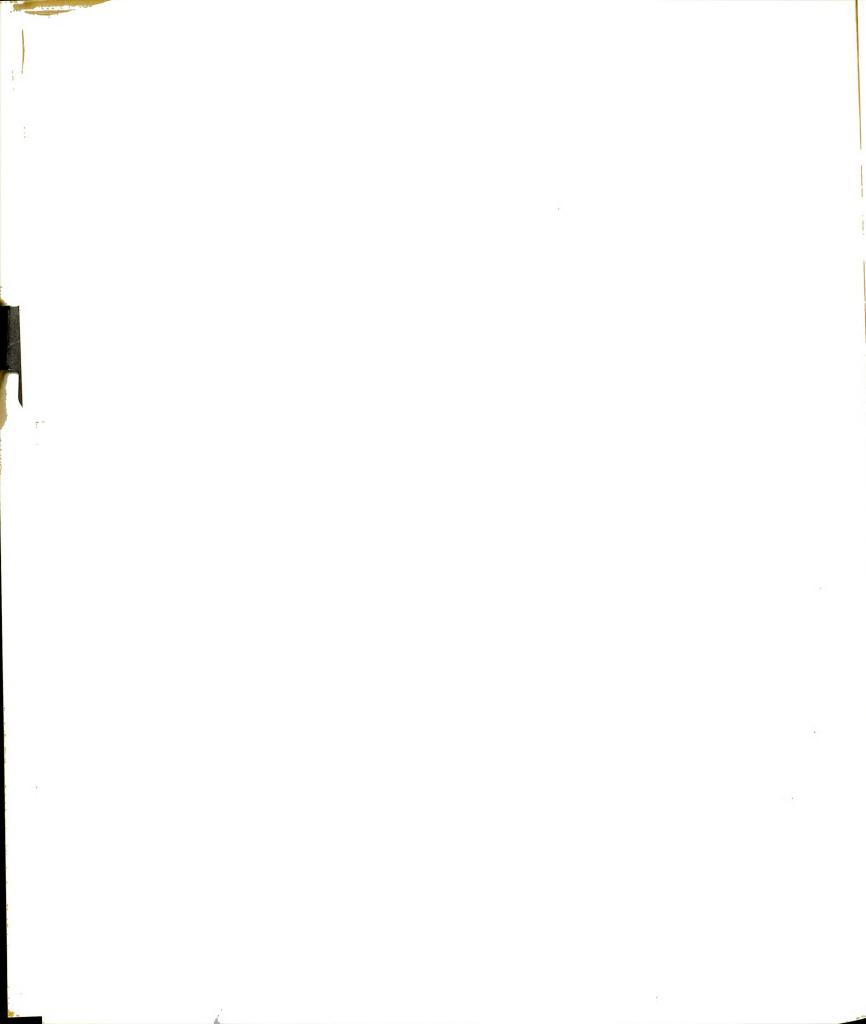
¹Ibid., pp. 96-97 and 113-114.

²City of Norfolk, Deed Book Number 306-C, p. 2.

³Ibid., pp. 3-5.

⁴"New Moves in Radio Controversy Fail to Bring Agreement Here," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 19, 1920, p. 2.

⁵Jack Light, personal interview.



gain.¹ Jack Light recalls Goodridge in much the same way:

Goodridge was a man for the city, a good man. He made his money twice. He was in the grocery business, and that failed. Well, when he got over that he paid back all the people he owed and then became a rich man.²

The relationship between Goodridge and Light was close, and Goodridge, from the time he bought the station until he ultimately sold it to the Ledger-Dispatch in 1932, left Light alone to manage and operate WTAR in his own way. When Goodridge sold the station to the Ledger he specified that Light be retained.³

The transfer of the station in 1928, then, was as easy as it could be, even though the financial and legal dealings were somewhat involved. Nonetheless, the death of the Reliance Electric Company did represent the end of an era for Norfolk radio and for WTAR.

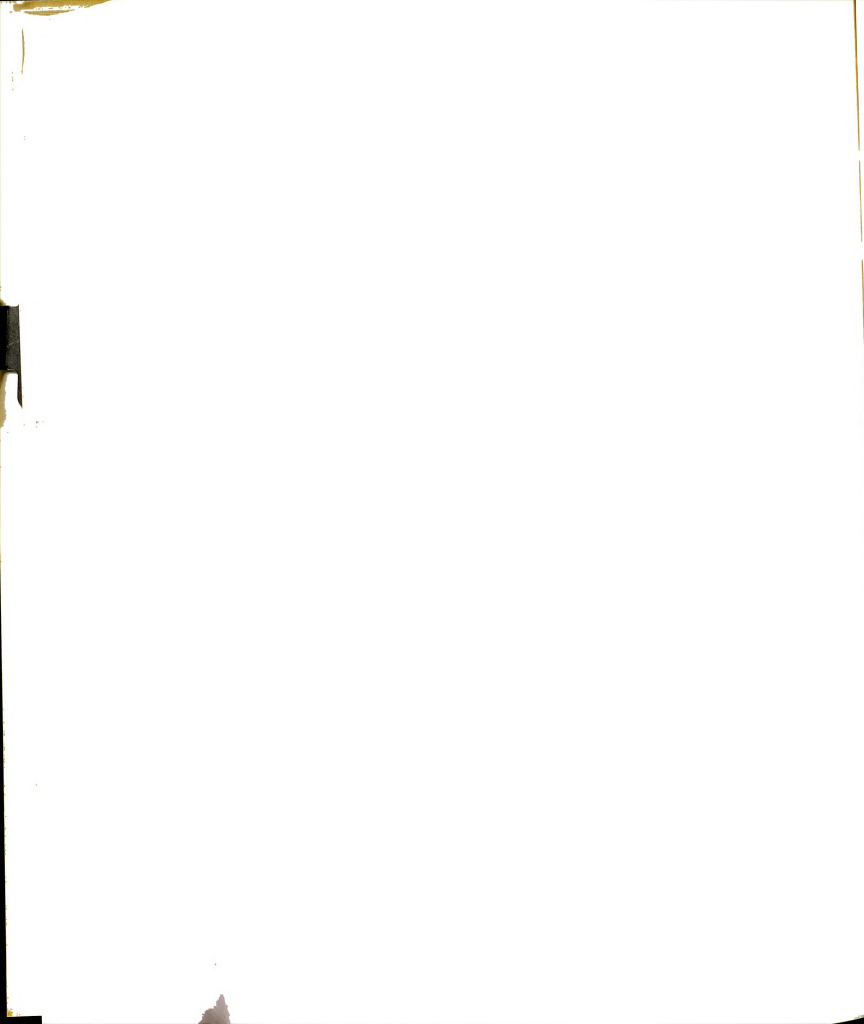
While the corporate reshufflings were going on during the summer of 1928 WTAR moved again, this time from the National Bank of Commerce and Trust Building to the Fairfax Hotel.⁴ The reasons for the move are not clear. It is doubtful that there was any ill-feeling between the station and the Chamber of Commerce, for the two worked closely for many years to come. It is possible that the move might have been

¹Tom Hanes, personal interview.

²Jack Light, personal interview.

³Ibid.

⁴"Fairfax Hotel to House WTAR, Will Move Soon," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 14, 1928, p. 26.



associated with the sale of the station, but facts are lacking to support this contention. Whatever the reason, the stay was short. WTAR was in the Fairfax Hotel from the last half of July until the first part of November when it again moved, this time to the Seaboard Air Line Building.¹

The conditions in the Seaboard Air Line Building were by far the best which WTAR had experienced in its five years on the air. The studios occupied the entire eighth floor of the building, and were decorated and furnished according to Jack Light's dictates. On the seventh floor was Light's private office. All this was provided free to the station in return for a mention of the railroad during station breaks.² In addition the Seaboard Air Line sponsored a program once a week for which they paid WTAR \$50.00.³

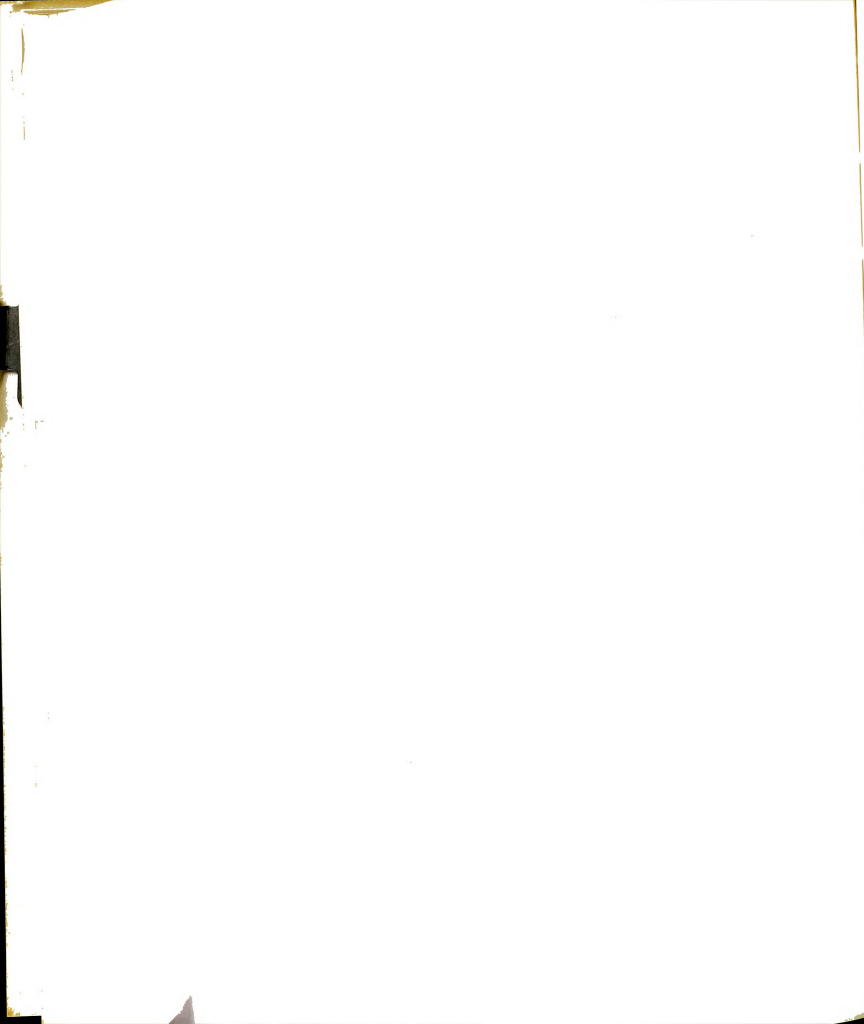
The move to the Seaboard Air Line Building was accomplished by November 13, 1928,⁴ and undoubtedly many at the station hoped that the situation would now be somewhat stabilized. But there were still regulatory problems which the Federal Radio Commission was trying to work out, and the

¹"S.A.L. Gives Studio to WTAR; Railroad Program Likely," November 3, 1928, p. 21.

²Ibid. The Seaboard Air Line was the predecessor of the Seaboard Coast Line railroad.

³Jack Light, personal interview.

⁴"New Studio To Open Tuesday," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, November 11, 1928, II, p. 1.



decisions which came out of Washington in the last half of 1928 were to cause difficulties for WTAR.

In May, the F.R.C. announced that four Virginia radio stations had been ordered off the air as of August 1. From WTAR's standpoint the most important of these four was WBBW, the Ruffner Junior High School station with which WTAR was supposed to share time as the result of the controversy with WSEA in 1927.¹ On August 1, then, WTAR was left alone on the 1270-kilocycle frequency in Norfolk.

In September, however, the Commission completed its task of frequency reallocation with one final directive to be implemented on November 11.² WTAR was ordered to broadcast on a frequency of 780 kilocycles, to share time with WSEA again. Jack Light was mad. It was not the fact that the station had to change its frequency that bothered Light, but that WTAR had not been awarded a clear channel and that it had to share time:

The Federal Radio Commission has admitted that according to the law enacted last year, that equal rights should be given to all States according to population, as to wave length, power and time on the air. WTAR has requested upon numerous occasions that the commission grant this section of Virginia a wave length free of interference. Up to this time we have been operating on the same channel with 12 other broadcasters, causing set interference during daylight hours. WTAR could not serve its listeners in a radius greater than

¹Supra, pp. 117-121.

²"Board Reallocates Broadcast Stations," New York Times, September 11, 1928, p. 16.

25 miles due to this interference.

We were promised relief from this situation, . . . but the result is that when the new allocations are made public I find that WTAR is the only high-powered station in the State that has been ordered to divide its time with another station.¹

Of more immediate concern than the lack of assignment to a clear channel was the assignment to a shared frequency in Norfolk. This factor would potentially cause WTAR other problems in an area which was of vital concern in September. According to Light:

WTAR has been making a strenuous effort to obtain chain network programs through the Columbia chain, and was about to complete this arrangement. . . . But one of the stipulations of the Columbia Broadcasting System was that they would have to await the new allocations because they could not afford to tie up with any station that did not have full time on the air. If WTAR does not get the full time it will mean, without a doubt, the loss of chain broadcasting here. . . .²

The second immediate problem caused by the reallocation would arise from the fact that WTAR would be on a frequency close to that of several high-powered stations, such as WGY in Schenectady, New York. The proximity of the two frequencies, 780 and 790 kilocycles, would cause overlapping on many sets in the Norfolk area. Light continued:

In short, . . . it appears to me that even though we are cooperating with the Federal Radio Commission in an effort to clear up interference, that we have received the worst end of the deal. We feel that due to the service which WTAR has been giving the community

¹Jack Light, quoted in: "Reallocation of Radio Facilities of Country Arouses Local Protest," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September 11, 1928, pp. 1 and 5.

²Ibid.

continuously since September, 1923, that our patrons, as well as the business people who have Norfolk at heart, should write letters of protest to the Federal Radio Commission at Washington, telling them of the service that this station has given and insisting that WTAR be given full time on the air.¹

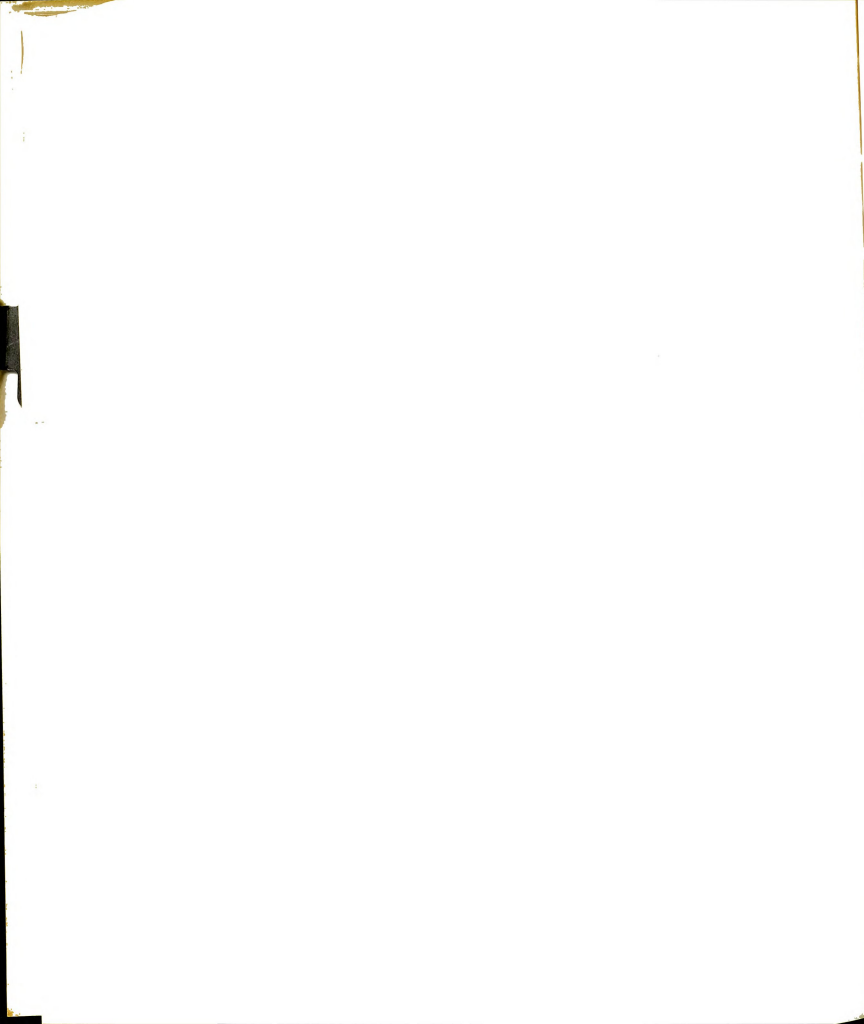
By the day before the institution of the new allocation plan in November Light's irritation had subsided. In the intervening two months WTAR had tested its new frequency and had found that the problems it had anticipated had not shown up, at least not during the tests.² But Light's initial analysis of the potential for interference was more accurate than the tests had been. On November 13 the Pilot reported that radio listeners in Norfolk were both praising and condemning WTAR as it broadcast on the new frequency. Light recommended that everybody wait until things had settled down.³

Three days later the situation was worse, rather than better. The radio dealers in Norfolk had held a meeting at which they expressed their extreme displeasure at what WTAR was allegedly doing to reception from distant stations on frequencies close to that of WTAR. It was precisely what Light had worried about when he first heard what WTAR's new frequency would be. The dealers said that they were going to

¹Ibid.

²"New Channel Tried by WTAR; Satisfactory," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, November 10, 1928, p. 24.

³"Radio Listeners Condemn and Laud New Wave Lengths," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, November 13, 1928, p. 3.



the F.R.C. to complain about WTAR's new frequency. They wanted the station to move its transmitter to Cape Henry to cut down on the interference. Jack Light, who attended the meeting, said that he had received as many compliments as he had complaints about the new situation. After that the meeting degenerated into a shouting match.¹

On November 16 the radio committee of the Norfolk Electric Club secured the services of Menalcus Langford, Republican Congressman-Elect from the Second District, to present their case before the Radio Commission. Additionally, the radio committee was preparing a petition to be placed in every dealer's store asking the Commission to do one of three things: first, assign WTAR to its old frequency of 1270 kilocycles, or, second, require that WTAR remove its transmitter twenty-five to thirty miles from downtown Norfolk, or, third, require WTAR to sign off at 6:00 P.M.

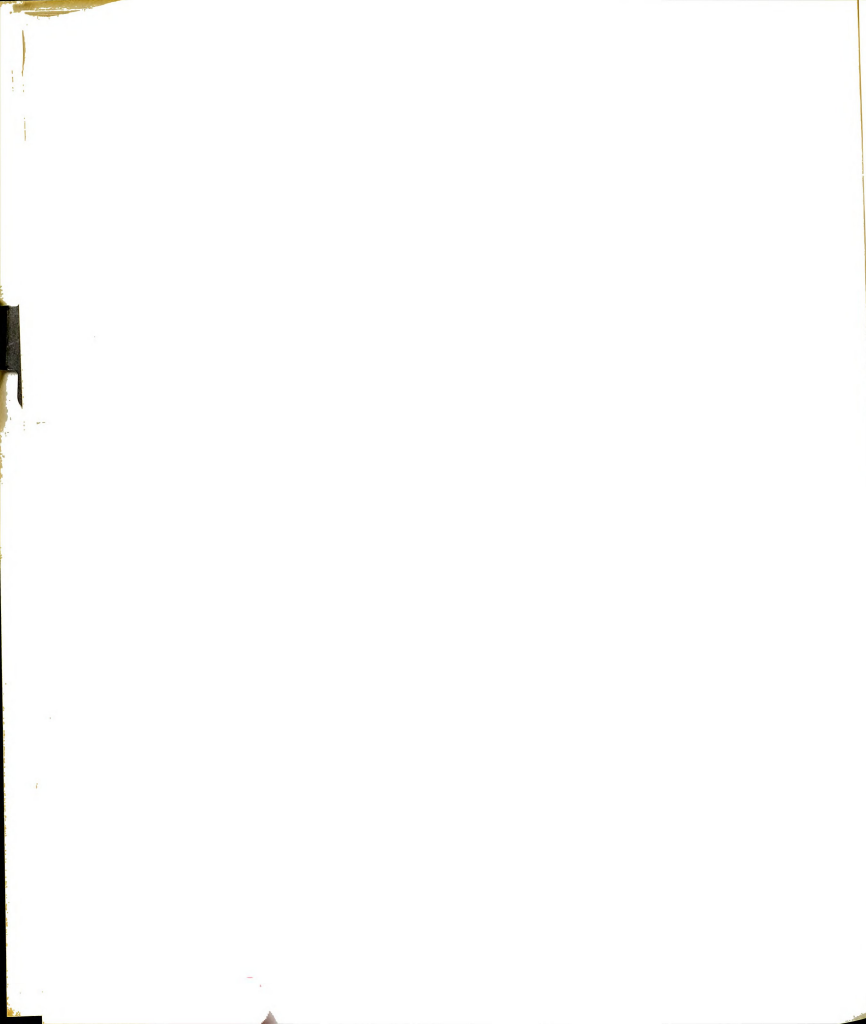
Light objected to what the dealers were doing:

When they ask signers for the petition they are seeking only those who are against us and give no opportunity for those who are satisfied with present arrangement to have their say. That is unfair. Thursday night we received 547 telephone calls in regard to the program and all except three were commendatory. And 75 per cent of the letters received registered only compliments.

.
It is not a question of interference but a question of the radio set and its operation.²

¹"Radio Dealers and WTAR Split on Wave Length," ibid., November 16, 1928, p. 24.

²Jack Light, quoted in: "Radio Wranglers Set Forces for Determined Tiff Because of WTAR's New Wave-Length," ibid., November 17, 1928, p. 16.



Mediation was obviously necessary, and the role of peace-maker fell to the new President of the WTAR Radio Corporation, H. B. Goodridge. In a letter to G. A. Bering of the Norfolk Electric Club Goodridge put the terms of the truce in writing:

Station WTAR operates under a Federal license and present allocation of wave lengths to all broadcasting stations in America has presented new problems and the apparent unwillingness of Jack Light to make some direct statement of policy was due to the request of the Radio Commission that no action be taken and no complaints filed until a fair trial could be given of these new wave lengths.

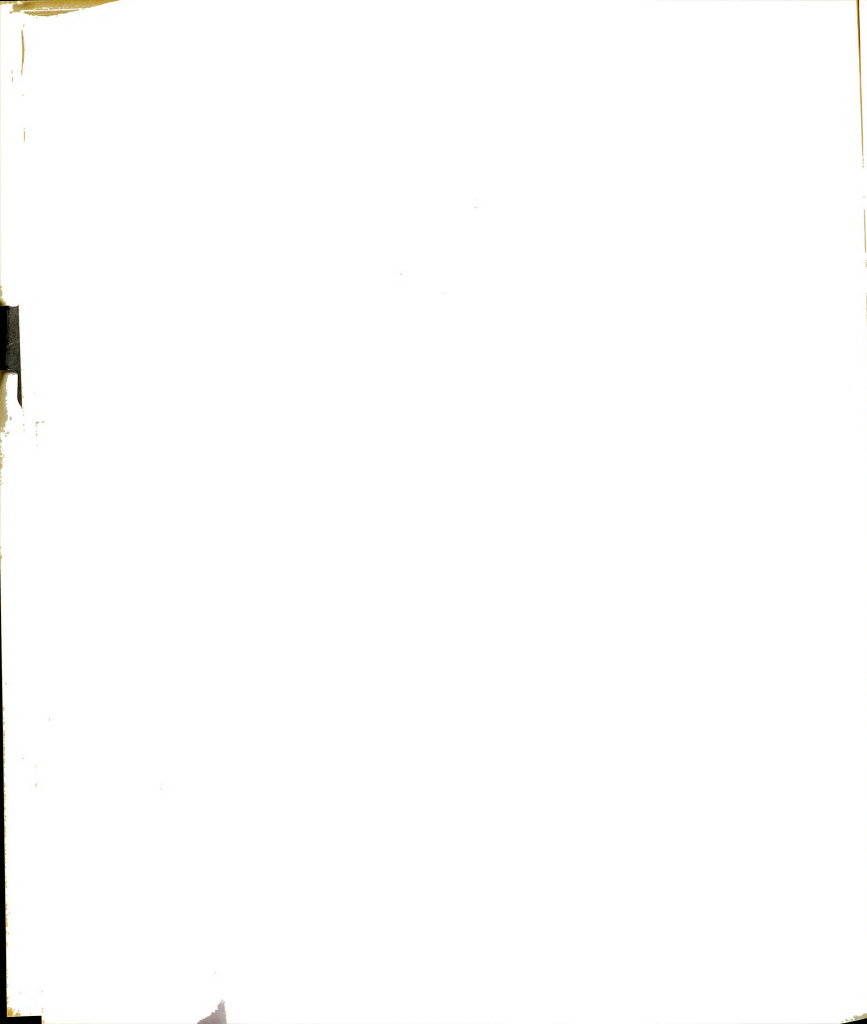
Station WTAR will broadcast a Community Fund program on Monday night and with that exception we will not go on the air from the time we give our morning program at 7:30 a.m. concluding with the news items from the Ledger-Dispatch; in other words after Monday for the balance of the week we will have no program after 7 o'clock p.m. This will give all radio users and your club an opportunity to test out without interference all other programs.

No conclusion should be reached by your Electric Club, the radio local public, and the station WTAR until we can ascertain all the facts upon which to base a decision as to the operation of our local station that it may best serve the community; the station is operated with that single purpose.

I will be most glad to meet your radio committee at such time as you may designate.¹

While Goodridge's syntax certainly did not assist in clearing up the problem, the actions of the station did. With the exception of one evening WTAR signed off the air at 7:00 P.M. that week, and by the second of December the situation had returned to normal. Most of the protesters had discovered that it was either their radios or their lack of

¹Letter from H. B. Goodridge to G. A. Bering, quoted in: "WTAR Quits Air at Night Next Week in Truce," *ibid.*, November 18, 1928, II, pp. 1 and 4.



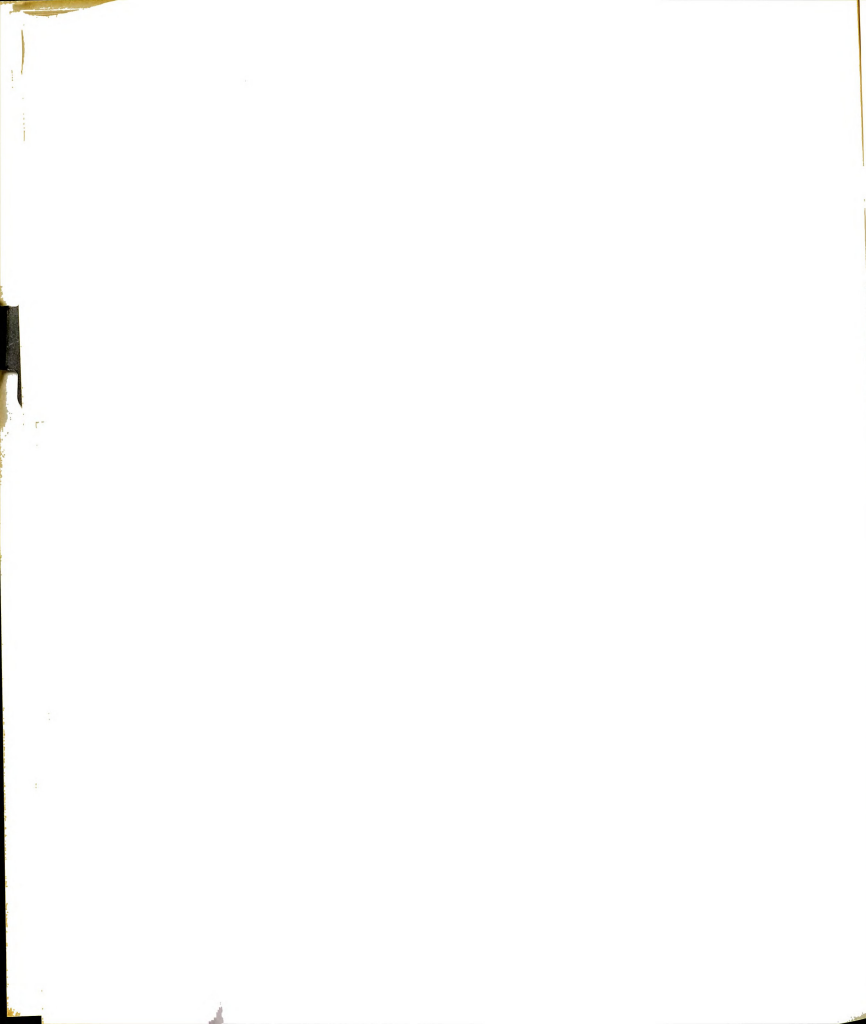
familiarity with the new frequencies which was causing the trouble, not WTAR. The Pilot closed the rather ugly incident in a most appropriate way:

The Norfolk Electric Club asked approximately 100 owners of receiving sets who had been among the principal complainants to make affidavits covering their reception last Sunday night with WTAR on, and WTAR off, in order that some action could be taken. When the proposition was put up in this way, most of the kickers discreetly shut up.¹

By the end of 1928 WTAR had a new frequency, a new home, a new owner and a network affiliation. During the year it had added programs from Virginia Beach during the summer and had established its first early morning programming. But also, for the second year in a row, it had been forced into a situation of having to publicly fight over its frequency.

The program schedule for December of 1928 was not much different from what it had been in December of 1927, but this similarity is about all one could reasonably expect, considering everything else which had happened.

¹"Local Radio Fans Generally Satisfied with New Wave Length," ibid., December 2, 1928, V, p. 1.



CHAPTER X

QUIET BEFORE THE STORM

In each of the years during which WTAR had been broadcasting prior to 1929 something untoward had happened which served to divert the energies of the station from providing a program service to the Norfolk audience and to direct these energies toward the solving of significant, but nagging, problems. But 1929 was to be different. By January of that year the Federal Radio Commission had approved the transfer of the station license from the Reliance Electric Company to the WTAR Radio Corporation.¹ By January, also, the power and the frequency of the station had been set, and the allocation had not been found to be detrimental to overall radio reception in the Norfolk area. The public was contented. In short, all was well.

The year of the stock market crash was to be, then, a quiet one for WTAR. It was to be a year in which the station would go about its business in an unassuming and somewhat

¹United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. A-B-14, January 3, 1929. The delay between the time when the transfer was actually effected and the time when the F.R.C. finally approved the transfer resulted because the principals of WTAR had failed to properly request the change. It was purely a matter of "red tape."

unspectacular manner. It was to be a year when there would be little legal, technical or esthetic experimentation. Consistency and regularity were to dominate over innovation.

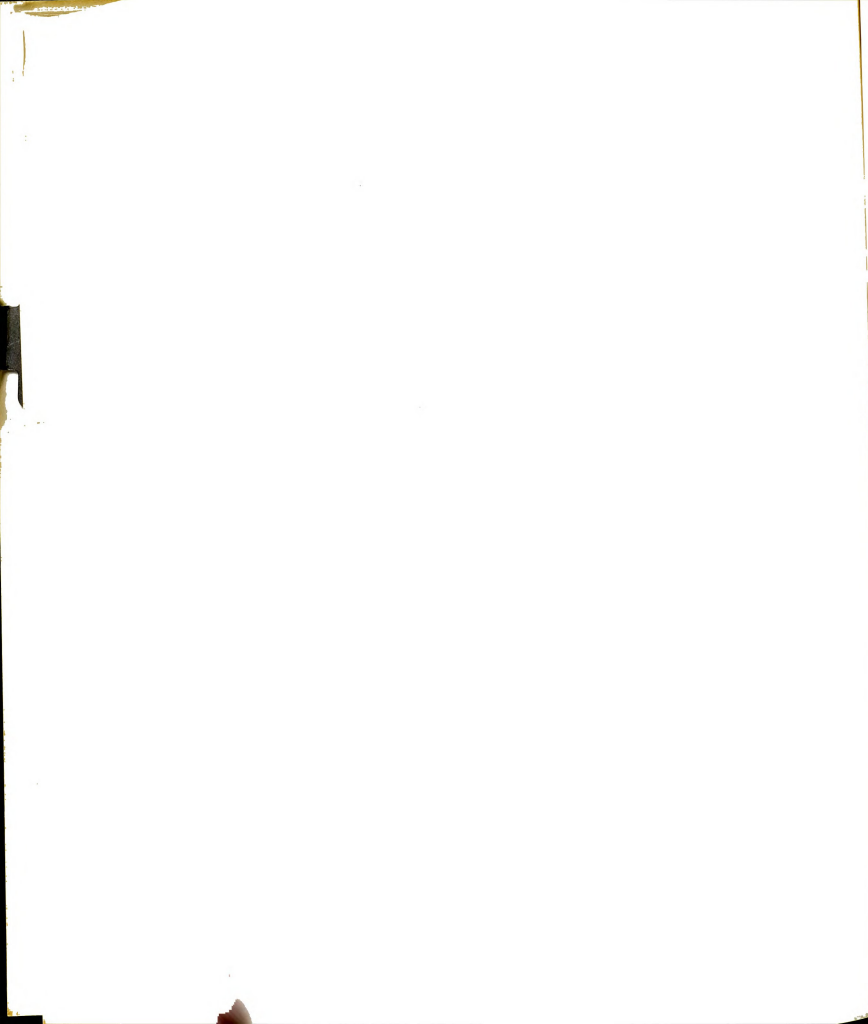
The story of 1929, then, is a relatively easy one to tell. In part it is the story of the station's relationship with the Columbia Broadcasting System, for 1929 was the first full year during which WTAR had a network affiliation. In part it is the story of the refinement of the existing broadcasting schedule which WTAR undertook.

Barnouw states that by January of 1929 C.B.S. had developed its rather unique affiliation contract through which the network would provide sustaining programs free to those affiliates which would give the network a firm option on the affiliates' time.¹ WTAR was not a party to an agreement of this nature in 1929. The station was a parttime affiliate of the network, perhaps as a kind of trial arrangement to see whether a network affiliation was feasible in Norfolk.² The relative laxity with which WTAR was tied to C.B.S. permitted the station to slowly increase the hours per week of programs from C.B.S., but it also allowed the station a rather free hand in pre-empting network broadcasts for local broadcasts.

The inaugural broadcast of the expanded C.B.S. network was on January 8, 1929, but WTAR aired its first Columbia

¹Barnouw, I, pp. 250-251.

²Jack Light, personal interview.



program of 1929 on Sunday, January 6: the "Majestic Theater," starring, that week, Eddie Cantor. The week of the eighth WTAR carried two additional hours of programming from C.B.S.: the "Voice of Columbia" and the "Sonora Hour," both on Thursday, January 10, 1929.¹

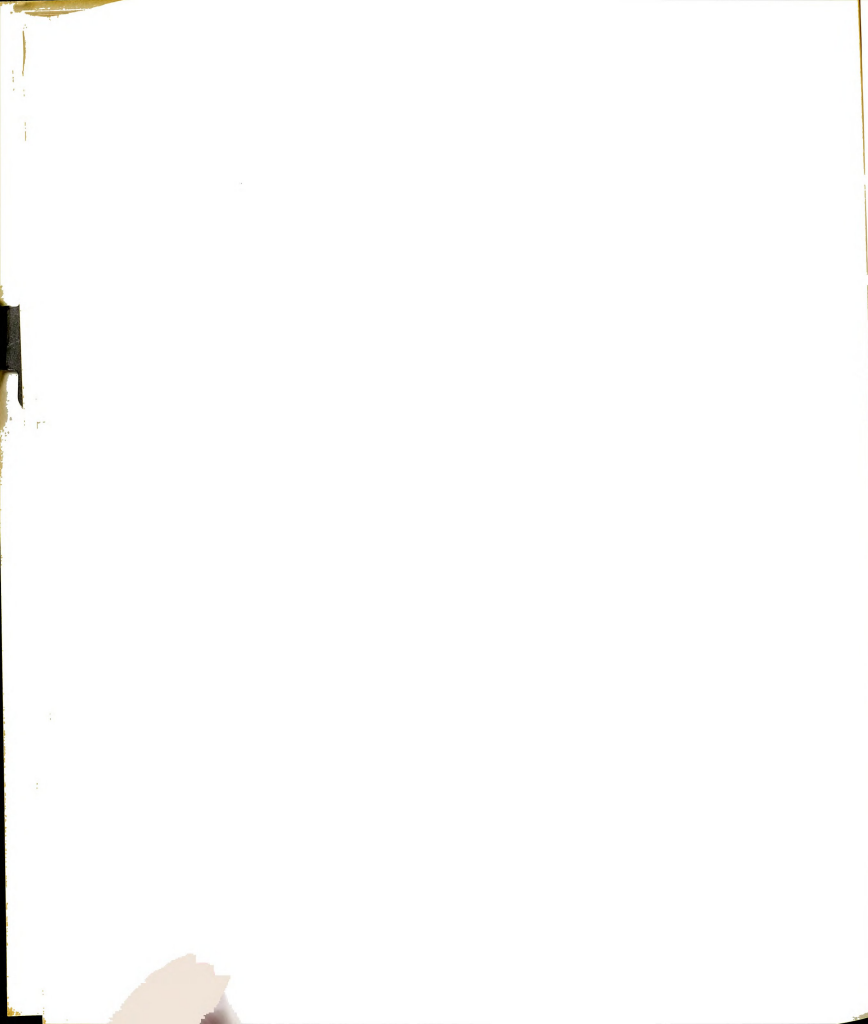
By the middle of the next week the station announced that it would add an additional hour per week from C.B.S. in February with the appearance of the Paul Whiteman Orchestra on the "Old Gold Hour,"² and still later in January it was announced that the "Columbians" would be heard on WTAR beginning in February.³ These additions would bring the total number of C.B.S. network hours carried by WTAR to five per week.

By the end of February WTAR was carrying six hours of C.B.S. programming per week: the "Majestic Theater" on Sundays, "Kansas School Daze" on Monday, the "Old Gold Hour" on Tuesdays, the "Sonora Hour" and the "Columbians" on Thursday, "Close-Ups," "Veedol Vodevil," the "Eastman Kodak

¹"Eddie Cantor Star of First WTAR-Columbia Bill," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 5, 1929, p. 16; "Norfolk Broadcasting Station Hooks Up with Columbia Chain Today," Virginia Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, January 6, 1929, IV, p. 6.

²"Paul Whiteman's Music for WTAR Audience," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 12, 1929, p. 13.

³"Columbia Chain Adds Two Hours to WTAR Program," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, January 20, 1929, II, p. 2.



Hour" and "Night Club Romances" on Fridays.¹ To this material from C.B.S. must also be added one hour per week which WTAR carried from the International Bible Students' Association and a thirty-minute program from the Watchtower Network.² In March of 1929, then, WTAR could carry up to eight hours of programs per week from various network sources.

Here arises the first indication of the relatively loose arrangement by which WTAR and C.B.S. were associated. In its application for license renewal in March of 1929 WTAR indicated that it was carrying a total of six hours of network programming from C.B.S. and the International Bible Students' Association. The Watchtower Network was not listed in the renewal application.³ Because the license renewal application was duly notarized it is not unreasonable to assume that the figures given were accurate representations of the station's programming status just prior to the filing of the application. This assumption leads to the conclusion that WTAR did not carry a program from the Watchtower Network during the week from which the station drew its programming figures.

¹Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 1, 1929 through March 31, 1929, passim; Harrison B. Summers, A Thirty-Year History of Programs Carried on National Radio Networks in the United States (Columbus: Ohio State University Department of Speech, 1958), pp. 11-13 and 15-18.

²Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 1, 1929 through March 31, 1929, passim.

³United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. R-B-380, March 26, 1929.



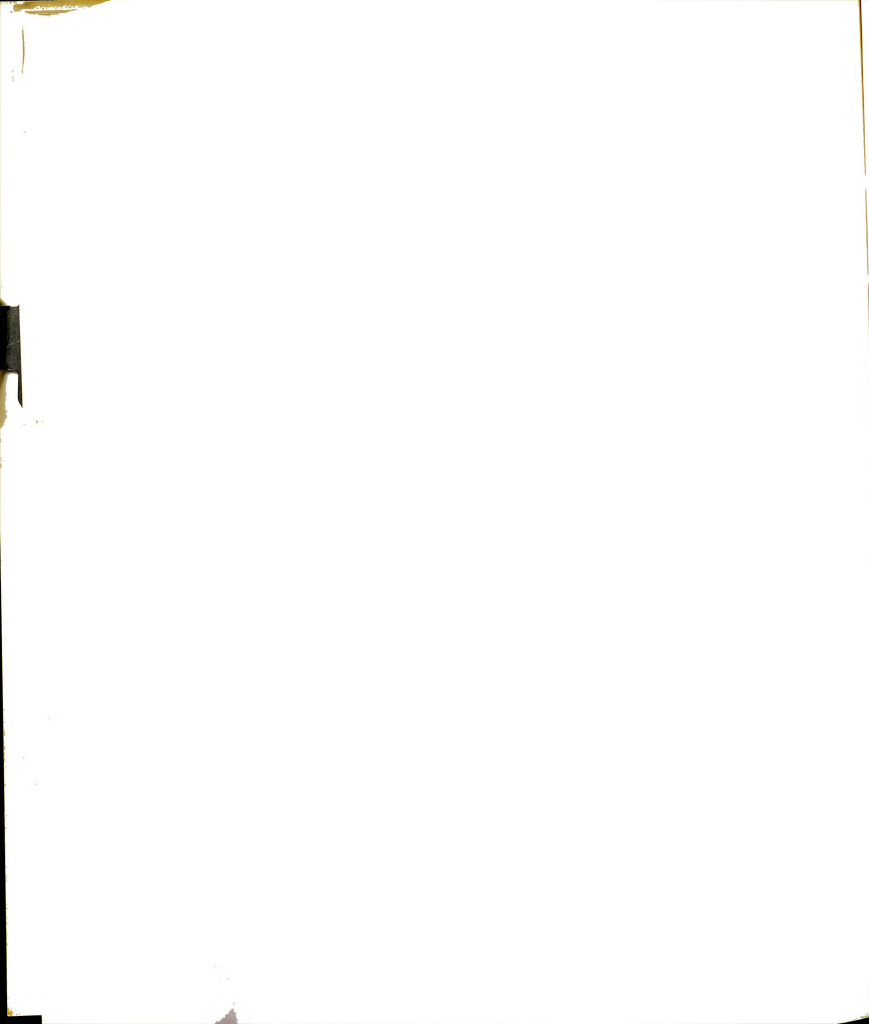
It also leads to the conclusion that local programming must have been substituted for network offerings during that week. Evidence from the local papers gives further credence to this conclusion. For instance, on Friday, March 15, 1929, WTAR substituted a program listed simply as the "Cook Banjo Trio" for the "Eastman Kodak Hour" from C.B.S.¹ Further indication of WTAR's use of the pre-emptive right comes somewhat later in the month. On March 28, instead of the "Sonora Hour" and the "Columbians Ensemble," the station carried a program by Frank Ficarra and his Wong Ping Whoopeans and a dance program.²

Economics most probably supplies the explanation for these variations. WTAR was paying C.B.S. for the programs which the local station aired.³ If, however, the station might produce a local program for which a sponsor might be secured, then it would make sense for it to substitute this local program for the network one. This is most likely what happened in these instances, and it would happen again up to the time when WTAR signed a long-term agreement with C.B.S. in 1930.

¹Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 15, 1929, p. 23.

²Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 28, 1929, p. 12; New York Times, March 24, 1929, XI, pp. 19-20.

³"WTAR Awarded Place in Big Radio Hookup by Columbia," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, December 2, 1928, II, p. 1.



By June of 1929, when WTAR again filed for license renewal, the station stated that it was carrying only three hours of network programming per week.¹ The number of network shows carried by WTAR had further declined in July when, during the week of July 7 through July 13, for example, the station carried only two hours of network programs, with one of those being from the Watchtower Network.² In August the figure rose to three hours.³ This decrease can be partially attributed to the fact that some of the programs, such as the "Old Gold Hour," had gone off the air for the summer; but, in spite of that, it is apparent that WTAR was certainly not dominated by the Columbia Broadcasting System during this period of its affiliation.

Late in August Jack Light announced the fall schedule of programs from C.B.S. Beginning in September Light said that WTAR would be carrying up to five and one-half hours of network commercial programs in addition to "several sustaining features" from the network per week.⁴ As the schedule firmed up in October WTAR was carrying the following C.B.S. programs for the number of hours stated by Light: the "McKesson-Robbins

¹United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No., R-B-380, June 5, 1929.

²Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, July 7, 1929 through July 13, 1929, passim.

³Ibid., August 4, 1929 through August 10, 1929, passim.

⁴"Light Announces Added Features for Station WTAR," ibid., August 11, 1929, I, p. 10.



Newsreel of the Air" and the "Majestic Theater" on Sundays, the "Old Gold Hour" on Tuesdays, the "True Story Hour" on Fridays, "Jo and Vi," the "Paramount-Publix Hour" and "Romany Patteran" [sic, gypsy music], or a network sustaining program in its place, on Saturdays.¹ The several sustaining programs to which Light alluded in his announcement in August were never specified, and a survey of the station's program listings for the last quarter of 1929 shows that these unsponsored offerings from C.B.S. were few and far between.² When one was scheduled it was listed simply as "sustaining" by the newspapers, with no further indication of program title or content.³

It is somewhat difficult to evaluate the effect which this first of affiliation with C.B.S. had on WTAR or on WTAR's audience. There was not a large amount of programming from the network, and it seems that WTAR felt rather free to preempt the limited number of C.B.S. programs in favor of local programming. The station, at least publicly, was convinced of the value of the affiliation,⁴ and there were instances

¹Ibid., September, October, November and December, 1929, passim.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., December 21, 1929, p. 8. The term sustaining clearly referred to network programs. Local programs were listed by title or content.

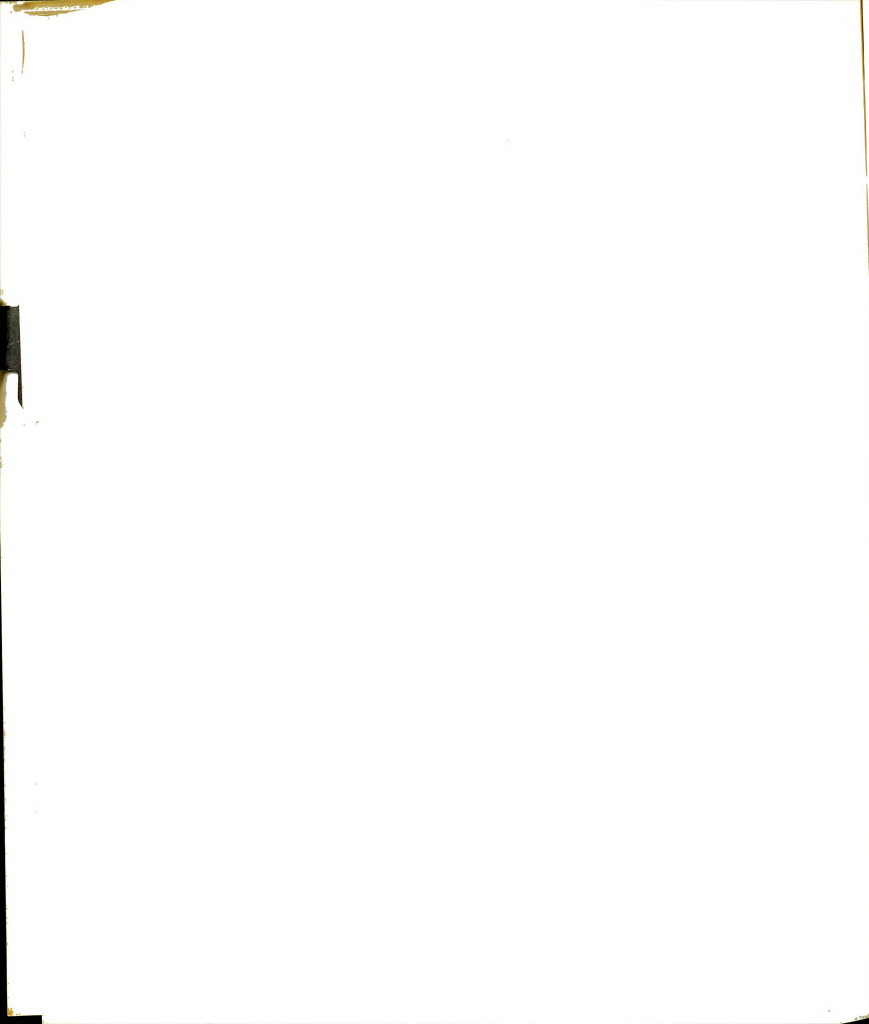
⁴"Tie-Up with Columbia Helps WTAR Programs," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 17, 1929, II, p. 2.



when WTAR was able to provide, through C.B.S., programs of definite value, such as the inauguration of Herbert Hoover and the play-by-play broadcast of the 1929 World Series by Ted Husing.¹ But in spite of these two examples, and possibly others in the news and special events realm, C.B.S. did not contribute a great deal to WTAR during 1929. The station was doing local broadcasts the majority of the time it was on the air this year, and it is, therefore, appropriate to turn the discussion in that direction at this point.

In March of 1929 WTAR's program schedule looked very much as it had at the close of 1928. The station was on the air from 7:30 A.M. until 9:30 A.M. with the "Time Service Program." It returned to the air at 12:30 P.M. with a program of luncheon music and signed off again at 1:30 P.M. The evening part of the schedule began at 4:30 and continued until 11:30. This latter portion of the broadcast day included the Ledger-Dispatch news reports, any number of programs featuring a variety of local talent and whatever network programs the station might happen to be carrying. In short, the station appeared to have arrived at a kind of plateau, a quantitative level of programming at which it could efficiently, effectively and economically operate. There had been no significant changes in its schedule since the addition of the "Time Service

¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 4, 1929, p. 8; "WTAR Will Broadcast World Series Direct from Playing Fields," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 5, 1929, p. 1.



Program" in August of 1928, and it will be recalled that the program schedule at that time was much the same as it had been at the close of 1927.¹

Late in March, however, alterations began to take place. The station had been signing off at 9:30 A.M. after a brief weather forecast. In March, the station had added what was simply billed as a "Housekeepers' Chat" to the weather forecast. There was no publicity associated with the program. It simply appeared one day in the daily schedule of WTAR programs.² But information published later indicates that it was an informational program derived from material put together by the Virginia Department of Agriculture.³ In itself this program is not worthy of note, perhaps, but it represented the first step in a significant extension of WTAR's broadcasting day.

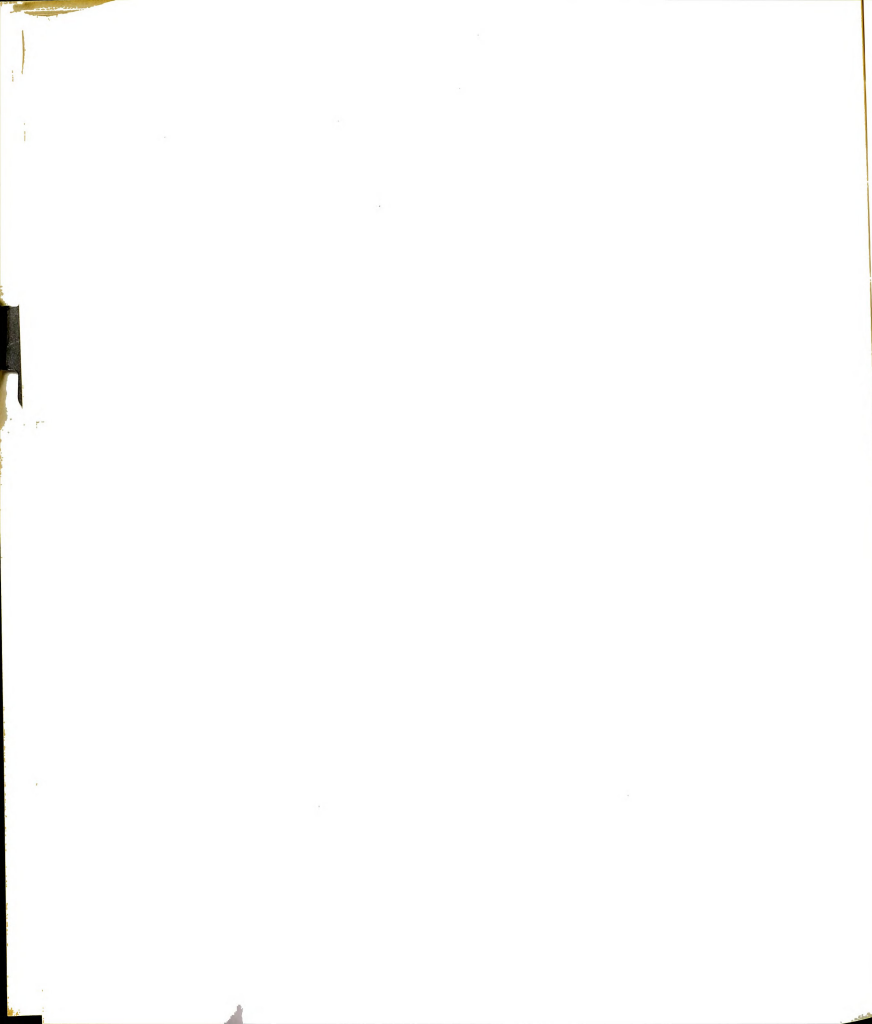
In April the station let it be known that it was seriously contemplating broadcasting the entire day from 7:30 A.M. until midnight.⁴ During that same month the station made several additional programming changes. It added to the

¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 3, 1929 through March 9, 1929; Supra, pp. 138-139.

²Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 25, 1929, p. 11.

³"WTAR's Fan Mail Growing," ibid., August 10, 1929, p. 22.

⁴"WTAR May Soon Be on Air Continuously," ibid., April 13, 1929, p. 21.



morning programming by producing a program called "Opening the Mailbag" at 9:40 after the "Housekeepers' Chat," and at 3:30 P.M. it now offered the Norfolk Audience the "Afternoon Tea Hour" or "Afternoon Tea Party." The evening programs of dance music were extended to midnight.¹

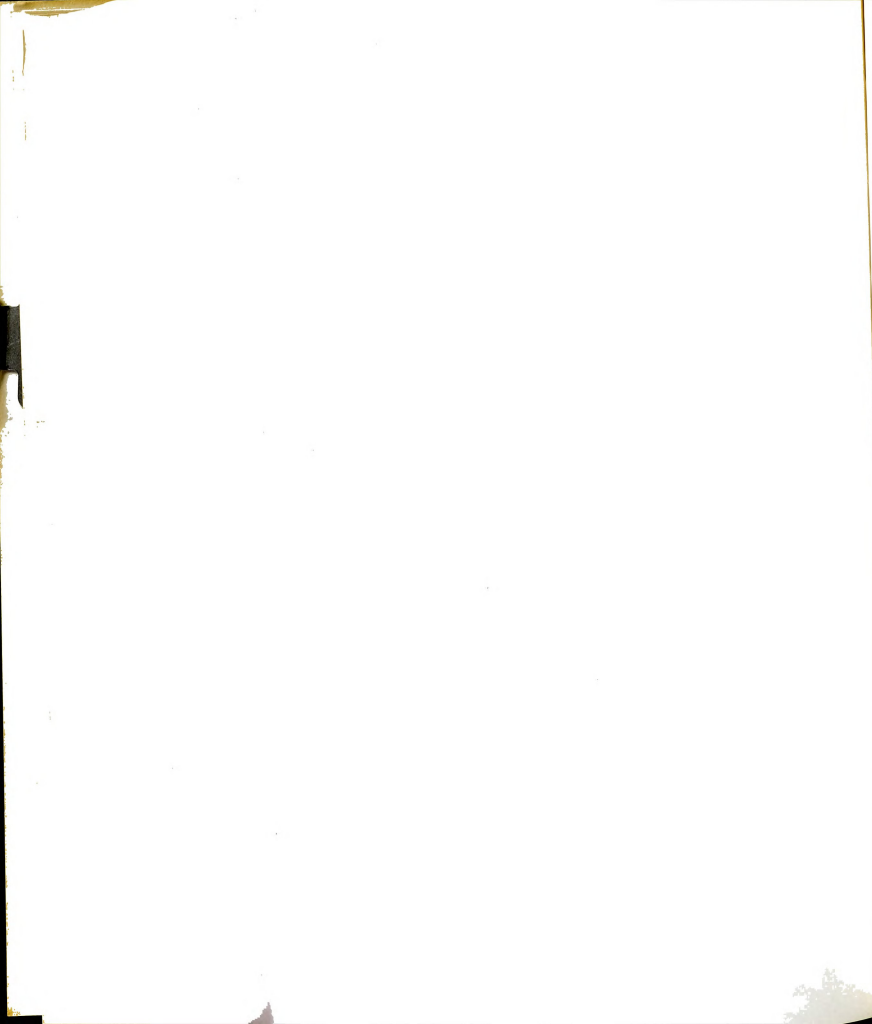
The "Afternoon Tea Party" was the most interesting of these additions. An accurate description of the program is no longer possible, but from available evidence it looks as if it was one of the earliest of the "talk" shows. Four members of the WTAR staff, Blayne Butcher, George Black, Fred Pfahler and Grace Gatling would daily gather around the microphone to talk informally, read the mail and just generally discuss whatever happened to come up. No mention is made of whether or not guests were ever present on the show. There doesn't seem to be much doubt that the program was popular.²

By May the station had added additional programs during the middle of the day so that it was then on the air from 7:30 A.M. until 11:00 A.M. and then from noon until midnight.³ The final hour to be filled from 11:00 A.M. until noon was

¹"Coming Week over WTAR," ibid., April 20, 1929, p. 26.

²"Over WTAR Coming Week," ibid., April 27, 1929, p. 25;
 "Two Thousand Letters Attest Popularity of WTAR Over Country,"
Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, June 2, 1929, III,
 p. 10.

³"Two Thousand Letters Attest Popularity of WTAR Over Country," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, June 2, 1929, III, p. 10.



not programmed with any sort of consistency until September when the "Shut-Ins Request Period" was added.¹ The following schedule for September 9, 1929, gives a representative idea of what WTAR was offering when its extension of hours was completed:

A.M.

7:30 Time Service Program
9:30 Weather; Opening the Mail Bag
11:00 Shut-Ins Request Period

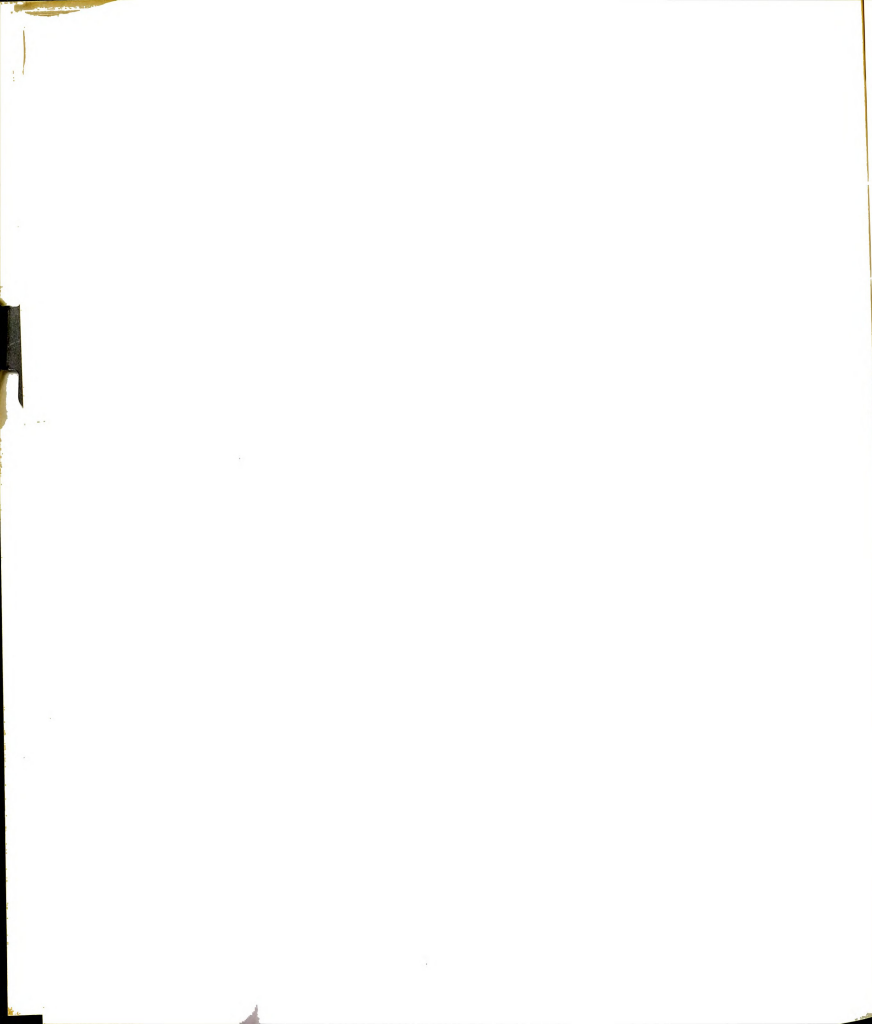
P.M.

12:00 Luncheon Music and Weather
12:25 Show of the Week
12:30 Pender Grocery Luncheon Program
1:30 Health Talk
1:35 Variety
2:30 Old Time Tunes
2:55 World Book Man
3:00 Wood Piano Company Afternoon Social Hour
3:30 Afternoon Tea Party
4:30 D. P. Paul Orthophonic Hour
5:30 Newscasting
6:00 Resume: Musical Interlude
6:29 Sapper's Correct Time
6:30 Ledger-Dispatch Weather, News and Sports
7:00 Music
7:15 Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce Survey
7:30 Dinner Concert
8:00 Studio Homecoming
10:00 Dance Music²

The program at 5:30 P.M., "Newscasting," is a rather curious one. There is no indication as to what it was, but apparently it was originated from WTAR and had no connection with the Ledger-Dispatch news programs carried at 6:30 P.M.

¹Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch and Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, July, August and September, 1929, passim.

²Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, September 9, 1929, p. 13.



The summer of 1929 brought the return of orchestra concerts from Virginia Beach.¹ These broadcasts continued through the end of August; but, these aside, the summer was a rather uneventful one.

The fall and winter continued the pattern of previous months. The Ledger-Dispatch was not quite as active in the WTAR programming as it had been in the past, however. The news program remained at 6:30 P.M., but the addition of the C.B.S. network meant that the re-creations of the World Series were no longer necessary. There was only one college football game played in Norfolk for Tom Hanes and his staff to broadcast, but the station and the paper did join forces to broadcast the election returns for the State election in November.²

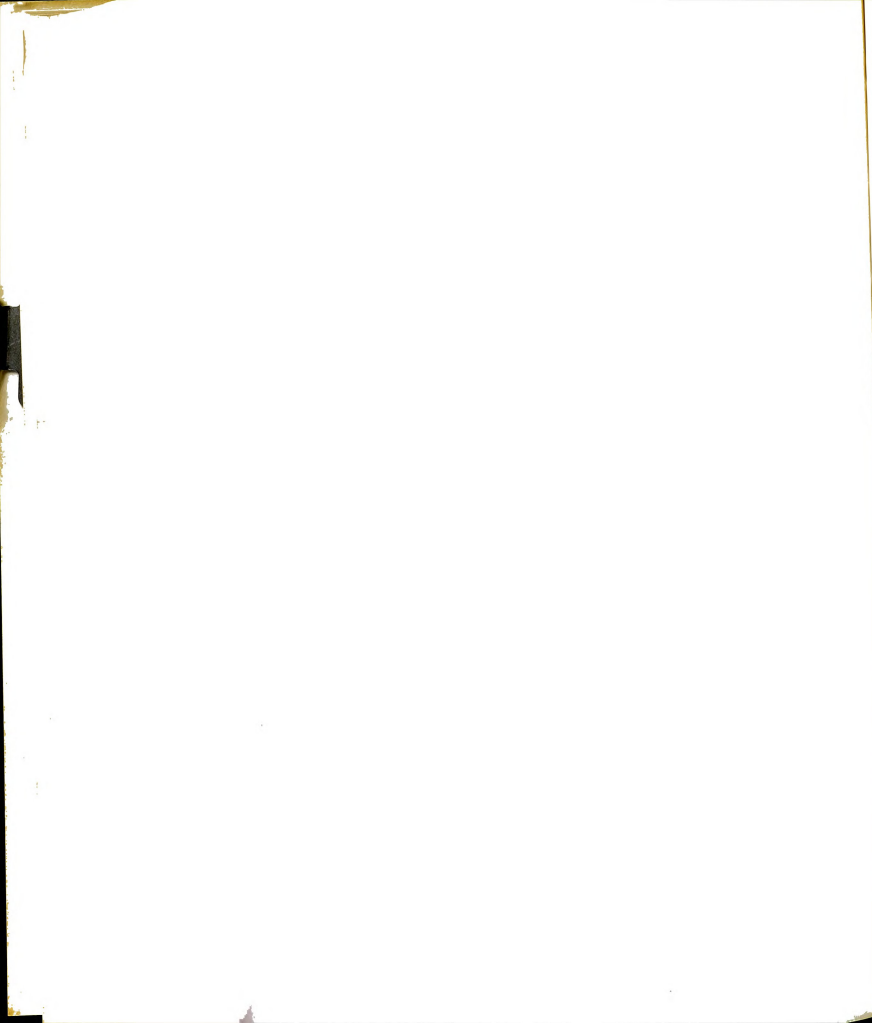
December of 1929 brought the final additions to the WTAR program schedule. On December 14 the Ledger announced that WTAR would be on the air from 10:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M. on Sundays, marking the first time that Sunday had been a full broadcasting day for the station.³

By the end of the year the metamorphosis of WTAR was completed. In the space of six years and three months the

¹"Over WTAR Coming Week," ibid., June 15, 1929, p. 11.

²Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch and Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September, October, November and December, 1929, passim.

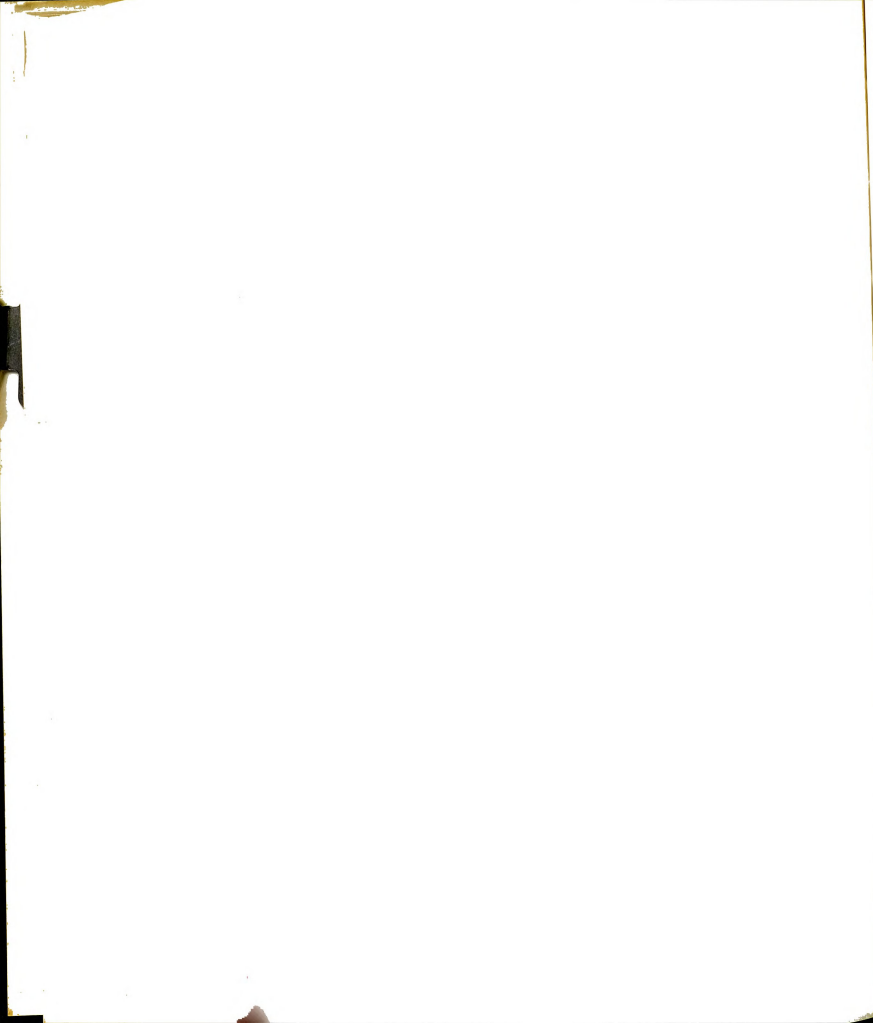
³"WTAR Schedule to Run from 10 AM to 10 PM Sunday," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, December 14, 1929, p. 24.



station had progressed from being a somewhat erratic, occasionally-programmed, fifteen-watt broadcasting plant to a consistent station with thirteen employees, a weekly payroll of \$350, and broadcasting 105 hours a week. By the end of the year WTAR was carrying forty-six and one-half commercial hours of time, out of that 105 hours on the air, and it showed a monthly net income of \$150.00.¹

Nineteen-twenty-nine was WTAR's first full year of affiliation with C.B.S., but, more importantly than that, it was a year of consolidation. It was a year when Jack Light and his staff could take the time necessary to unify and adequately structure all that had proven effective in the past. It is fortunate that this year came when it did for WTAR, for 1930 was to find the station in the midst of another battle with the people of Norfolk, a battle in which the station was thoroughly taken to task by just about everyone from the plain, ordinary folk of Norfolk to the staff of the Federal Radio Commission in Washington. If the station had not had 1929 to pause and catch its breath it would have been hard-pressed to endure what 1930 was to offer.

¹United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. R-B-380, December 30, 1929.



CHAPTER XI

THE STORM

Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write

From what has been said so far one can discern certain strengths which WTAR had developed during the early years of its life. The station was blessed with a dedicated staff of reasonably talented people. It was owned by individuals who were willing to put the necessary amounts of money into the operation which would produce an acceptable, if not brilliant, level of radio service to Tidewater, Virginia. But, whatever its strengths might have been, good public relations at the appropriate times could not be counted as one of them. The station was capable of putting out press releases which would promote a forthcoming program; it could publicize its accomplishments well enough. But when it came to the point where WTAR had to convince the public of the reasonableness and propriety of a course of action it had difficulty handling the job with the necessary dispatch. It had handled the conflict with WSEA rather poorly in 1927, and in 1930 it stumbled through its problems to the point where one gets the impression that there was at least reasonable doubt on the part of

the owner as to whether he should continue at all. WTAR was to come through 1930 in one piece. Ultimately it did all that it had wanted to do, but that in no way discounts what happened during the early part of 1930.

The seeds of the conflict date to the general reallocation of radio frequencies in 1928.¹ At that time WTAR had been directed to share the 780-kilocycle frequency with WSEA. When WSEA ceased broadcasting WTAR's license was changed to state that the station was to share its frequency with a station which would be assigned at a later date.² The management of the station simply forgot about the qualification in the license.³ This oversight was the foundation for the conflict.

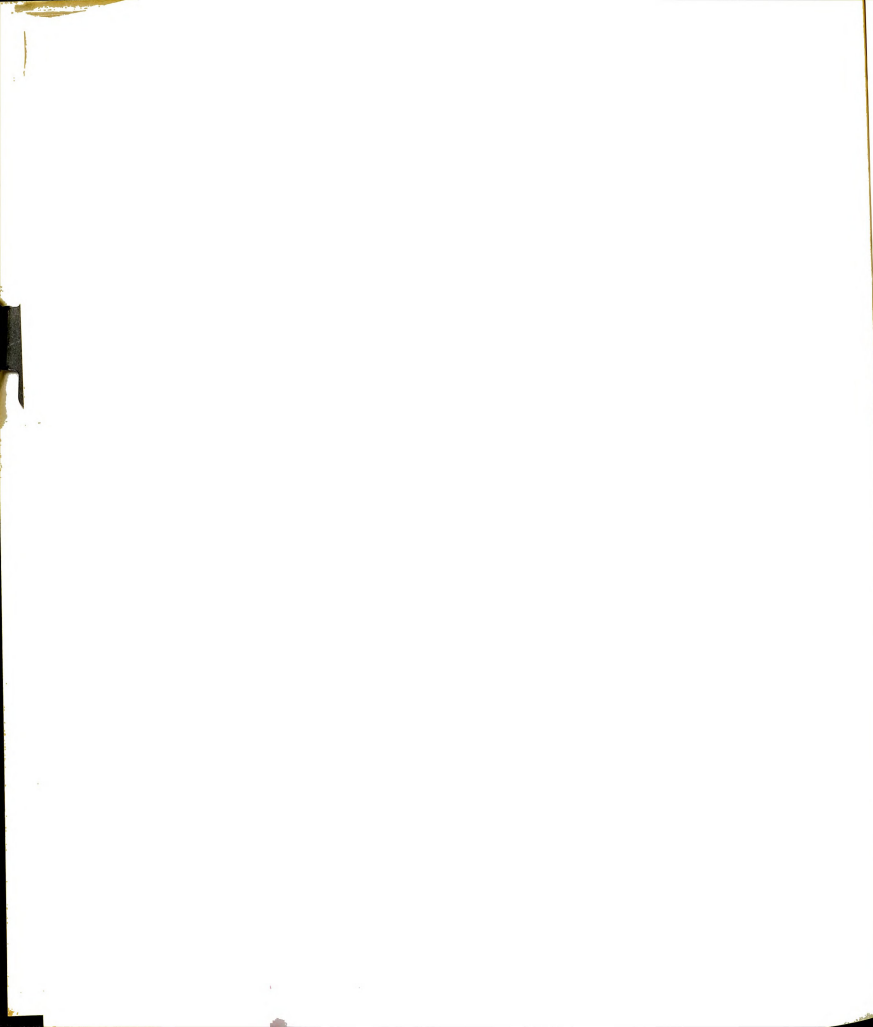
In January of 1930 Dr. R. A. Gamble, who had periodically broadcast over WTAR with a series of "Health Talks," applied for a license to broadcast from Petersburg, south of Richmond, on a frequency of 780 kilocycles. Announcement of the fact was first made in the editorial columns of the Ledger-Dispatch as the paper, with obvious prejudice, said:

Radio and all its works form so important a part of life nowadays that all our people should take a keen interest in the impudent application of Station WLBG, of

¹Supra, pp. 144-169.

²United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. R-B-380, October 12, 1929.

³United States Federal Radio Commission, In Re: WTAR Radio Corporation, Norfolk Virginia, Docket No. 443, April 9, 1930, pp. 57-59.



Petersburg, for authority to share time with Station WTAR of Norfolk, using the same wave length.¹

The editorial further indicated that Dr. Gamble might have been trying to get even with WTAR because the station had told Gamble that he could not continue to broadcast his messages unless the content were changed.² But that particular aspect of the conflict between the two stations was soon overshadowed by larger issues in which WTAR was involved to the exclusion of WLBG.

To oppose the Gamble application WTAR applied to the Federal Radio Commission for a full-time license. The WTAR application made a hearing necessary to decide the issue.³

The application of WTAR brought out a hostility to the station which, to this point, had been latent. The first shot in the battle was fired by C. E. Lints, and, although Lints mentioned Gamble and WLBG, he did hit upon the two substantive issues which were to endure through the dispute:

I have been told by several people in Norfolk that they are unable to get WJZ at New York City while Norfolk is broadcasting. Wouldn't the public rather listen to WJZ than to Norfolk? . . .

Patronize and uphold home industry. That motto is fine when you get value received, otherwise, go out of town, and this is just what you have to do if you want a good radio program.

Give Petersburg a part of Norfolk's time so that

¹"Norfolk's Station Threatened," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 16, 1930, p. 8.

²Ibid.

³"Lively Radio Fight Looming," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 18, 1930, p. 30.



the radio bugs of Norfolk will be able to get some good programs.¹

The issues which were working against WTAR were interference with the reception of distant stations in Norfolk and the apparent extensive use of records by WTAR. It is interesting to note that the interference problem is one the potential of which was noted by Jack Light in 1928 when WTAR's frequency was changed from 1270 kilocycles to 780 kilocycles.² Jack Light recalls, in connection with the phonograph record issue, that there was something of a bad joke going around Norfolk at that time: the letters W-T-A-R were alleged to stand for "We'll Try Another Record." Light chuckles about this now, but it was not quite so funny then.³

Lints' attack on WTAR made the "Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write" columns the forum for the debate over the merits and demerits of WTAR. The letters make interesting reading, regardless of their value as constructive criticism, for they provide a kind of record of the way in which the Norfolk public viewed radio broadcasting.

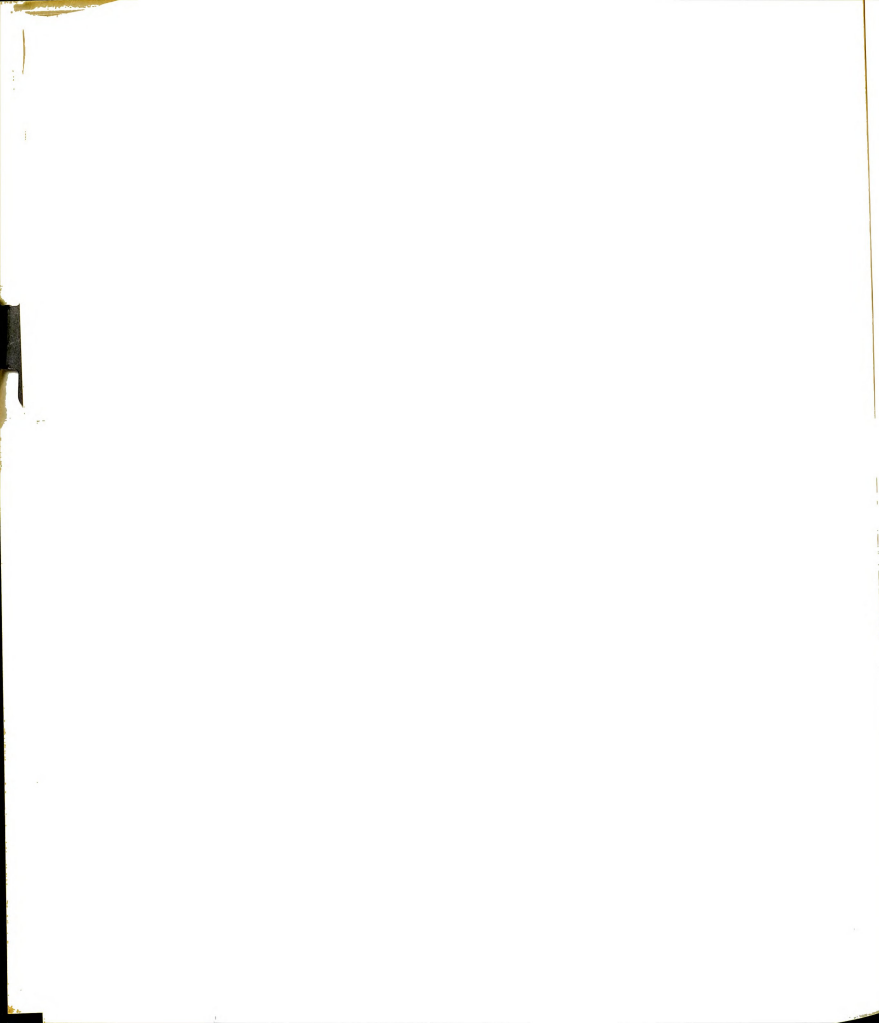
Miss Goldie Onley was the first to reply to Lints' letter, and she was very much in favor of the Norfolk station:

I like Norfolk, hope they'll give Norfolk 24-hour service instead of 16 hours a day. As for their playing

¹"Ledger Dispatch Readers Write," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 25, 1930, p. 8.

²Supra, pp. 146-149.

³Jack Light, personal interview.



phonograph records, I enjoy them. . . .

.
I say give Norfolk 24 hours a day and let Petersburg broadcast on her own. Come on, all you radio fans and tell Mr. Lints how you had rather hear Norfolk than any other station.¹

Two days later, R. M. Hughes, Jr. added his voice to the pro-WTAR chorus:

One does hear worthwhile artists through the phonograph record, and outside of the three great New York "key" stations such talent is rare in the radio studios.

Mr. Lints wants WTAR off the air so that WJZ may be heard here. Surely he knows that the National Broadcasting Company's programs from WJZ may always be got through other stations in the NBC network . . . even better than from WJZ direct.

Perhaps WTAR is not yet one of the leading stations in the country, but it may become so if loyally supported by our community instead of being assailed by our Knights of the Hammer.²

Hughes' means of dealing with the interference problem was not practical, at least not in the mind of W. S. Morris. Morris went through the various stations which carried network programs and pointed out that reception of these stations was neither more consistent nor of higher quality than reception of WJZ. He concluded:

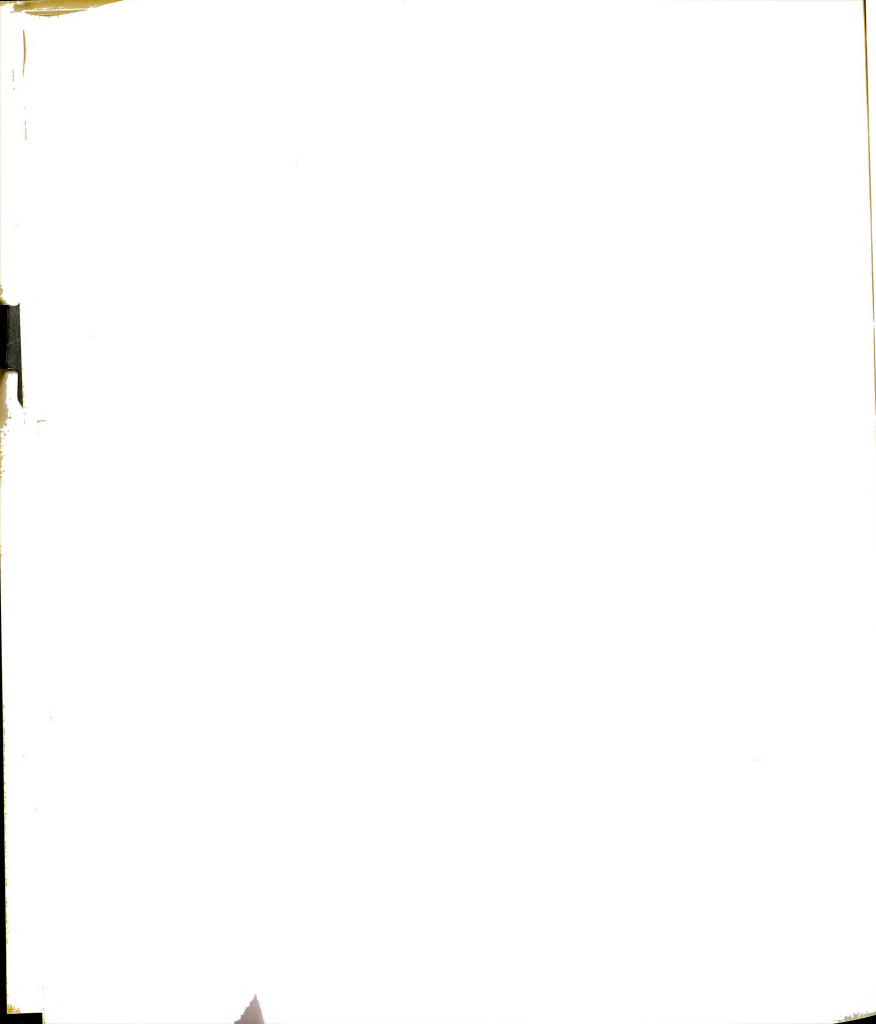
We do not love WTAR less but we do wish that it would keep quiet when WJZ and WGY are on the air when it has nothing better to offer than phonograph records.³

Dr. J. B. West approved of very little which WTAR broadcast, and his expression of disapproval was colorful, if not

¹"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, January 29, 1930, p. 8.

²Ibid., January 31, 1930, p. 8.

³Ibid., February 3, 1930, p. 8.



constructive:

Radio Station WTAR (Letters I presume standing for "Will Try Any Racket"), will find it difficult convincing any normal family that it broadcasts for only 16 hours per day. We have grown to think of its announcer as some inexhaustible superhuman being with calloused fingers from handling phonograph records, totally deaf, advertising manager [sic] for concerns selling ships, shoes, sealing wax, cabbages and bloated with Wong Ping chow mein.

. . . "WTAR" need not share time with Petersburg, for it will be just another station. We want WTAR to share its time with us (its audience). A night or two off each week will relieve it of so much time to fill in and give us a chance to hear our radio.

I understand from WTAR, that any criticism of this kind is, "Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth," well who wouldn't take a peep in its mouth when it stands braying for hours like a jackass in the gateway of a pasture of gift horses.¹

C. E. Lints wrote another letter which was, in part, a reply to Miss Onley, but he did offer a possible solution to the problem of interference: "I find that a good many people are waiting until the sentiment is aroused, and will assist to have Norfolk placed on another wave length, if nothing else can be done."²

The calm, reasoned thoughts of Judge R. B. Spindle put the conflict in the perspective which was in danger of being lost for good. Spindle's comments were to carry somewhat more weight than the others because he was to become the leader of the anti-WTAR forces when they were organized in early March: "I take it that nobody desires per se to have

¹Ibid., February 4, 1930, p. 8.

²Ibid.



WTAR's time divided with a small station in Petersburg that promises no better programs, but certainly reception conditions here should be improved."¹

The depth of feeling of the opposition must have had some kind of an effect on WTAR. A number of the letters to the Ledger indicated that the objections of the writer had been communicated to the station, and perhaps an article in the Ledger on February 8, 1930 was a manifestation of the effect of the listeners' complaints. The Ledger printed a kind of ballot with fourteen categories of radio entertainment and asked the readers to indicate their preference and send the ballot to WTAR. Daily, from 4:00 to 4:30 P.M., Blayne Butcher, WTAR's Chief Announcer, would discuss the trends over the air.² Nothing more was said of the idea in the paper, but one thing is certain: The attempt to better community relations by improving communication did not placate the protesters. The letters to the Ledger continued.

James Machen wrote, giving the impression that he was demanding a great deal of his radio, and he blamed WTAR when the performance did not live up to expectations:

. . . I find that when WTAR is broadcasting it is impossible to reach Baltimore, Shenectady [sic], New York, Miami, Cincinnati and numerous other first class

¹Ibid., February 8, 1930, p. 8.

²"Listeners Asked to Give Program Ideas to WTAR," ibid., February 8, 1930, p. 14.

stations due to the fact that interference is received from WTAR. . . . This practically eliminates all of the outside worthwhile stations until after WTAR goes off the air.¹

C. L. Zunes had problems with interference, too, but as far as playing records was concerned there were times when he would much rather listen to recordings instead of the real thing:

. . . I would much prefer at times "Il Trovatore," [sic] if in a classic mood, or "Pompanolis," if frisky, on a record over WTAR than some silly, half-drunken woman singing in a falsetto voice some sickening, nerve-wrecking idiotic presumably love song (ye gods have mercy) over the 50,000 W. stations.²

Support for WTAR came also, during February, from a rather predictable source: the Chamber of Commerce. R. W. Coates made the following statement:

It is evident that all stations in all locations have a tendency to dominate a greater or lesser number of degrees on the dial. . . . Every city that has a broadcasting station has to go through the same conditions. It is also evident that if WTAR were not operating strictly within the law it would be required to come off the air, and when it is permitted to operate as it does without censure of any kind from the Department of Commerce it is obviously performing according to the regulations in the eyes of experts.³

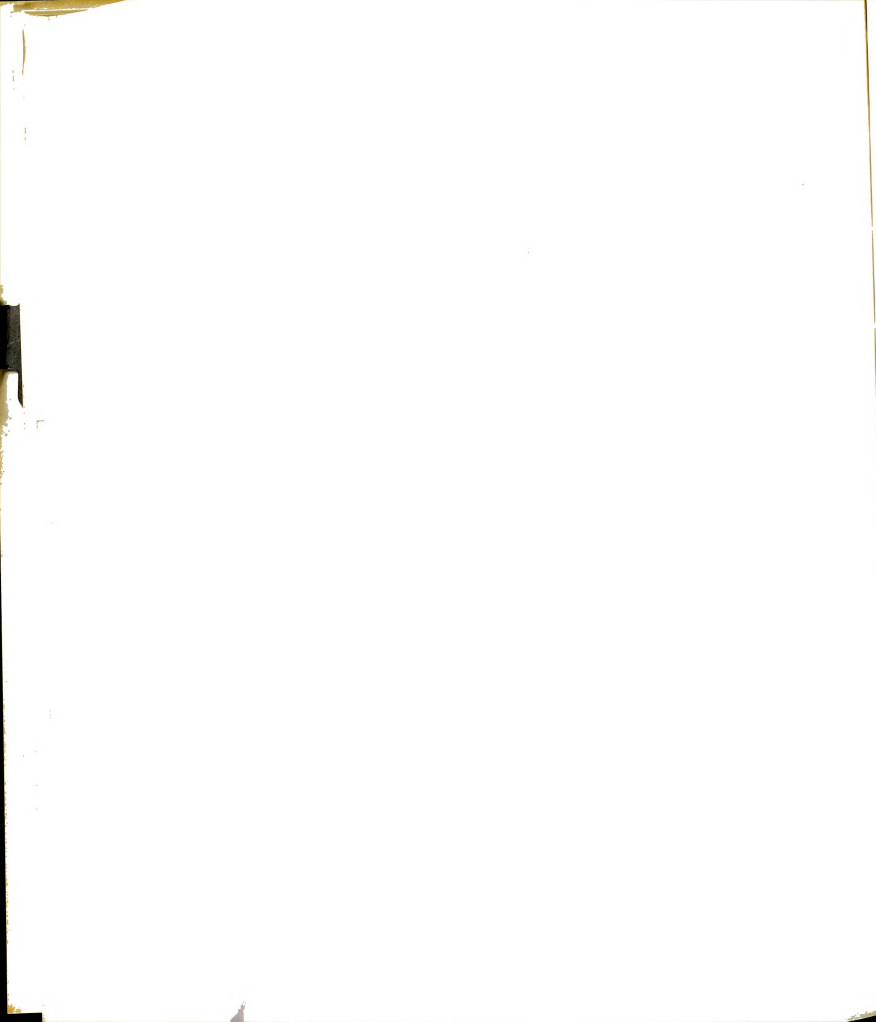
Even Edward Bennett, The Assistant Radio Inspector for the third radio district, which included Norfolk, stated that WTAR was well within the prescribed technical limits.⁴

¹"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write," ibid., February 10, 1930, p. 8.

²Ibid., February 11, 1930, p. 8.

³R. W. Coates, quoted in: "WTAR Upheld by Officials," ibid., February 14, 1930, p. 3.

⁴Ibid.



But what Bennett thought made little or no difference to the listeners, and those who wrote to the Ledger made little effort to conceal their displeasure. Consider the suggestions of W. B. Edmonds:

Would suggest that WTAR procure a hurdy-gurdy and steam calliope to add to their jews-harp [sic] and French harp virtuosos. To make sure that their 16-hour time can't be broken into when they changed records until the supply is exhausted should suggest they pick up a pickininy [sic] off the street and let him render "It Ain't Going to Rain No Mo". . . .¹

Mrs. J. W. Roard was brief, but explicit: "Here's hoping that WTAR will be taken off the air."²

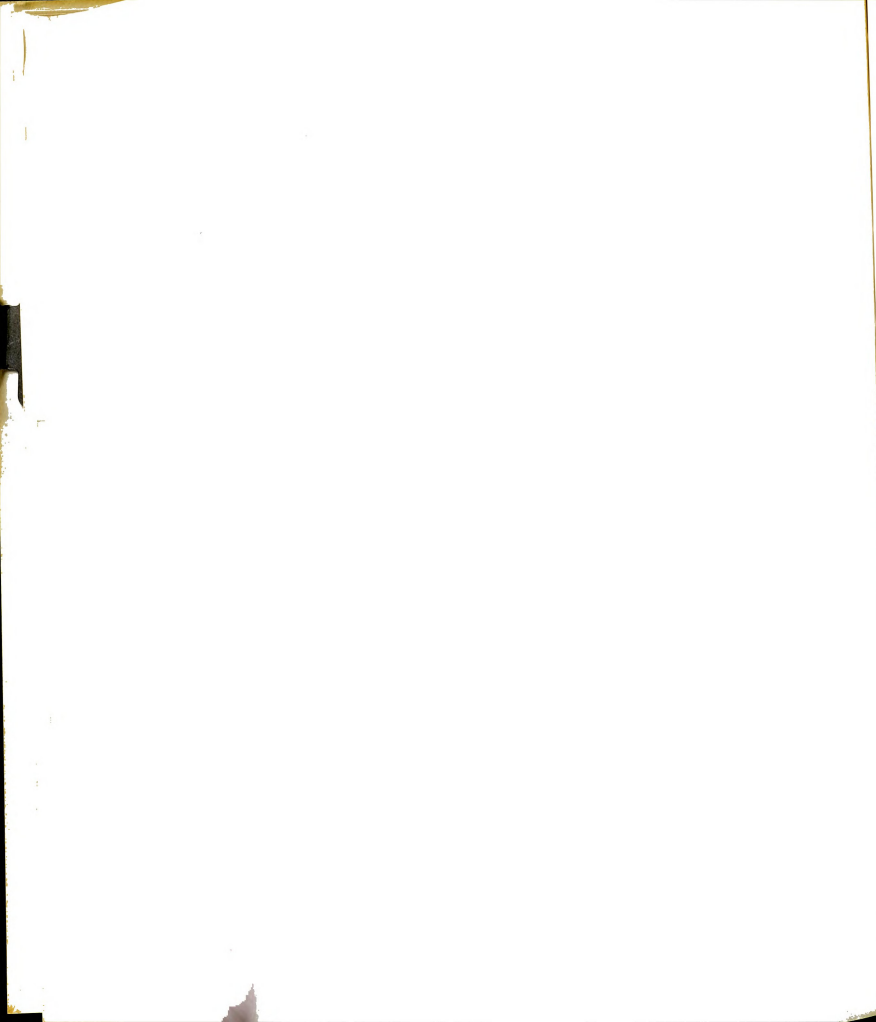
By the middle of February, not much more than a month after the original editorial in the Ledger, the reason for the dispute had been all but entirely lost. But WTAR could not forget that it was in a battle with WLBG in Petersburg over the 780-kilocycle frequency. On February 21 the Ledger announced that the date for the hearing between the two stations was April ninth.³

In that same issue of the Ledger the text of a speech originally broadcast by W. S. Harney of the Chamber of Commerce over WTAR was printed. Harney had not forgotten the issue which was to be decided in Washington as he said,

¹"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write," ibid., February 18, 1930, p. 8.

²Ibid., February 19, 1930, p. 8.

³"Norfolk Radio Hearing Set," ibid., February 21, 1930, p. 1.



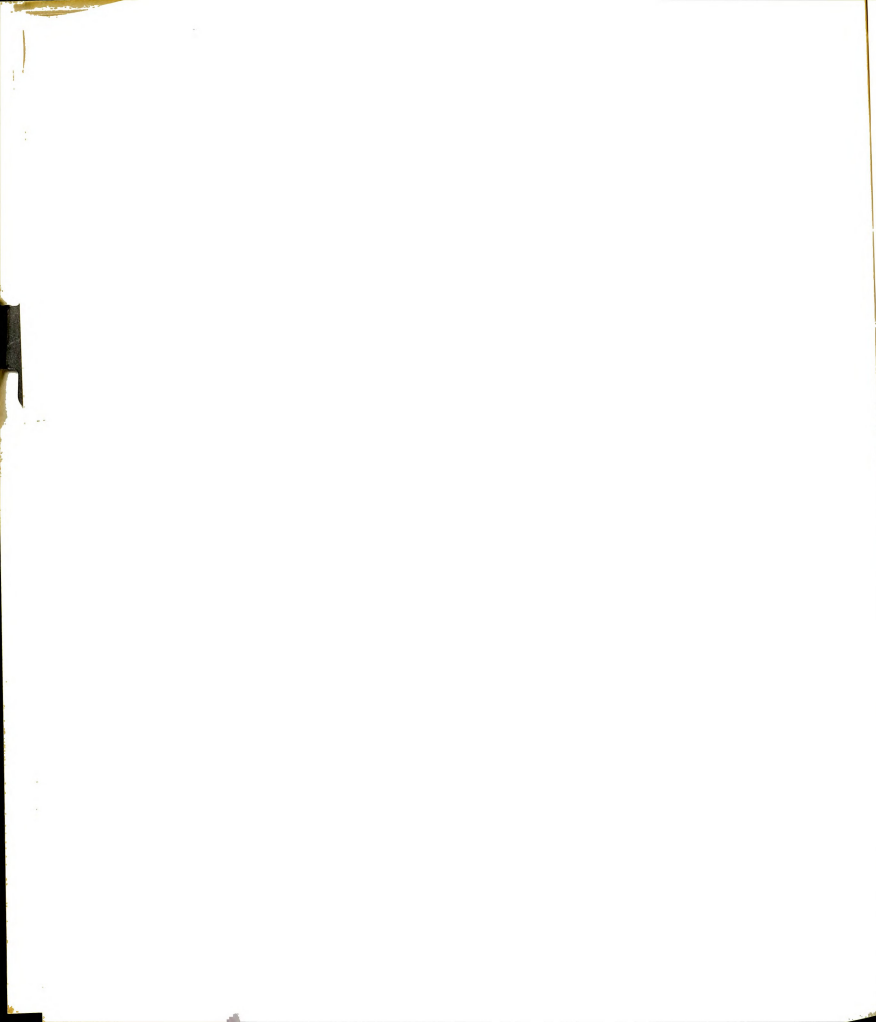
"We certainly do not wish it said that the oldest radio station in Virginia . . . has been caused to share its time with a smaller or any other station."¹ But, even though he had not lost sight of the main problem, Harney devoted most of his address to the problems which the audience had brought to the fore. He was not particularly sympathetic. He said that WTAR's programs were not a valid basis for disagreement because no station anywhere could hope to please everyone who listened to it. Therefore, the only reasonable basis for disagreement was a technical one. From an engineering standpoint, Harney continued, WTAR was within the legal limits. This had been confirmed by Edward Bennett. There was nothing WTAR should do.²

In spite of what Harney said the letters continued to come into the Ledger, and their vehemence was probably a contributing factor to the appearance of a second editorial in support of WTAR:

But, if every one of these conflicting commentators is right, how could we get anywhere by splitting time with Petersburg? That kind little station occupies only two or three hours a day now. How could its programs possibly be beneficial to the radio listeners of Norfolk? Some of the more vehement of the anti-WTAR critics say that the interposition of the Petersburg station would at least get WTAR off the air for the period of interposition. Well, Petersburg is pretty close. Wouldn't a station operating there on the same

¹W. S. Harney, "WTAR As a Community Asset," ibid., February 21, 1930, p. 11.

²Ibid.



wave-length as that now employed by WTAR provide pretty much the same interference with others [sic] stations as WTAR now presents?

.
After all is said and done, no reason is apparent why that nice little Petersburg station should be permitted to share time with Norfolk's WTAR.¹

Three days later the Ledger decided that all that could be said, both for and against WTAR, had been said, and so, in the third editorial of the dispute, the Ledger said, "So, here endeth the publication of such letters."²

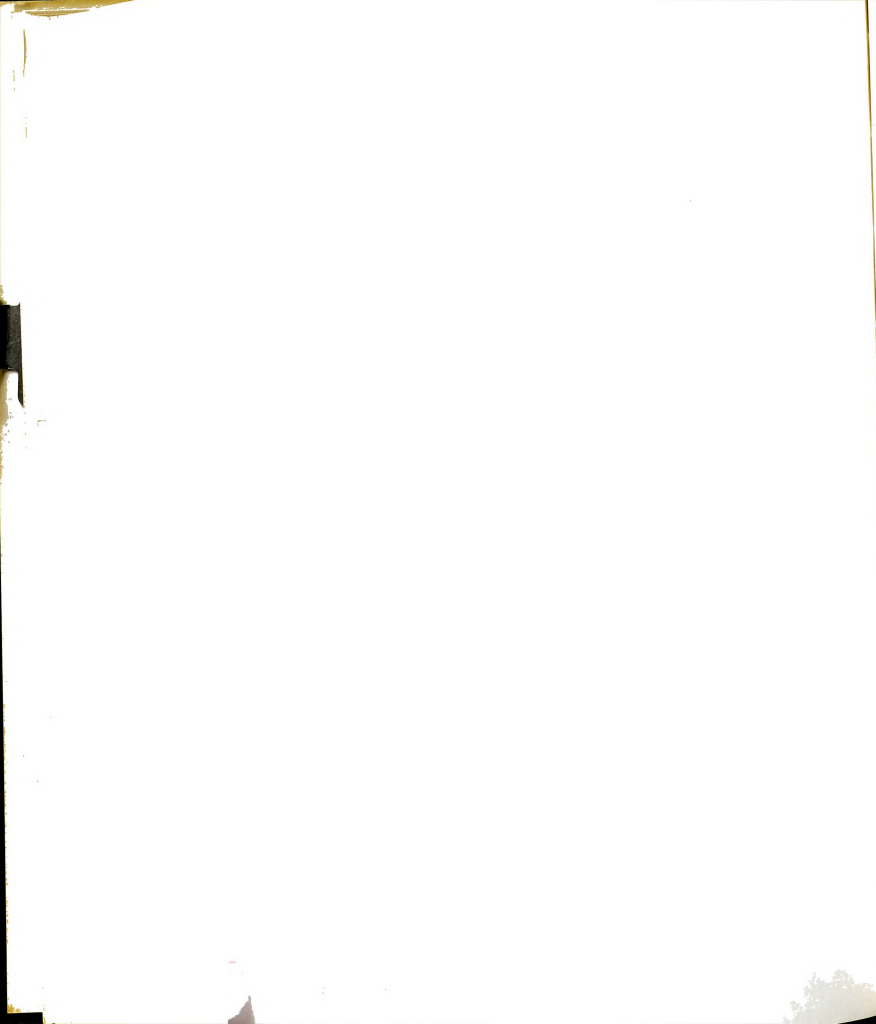
On February 26 the whole dispute appeared to have been nothing more than an academic exercise in popular democracy, for Dr. Gamble withdrew his application for shared time. He said that the F.R.C. had sent him a letter stating that it did not believe his application to be in the public interest.³ The announcement of Gamble's action was the first appearance of the dispute in the pages of the Virginian Pilot. It had, up to that point, ignored all that was going on.

February 26, 1930 should have been the date which marked the conclusion of the struggle between WTAR and its audience. But, as matters turned out, it represented merely the termination of a phase of the struggle. The one-sided outpouring

¹"WTAR and Petersburg," ibid., February 23, 1920, p. 8.

²"Tired of WTAR Letters," ibid., February 25, 1930, p. 8.

³"WTAR Wind in Fight Against Sharing Time with Station WLBG," ibid., February 26, 1930, p. 1; "WLBG Withdraws Plea to Share Air Time with WTAR," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 27, 1930, p. 16.



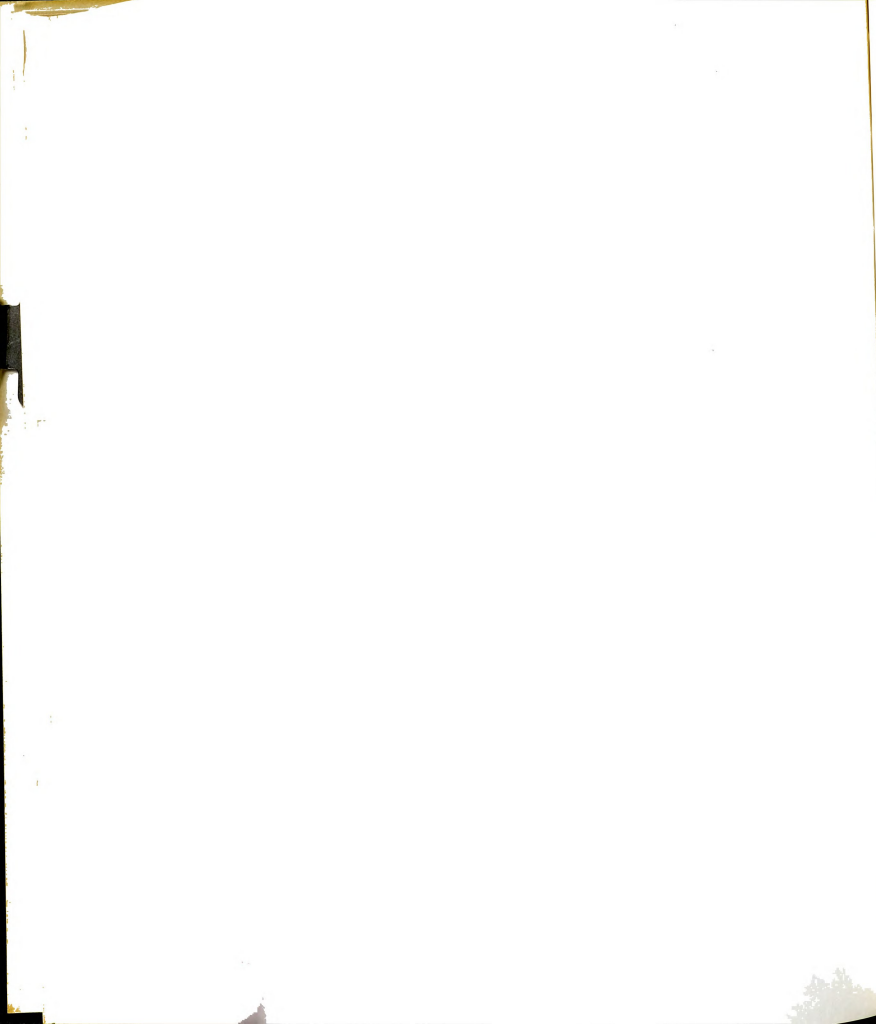
of abuse in the letters-to-the-editor columns was to develop into an equally heated dialogue in which WTAR was forced to participate. It was a classic exercise in bad timing by WTAR and the Chamber of Commerce which was to fan the still-warm coals of dispute into a full-fledged conflagration.

Radio Listeners' League

The last day of February WTAR announced that substantial improvements were going to be undertaken for the benefit of the station's listeners. WTAR had made plans to request an increase in power from 500 watts to 1,000 watts, and it had also secured land outside the Norfolk city limits to which it hoped to move its transmitter. The Chamber of Commerce was the motivating force behind the announcement. WTAR had planned to keep the plans secret for a while, but the Chamber encouraged the station to announce them.¹ The Chamber had assumed that by announcing the plans WTAR would show that it was aware of the complaints levelled against it and was going to do whatever it could to provide the kind of service which the audience was demanding.² The action, in fact, had precisely the opposite effect.

¹"WTAR Planning Improvements for Listeners," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 28, 1930, p. 2.

²"WTAR Applies for Permit to Boost Power and Move Transmitter Outside City," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 28, 1930, II, p. 1.



Early in March H. B. Goodridge, the President of the WTAR Radio Corporation, said that the significant part of the plans involved the increase in power. Goodridge went on to say that if the power were increased, and if the transmitter were not moved from its present downtown location, substantial interference would result.¹ There were probably any number of ways Goodridge could have phrased that last remark, but he picked the way which would bring the potential problems right into the open.

For a short time things seemed to be going along according to plan. If there were any violent objections to the plans they were not publicly reported, and WTAR continued to drum up support for the changes which would be dealt with in a hearing before the F.R.C. on April 9.² But on March 11 the Pilot reported that WTAR had filed an application for an increase in power only. The request for a change in the location of the transmitter would be made once the power increase had been granted and once the new site had been found satisfactory from an engineering standpoint.³

¹"Civic Organizations Expected to Aid WTAR in Operation Changes," ibid., March 2, 1930, II, p. 1.

²"WTAR To Seek Clubs Support," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 3, 1930, p. 3.

³"WTAR Transmitter Removal Request Not Yet Submitted," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 11, 1930, p. 16.



Two days later Goodridge found it necessary to say what he should have said at the outset: WTAR would not increase its power unless its transmitter were moved. But he was already too late. The anti-WTAR forces had banded together into an organization whose goal was to oppose the power increase until the transmitter site were moved to eliminate interference.¹ WTAR was right back fighting with its audience again, and, as the Ledger pointed out, the local agitation which was to be stirred up could easily defeat the plans of the station.²

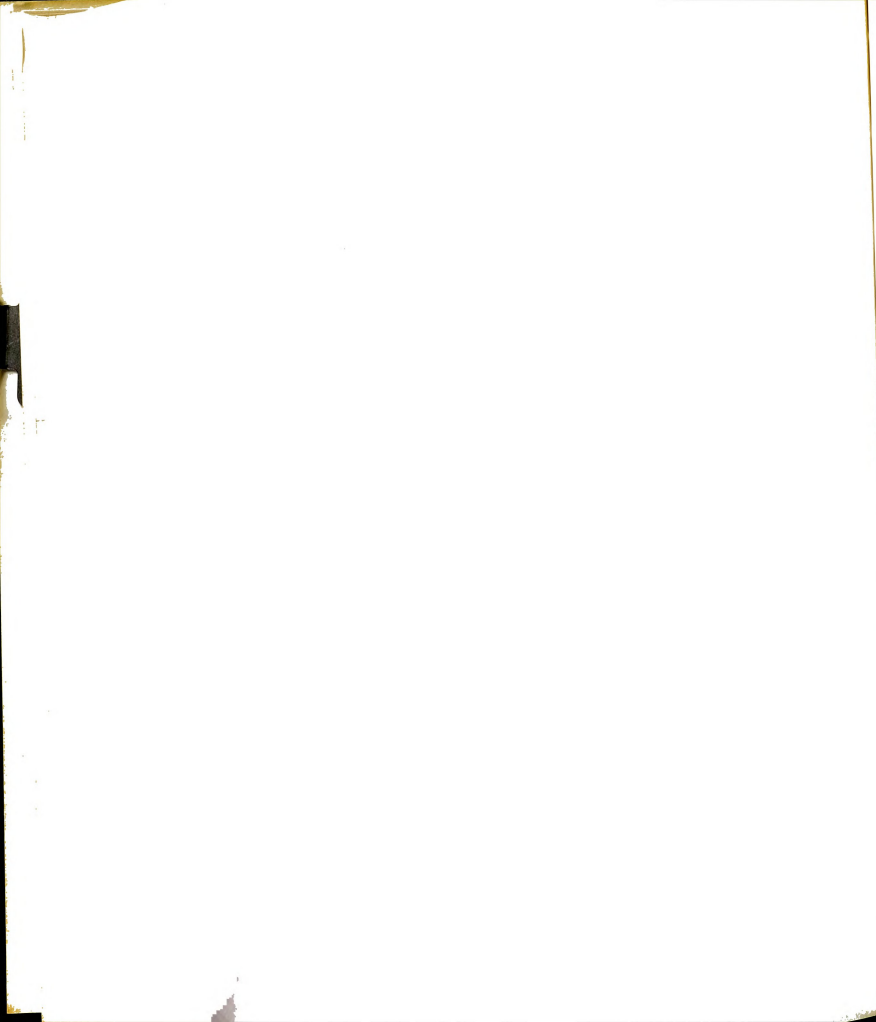
On March 13 the newly formed Radio Listeners' League of Norfolk elected Police Justice R. B. Spindle as its President at its first meeting, which was also attended by a representative of WTAR. Spindle said that the League would have counsel appear before the F.R.C. at the hearing in April to oppose the power increase until a transmitter site was found and approved.³

J. W. Eggleston, who had been elected Secretary of the League, spoke of the concern of the League membership when he said, "I believe I am safe in prophesying that if the application for increased power is granted and it is not contingent on a change in transmitter, many of us might just as well

¹"WTAR Definitely Committed to Removal of Transmitter if Allowed Power Increase," ibid., March 13, 1930, p. 16.

²"WTAR Will Not Raise Power While in City," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 13, 1930, p. 2.

³"Spindle Heads Radio League," ibid., March 14, 1930, p. 29.



throw away our receiving sets."¹ Fred Pfahler, the Advertising Manager of WTAR tried to point out that both the League and WTAR were working toward the same goal, but the mechanics involved did not permit the kind of action the League was demanding. He said that a request for a change in transmitter location could not be incorporated into the request for increased power. A separate form for a construction permit was necessary, and this could not be filed until the new site had been secured. He asked the League to be patient and to give WTAR a chance to follow matters through.²

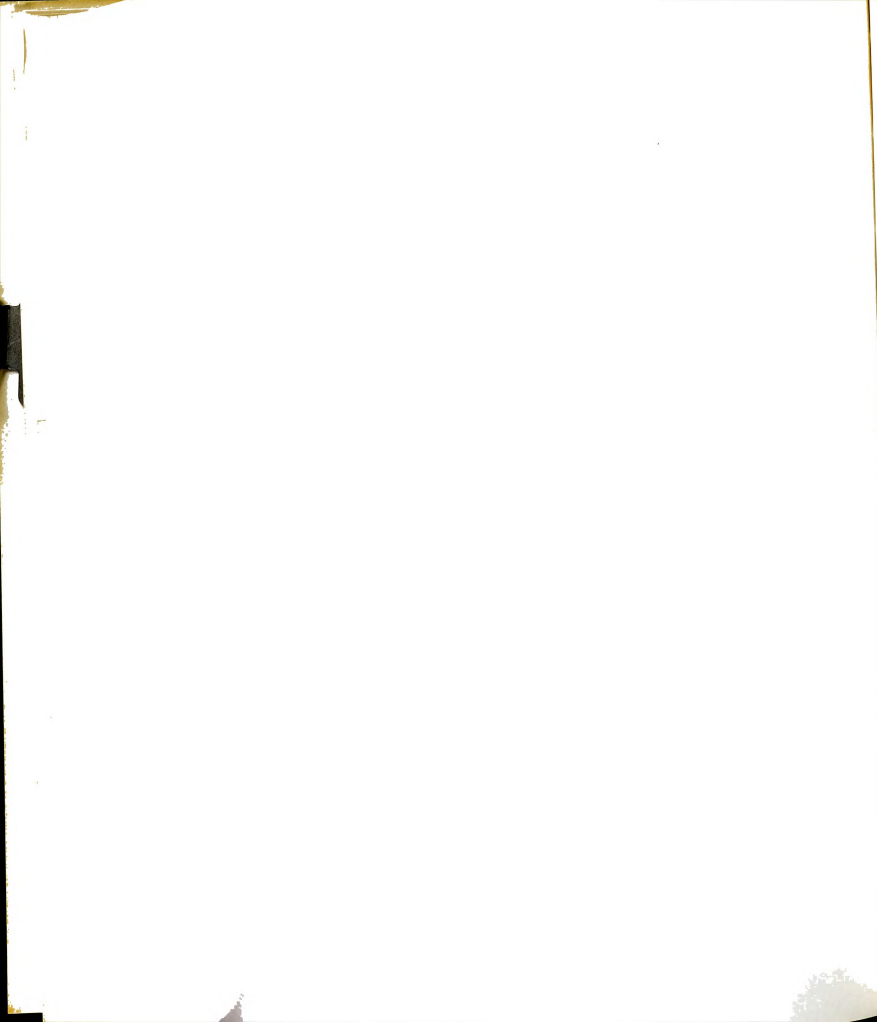
During this meeting on the thirteenth of March it was brought out that WTAR was sending Jack Light and Congressman Menalcus Langford to Washington the next day to ask the F.R.C. about frequency availabilities and technical assistance.³ Goodridge issued a statement about the Washington junket that was confusing at best,⁴ and, as a result, on Friday, with Light and Langford on their way to Washington, Goodridge was almost pleading with the League to leave WTAR alone until it could straighten things out:

¹J. W. Eggleston, quoted in: "Radio Listeners' League Organized," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 14, 1930, p. 14.

²Ibid.

³"Spindle Heads Radio League," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 14, 1930, p. 29.

⁴"Radio Listeners' League Organized," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 14, 1930, p. 14.



We are trying our best, acting in good faith . . . to do just what our critics would have us do--get outside the city limits--and every letter they send to Washington is just another obstacle in our path.¹

But the League paid little attention. Eggleston repeated that the League would be represented at the hearing on April 9 to work for the best interests of Norfolk's radio fans.²

On Saturday the two sides were still talking, but neither appeared to be listening to the other. Goodridge had asked that members of the League be present at the Chamber of Commerce deliberations concerning WTAR, in hopes, most likely, of proving the station had nothing to hide. Eggleston announced that he had received a telegram from the Secretary of the F.R.C. saying that the existing application of WTAR could be amended to include a request for a change in transmitter site. To that Goodridge replied, as he had in the past, that as soon as an engineer had checked the new site WTAR would amend its application. Judge Spindle was willing to accept Goodridge's word, but that settled little.³

The following Tuesday, March 18, Judge Spindle met with the radio committee of the Chamber of Commerce, but each side

¹H. B. Goodridge, quoted in: "WTAR May Remove Transmitter Even on Present Power," ibid., March 15, 1930, p. 12.

²Ibid.

³"Peace Move Made in Radio Wrangle as Troubles Fade," ibid., March 16, 1930, II, p. 1.

repeated its position and the stalemate continued.¹ In another attempt to prove his good intentions, Goodridge showed Spindle and Eggleston the text of a letter he was going to send to the F.R.C. the next day:

March 19th, 1930

Honorable Judge Ira E. Robinson, Chairman,
Federal Radio Commission,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Sir:

Station WTAR has applied to your Honorable body for an increase of power, this to be determined at a hearing April 9th or some subsequent hearing.

It is the purpose of Station WTAR to remove its transmitter outside the City limits of Norfolk to a point distant five to ten miles if any increase of power is granted the station.

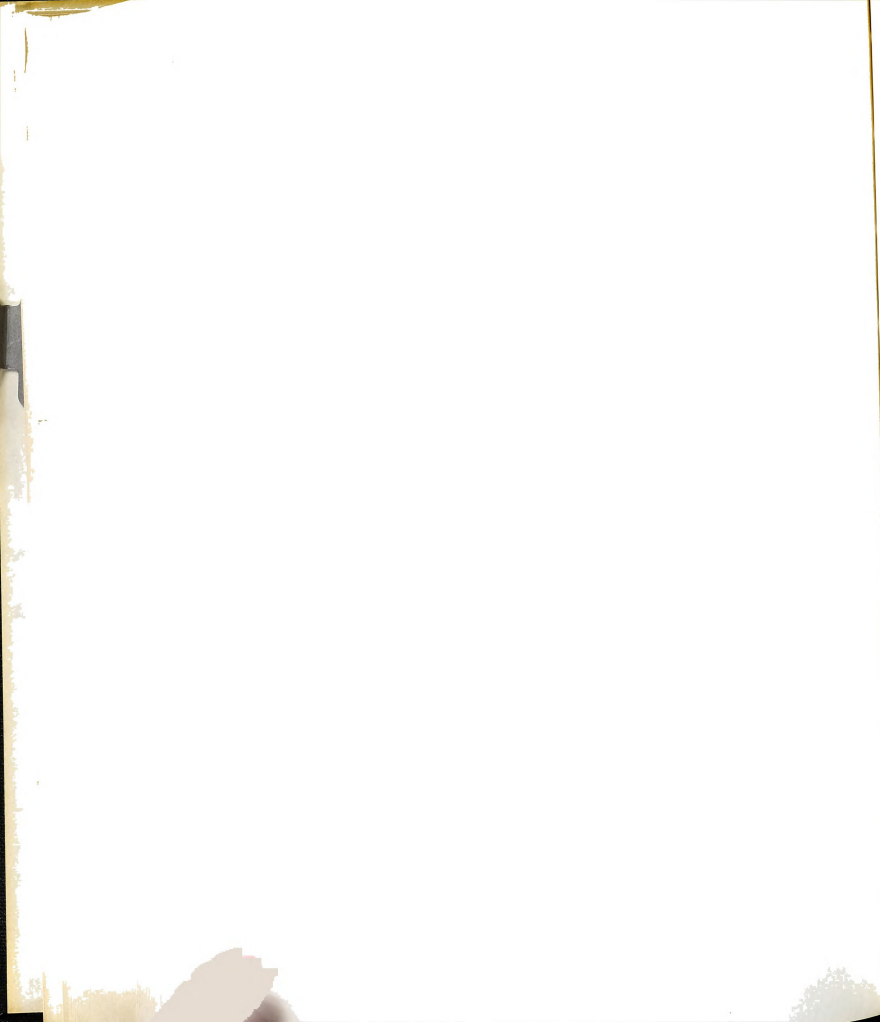
Station WTAR desires to record with the Commission the effect of this purpose pending filing an application for a construction permit after a suitable location is determined.

Respectfully,
WTAR Radio Corporation
/s/ H. B. Goodridge²

Eggleston was not impressed. The letter did not state "point blank" that the increase in power was contingent upon a change in location. Further the letter stated that the transmitter would be moved only five to ten miles outside the city, and Eggleston was under the impression that the distance

¹"New Moves in Radio Controversy Fail to Bring an Agreement Here," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 19, 1930, p. 2.

²Letter, H. B. Goodridge to Judge Ira E. Robinson, United States Federal Radio Commission, In Re: WTAR Radio Corporation, Norfolk, Virginia, Docket No. 443, March 19, 1930.



was to be nine miles.¹

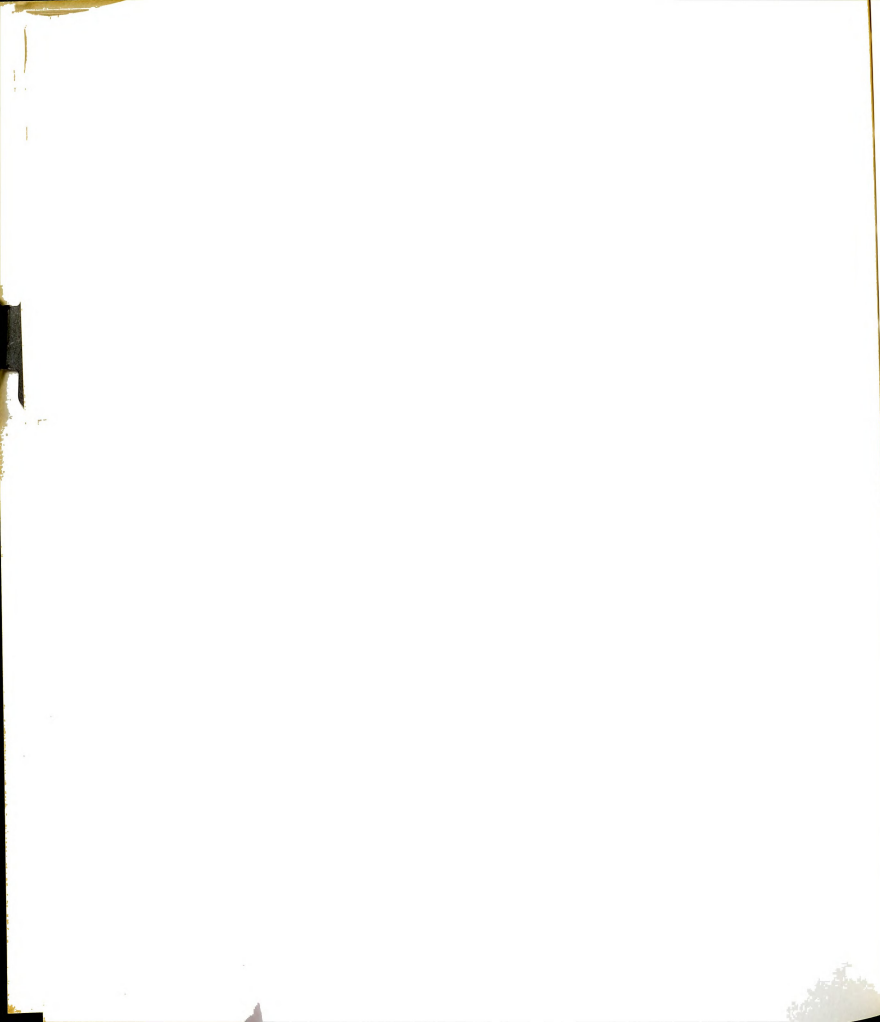
Goodridge was having difficulty convincing the League that he was going to do what he said he was going to do. After Eggleston discounted the letter to the F.R.C., Goodridge produced a letter written by Percy Stephenson and A. Brooke Taylor in which the latter parties indicated that they were selling their stock in WTAR because they did not wish to spend the money which Goodridge's plans called for.² That had no effect either. The League was demanding something from Goodridge which was binding on the station, and Goodridge either could not or would not offer something to meet that demand. Finally, Eggleston, apparently the most militant of the League officers, delivered an ultimatum: either the difficulties were worked out in one week or the League would fight it out with WTAR before the F.R.C. on April 9.³

Wednesday, March 19, WTAR capitulated entirely; it was the only action the station could take which would pacify the League. The station dropped its request for an increase in power, and Goodridge promised that the transmitter would be moved outside the city limits without the higher power.

¹"New Moves in Radio Controversy Fail to Bring an Agreement Here," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 19, 1930, p. 2.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.



Eggleston was delighted; R. W. Coates of the Chamber of Commerce radio committee was disappointed; Goodridge's feelings were not revealed.¹

The hearing set for April 9, then, would be for the purpose of deciding on the issue of full-time use of the 780-kilocycle frequency. The request for a change in transmitter location had been put aside for the time, most probably to await engineering surveys of the new site.² In the request for a full-time license WTAR was unopposed, as far as anyone could see, and there was every reason to believe that the hearing would be uncomplicated and relatively short. Such, however, was not to be the case. The battles of the preceding months in Norfolk had not escaped notice by the Federal Radio Commission in Washington.

In Re: WTAR Radio Corporation

On Wednesday, April 9, 1930, a hearing was held in the Hearing Room of the Federal Radio Commission in the Interior Department Building in Washington. Present, representing the F.R.C., were Commissioner Eugene Sykes, Assistant General Counsel Paul D. P. Spearman, Assistant Counsel Rosel H. Hyde and Technical Adviser A. D. Ring. Attorney W. H. Venable

¹"WTAR Withdraws Request for Increased Power," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 20, 1930, p. 16.

²"Request of WTAR for Full Time on Air is Unopposed," ibid., April 8, 1930, p. 16.

acted as counsel for WTAR, and testimony was taken from fourteen witnesses, among them Jack Light, H. B. Goodridge and J. W. Eggleston, who had assumed the role of counsel for the Radio Listeners' League of Norfolk.¹

Most probably as a result of the capitulation of WTAR not one of the individuals who appeared as a witness raised any objection whatsoever to the WTAR request for a full-time license. In fact, they all supported it, although for varying reasons.² The only element present which kept the two-and-one-half hour hearing from turning into a meeting of the Mutual Admiration Society was in the person of Assistant General Counsel, Paul D. P. Spearman. Spearman's function was, in the words of Commissioner Sykes, "... to bring out all the material facts which he thinks are relevant to the issues."³ This Spearman did with gusto, to the point of extracting information of border-line relevance to the issue at hand.

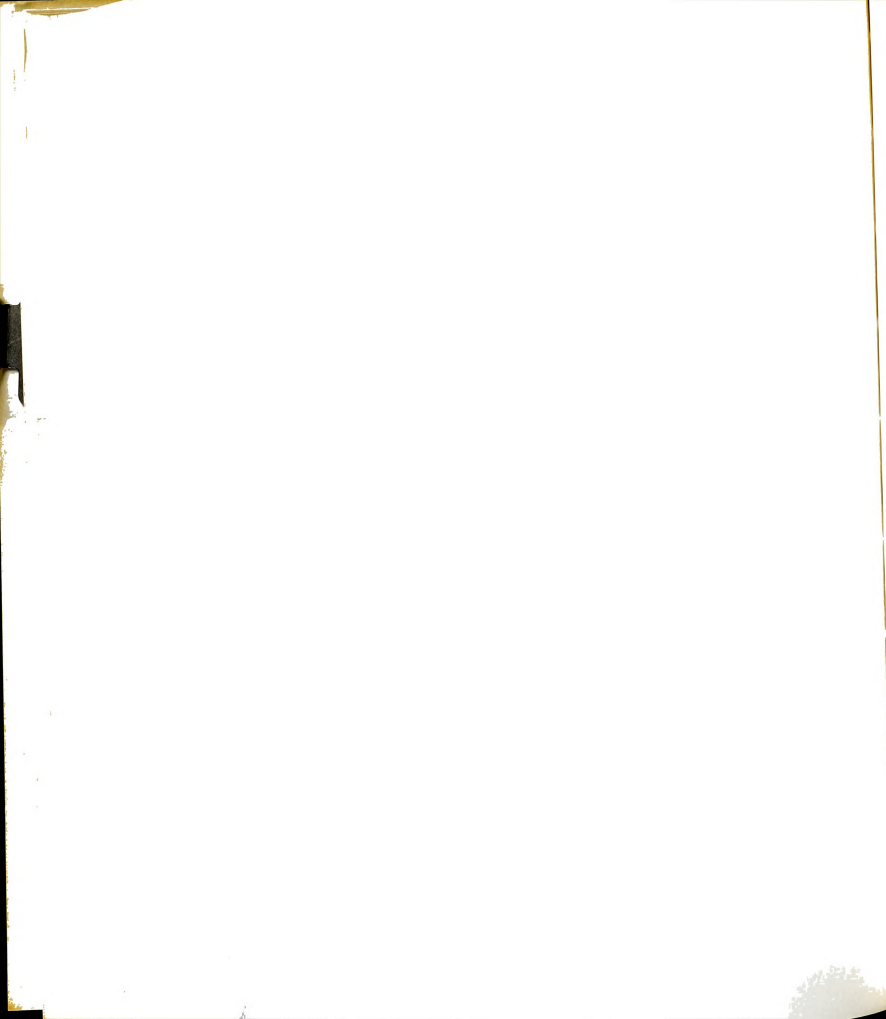
Most of the witnesses appeared with prepared statements which put forth the reasons why the Hampton Roads Maritime Exchange, or the Isaac Walton League, or the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce, favored the full-time license.⁴

¹United States Federal Radio Commission, In Re: WTAR Radio Corporation, Norfolk, Virginia, Docket No. 443, April 9, 1930, pp. 1 and 2.

²Ibid., passim.

³Ibid., p. 83.

⁴Ibid., passim.



The only individual who was not subjected to cross-examination by Spearman was Mr. R. W. Coates of the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce. But during the cross-examination of the other witnesses it became apparent that Spearman, like those who had written to the Ledger during January and February, was most concerned about what WTAR was doing to the reception of outside stations. The exchange between Spearman and H. B. Wood, Chairman of the Norfolk Radio and Electric Club was typical:

Q Mr. Wood, do you know what programs are broadcast by WJZ?

A Not exactly.

Q Do you know what programs are broadcast by WBT, at Charlotte [North Carolina]?

A No.

Q Do you know what programs are broadcast by WRVA at Richmond?

A Yes.

Q Do you know what programs are broadcast by WJZ at New York, when WRVA or WBT may be broadcasting a program of local origin?

A WBT is the Charlotte station.

Q Yes.

A Yes.

Q In other words, if station WBT and WRVA--

A Sometimes they do not operate on the same programs. They do not at all times.

Q If those two stations, WBT and WRVA are broadcasting local programs originating in Charlotte or Richmond--

A I will take the Richmond station. We all would.

Q If it happens that WJZ is broadcasting a program that the people of Norfolk are interested in, that is not broadcasted by either of those stations, if they have Crosley radio sets, what are they going to do? They are going to get a mixture of WTAR and WJZ, are they not?

A Except on a good night.

By Mr. Goodridge:

Q Is it not a fact that you would take it from Pittsburgh?

A Yes, sir. There is no interference at all in our community with KDKA.

By Mr. Spearman:

Q Mr. Wood, you are acquainted with station KDKA, and listen to it?

A Yes.

Q That is the world's greatest and most famous fading station, is it not?

A It is. There is no question about that. It is a good station though.¹

Spearman also took a number of opportunities to belittle WTAR's local programs. Consider his questioning of H. M. Thompson of the Hampton Roads Maritime Exchange:

Q Do you get station NAA at Norfolk?

A Not over my set.

Q Sir?

A I don't recall getting it over my set.

Q Have you listened particularly for it?

A No, sir. I don't even know where it is.

Q You don't know what that station does?

A No, sir.

Q Would you be surprised to know that that station is a Government station located in Washington, broadcasting regularly the latest weather and other reports, and forecasts that are of interest to mariners?

A Since you call attention to it, not thinking of the Government stations, I recall that that is the Government station at Arlington, and that Arlington does broadcast weather reports.

Q Do you hear it down at Norfolk?

A No, sir, I have not heard it over my set in three years.

Q Have you tuned for it, hunted for it, or tried to get it?

A No.

Q Did you formerly hear it?

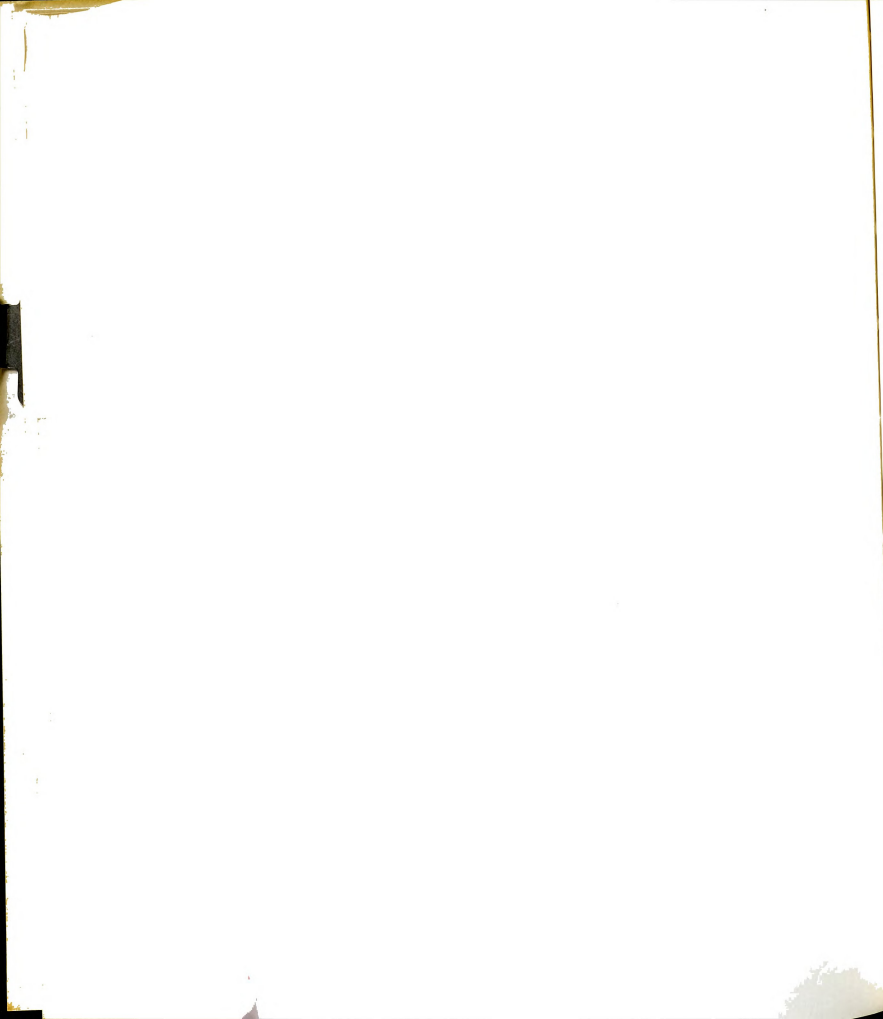
A Yes, sir, before the wave lengths were changed, I used to hear it.

Q Have you tried to tune where you used to tune for it?

A I have had no particular occasion to do that.

Q You don't know whether it comes in down there or not?

¹Ibid., pp. 22-23.



A I cannot testify of my own knowledge that it does not, but I have been told by people who operate boats that it does not come in with the regularity WTAR comes in. They went into that feature of it. I have been told very definitely that it does not come with the regularity of WTAR in that particular neighborhood.

Q I believe this application was accompanied by programs which were made a part of the application, to show all of this. As a matter of fact, the only time station WTAR ever broadcasts anything at all with respect to weather, as shown by its programs, which are made a part of this record and a part of this application, is at 12 o'clock noon, and at six o'clock, in the evening, is that not true?

A No, sir. There have been some changes in that.

Q Then, he just sent in programs that did not show the facts?

A I am not in a position to say what he sent in. I do not know. But I will say that weather reports are broadcast at other hours, because I hear them.

Q Mr. Thompson, if a man were depending on WTAR to get his weather forecasts, and were listening in late in the afternoon, he would have to listen between six o'clock and two minutes after six o'clock if he got his weather reports, would he not?

A That particular report, I think is broadcast at six o'clock, yes, sir.

Q Only two minutes a day, at that time?

A At that time, yes, sir.

Q Have you listened to those programs that are broadcast at noon?

A No, sir. I am always in the office at noon.

Q You don't know whether they are any good or not. You have not listened to them?

A We were speaking of the weather reports.

Q I am talking about the programs broadcast by Station WTAR at 12 o'clock each day. Have you listened to those programs?

A The weather reports?

Q The programs broadcast each day at noon?

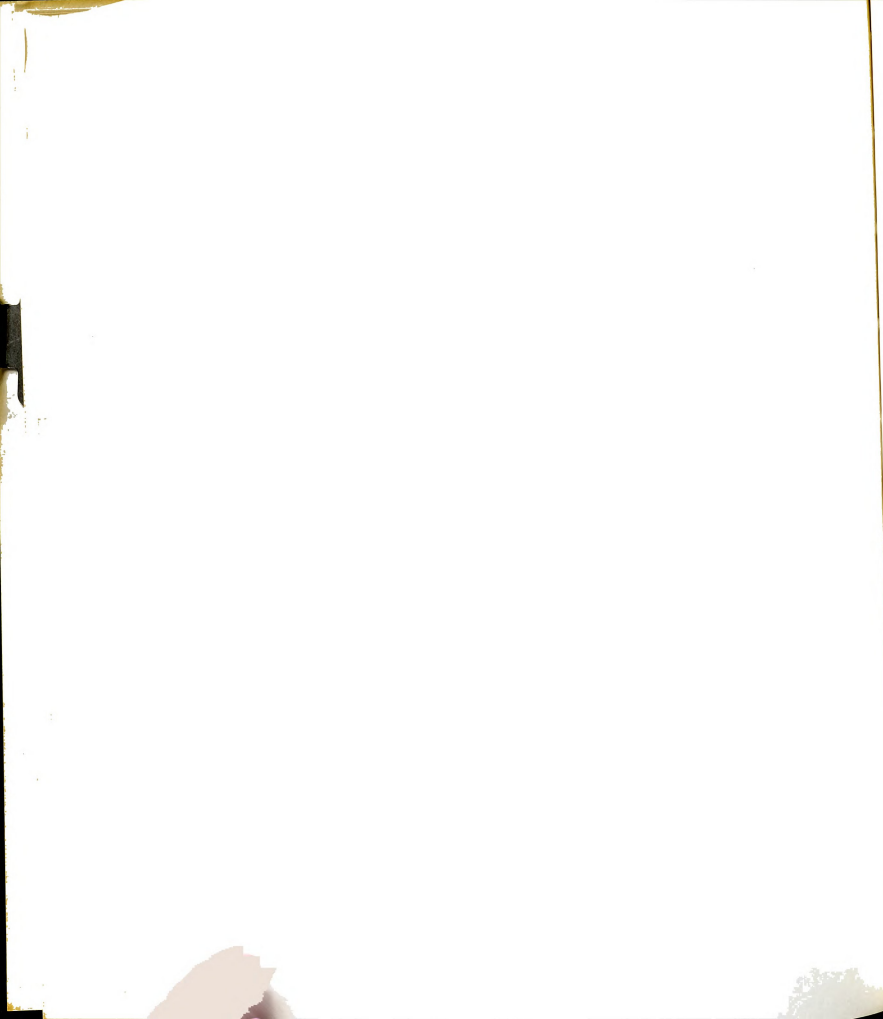
A No, sir, I have not listened to them.

Q You don't know what they are?

A No, sir.

Mr. Spearman: That is all.¹

¹Ibid., pp. 40-43.



By the time it was Goodridge's turn to testify he was concerned and bothered by what was transpiring:

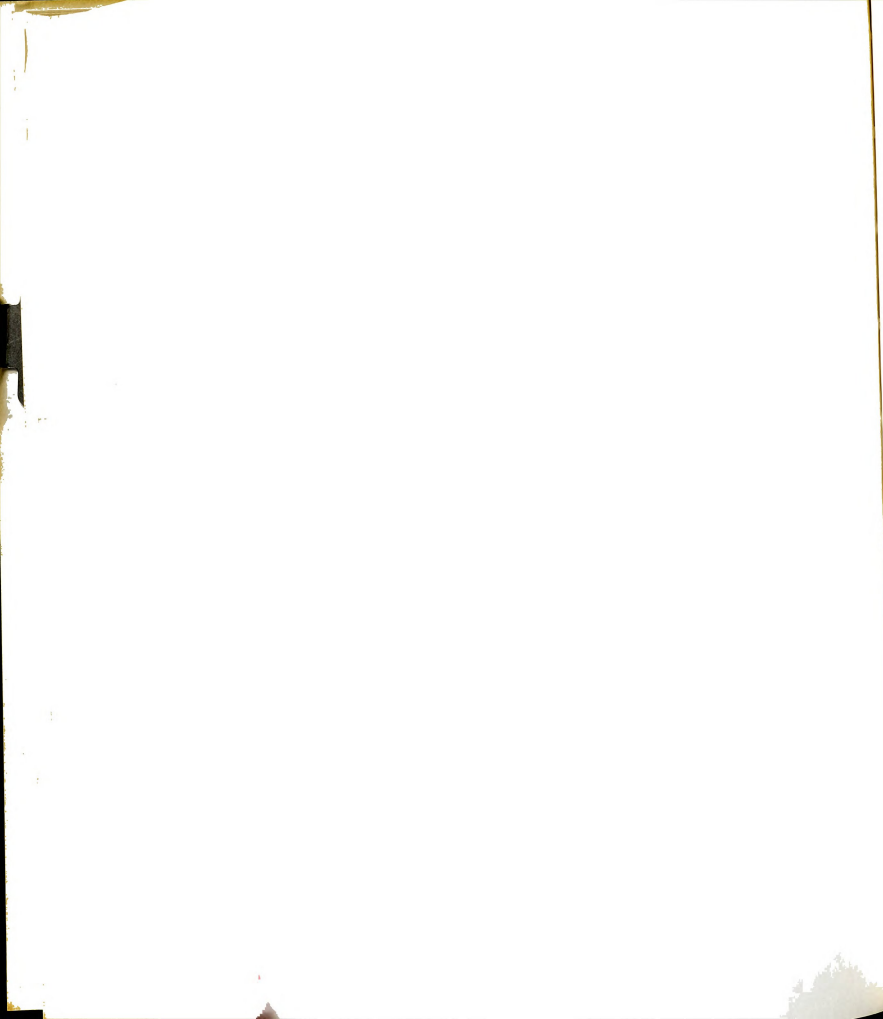
I have listened with some amazement, Mr. Commissioner, to some of the questions put here this morning, because I have informed myself just as carefully as I could--and I hope in a fairly intelligent way--as to the character of station and as to the character of service that we should perform in a local community. . . . Before I leave Washington today, I will thoroughly inform myself as to whether it is our real obligation to do a local service there, or if, on the contrary, it is our real obligation to furnish New York programs to all of our people practically all the time.¹

Goodridge went on to give a brief history of his association with WTAR. He expounded upon his feeling that local programming was very important, and he told the Commission that he had come to Washington with a large number of letters which proved that there were many listeners who agreed with him. He told of the tremendous volume of mail which the "Opening the Mailbag" program had generated, and he described how much the boys in the rural areas enjoyed the 4-H Club programs that the station was carrying.²

But Goodridge also implied that he appreciated the fact that national network programs were an important part of the programming service. He told the hearing that he had just come from New York where he had negotiated a contract for affiliation with C.B.S. This brought questions from Commissioner Sykes:

¹Ibid., pp. 53-54.

²Ibid., pp. 52-61.



Q You are going to have some time for your local programs?

A We are certainly going to have some time, Judge, unless you tell me I am doing wrong about it.

Q I will tell you my personal opinion, and that is that you ought to take care of your local interests.

A I am certainly going to take care of them.

They are certainly going to have those local programs down there, if it has to be over my dead body. That is what builds up a community.

Q I think you are exactly right about that.¹

With the completion of Goodridge's direct testimony it was Spearman's turn to ask questions, but he did not get very far. He was asking technical questions, and Goodridge, with noticeable irritation guiding his choice of words, refused to answer them.²

If there was going to be any kind of legal ground upon which WTAR's application could be denied it would be as a result of the Davis Amendment to the Radio Act of 1927. Under the specifications of this amendment radio channels were to be allocated to each of five regions according to population. A. D. Ring, a Broadcast Engineer for the F.R.C., told the hearing that Virginia was entitled to 2.37 regional, as opposed to clear, channels, and if WTAR were granted full-time status on its assigned frequency the number of channels in use would be 3.50, or substantially over quota.³

¹Ibid., p. 57.

²Ibid., p. 62.

³Ibid., p. 67.

The last witness to appear was Jack Light. He carefully described the weather service provided by WTAR, to clarify the misconceptions set up by Spearman earlier, but the bulk of his testimony dealt with the technical aspects of the station's operation. He discussed the problem of frequency control, pointing out that, while WTAR was not equipped with the most recent frequency control devices, the station was monitored daily by the Radio Supervisor in Baltimore. WTAR had never been cited for frequency deviation, and it rarely deviated from its assigned frequency more than 200 cycles.¹

Under cross-examination, with Spearman pursuing his concern for the reception of WJZ and WGY in Norfolk, Light pointed out that at distances of more than ten miles from the transmitter both WJZ and WGY blanketed WTAR's signal. Spearman made no reply, but instead turned the discussion toward a consideration of whether WTAR was correctly announcing that it was broadcasting phonograph records. WTAR, it seems, was living up to the spirit of the regulation, but it was falling short of the letter. This momentous issue was settled off the record and the transcript of the hearing offers no detail whatsoever.

After Light was excused Venable offered a final summation to the Commission. His concluding three sentences

¹Ibid., pp. 73-74.

²Ibid., pp. 75-78.



provide the essence of his thoughts:

At any rate, I hope you gentlemen will feel that this is an earnest, bona fide, honest station. It is not such a big thing as the General Electric Station, carrying on and developing the enterprise of using the air for communication, but it has done its part when other people were not thinking about it, and it has carried on. I hope this Commission will see its way clear to grant this application, as I believe you should, and as I believe you will.¹

The hearing ended, but when Goodridge and Light left the Hearing Room that Wednesday they were concerned over the fate of the station. They were not at all sure how the Commission was going to decide upon their request.² Nonetheless, the issue was favorably resolved before the month was over. On April 25 the Federal Radio Commission decided that:

. . . [the] public interest, convenience and necessity would be served by granting said modification of license as follows: Unlimited time on 780 kc, 500 watts.³

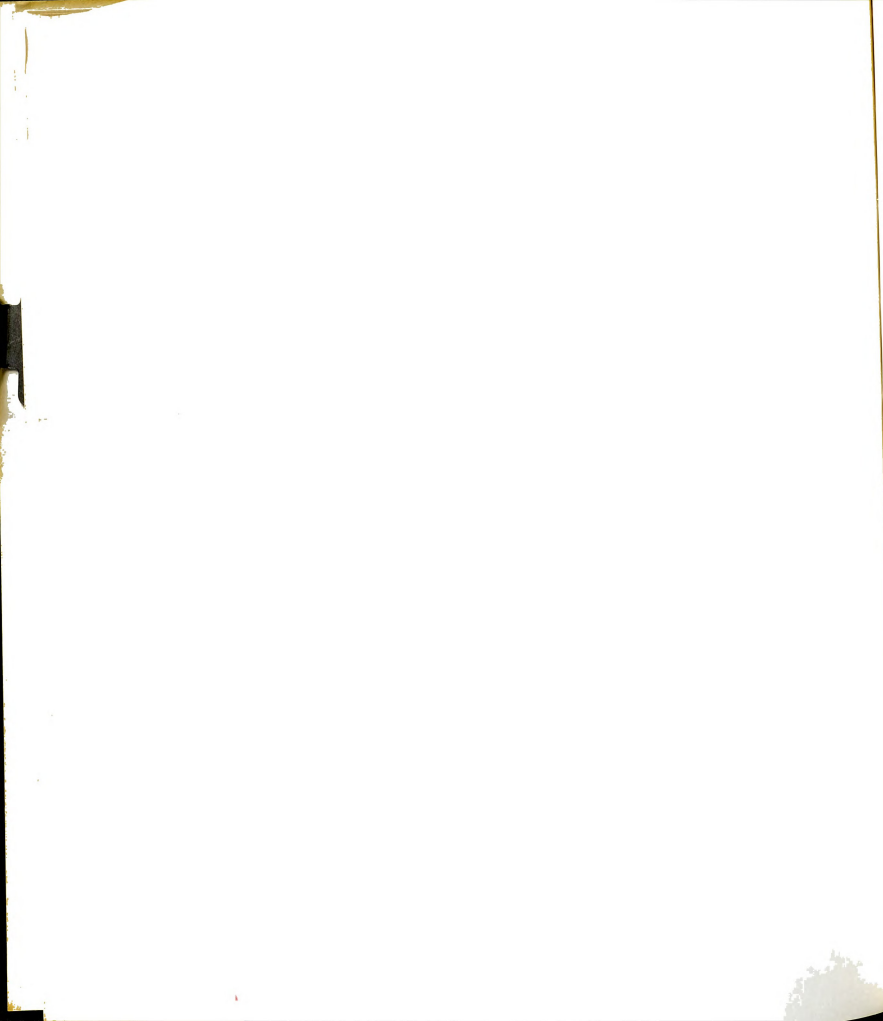
"Thank God, That's Over"

It would be inappropriate, and decidedly inaccurate, to permit the impression to exist that the struggle for a full-time license was the only event of consequence with which

¹Ibid., p. 83.

²"Station WTAR Has Hard Fight for Full-Time," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 10, 1930, p. 2; "Federal Radio Commission Hears WTAR Pleas for Full Time on Air; Delays Decision," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 10, 1930, p. 1.

³United States Federal Radio Commission, Order, File No. 2-M-B 555, Docket No. 443, April 25, 1930.



WTAR was concerned during 1930. There were several other events which warrant comment, and a brief consideration of these events rounds out the story of 1930.

The order from the F.R.C. settled the problem of a full-time license, but, in the midst of the dispute which ultimately produced that license, WTAR had promised to move its transmitter from downtown Norfolk. In July the station began the engineering tests on a site on Virginia Beach Boulevard, some seven miles east of the downtown area. The site was located at what was popularly called Davis' Corner.¹ During the first week in July the F.R.C. had approved the use of a portable transmitter, with a power of 250 watts, for checking on possible interference which might result from the new site and also to determine the strength of the station's signal from the new site. The tests were to take about two weeks, and the station said that it would announce the results as soon as they were conclusive.²

Evidently preparations took longer than anticipated, or else complications in the testing process arose. On July 19 the Ledger reported that a mobile laboratory designed to test

¹"US Radio Test Car Due This Week to Aid WTAR and Check Interference," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, July 20, 1930, p. 1.

²"WTAR to Start Tests for New Site at Once," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 18, 1930, p. 2; "WTAR Given Permit to Make Tests to Find New Location," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, July 8, 1930, p. 16.



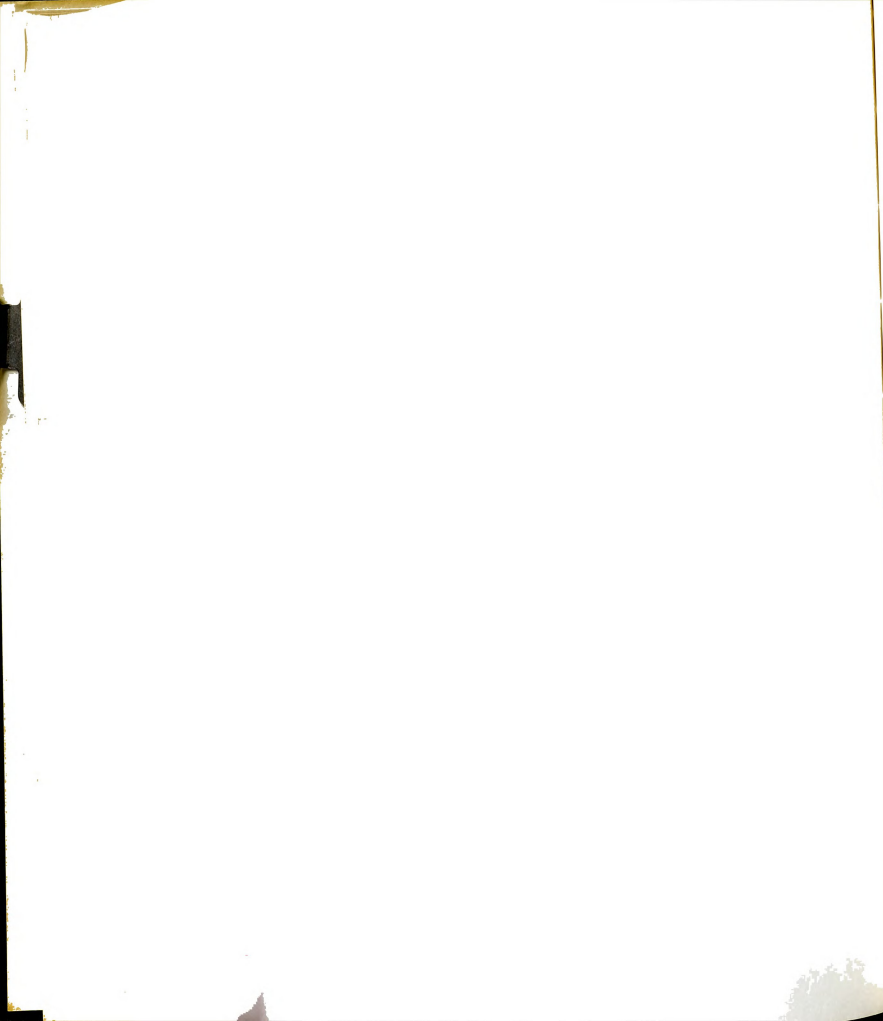
field strength was being sent to Norfolk from Baltimore, and the article gives the impression that the testing would begin as soon as the "test car" arrived. The time between the eighth and the nineteenth had apparently been spent making physical preparations.¹ At the same time it was announced that the WTAR studios would be moved in the very near future from the eighth floor of the Seaboard Air Line Building to make room for the Operations Department of the railroad which was moving to Norfolk from Atlanta, Georgia.² The move would be less complex than some in the past as the station was only going to the sixth floor of the same building,³ but it was a complication which the technical staff of WTAR could probably have done without at that particular time.

By the middle of August the engineering tests had shown that the Davis' Corner site was unsuitable for the station's transmitter: the coverage of Norfolk from that point was inadequate. Goodridge, with past disputes still fresh in his mind, said that the station was still going to move as soon

¹"Radio 'Test Car' Coming to Norfolk Next Week," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 19, 1930, p. 2.

²"US Radio Test Car Due This Week to Air WTAR and Check Interference," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, July 20, 1930, II, p. 1.

³"WTAR Studios Moved Without Going Off the Air," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 16, 1930, p. 5.



as a suitable location could be found.¹

Two months passed during which time nothing more about a new site for the WTAR transmitter was said. Then, on October 18, the station announced that it had purchased land on Virginia Beach Boulevard, about one and one-half miles from downtown, to which it would move its transmitter. The move would cost \$15,000, and the new equipment would be in operation by the thirty-first of January, 1931.² Months before, J. W. Eggleston had been unwilling to accept a site which was closer than nine miles to Norfolk. When the location of the new site was announced no one reported the feelings of Eggleston or the Radio Listeners' League. The disagreement had been quietly retired.

In the midst of the dispute with which this chapter has concerned itself thus far, WTAR managed to get itself embroiled with a second public conflict over an entirely different issue, involving an entirely different group of people. The first notice of it came on February 16, 1930 when the Virginian Pilot carried a one-half page ad placed by a group which was promoting a speech by Charlie McCall

¹"David Corner Undesirable as Radio Site," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 13, 1930, p. 1; "Goodridge to Continue Efforts to Obtain Site More Suited for WTAR," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, August 13, 1930, p. 16.

²"WTAR Buys Site Out of City," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 18, 1930, p. 1; "WTAR Buys Site for Transmitter Outside of City," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, October 19, 1930, II, p. 1.



on "The Menace of Chain Stores." In part the ad read:

If you can't attend the meeting tune in on WGH, Newport News, Virginia, because satisfactory arrangements could not be made with the management of WTAR, the station that is "serving the community in a useful manner," the masterful address of Charlie McCall will be broadcast with the whole-souled cooperation of station WGH. . . .¹

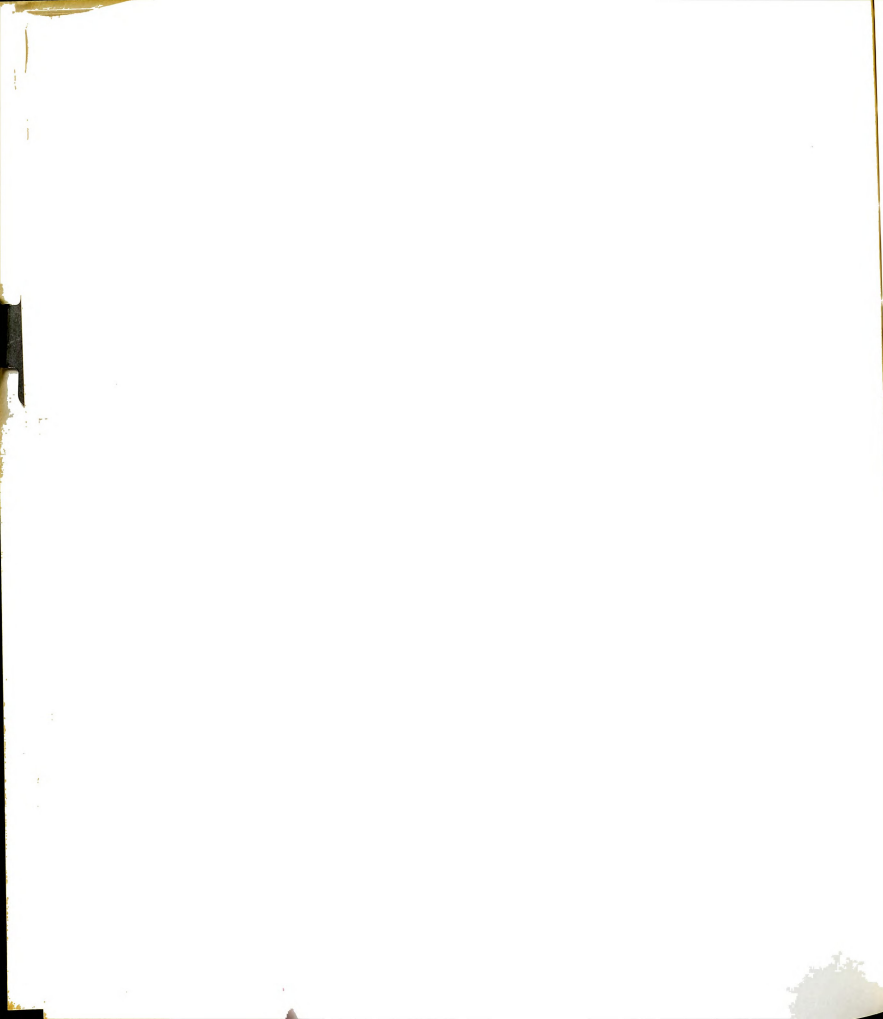
That was precisely the kind of publicity which WTAR did not need at that particular point in time. The day after McCall addressed the mass meeting it was revealed that WTAR had not carried the speech because the President of the Radio Company, presumably H. B. Goodridge, was in Florida, and a speech of such a controversial nature could not be carried without his consent. Goodridge returned to Norfolk too late to permit arrangements.² The Ledger gave a somewhat different account of the reasons for WTAR's not carrying the speech. To carry McCall's address WTAR would have had to cancel six existing contracts. The station's time was booked during the period which the promoters requested, and they would accept no other offer from the station.³

By the end of March WTAR and the Independent Citizens League had ironed out their differences. WTAR had agreed to

¹Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, February 16, 1930, p. 2.

²"McCall Addresses Mass Meeting on Chain Store Topic," ibid., February 21, 1930, pp. 1 and 2.

³"Tells Why WTAR Didn't Broadcast McCall Talk," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, February 21, 1930, p. 3.



broadcast a series of programs "in the interest of and in behalf of independent merchants of our community." Both parties had agreed that the previous misunderstanding was a "'matter of mutual regret.'"¹ It is not at all clear whether there were any issue-related reasons for WTAR's actions in addition to the purely business ones given by the station. But, whether there were or not, and considering the other difficulties the station was having with its public at the same time, WTAR could have handled the situation in some way which would not have given the Independent Citizens' League a reason for putting the station in a bad light.

April 12, 1930, was the first day of positive accomplishment which WTAR could point to in 1930. On that day WTAR began receiving the full service of the Columbia Broadcasting System. The Virginian Pilot reported that WTAR and C.B.S. had signed a five-year contract which would cost WTAR in the neighborhood of \$28,500 annually.² The agreement had been mentioned by Goodridge during the hearing on April 9, and it evidently had been under consideration for some time prior to that.³ In taking the step toward full affiliation

¹Joint Statement of the Independent Citizens League and WTAR, quoted in "Citizens League and WTAR Iron Out Their Differences," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, March 23, 1930, II, p. 2.

²"WTAR is Reported in Long Contract with Broadcast Chain," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, April 12, 1930, p. 2.

³"WTAR Now Gets Full Columbia Chain Programs," ibid., April 13, 1930, II, p. 1.



one cannot overlook the fact that the major dispute which had consumed most of the first three months of the year had figured into the decision. If interference was preventing listeners from getting significant chain service, then, perhaps, if WTAR would join a chain on a full-time basis the complaints about interference might be lessened.¹

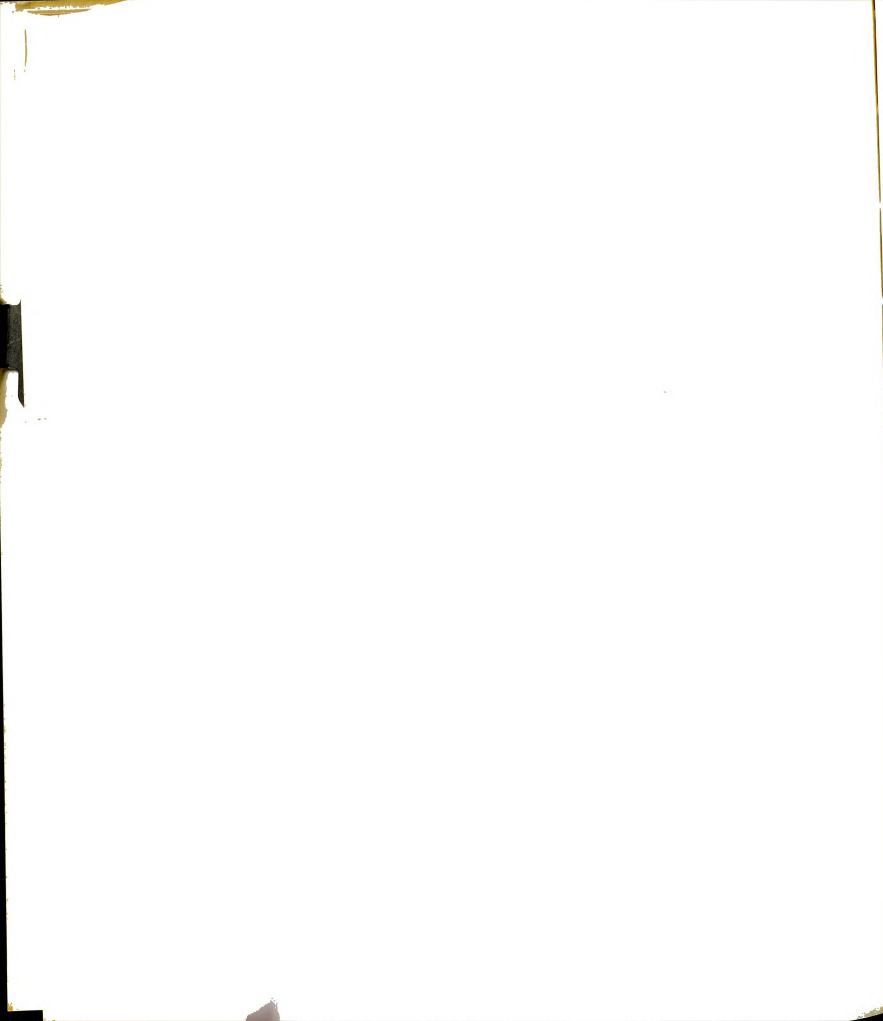
The affiliation with C.B.S. substantially decreased the amount of locally-produced programming which WTAR had to provide, and this must have had an effect on those who complained about the station's heavy use of records. In March of 1930 the station reported to the F.R.C., in its request for unlimited time on the air, that it was carrying seven hours of network programming a week from C.B.S. and the Watchtower Network.² Three months later, near the end of June, WTAR stated that it was carrying eight hours per day of network programming from the same two sources.³

On September 22, 1930, the Columbia Broadcasting System honored WTAR by carrying the station's eighth anniversary program over the entire C.B.S. network. The station was going to bear all of the expenses associated with the broadcast as

¹"WTAR is Reported in Long Contract with Broadcast Chain," ibid., April 12, 1930, p. 2.

²United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. M-B-555, March 28, 1930.

³Ibid., File No. R-B-380, June 28, 1930.

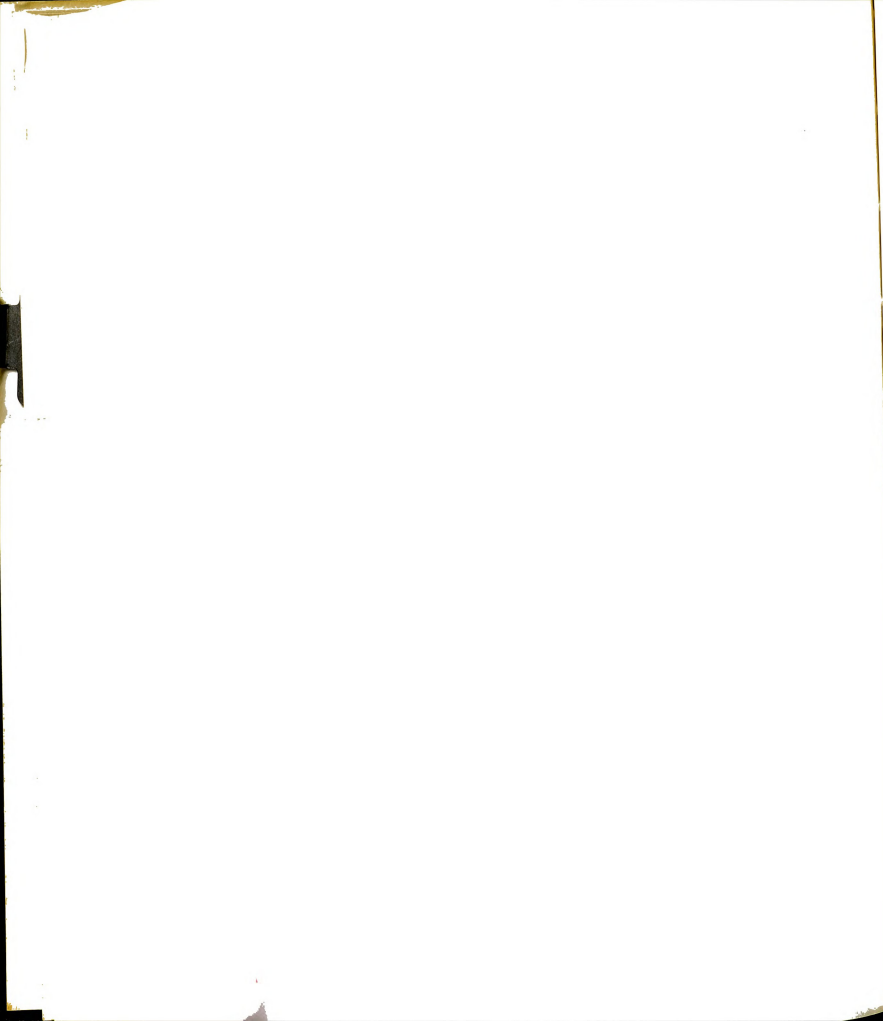


its contribution to the promotion of the Hampton Roads area.²

There is nothing which makes a station's eighth birthday more, or less, significant than its seventh or ninth, but WTAR certainly got many more promotion miles from the 1930 occasion than it had from any other. Undoubtedly the fact that the station was originating a program for C.B.S. had something to do with the coverage the event received by the Ledger-Dispatch. But, one might reasonably suggest that the Ledger felt that it might attempt something a little more elaborate for the station in a year which had been so difficult. Whatever the reason, on September 22, 1930, the Ledger published stories about WTAR on eleven different pages. There was a story about the C.B.S. program to be aired that night; a story about the variety of programs WTAR was carrying from C.B.S.; a story about the distance the station covered; a technical article dealing with the transmitter; a summary of the significant programs the station had carried over the years; a promotional piece relating how the Ledger had been an ally of WTAR's in providing new programs, and others.²

¹"National Chain to Carry WTAR Birthday Party," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, August 23, 1930, p. 3. September 23, 1930 was not the station's birthday in a strict sense, but that date would be the beginning of the station's eighth year on the air.

²Ibid., September 22, 1930, passim.



The birthday program was an elaborate affair. For sixty minutes the production staff presented a variety of singers, orchestras, instrumentalists and speeches by politicians, including a short address by the Governor of Virginia, John Garland Pollard.¹

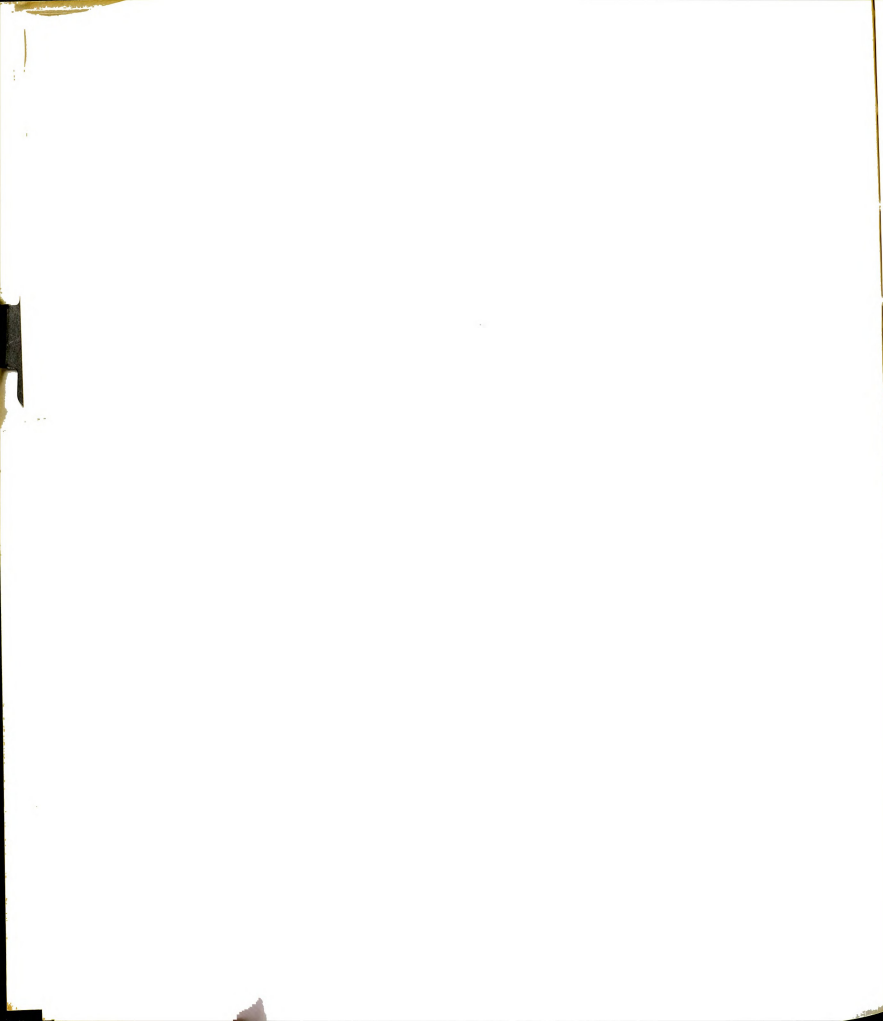
Interestingly the Pilot printed only one story about WTAR the day of the big program, and that was a creative little piece which attributed the paternity of WTAR to H. H. Rumble, former President of the Norfolk-Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce.² It will be recalled that Rumble's most notable contribution to the progress of WTAR was the remark he made on the occasion of WTAR's inaugural broadcast in December of 1923: "Thank God, that's over."³ It is a rather appropriate remark to recall at the end of 1930.

A brief glance through the materials which WTAR has preserved in its scrapbooks would lead the peruser to the conclusion that the anniversary program carried over the entire C.B.S. network was the only event by which 1930 should be remembered. For posterity the station would just as soon forget everything else that happened that year, and for good reason.

¹"WTAR Birthday Celebration on Chain Monday," ibid., September 20, 1930, p. 2.

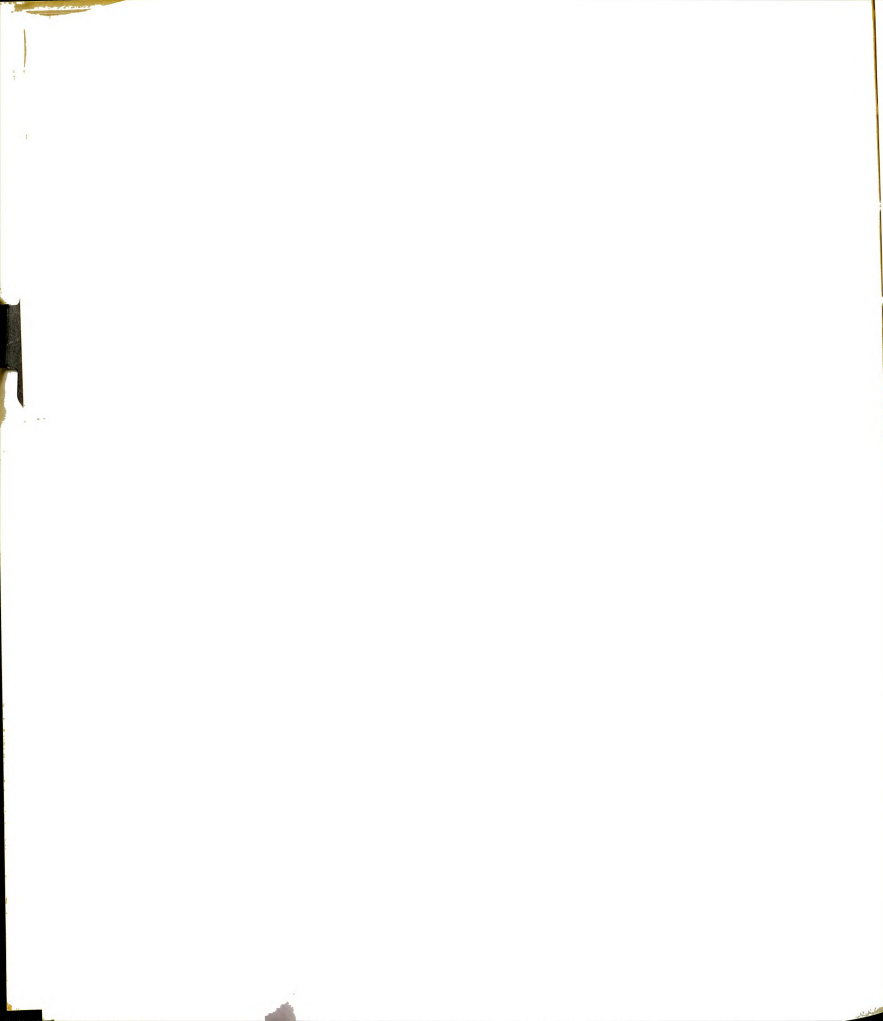
²"Pollard to Speak over WTAR Tonight," Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark, September 22, 1930, p. 12.

³Supra, p. 37.



The conflict between WTAR and its audience is the essence of the story of 1930, however. The disagreements which finally came out in the open, with WLBG acting as a catalytic agent, centered around two issues: First, WTAR was seriously interfering with the reception of distant stations; second, WTAR's programming was too heavily dependent on phonograph records. Both of these complaints were alleviated: the first by the movement of the transmitter outside the city limits; the second by a full-time affiliation with C.B.S. The first complaint, dealing with interference, and its remedy, the movement of transmitter, show a direct cause-and-effect relationship. The second complaint, dealing with the heavy dependence on phonograph records, and its remedy, the full-time affiliation with C.B.S., may not be linked as cause is to effect, but the fact of the matter is that with more network programs per day there was less time available to play phonograph records. Additionally, the local listeners most probably felt less of a need for distant stations as WTAR started to bring more chain programming directly to Norfolk.

The most pressing question of 1930 is, "Why did these things have to happen?" The question is somewhat difficult to answer, even with the luxury of hindsight, but some probable hypotheses might be proposed. It seems that WTAR might have assumed that the mail it was receiving was a representative sampling of audience reaction when, in reality, it was representative only of the less sophisticated, rural and

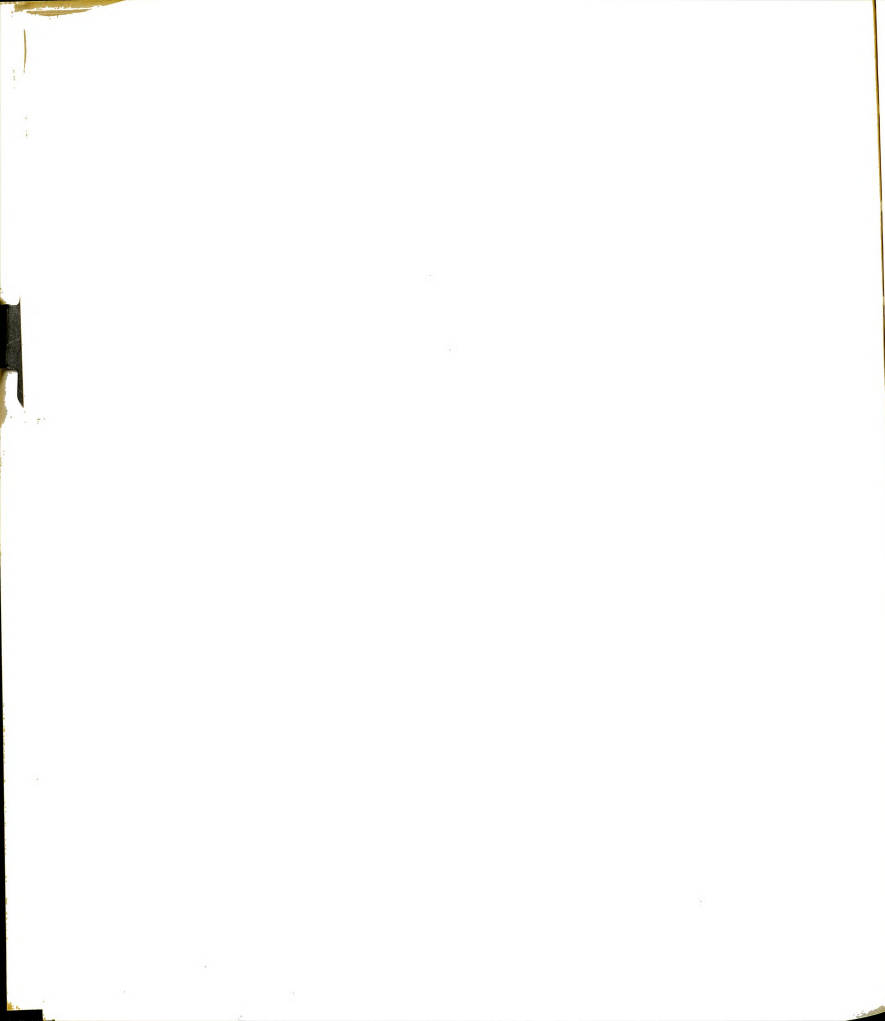


semi-rural elements in the station's total audience. The vast majority of the letters sent to the F.R.C. written by individuals, as opposed to businesses, were from people who could be described in this way.

A second possible answer to the question is, in part, a derivative of the first. Goodridge, Light and others, perhaps, had failed to appreciate the increased urbanity which the medium of radio had brought to the Norfolk audience. It seems evident from the various letters which were printed in the Ledger that Frank Ficarra and his Wong Ping Whoopeans were no longer of the caliber which would consistently satisfy the general public. Ironically, it was WTAR itself, with the addition of C.B.S. programs in the late twenties which had brought about this change, at least in part.

It is important, also, not to overlook the fact that, while the difficulties were lengthy and embarrassing, to say the least, WTAR did adapt itself to the changes which were forced upon it. The station showed itself to be much more receptive, ultimately, than the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber was willing to discount all technical complaints because the District Radio Supervisor said that WTAR was within the legal limits. The Chamber was willing to discount the programming complaints by saying that no station could please everyone. This was a heavy-handed approach to the problem which could have proved disastrous for WTAR if it had been allowed to dominate.

Lastly, the fact that the men who were guiding WTAR were good, honest men bears repetition. In Jack Light and Harry Goodridge there was no malice. They were merely good men trying to do the job in the best way that they could discern. That they stumbled is unfortunate, but that they recovered to a better posture is noteworthy. Nineteen-thirty was a good object lesson for WTAR which would not need repetition in the future.



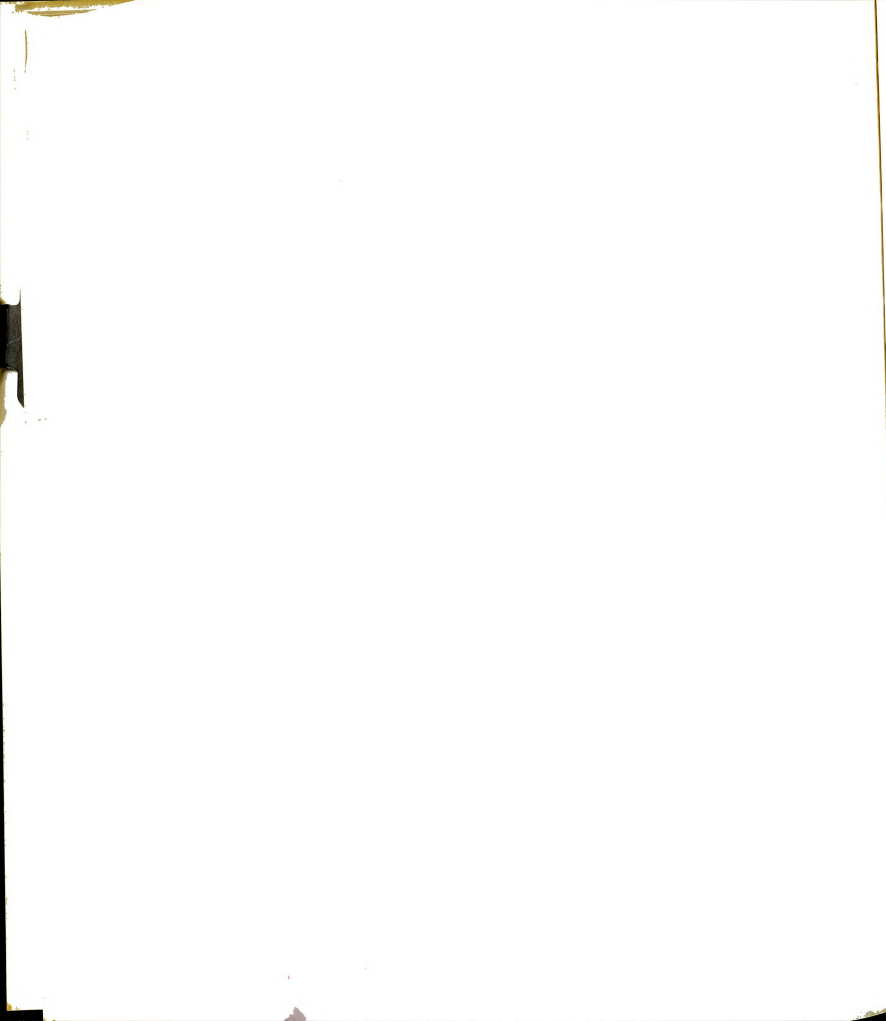
CHAPTER XII

ORDERLY PROGRESSION

This chapter covers four years of the history of WTAR. This is not to say that the years from 1931 through 1934 were any less important to WTAR than were those which came before and to which more space has been devoted. As Adele DeFord, who worked for WTAR from the late thirties until her retirement in 1969, said, "We thought everything we did was pretty important."¹ Rather than belittling the importance of the events during these years, the fact that they are treated in one chapter reflects the fact that the emphasis of WTAR's programming was shifting from strictly local to increasingly national over these years. When WTAR became a full-time C.B.S. affiliate in 1930 the amount of network programming jumped to slightly more than fifty per cent of the station's time on the air. The story of 1930 shows that this was the kind of programming which the Norfolk audience wanted.

It would seem feasible, then, to end this phase of WTAR's history on December 31, 1930; but that would introduce

¹Adele DeFord, personal interview, WTAR Building, Norfolk, Virginia, April 17, 1970.

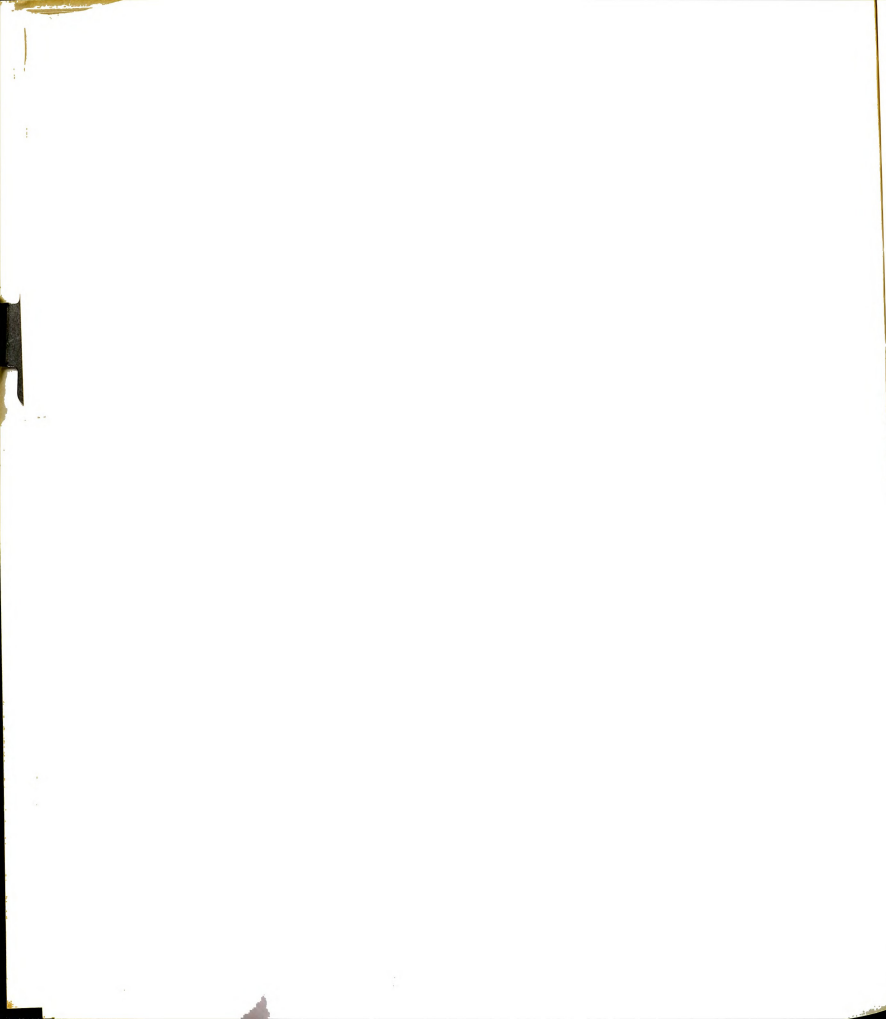


something of a distortion into the story. There were a number of aspects of the station's character which were yet to be moulded by the end of 1930, aspects which became established during the four years with which this chapter deals. Nineteen-thirty-one represents the beginning of the end of a phase of WTAR's life, a kind of institutional post-pubescence.

1931

Nineteen-thirty-one was a relatively quiet year. In some ways it was similar to 1929, for it was a year of consolidation, maybe even a year of convalescence after 1930. What comes forth from research into this year is primarily that the newspapers had become less interested in WTAR itself and more interested in WTAR as a vehicle for C.B.S. Of the three incidents which stand out in 1931, two deal with WTAR acting as the key station for the C.B.S. network. The third is an epilogue to the story of the previous year.

The richness of Virginia history means that he who is in search of appropriate occasions for celebration need not look far nor wait long. April 26, 1931 was the 324th anniversary of the landing of the English settlers at Cape Henry in 1607. A celebration of significant size was planned for the occasion, and it was decided that WTAR would cover the proceedings and also act as the originating station for a national broadcast by C.B.S. Virginia Governor Fred Pollard



was to be the host, and President Herbert Hoover was to be in attendance.¹ One might validly question the reasons for offering such a celebration on the 324th anniversary when neither the 323rd nor the 325th anniversaries were so honored, but the answer to such a question is elusive.

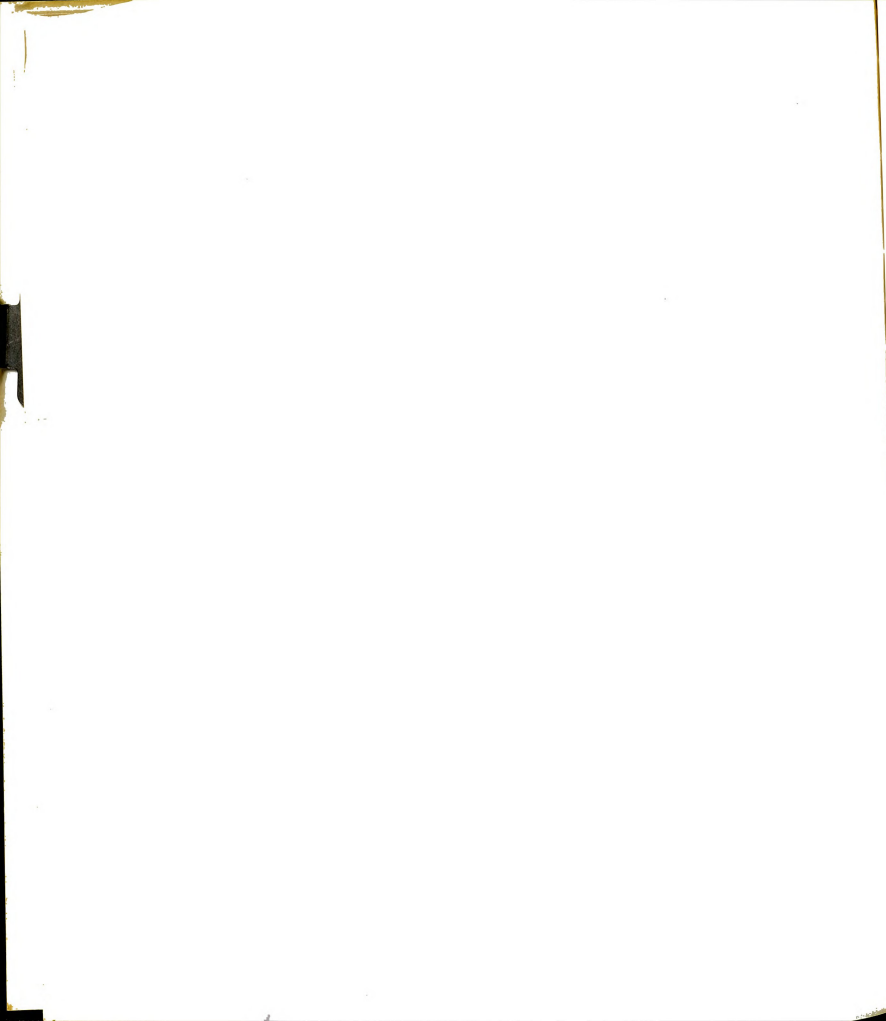
On the day of the event Fred Pfahler of WTAR was set to describe the proceedings to a national audience, but it was not to be a successful day. A good crowd of around 10,000 persons had gathered at the Cape, east of Norfolk, but difficulties cropped up before the exercises even began. The President's train, which was to bring the chief executive from Little Creek to Cape Henry was held up for twenty minutes. Pfahler was prepared for such a contingency as he ably filled the time with a description of the purpose of the celebration and the history of Cape Henry.²

Once the President arrived the program was begun. "America" was sung, and Bishop S. C. Thompson began the invocation. Then rain and twenty-five mile-per-hour winds took over the program. Fred Pfahler continued at this post until his usefulness had ceased:

The rain started at 3:28 o'clock, soon after the ceremonies had started, and the broadcast was discontinued at about 3:40 after Mr. Pfahler had described

¹"Pilgrimage Exercises to be Broadcast," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 21, 1931, p. 2.

²"Rain Breaks Up Pilgrimage," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 27, 1931, p. 1.



the President's drenching and flight, and the rout of the crowd by the rain.¹

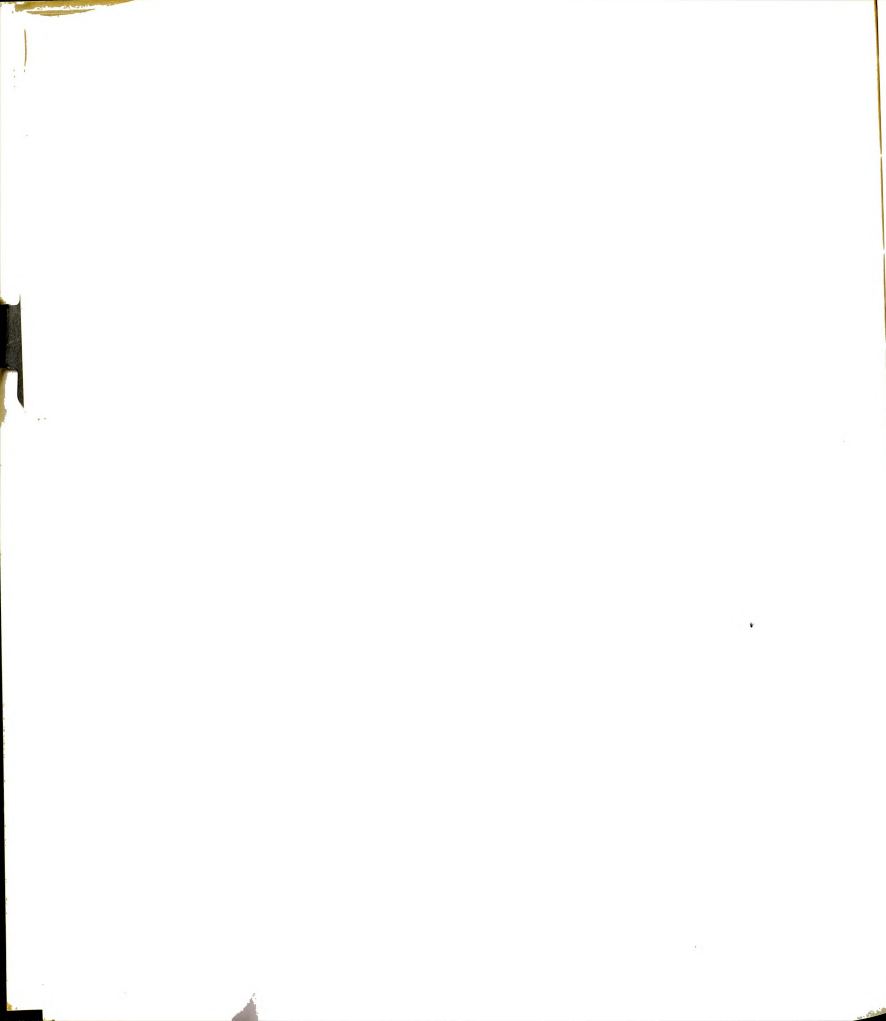
Four months later WTAR was again designated as the key station for a national C.B.S. broadcast. The occasion this time was to be the sinking of the "Mount Shasta" by the Army Air Corps, a practical demonstration of how the army would react to a naval invasion. WTAR set up a receiving station on the top of the Cavalier Hotel in Virginia Beach to relay the reports of Ted Husing, who would be aboard the mine planter "Schofield" near the "Mount Shasta."²

Everything was in readiness on August 11, but the United States Army lacked the necessary influence over the elements. The planes took off from Langley Field on the Peninsula, but heavy clouds prevented them from finding the ship that was supposed to be attacking the United States Coast. Husing and C.B.S. went on the air at 12 o'clock noon, and finally signed off at 12:30 P.M. when it became apparent that the test would have to be staged on another day. Husing told his audience, "'It was all bunk that the bombing planes were anywhere near, but so high that they could not be seen. If the planes were out here, we could hear them or see them.'"³

¹Ibid.

²"WTAR is Picked as Key Station for Big Hook Up," ibid., August 5, 1931, p. 3.

³Ted Husing, quoted in: "Army Bombers Fail to Reach Target Vessel," ibid., August 11, 1931, p. 1.



And last, on the thirtieth of May, the nails were formally driven into the coffin which contained the bad memories of 1930. On that day, at 7:00 P.M., WTAR dedicated its new transmitter on Virginia Beach Boulevard, about two miles from the Norfolk city limits.¹ The new equipment would be capable of broadcasting with a power of 1000 watts, even though only 500 watts was authorized at the time, and the old equipment, at the original site on what was once called Harrington Avenue, was to be dismantled and disposed of.² The last physical link with the Reliance Electric Company was to disappear forever.

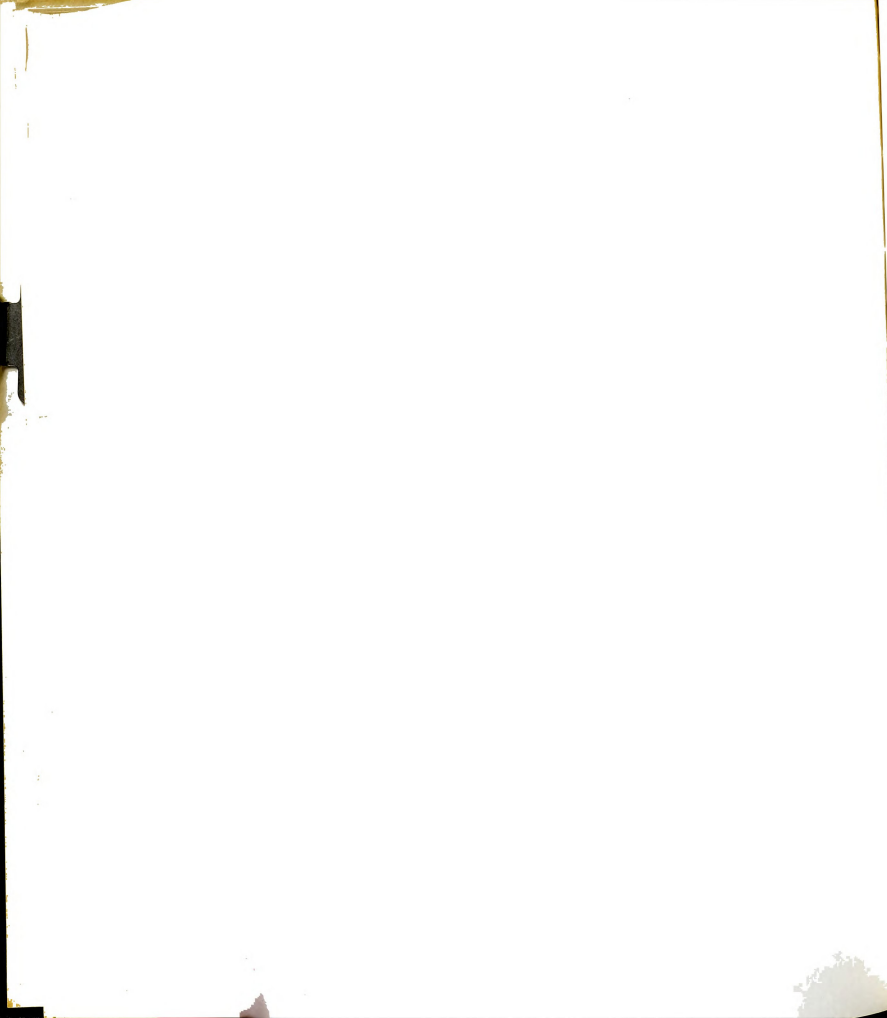
1932

Nineteen-thirty-two is significant not so much for what WTAR did as for events which had an effect on the station, events over which WTAR had little or no control.

May seventh of that year must have brought a mild surprise to the readers of the Ledger-Dispatch, and a similar sort of surprise greeted the readers of the Virginian Pilot the next day. For on those days the radio listings were not printed in either paper for the first time in many years.

¹"WTAR Ready to Dedicate Transmitter," ibid., May 23, 1931, p. 2.

²Ibid.



It would be five months before they would appear again in the Ledger and eight months before they would return to the pages of the Virginian Pilot. The Press-Radio War had reached Norfolk.¹ Somewhat more than two weeks later the Ledger took editorial space to explain its actions:

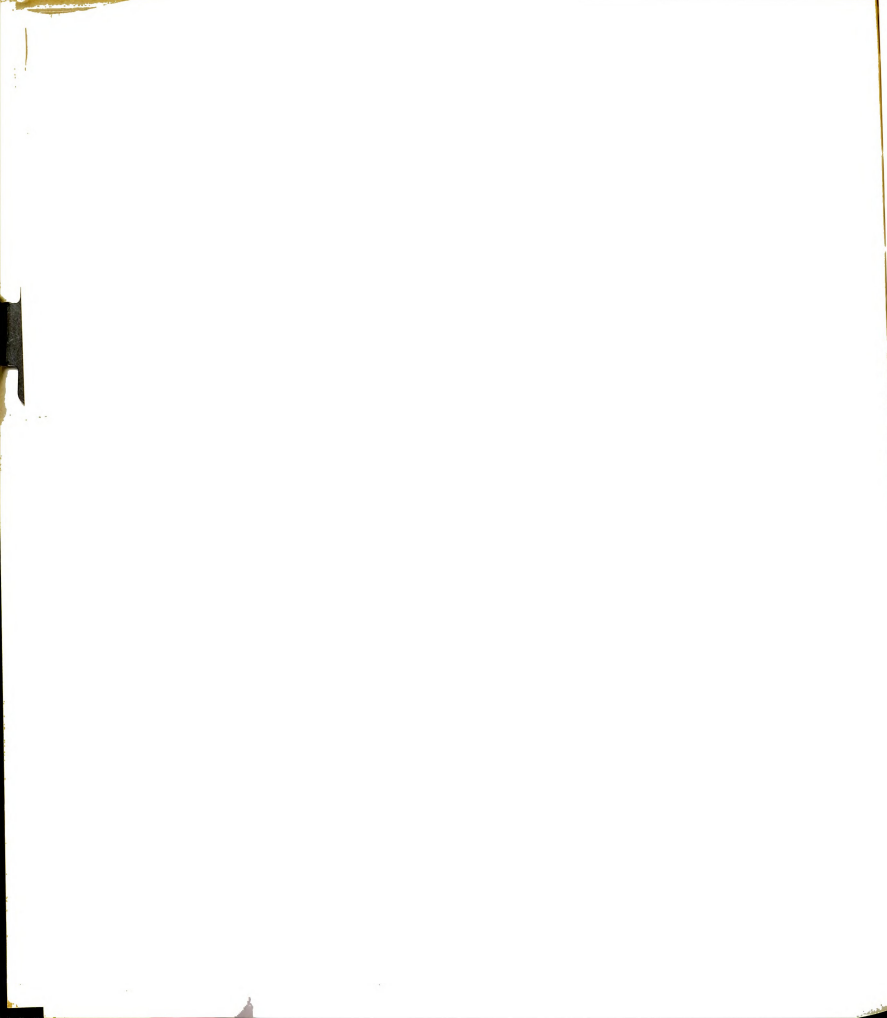
As a medium of transmitting calls for help, messages over seas and waste places, directions and instructions that require well-nigh instantaneous passage from point to point, radio is a blessing to mankind. As an advertising medium, to which purpose it is almost altogether devoted in the United States, it is a direct competitor of every newspaper and magazine in the country. . . . There is no [more] reason why newspapers, which live by their advertising, should donate day by day valuable advertising to radio, which also lives by advertising, than there is why one dry goods merchant should advertise in his store the goods sold by another dry goods merchant across the street from him.

.
When the public realizes that the Ledger-Dispatch and the local station, or any other newspaper and any other radio station, are in precisely the same business, in so far as advertising is concerned, the public must also realize that there is no more reason why the newspaper should advertise the radio station without cost than there is why the radio station should advertise the newspaper without cost.²

This announcement came from the same newspaper which had been a kind of guardian-in-print for WTAR since it first went on the air in 1923. The Pilot, on the other hand, just dropped the listings and offered no explanation, or rather rationalization, to its readers.

¹George E. Lott, Jr., "The Press-Radio War of the 1930's," Journal of Broadcasting, Vol. XIV, No. 3, Summer, 1970, pp. 275-286.

²"Why Radio Programs are Omitted," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, May 16, 1932, p. 8.

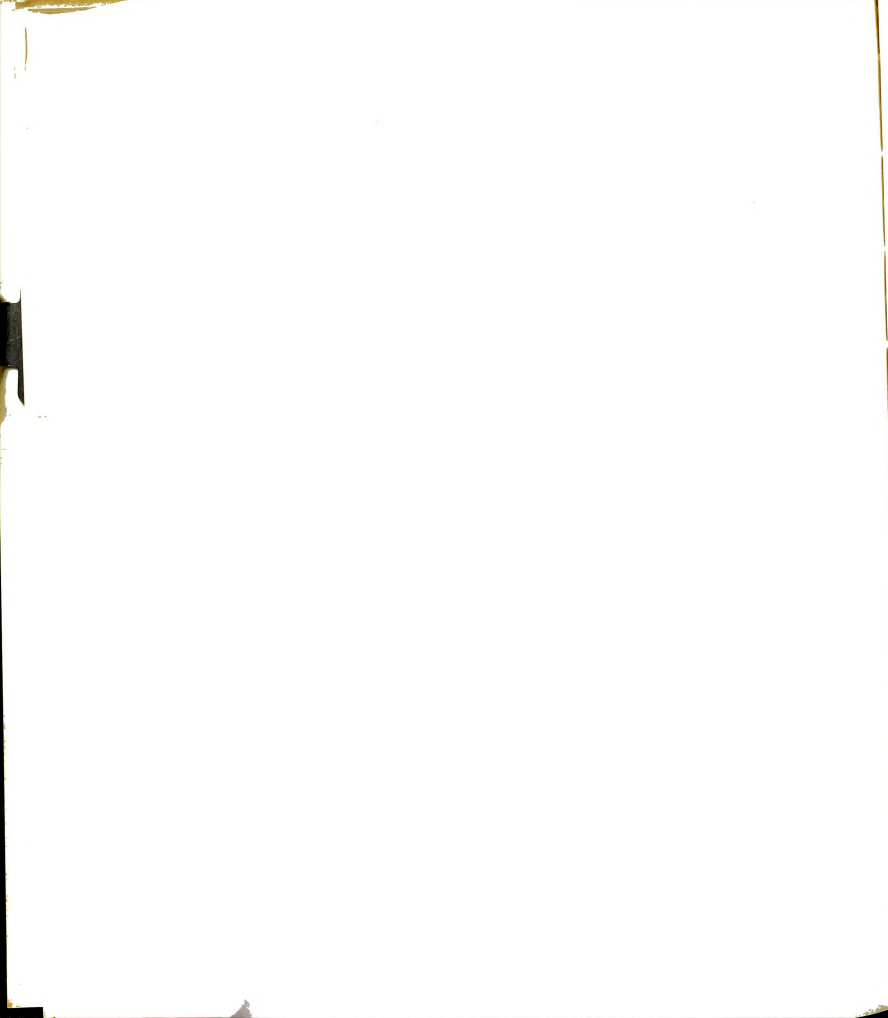


It is difficult to say how long the battle would have continued in Norfolk because an event in the corporate arena drastically changed the competitive situation, first between the Ledger and WTAR, and then between the Ledger, WTAR and the Pilot. In October of 1932 H. B. Goodridge sold WTAR to the Ledger-Dispatch for \$15,000.¹ The circumstances surrounding the purchase are recalled by Jack Light. In 1932 Goodridge was in a serious automobile accident, and after that he felt that he could no longer handle the station. He wanted to sell it to the Ledger, and everyone at the Ledger was in favor of the idea except the publisher, Colonel Samuel Slover. Slover was acquainted with a situation in Atlanta where the paper there had decided against buying a radio station because it would cost too much money. Slover felt the same way. One of Jack Light's announcers, Blayne Butcher, wanted to buy the station, but Jack Light would not let Goodridge sell it to Butcher. Light and Goodridge waited until Slover changed his mind, and then sold the station to the paper.²

Colonel Slover ultimately got a very good deal, for WTAR was well under-priced at \$15,000. The fixed assets of the station were probably valued in excess of that figure, especially since the new transmitter equipment was said to have

¹"Ledger-Dispatch Purchases WTAR from Goodridge," ibid., October 14, 1932, p. 1.

²Jack Light, personal interview.



cost at least \$15,000,¹ but nothing can be said of its debts. Additionally, in the license renewal application of June, 1932, the station reported that its gross income was averaging \$5300.00 per month.² Others realized the potential value of WTAR, but they were too late. Tom Hanes recalls that two or three years after the Ledger took over the station he was representing a syndicate which was prepared to offer the Ledger \$250,000 for the station. Paul Huber, President of the Norfolk Newspapers, Inc., and Slover, the Chairman of the Board, chuckled as they refused the offer.³

The day after the Ledger announced acquisition of WTAR an editorial appeared on the topic in the paper, explaining the reasons for the purchase of the station:

For the present at least, no change will be made in the operation of Station WTAR. At some time in the near future, however, the Ledger-Dispatch hopes and purposes[sic], by the utilization of its own facilities, to make the station even more valuable than it has been to radio listeners in general and to those whom this newspaper endeavors to serve in particular.⁴

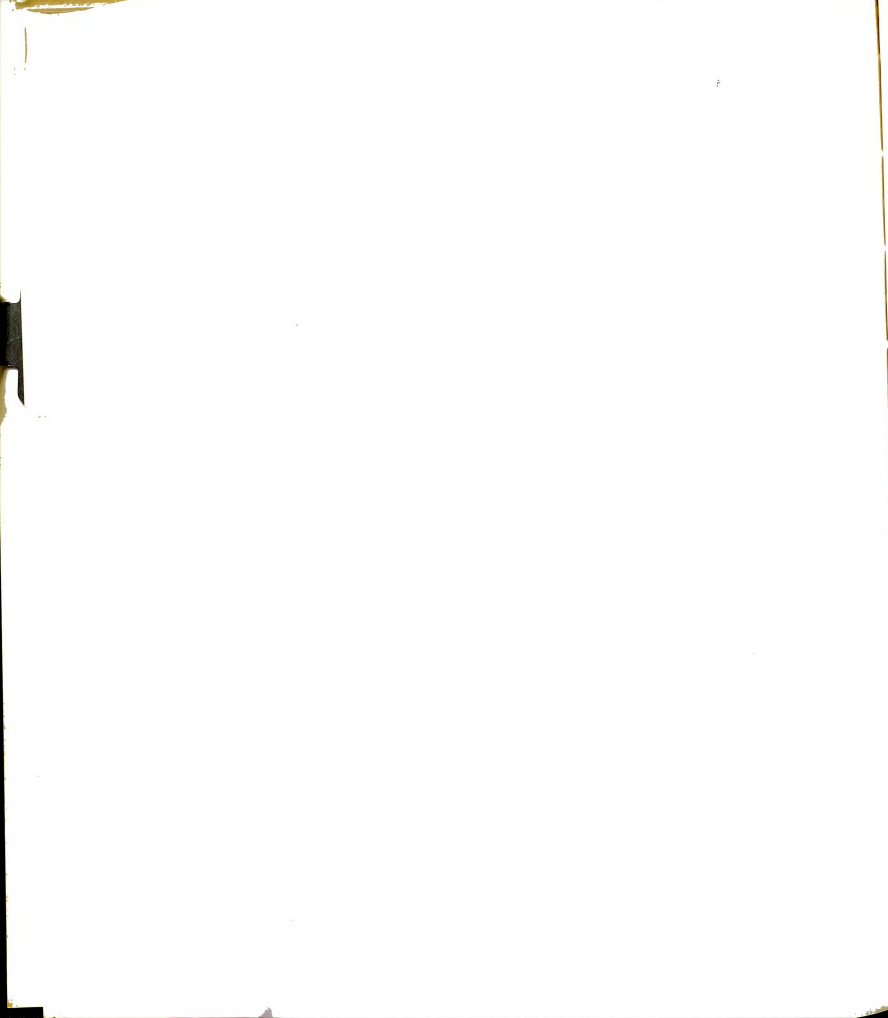
In closing the editorial the paper paid a small tribute to the works of Goodridge during his four years as principal owner of WTAR:

¹"WTAR Buys Site Out of City," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 18, 1930, p. 1.

²United States Federal Radio Commission, Records, File No. R-B-380, June 30, 1932.

³Tom Hanes, personal interview.

⁴"The Ledger-Dispatch Acquires WTAR," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 15, 1932, p. 8.



By the exercise of his energy and ability, Mr. Goodridge has developed what was a small and poorly equipped station into a remarkably inclusive and admirably equipped modern station. The Ledger-Dispatch promises Norfolk and the whole community that it will use its best endeavors to advance and extend Station WTAR into a still more valuable agency for the service of the public.¹

Two days after this editorial appeared WTAR's programs returned to the pages of the Ledger-Dispatch, but in a form which would indicate that they were as paid advertisements. No Ledger news programs appeared in the listings,² however, and this could lead one to believe that this program had been pulled off the air when the paper ceased carrying the WTAR programs in May.

As promised by the Ledger the change in ownership brought about no noticeable change in the programming or character of WTAR. Indeed, Jack Light was still the manager, that being a condition of sale imposed by Goodridge, and Light did not receive any interference from the new owners.³ Everyone got along quite well.

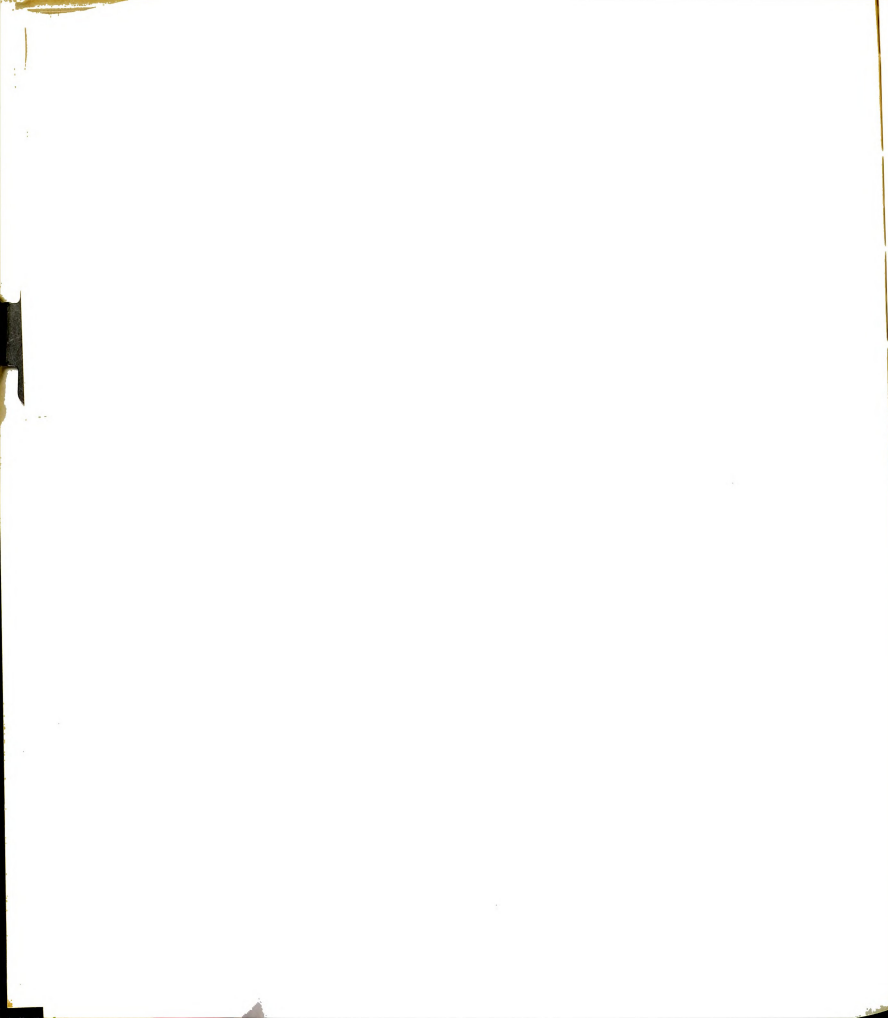
From the standpoint of the newspapers 1932 was the year in which the depression hit Norfolk.⁴ Advertising revenues were down, and, while neither the Ledger-Dispatch nor the Virginian Pilot were in difficult financial straits, it

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., October 17, 1932, p. 2.

³Jack Light, personal interview.

⁴Chambers and Shank, p. 353.



appeared to be the time to do something about the situation. Colonel Solver decided that a merger was the appropriate means to solve the economic problems, primarily because he had seen it work well in other cities.¹

The Ledger took the initiative because the merger was Slover's idea but also because the Ledger was the financially stronger of the two papers. On December 31, 1932 the formal announcement was made in the Ledger:

The Virginian Pilot and Ledger-Dispatch will be consolidated, effective January 1.

Due to economic conditions to which all business and individuals are subject and in line with similar mergers in many other cities this consolidation has been effected by agreement of stockholders of both newspapers looking to the eventual utilization of one plant in which both will be published.²

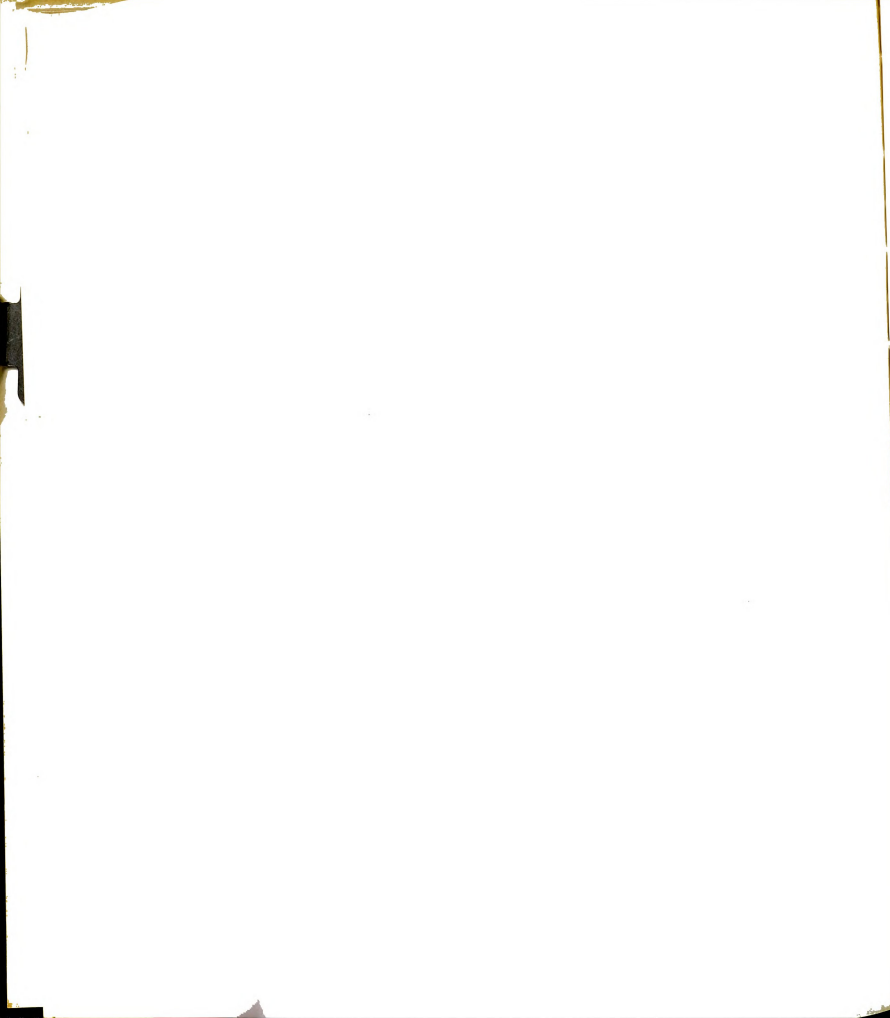
A new corporation was to be formed, called Norfolk Newspapers Incorporated, with Slover as Chairman of the Board and Paul Huber as President.³ Huber issued a statement which made it quite clear that, in spite of the fact that the two papers would be owned by the same company, the operational policies governing news and editorial matters would remain separate:

The consolidation will in no way affect the editorial or news policies of the Virginian Pilot or Ledger-Dispatch. They will preserve their distinct

¹Ibid., pp. 354-355.

²"Norfolk Papers Effect Merger," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, December 31, 1932, p. 1.

³Ibid.



personalities and characteristics unchanged, each independent of the other, and under the continued direction of the news and editorial executives who have guided them in the past.¹

One of the assets of the Ledger which was assigned to the new corporation was WTAR, but, again, there was no interference from the new owners. In fact, the new corporate structure might have done much to preserve WTAR's independence. Adele DeFord recalls that the only reason she was aware that the papers owned the station was that the paychecks were drawn on the account of Norfolk Newspapers, Inc. She says that few at the station even had any idea about who, beyond the manager, was involved with the business. If there were any disputes they were resolved long before they were passed on to the employees of the station.²

Tom Hanes re-enforces what Mrs. DeFord says. The fact that the station was owned by a corporation which owned two newspapers did WTAR no good at all when it came to news-gathering. Hanes says that he used to give his reporters bonuses if they would beat the Pilot or the radio station on a story. The competition was so fierce and the Ledger, the Pilot and WTAR so independent that Campbell Arnoux, the man who replaced Jack Light in 1934, complained many times that rival radio stations were getting better news breaks from

¹Paul S. Huber, quoted in: "Norfolk Papers Effect Merger," ibid., December 31, 1932, p. 1.

²Adele DeFord, personal interview.



the Ledger or the Pilot than was WTAR.¹

By the end of 1932 the corporate evolution of WTAR had been completed. The station was on firm financial ground probably for the first time in its history. It would not change hands again.

1933

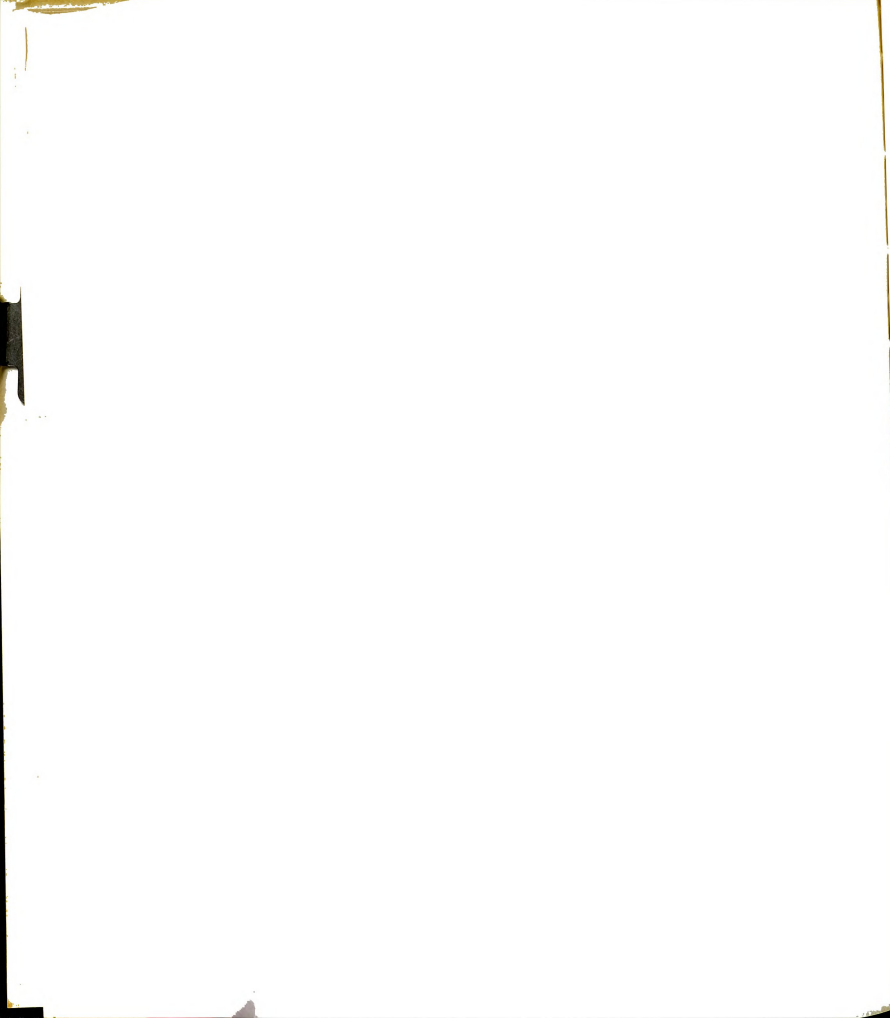
Nineteen-thirty-three was the year in which one of those events took place the mention of which, after the passage of several decades, brings grins to the faces of those who are questioned--but little explanation.

In October Rear Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd was to leave on a expedition to the South Pole from Norfolk. Because Byrd was a native Virginian, and because he had chosen Norfolk as his point of embarkation, an elaborate farewell program was arranged which would be broadcast over the entire C.B.S. network through WTAR.²

The broadcast was probably the most technically complex program with which WTAR had ever been involved. The participants would be situated not only in Norfolk, but also in Washington, D. C., New York and London, England. The program

¹Tom Hanes, personal interview.

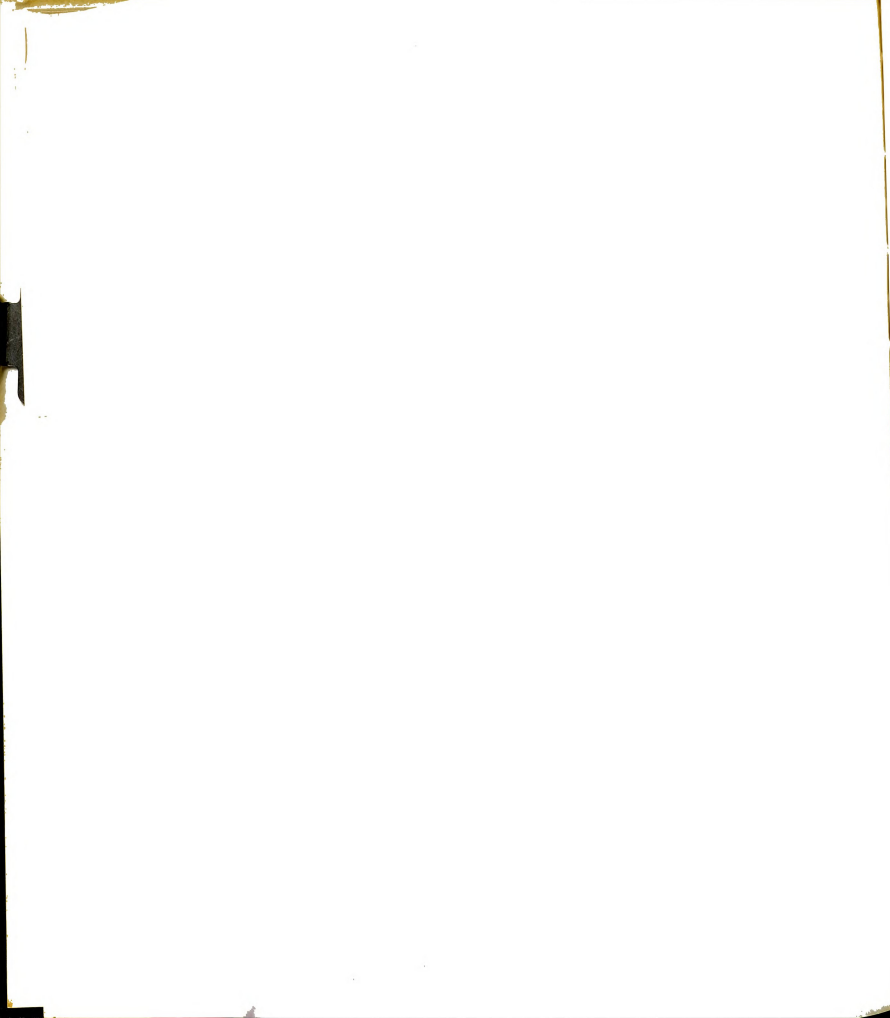
²"Byrd to Say Good-Bye in Broadcast from Norfolk Sunday Night," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 2, 1933, p. 1.



was as follows: the United States Navy Band playing "Anchors Aweigh" from Washington; actors in New York recreating the scene when Byrd's plane flew over the South Pole in 1929; from Washington a speech by Henry Latrobe Roosevelt and another selection from the Navy Band; from Norfolk Kate Smith singing "Boy of Mine" while presenting a bouquet of roses to Admiral Byrd's mother, and a speech by C.B.S. Vice President Henry A. Bellow; from Washington, speeches by Captain Stanford C. Hooper, Chief of United States Navy Communication, and E. O. Sykes, Chairman of the F.R.C.; from London a speech by Admiral Sir William E. Goodenough, President of the Royal Geographic Society; and a speech by Postmaster James Farley from Washington.¹

The final segment of the program was to come from Norfolk. Governor Fred Pollard made a short speech followed by Chief Pilot Harold June. Then it was time for Admiral Byrd to make his speech, the high point of the program. There had been complications. At 5:00 P.M. the people responsible for the program had been informed that Byrd would be confined to his hotel room because of illness. He would be unable to attend the ceremonies at Building 16 at the Norfolk Navy Yard. It was quickly decided to run a special cable from the Monticello Hotel to Building 16 in order to carry Byrd's speech. Prior

¹"Cut in Wire Stopped Byrd Radio Address," ibid., October 16, 1933, pp. 1 and 3.



to the broadcast all was in order.¹

At the appointed time Byrd began his speech, speaking "slowly and distinctly," and he talked for about two minutes when he stopped. There was some confusion, and silence, from Building 16, then Harry Von Zell, the C.B.S. announcer, said that Admiral Byrd would not continue "due to circumstances beyond our control." The Navy Band in Washington struck up with "The Star Spangled Banner," and the program ended. Later it was discovered that the uncontrollable circumstances were that the wire bringing Byrd's speech from the Monticello Hotel had been very neatly cut.²

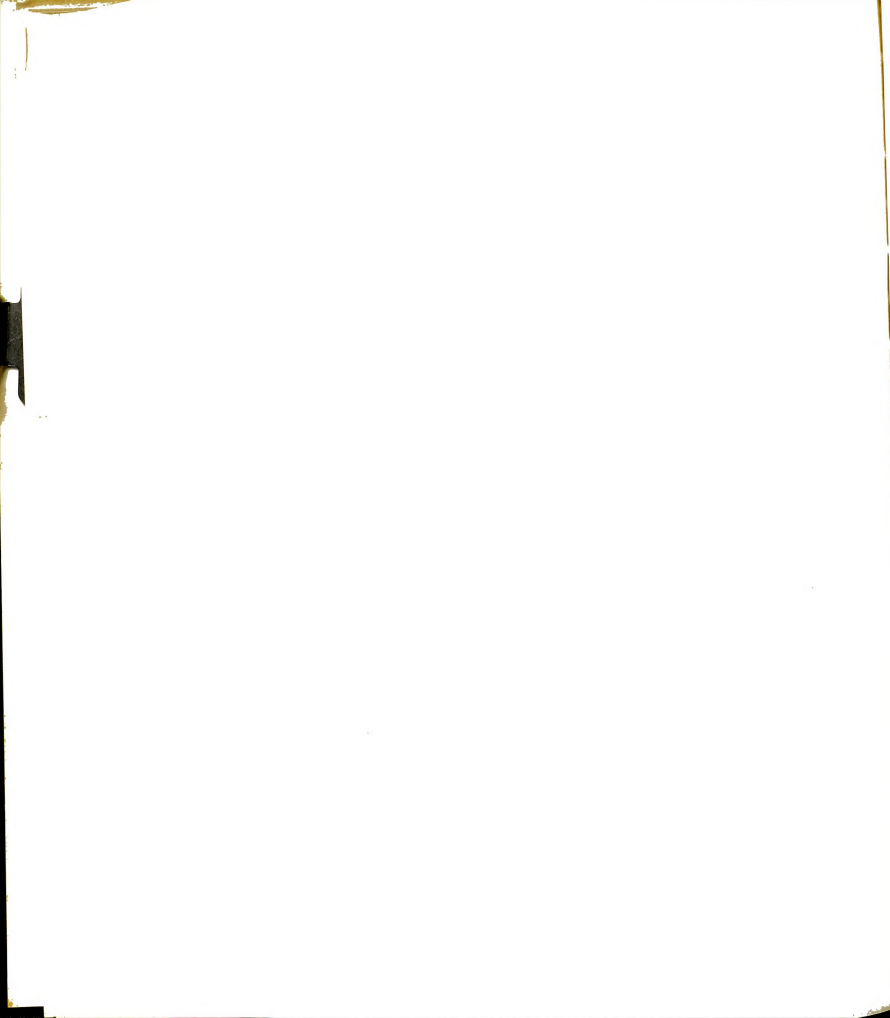
Sunday evening, after the broadcast, and most of Monday were spent trying to figure out who had cut the wire and for what reason. Some thought that it had been a case of faulty wiring which had broken. Others thought that the wire was cut to conceal some other cause for a cessation of the speech. Still others put the blame on sabotage,³ but no one has ever discovered the culprit or his motivations, or if someone has he is not talking.

Apparently, however, there is some inside knowledge about the event which people concerned would just as soon not

¹"Nation Hears Farewell to Byrd Expedition," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, October 16, 1933, pp. 1 and 7.

²"Cut in Wire Stopped Byrd Radio Address," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, October 16, 1933, pp. 1 and 3.

³"Admiral Byrd Ill in Hotel Much Improved Doctor Says," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, October 17, 1933, pp. 1 and 5.

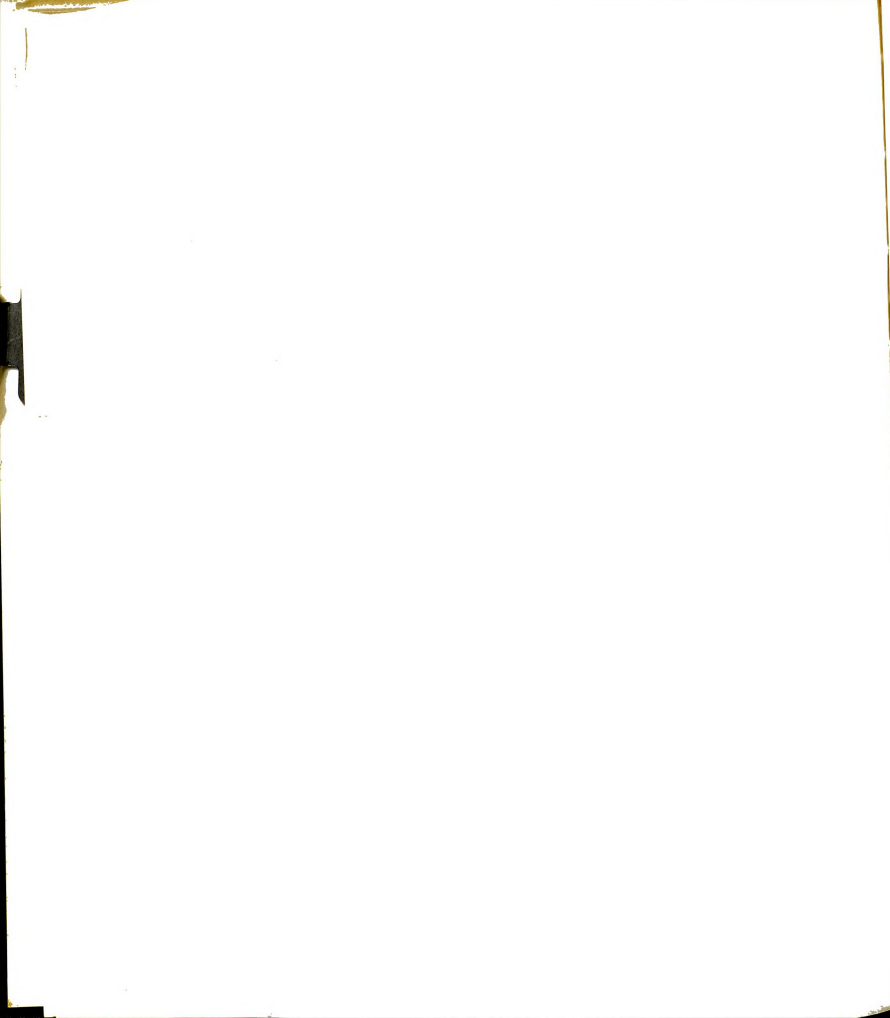


bring out in the open. When one brings up the question of the "Byrd Broadcast" he is met with what an observer of human facial characteristics would call a knowing grin. This form of non-verbal communication is combined with a simple "I don't know what happened," or words to that effect.¹ However, there are some indications that he who advanced the theory that the wires were cut to conceal the real cause of Byrd's abbreviated address might be offering the most valid explanation. Jack Light told a reporter in 1946, "I think it was cut off by a CBS man. . . . I know the network boys were all anxious to get away."² There are some who feel that Byrd was confined to his room for physiological reasons unrelated to the common cold. When he began to speak it became apparent to someone that Byrd's malady might create an embarrassing situation over a national network. This person cut the wire. Regardless of what happened, however, the situation was embarrassing to WTAR. For the third time WTAR had acted as key station for C.B.S. and the program had not been completed.

Nineteen-thirty-three is most remembered for the Byrd program, but there are two other incidents worthy of note, at

¹Jack Light, personal interview; Joel Carlson, conversations; Trafton Robertson, personal interview at the Golden Triangle Hotel, Norfolk, Virginia, April 17, 1970.

²Jack Light, quoted in Warner Twyford, "First Citizen of Radio Virginia, Jack Light Recalls Both Static and Sweet Tones of Long Career," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, September 27, 1946, p. 28.



least in passing: a C.B.S. audience survey and the return to news broadcasts.

In March of that year C.B.S. released the results of an independent survey of C.B.S. affiliates in eighty cities across the country. Norfolk was included, and the results were impressive. WTAR was matched against WGH in Newport News and WRVA in Richmond, and the survey showed that 76.1 percent of the listeners in the Norfolk area listed WTAR as their favorite station.¹ It would probably be easy to pick the survey apart, but that would accomplish little. What the survey shows is that the station had executed a remarkable recovery from its point of lowest popularity just three years before in 1930.

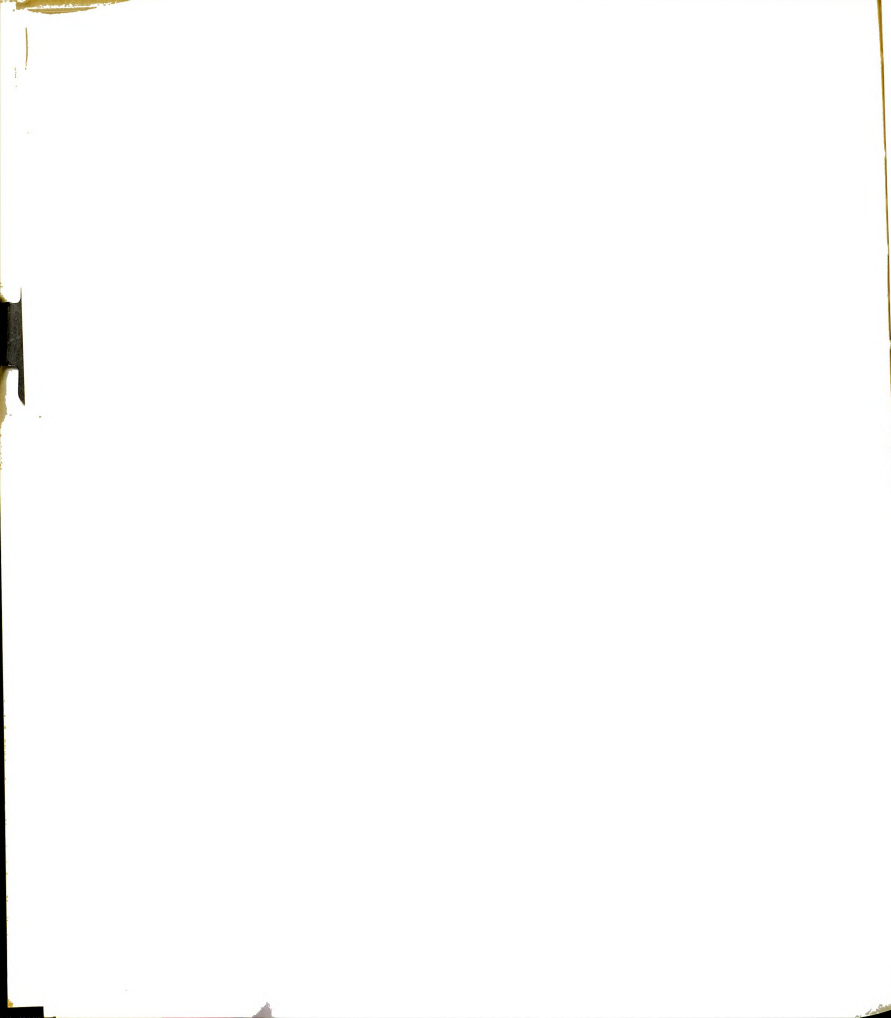
Lastly, in May of 1933, the Ledger-Dispatch news programs returned to WTAR. The time had been changed from 6:30 P.M. to 12:30 P.M., and the length of the programs had been shortened from thirty to five minutes. Significant, also, is the fact that on May 8 the Virginian Pilot also produced a news program for the first time on WTAR.²

1934

All that needs to be said of 1934 is that it was the year which marked the end of an era. The two events which

¹"WTAR Most Popular Station Among Norfolk Listeners," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, March 3, 1933, p. 3.

²Ibid., May 8, 1933, p. 4.

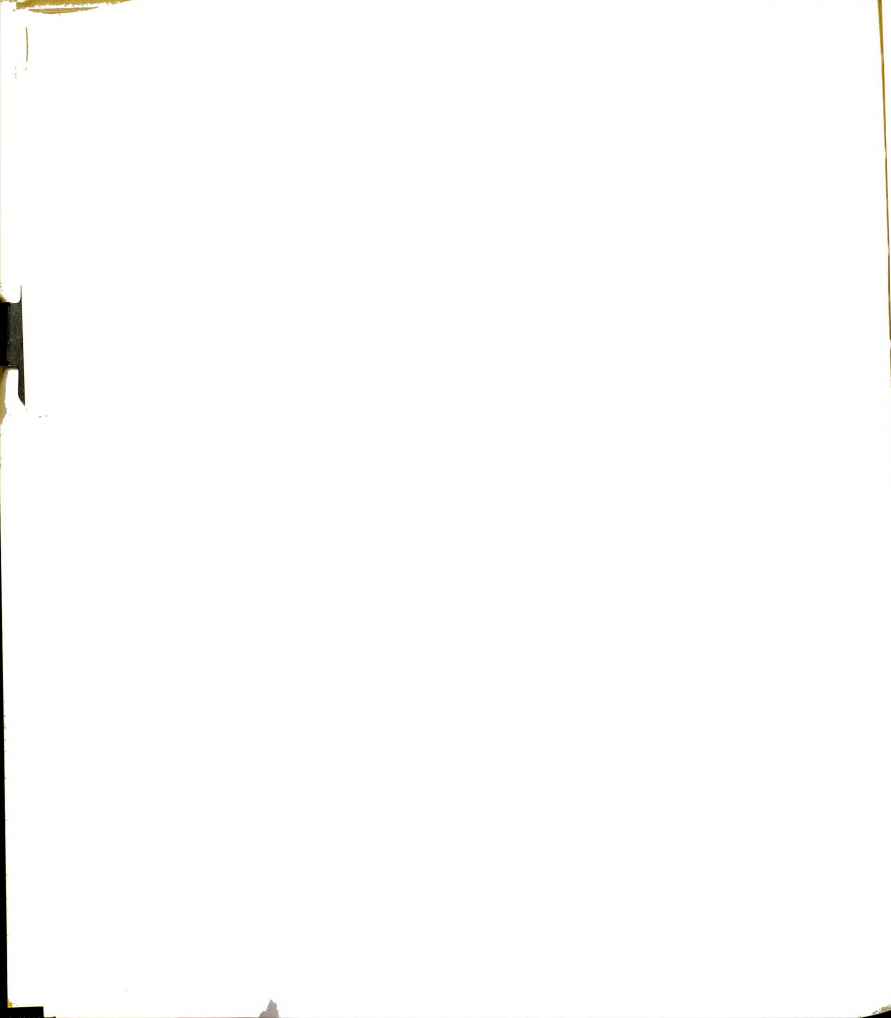


make this so are the semi-retirement of Jack Light and the desertion of C.B.S. for N.B.C.

For better than ten years WTAR had been Jack Light's station. He had been primarily responsible for its formation; he had been primarily responsible for its direction even when it was owned by Goodridge and the Norfolk Newspapers, Inc. But as 1934 arrived it had become apparent that he would be unable to continue. His sight was failing. On February 1, 1934 the announcement was made on the last page of the Pilot: Campbell Arnoux, formerly managing director of KTHS in Hot Springs, Arkansas, was replacing Jack Light as manager of WTAR. Light would continue as assistant manager.¹

Arnoux was young, aggressive and active. He was to bring a new dimension to the WTAR activities. He was a good manager, and the station would prosper under him. But with the retirement of Light the pioneer era of Virginia radio came to an end, and it is interesting to note that as one talks with Jack Light the lucidity of his recollections declines after 1934. Even though he was to remain with WTAR until 1946, at the age of 67, he recalls less about these more recent years than he does about those first eleven years. His adaptation from an active role to a passive one, along with the continued change in the role which radio played, account for this. It is useless to bemoan either of these facts,

¹"Campbell Arnoux Succeeds Light as WTAR Manager," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, February 1, 1934, II, p. 8.



but it is important that Jack Light's accomplishments be recorded. These pages are a step in that direction.

In April of 1934 WTAR moved, for the last time until the appearance of television in 1950, back to the Bank of Commerce Building. It was more of a homecoming, this time, than a change, because WTAR had had studios in the Bank of Commerce Building earlier. But the change in location was heralded differently, perhaps reflecting the new hand which was now guiding the station. A special program was planned for broadcast from 5:30 P.M. until midnight on April 6. Five hundred different people were asked to appear on the program, and the studios were opened up for public inspection for the first time in the station's history.¹ The Pilot devoted a full page to the move with a number of photographs of the new studios.² At the time of this move the station was on the air 117 hours per week, and eighty of those 117 hours were C.B.S. network programs. Close to seventy percent of WTAR's programming was national.³

In July another change was instituted. The contract with C.B.S. was cancelled, and Paul Huber, now President of Norfolk Newspapers, Inc., negotiated an affiliation with the

¹"WTAR Invites Public to Studios Tonight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 6, 1934, p. 12.

²Norfolk Virginian Pilot, April 6, 1934, I, p. 10.

³"WTAR Invites Public to Studios Tonight," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, April 6, 1934, p. 12.

National Broadcasting Company which would bring programs from both the Red and the Blue networks to Norfolk through WTAR.¹

The Ledger was most excited about the change:

Having this connection . . . WTAR thus makes available to all its patrons . . . the finest programs presented on the air in America.

In behalf of Norfolk and the station itself, it is just to say that its inclusion in the National Broadcasting Company system is properly to be regarded as recognition of the dignity of the community and of the importance of the station by this great company. . . . The inclusion of WTAR by NBC is equivalent to certification of the adequacy of the station's physical operation, and of the value and importance of its broadcasts to the large area which looks to it for radio service.²

On Friday, July 6, 1934, the first N.B.C. programs were carried by WTAR, and another of those dedicatory extravaganzas was produced.³ The next day, Saturday, WTAR was on the air from 7:00 A.M. until midnight, and it carried fourteen hours of N.B.C. programs. About eighty-two percent of the day's programs were from the network.⁴

And, finally, the last piece of unfinished business was concluded on Thanksgiving day of 1934. On that day WTAR started broadcasting at a power of 1,000 watts,⁵ and the

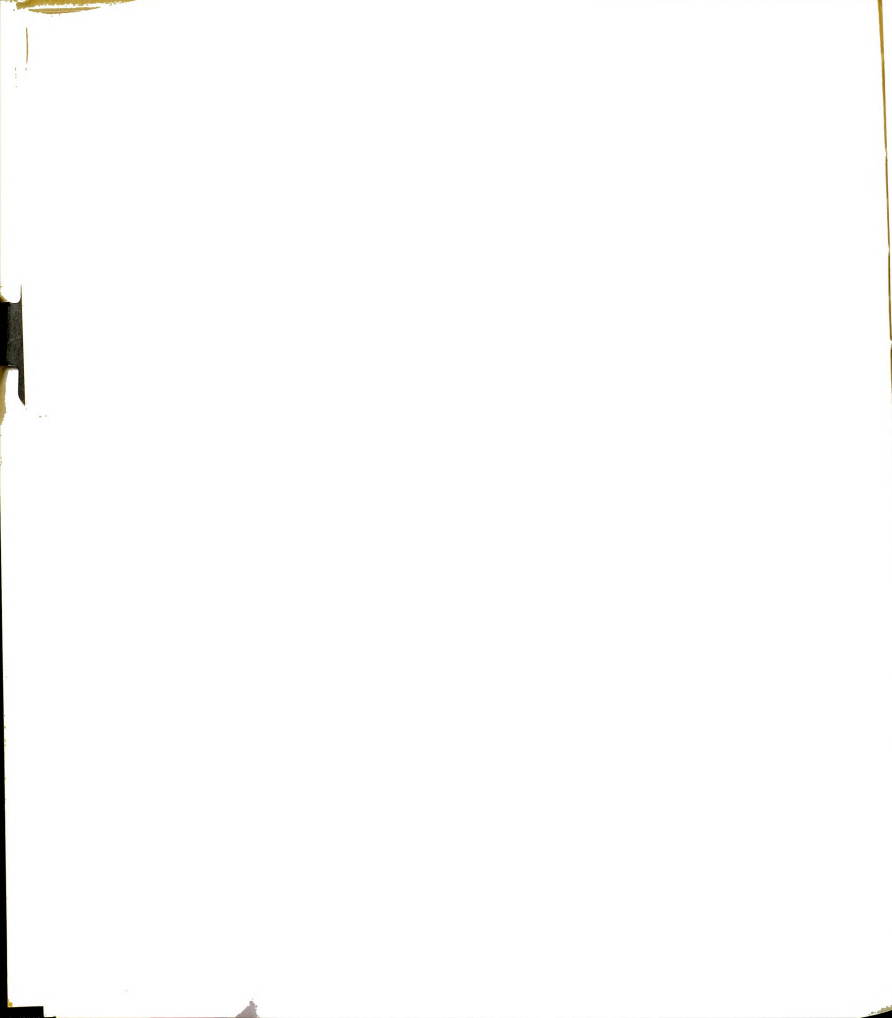
¹"WTAR Joins NBS Network Friday Night," ibid., July 5, 1934, pp. 1 and 2.

²"WTAR Joins NBC," ibid., July 5, 1934, p. 10.

³"WTAR and NBC Join Tonight in Offering Better Service Here," ibid., July 6, 1934, p. 1.

⁴Ibid., July 6, 1934, p. 10.

⁵WTAR, "The Voice of Tidewater," One of America's Great Radio Stations, Air Date, September 21, 1923, Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia: 40 Years of Progressive Broadcasting (Norfolk: WTAR Radio-Television Corporation, 1963), p. 4.

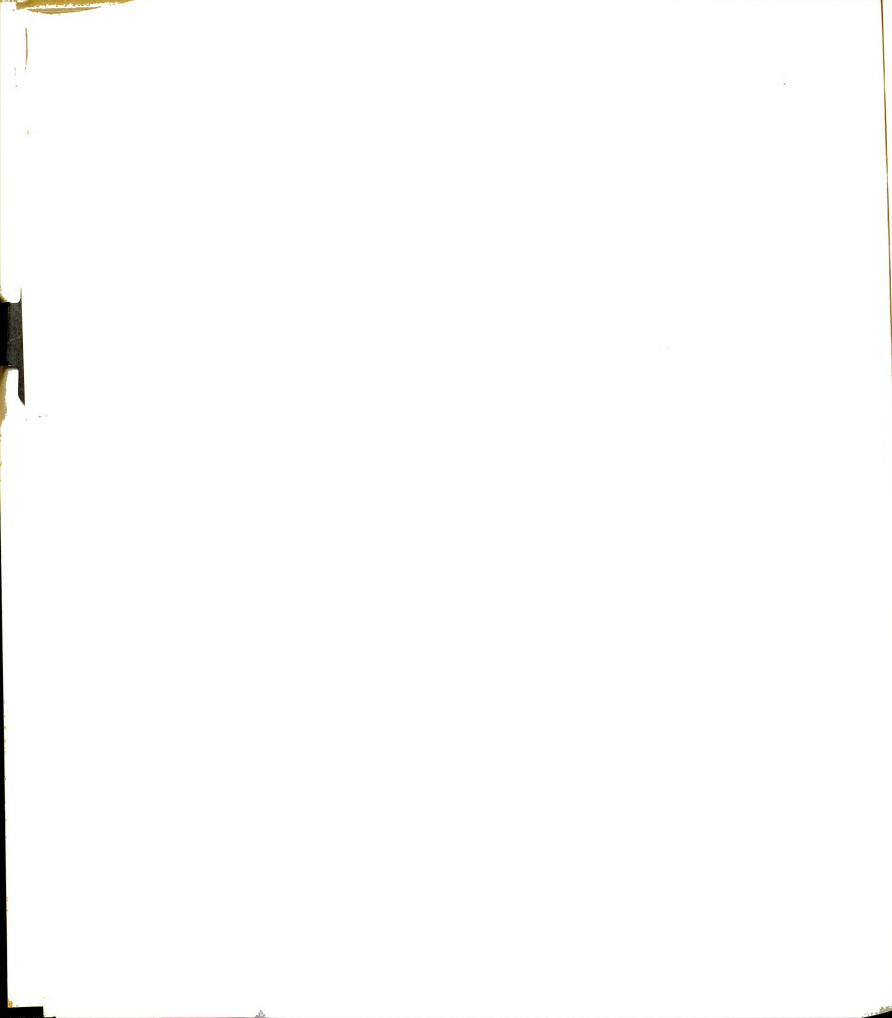


plans of Goodridge and Light, set forth in 1930, were finally realized.

Summary

The years of 1931 through 1934 were a time when WTAR was undergoing the final changes which would lead to maturity. The station was purchased by the Ledger-Dispatch, and the Ledger-Dispatch and the Virginian Pilot consolidated, bringing WTAR into Norfolk Newspapers, Inc. Jack Light retired to the position of assistant manager and Campbell Arnoux took over the leadership of the station. The transmitter was finally moved to a new location and power was increased to 1,000 watts. The station deserted C.B.S. for a more prestigious affiliation with N.B.C., and the amount of network programming broadcast by the station steadily increased to a point where the vast majority of the programs broadcast by WTAR were from the network.

With all of this accomplished, with all aspects of the operation of WTAR on firm footing, the station could look forward to years of steady progress and service, and the Norfolk community could look at the radio service which it was receiving and decide that it was comparable to anything else in the country.



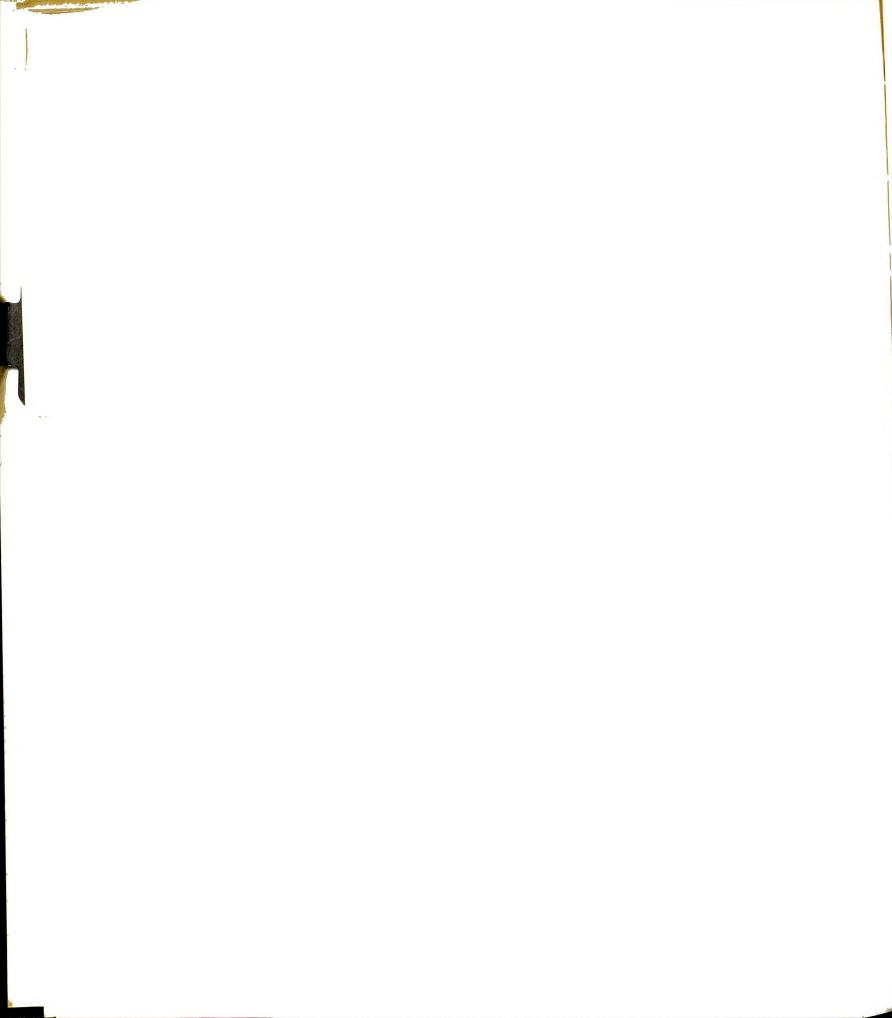
CHAPTER XIII

EPILOGUE AND COMMENTARY

1935 to 1950

One of the most difficult aspects of the recording of history is the determination of an appropriate point for the cessation of the effort. The interrelationships between man and the environment which he has created for himself do not have precise points of commencement and termination, but rather are a kind of on-going process, involving constant change and adaptation. Whatever limits one imposes on historical research are arbitrary, but they are necessary. But, even though the limitations are artificial one seeks to make them as realistic and reasonable as possible.

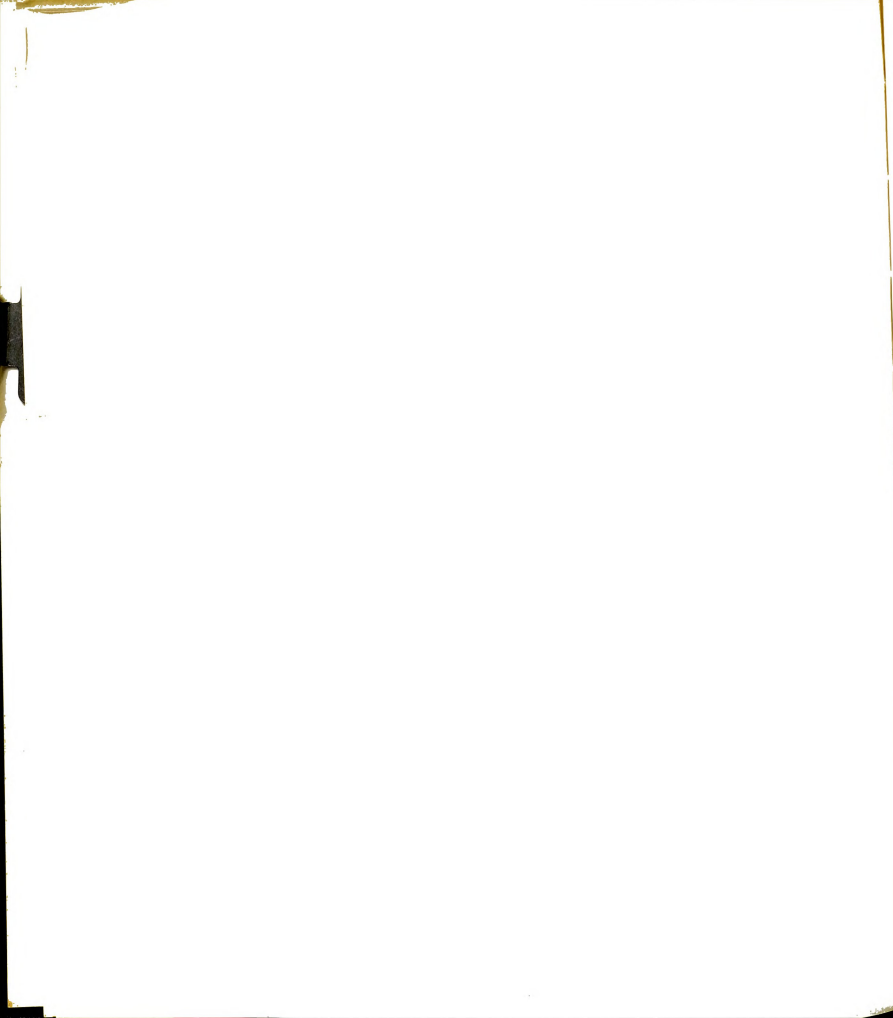
So it is with this partial history of WTAR. At the outset it was pointed out that 1934 would be considered as the concluding year for this piece of research. The reasons given were that: (1) 1934 was the year in which the founder of the station retired, (2) 1934 was the year in which the station affiliated with N.B.C., and (3) 1934 was the year in which the station's programming character changed through the dissemination of large quantities of national network programs.



Nineteen thirty-four then, is a good point at which to terminate the discussion of a phase of WTAR's life, for the character of the station had adapted itself to the times. What was once a small, ill-equipped toy, broadcasting just about anything that happened to come along, had become a large, well-equipped, well-financed and well-managed arm of a large corporate entity. WTAR was broadcasting the best programs which radio had to offer by 1934, its pioneer years were over. What WTAR did for 1935 up to the first part of 1950 when television came to Norfolk is a very much different story from what has been told so far. To tell it one must approach the raw material differently, for the procedures which were employed effectively on the station as a pioneer do not yield much useful information on the station as a mature medium of mass communication. But it is appropriate to lightly pass over these sixteen years from 1935 to 1950, just so that some recognition is given to the fact that the station went on after 1934, even though this detailed history has ceased.

A promotional booklet put out by WTAR on the occasion of the station's fortieth birthday in 1963 makes the following general statement about the decade of the 1930's: "For WTAR, the 30's was a decade of major technical and business growth."¹ That statement is a reasonably accurate summary of what happened to WTAR from 1935 to 1940, even though, as was

¹WTAR: 40 Years of Progressive Broadcasting, p. 6.

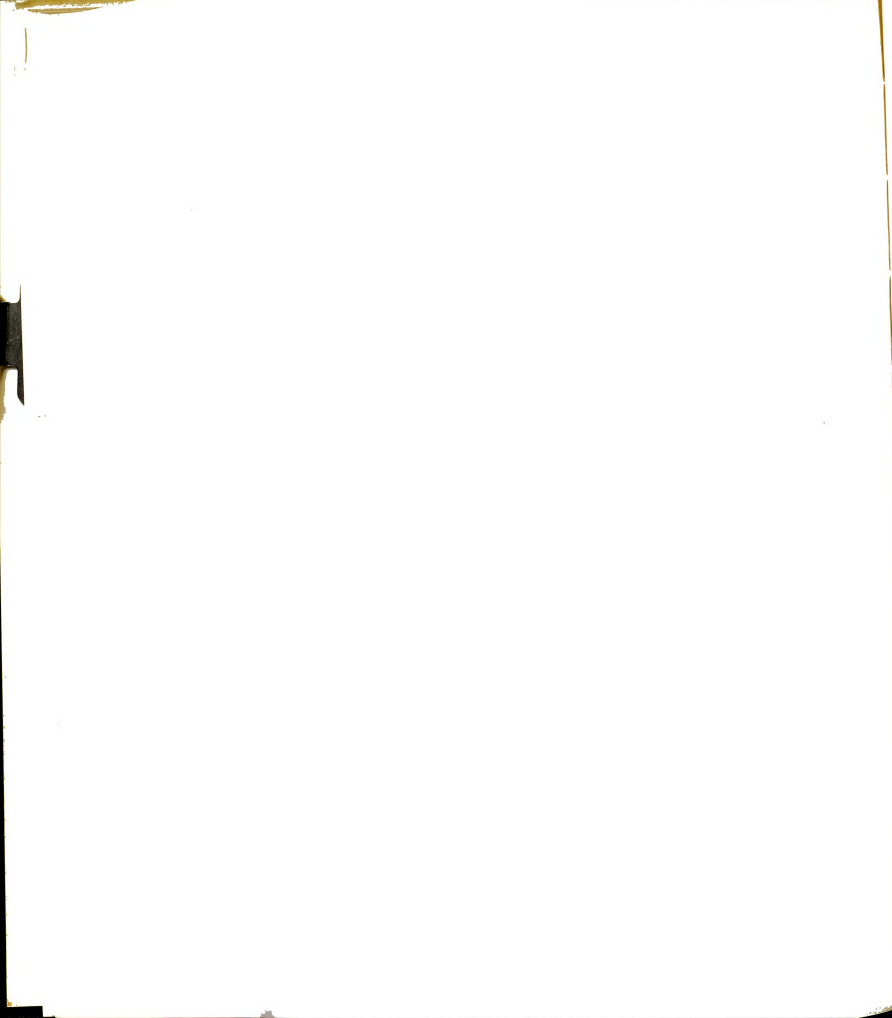


pointed out in the previous chapter, the first five years of the decade were really the time during which the station completed its first stage of maturation.

By December 31, 1934 WTAR was ensconced in the thirteenth floor of the National Bank of Commerce Building in downtown Norfolk. It was broadcasting 117 hours per week with a daytime power of 1,000 watts and a nighttime power of 500 watts. It was affiliated with the N.B.C. red and blue networks. The increase in power with which the station broadcast was the only change in these attributes to take place during the last half of the 1930's.

Throughout 1935 and 1936 the technical staff of WTAR was trying to solve the engineering problems which would be created if the station were to have a power of 1,000 watts both day and night. By July of 1937 the problems had been solved by the construction of a new, highly sophisticated antenna system. The basic problem was that with a nighttime power of 1,000 watts WTAR would cause interference with stations in Sudbury, Ontario, Providence, Rhode Island and Memphis, Tennessee also broadcasting on the 780-kilocycle frequency. The new directional antenna system was designed to cut the radiated power in those specific areas thereby eliminating the interference problem.¹ The final alteration in WTAR's

¹J. L. Grether, "Technical Director Tells How Changes Improve Reception," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, July 14, 1937, II, p. 1.



power was to come in 1941 when the station was licensed to operate at a power of 5,000 watts, both day and night.¹ Later in 1941 WTAR's frequency was changed to 790 kilocycles in accordance with the Havana North American Radio Agreements signed the previous fall.²

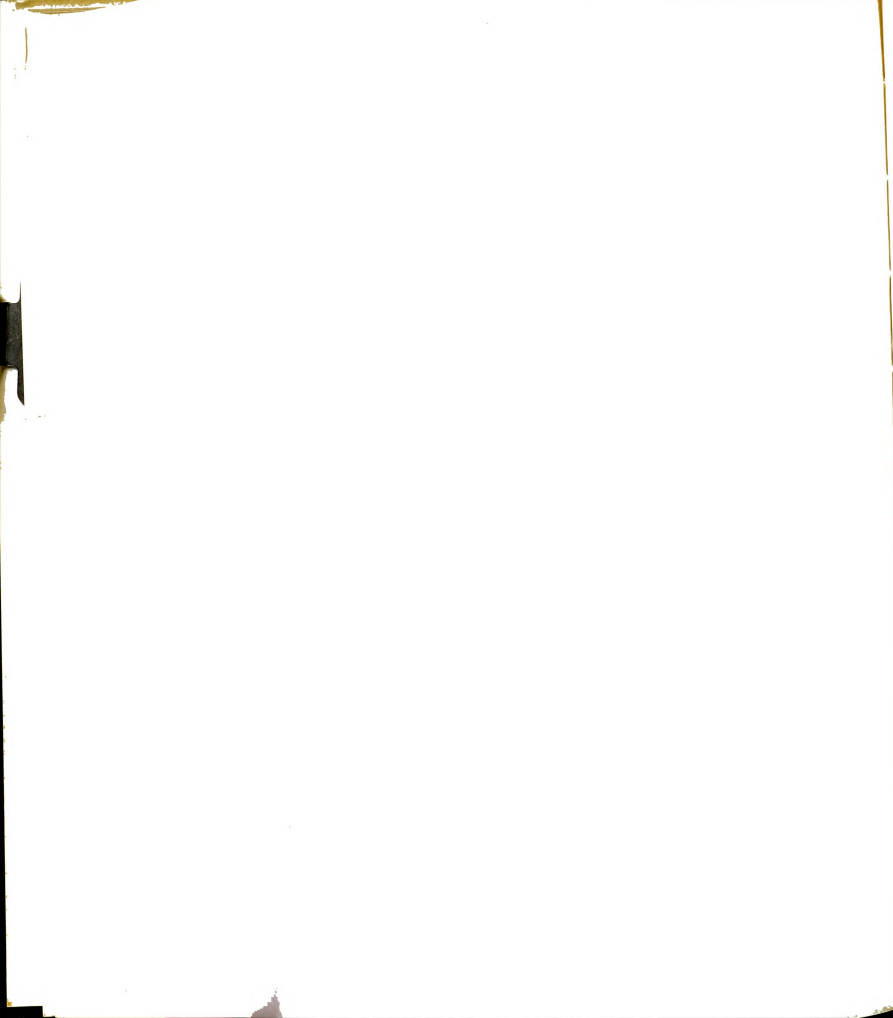
From a business standpoint WTAR's growth during the 1930's can be traced to two factors. The first was that it was not until the thirties that the medium of radio had developed sufficiently to permit maximum exploitation from a monetary standpoint. Both public acceptance of advertising and the development of appropriate advertising methods were necessary, and the 1930's brought both of these. The second factor was unique to WTAR: Campbell Arnoux. To be sure his success in the business of radio was aided by the first factor, but Arnoux was a man ready, willing and able to take advantage of the ability of radio to make money. Tom Hanes took note of this:

The time when Campbell Arnoux came here was the time when the station started to make money. The country was in a depression, and anybody who owned a newspaper or had a radio station could make himself a bundle in those days. Campbell Arnoux got in at the right time, and he was a smart operator. He knew the business and he approached it from the business side, too.³

¹United States Federal Communication Commission, Records, File No. B2-L-1319, January 30, 1941.

²"Radio Switchover," Business Week, March 22, 1941, pp. 48 and 50-51; "Radio Changeover," ibid., September 28, 1940, p. 26.

³Tom Hanes, personal interview.



Trafton Robertson, an air personality in the early thirties and again from the middle forties through the fifties, remembers Arnoux as much the same kind of person. He took the various strengths which had been developed by Goodridge and Light and made them profitable for the Norfolk Newspapers. Arnoux's greatest asset, most probably, was that he left the areas in which he was not strong to specialists. He did not become overly involved in daily programming activities, and he did not try to direct the engineering efforts. Above all he was not afraid to gamble and spend money if he could see a return for the investment.¹

The first half of the 1940's brought the United States into the Second World War. As was described in Chapter II, wars and the activities of the military have figured strongly in Norfolk's history, and World War II was no exception. WTAR was active in the war effort, too, with programs designed especially for the service personnel stationed in Tidewater, programs dedicated to the sale of war bonds, involvement in the local Civil Defense organization and a variety of other patriotic activities which were apparently well received by the Norfolk audience.²

¹Trafton Robertson, personal interview.

²Norfolk Virginian Pilot, 1941 through 1945, *passim*; Marvin W. Schlegel, Conscripted City: Norfolk in World War II (Norfolk: Norfolk War History Commission, 1951), *passim*.



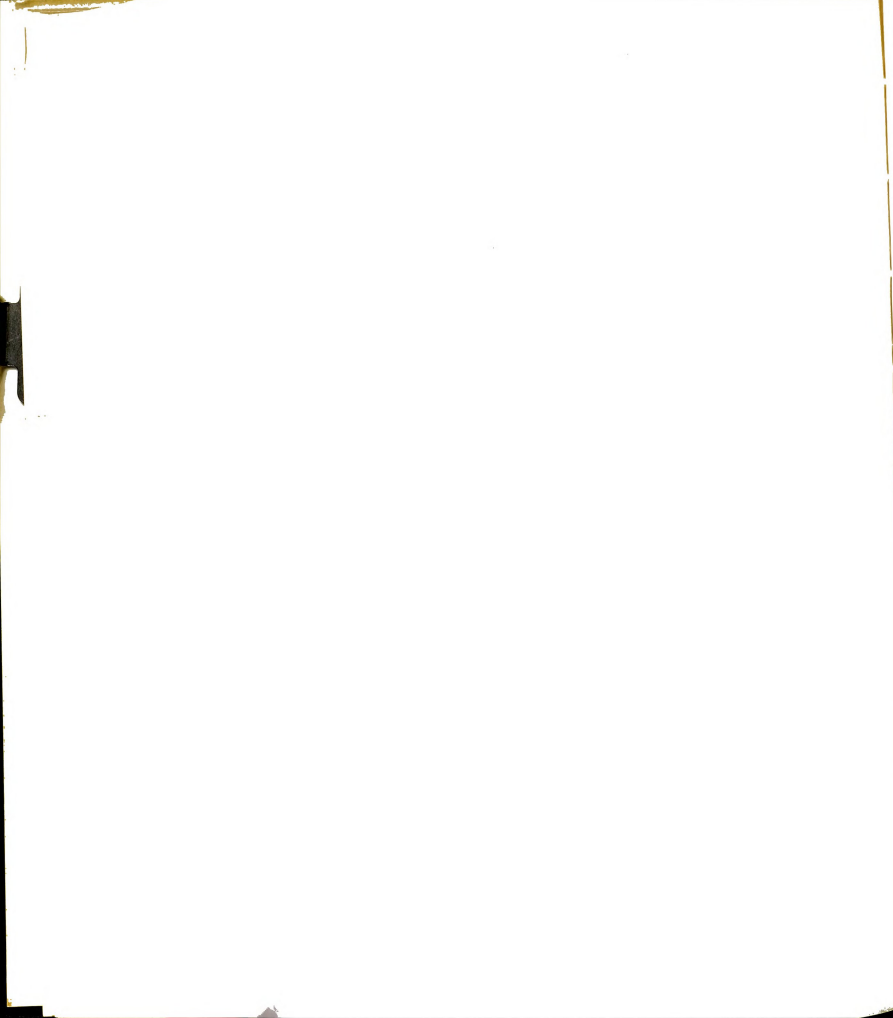
The value of what has come to be called "public service programming" was apparent to WTAR during the war years. In November of 1941 Program Director Henry Cowles Whitehead spoke to the Rotary Club on the subject, saying that during the preceding month thirty-nine organizations had used a total of fifty-one hours of air time for programs plus 229 spot announcements. Public service, Whitehead felt, was what determined the usefulness of radio to a local community.¹

The war most probably served to re-enforce WTAR's attitude toward public service programs. As one searches the materials which the station has saved over the years he finds a catalogue of the infinite ways a station can serve the public. There was nothing spectacular in a one-program sense. Instead there was a consistent offering of programs on a day-to-day basis devoted to Norfolk and the war effort. Significantly, when the war ended this kind of programming remained on the station. Short items, such as the following, appeared in trade publications time and time again during the middle and late forties:

WTAR, NORFOLK: Attention F.C.C.: Here's a station with statistics showing 3,680 programs, 4,059 announcements for public service projects of one kind or another [during 1947].²

¹"Public Service Placed First," Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch, November 25, 1941, p. 15.

²Variety, March 12, 1947, p. 38.



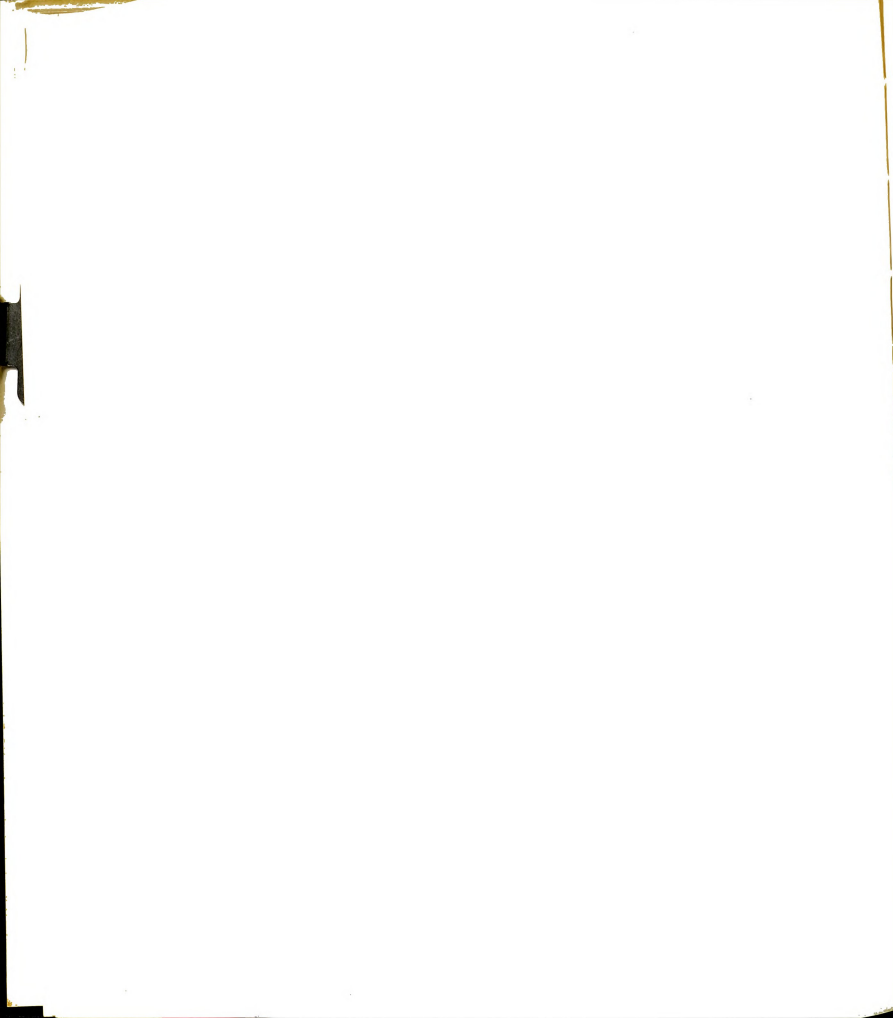
Both Joel Carlson, who became Program Director in 1948, and Trafton Robertson can offer a seemingly endless list of projects with which they, and other members of the staff, were involved.¹ To do any kind of justice to this aspect of WTAR's programming would require a separate study, but one example can give an indication of what the station was doing.

At the end of the 1945 football season Granby High School had completed three consecutive seasons without a loss. A celebration of some kind was definitely in order, and WTAR gave a banquet for the team and made arrangements for star sportscaster Bill Stern to address the gathering in person.² On the evening of the banquet, however, the big attraction, Bill Stern, was in Philadelphia, not Norfolk. His plane had been grounded. To avoid disappointing the boys at the banquet WTAR made arrangements with KYW in Philadelphia to allow Stern to broadcast from the KYW studios to Norfolk over a line which was installed specifically for the occasion. Stern was not there in person, but the Granby Comets got to hear him anyway. The event caused Billboard to give WTAR the top public service award for 1945.³

¹Joel Carlson, conversations; Trafton Robertson, personal interview.

²"Granby Comets to Hear Bill Stern at WTAR Wednesday," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, November 28, 1945, p. 14.

³"Editors Tab Top P. S. Jobs," Billboard, March 16, 1946, pp. 5 and 21; "WTAR's P. S. Win in a Stern Vein," ibid., p. 18.



In the fall of 1946 Granby played a team from Clifton, New Jersey in the Oyster Bowl in Norfolk, and WTAR gave a banquet for both teams. And when Granby went to Miami to play the Classical High School of Lynn, Massachusetts WTAR went along to broadcast the game.¹

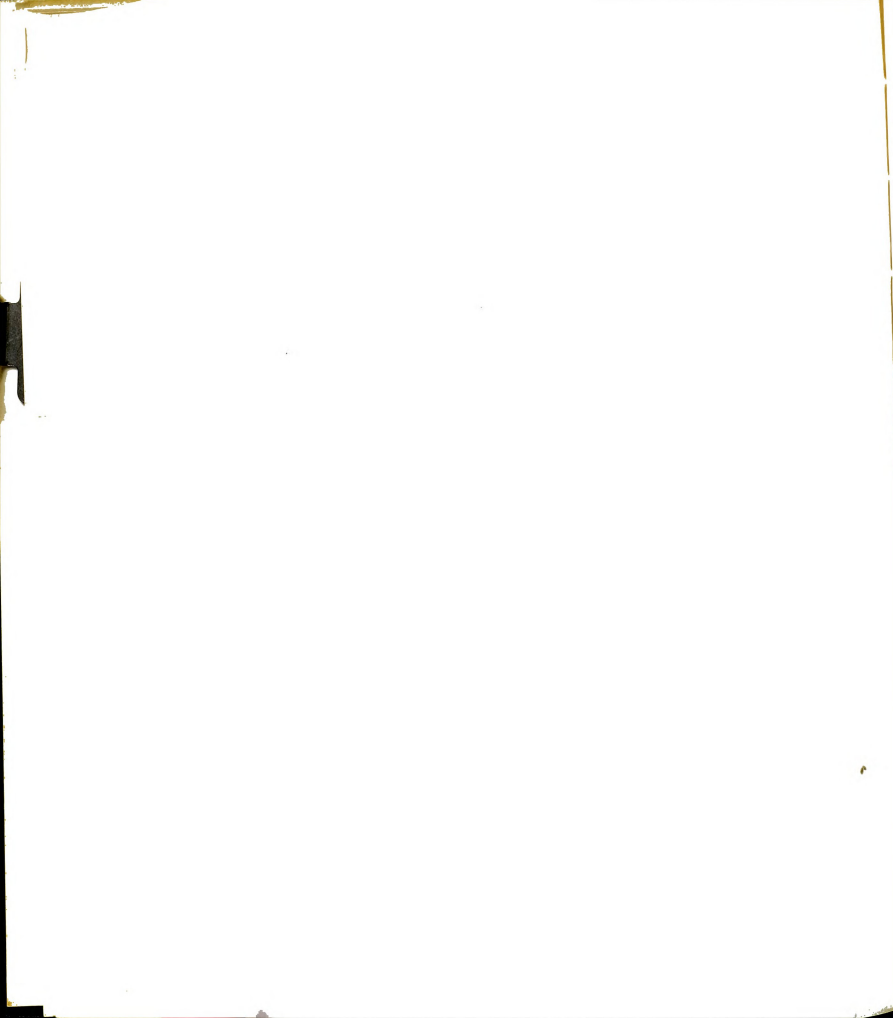
In addition, during the forties, there were the Christmas Toy Shop campaigns and the Easter Basket programs, both for underprivileged children, and a myriad of appeals for help for individuals who had been visited by disaster. There was so much by the late forties that Robertson remembers that the station had to begin exercising rather tight control over the appeals which it would consider. Public service, as WTAR understood it, was getting out of hand.²

There was a kind of flamboyance to WTAR during these years which had not existed before, and in part this must have been the result of the presence of the Program Director, Henry Cowles Whitehead. Whitehead was a showman of the first order, a man of seemingly endless energy who worked full-time for WTAR, directed the Norfolk Symphony Orchestra and was an active honorary Fire Chief of the Norfolk Fire Department.³ As Joel Carlson recalls, "Henry Whitehead loved to chase fire

¹"Bowl Season Opens Today for Norfolk," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, December 7, 1946, pp. 1 and 3; "WTAR to Handle Granby-Lynn Game in Miami," ibid., December 12, 1946, p. 18; "Granby Comets Given Mighty Reception on Arrival from Orange Bowl," ibid., December 30, 1946, p. 11.

²Trafton Robertson, personal interview.

³"Norfolk Fire Chief Wields Symphony Orchestra Baton," Washington Post, December 10, 1943, p. 12.



engines. He was a kid like that."¹

Whitehead's talent and enthusiasm permeated the WTAR staff, and while Campbell Arnoux was the boss it was really Henry Cowles Whitehead for whom the programming staff worked. They liked and respected Arnoux, for he was a superb business man and a leader of the radio industry, but the staff was devoted to Whitehead.²

There was a national side to the WTAR story of the forties, also, which ought not to be overlooked. The station was busy with Norfolk, but it was not neglecting its national obligations to N.B.C. In April of 1946 Billboard wrote the following:

Outstanding in delivering audience for network leaders (and surprising local topper) is WTAR. . . . Time buyers admitted they knew this station was doing a good job but expected that the listening index would be off after the war, since the area is a naval center and population as well as listening was due for a decline.

. . . This year it showed its heels to all station leaders, delivering top audiences for four nighttime shows and three daytimers, one of the few evening top rated stations that does the same thing for its daytime sponsors. Not stopping with being first seven times, it breaks into the "first-five" six more times in the evening tabulation and two extra times in the daytime. It's an amazing picture of what a station can deliver to a network rating. For while the ABC outlet (WGH) and the MBS percolator (WSAP), its competition, are not super power, WRVA, the nearest C.B.S. station at Richmond, Va., is a 50 kw operation, and a station that's out to wring every listener from every seg it airs.²

¹Joel Carlson, conversation.

²Joe Koehler, "Hooper-B.B. 1945-'46 Tab," Billboard April 20, 1946, p. 7.



In May of 1947 it was the same story again. Said Billboard: "WTAR, NBC's Norfolk outlet, for example, shows sensational ability to deliver listeners." WTAR's ratings were higher than average on ten of the top 15 shows, and it had the highest rating of any station in any "Hoooperated" city on six of those ten shows.¹

This summary discussion of WTAR through the middle thirties and forties would not be complete if mention were not made of the technical developments which would bring about a massive change in the interrelationships between the mass media. In May of 1944 WTAR made its application for an F.M. frequency. It was the first application from Virginia, and when the application was approved in October of 1945, eighteen months later, WTAR was one of the first sixty-four stations in the country to move into the new field of frequency modulation.² However, it was not until fully three years after the original application that the station went on the air, amidst predictions by Campbell Arnoux that eventually WTAR-AM would be phased out by the technically superior WTAR-FM.³ Events did not bear out Arnoux's predictions about FM, but WTAR-FM remained on the air.

¹"Study Reveals Top Five Outlets for Top '15," ibid., May 31, 1947, pp. 7 and 11.

²"WTAR Applies to Commission for FM Permit," Norfolk Virginian Pilot, May 2, 1944, p. 14; "WTAR Given FM Grant," ibid., October 23, 1945, p. 4.

³Warner Twyford, "Regular FM Broadcasting Begins on WTAR Monday," ibid., May 11, 1947, I, p. 21.



The FM station had just gotten settled after a frequency reallocation when WTAR put in its bid for a television station to serve Norfolk. In April of 1948, when the application was submitted to the F.C.C., Arnoux hoped to have the station on the air in less than two years.¹ The construction permit was granted in August of 1948, and at that time WTAR announced plans for the construction of a modern broadcasting center to house the AM, FM and television facilities.² The building was ultimately to rise in the 700 block of Boush Street in downtown Norfolk, a little more than a mile from the site of the old Reliance Electric Company.

On April 2, 1970 television came to Norfolk through WTAR, just less than two years after the original application was made. The new medium did not sneak up on the public as WTAR radio had done twenty-seven years before. This time there was a great deal of publicity the day before and the day of the inaugural program. The day prior to the first program a full page ad in the Pilot announced, "TELEVISION IS HERE. Tomorrow night and every night thereafter."³ The next day Frank Blackford wrote a story for the Pilot which heralded the arrival of a new era in broadcasting to Norfolk.⁴

¹"WTAR Asks Television, Hoping to Have Service in Operation Next Year," ibid., April 24, 1948, p. 20.

²Warner Twyford, "WTAR Plans Big Modern Radio Center," ibid., August 19, 1948, p. 26.

³ibid., April 1, 1950, p. 12.

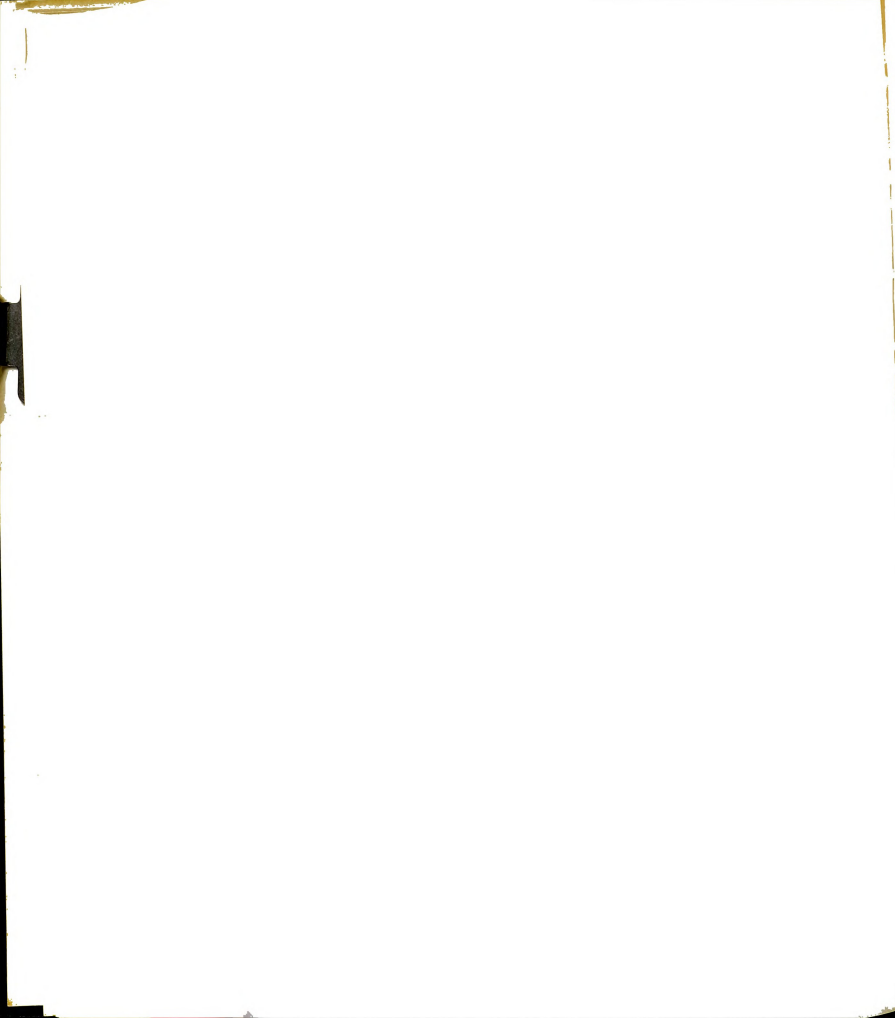
⁴Frank Blackford, "Video's Debut Today Opens Tidewater Era," ibid., April 2, 1950, II, p. 1.



Most scholars of mass communication agree that the arrival of television marked the beginning of the end of the "Golden Age of Radio," although it certainly did not cause the death of the older medium. The decade of the fifties was one of agonizing reappraisal by those involved with radio, as they tried to determine the proper role for the medium in the new economic and, indeed, social environment which television had created. Radio has survived, and it has prospered in Norfolk as elsewhere. The contortions and distortions which the medium went through as it tried to adjust were as evident in Norfolk as they were everywhere else, but that is a story for another time and another place.

Commentary

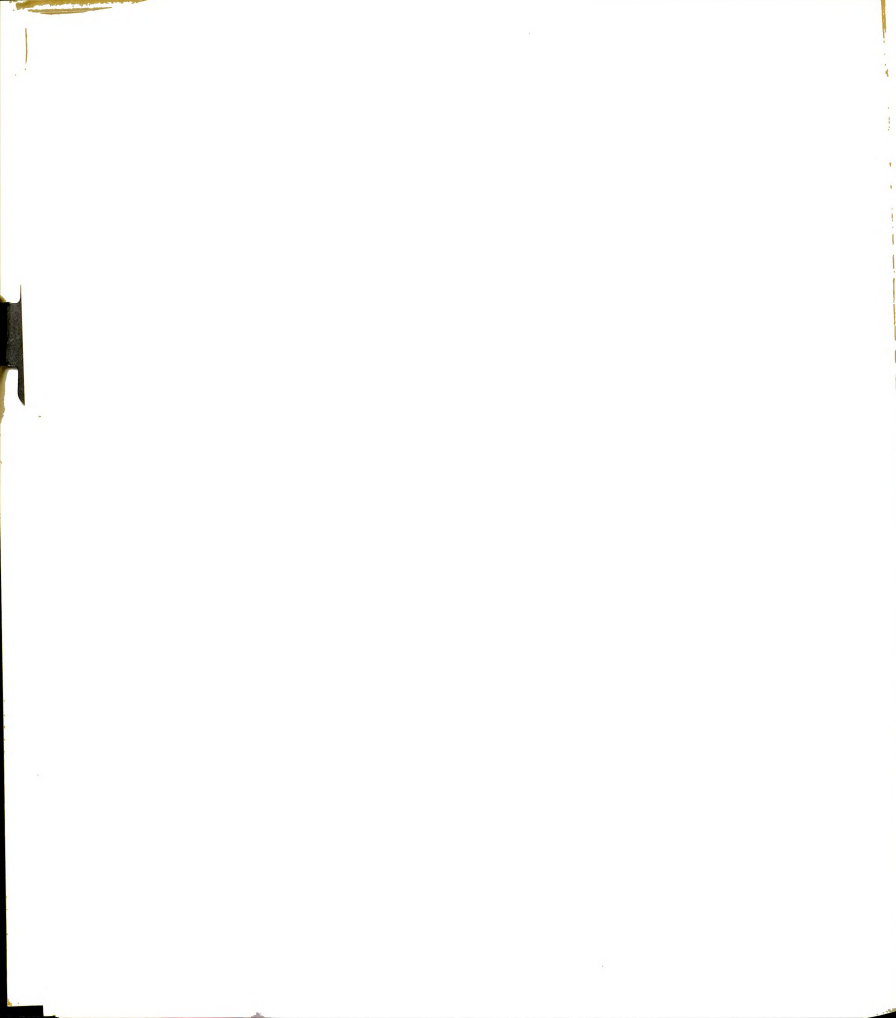
The first eleven years of WTAR's life, from 1923 through 1934, were not easy ones for the station. Those years had their successes and their failures. They were spotted with events that the station, the residents of Norfolk and, perhaps, the radio industry itself ought to remember. They were spotted with events also which everyone concerned would just as soon forget. But whatever kind of qualitative statements might be made about isolated incidents one must leave an involvement with WTAR's infancy with the impression that everyone associated with the station had to work under less than ideal circumstances for the results which were achieved.



The primary reason was financial. Up until the time when the Ledger-Dispatch purchased WTAR from H. B. Goodridge financing was always something of a problem. The Reliance Electric Company was not an economic giant, and WTAR was probably taking more from the parent company than it was giving in return, even after advertising had become an accepted part of WTAR's programming. It would be too much to say that WTAR brought about the demise of the Reliance Electric Company, but the station must have been a factor. When Goodridge purchased the station the situation was little changed. The primary difference was that the station, more than before, had to pay its own way. There was no parent company, large or small, rich or poor, to help pay the bills.

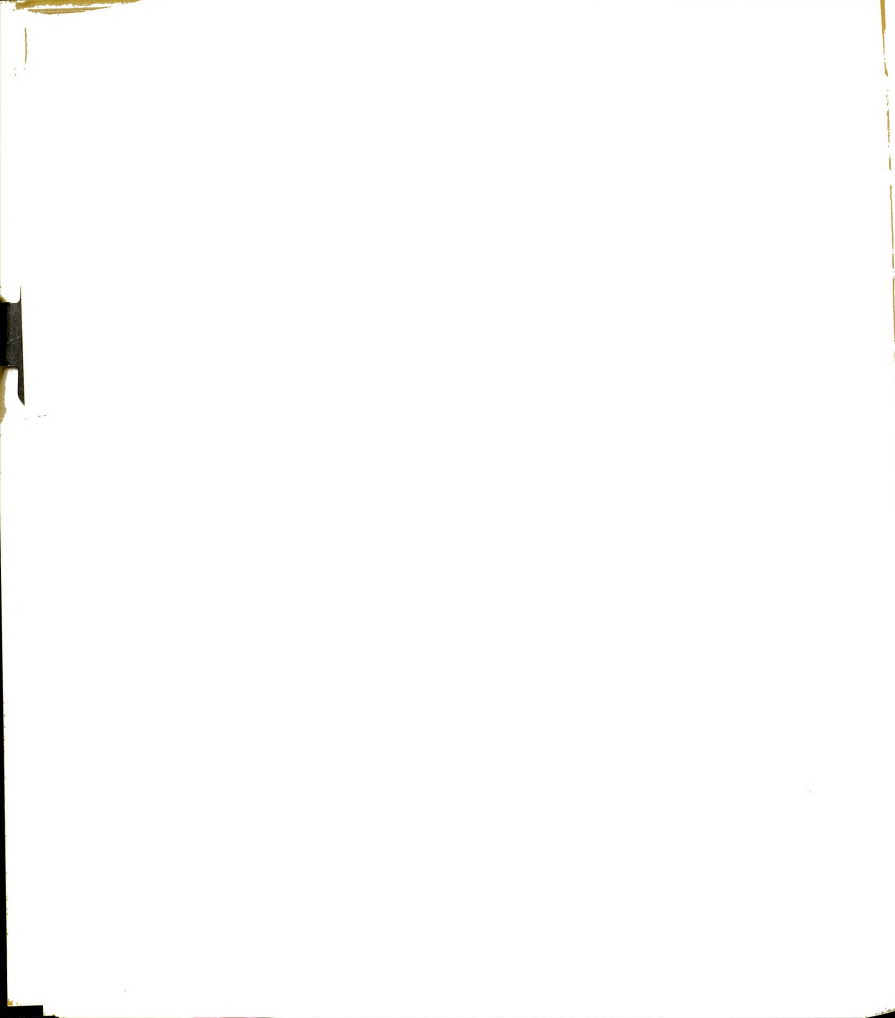
The purchase of the station by the Ledger-Dispatch did not automatically bring about a change. The depression was beginning to be felt in Norfolk, and, significantly, the station was still being run by the men who came up under Reliance and Goodridge. If there were greater resources these men most probably did not know the most efficient way to use them. It took the advent of Campbell Arnoux to end WTAR's financial insecurity. Arnoux knew what to do with the resources which the station had, and he set about to do those things, almost from the first day he started to work for WTAR.

Offsetting the apparent financial problems was the dedication of the people who worked for WTAR. One leaves an involvement with these first eleven years with a strong



impression that virtually everyone who worked for the station was committed to the station and to its success. Foremost among these is Jack Light. WTAR was a way of life to him, and, in many ways, it still is. His desire to do what had to be done was instilled in the people who worked for him, and, at least partially, this desire overcame the financial shortcomings with which the station had to exist. H. B. Goodridge likewise had this same kind of dedication. He originally purchased WTAR with two other men, but he bought out their interests when they became convinced that the station was not worth what it was costing. It is difficult to accurately compute how much Goodridge invested in WTAR, but it must have been a sizeable sum, and it is difficult to see how he could have realised much of a return when he sold the station for the sum of \$15,000. Nonetheless, it is clear that if it had not been for him the station might have followed the path of its early competitor, WSEA.

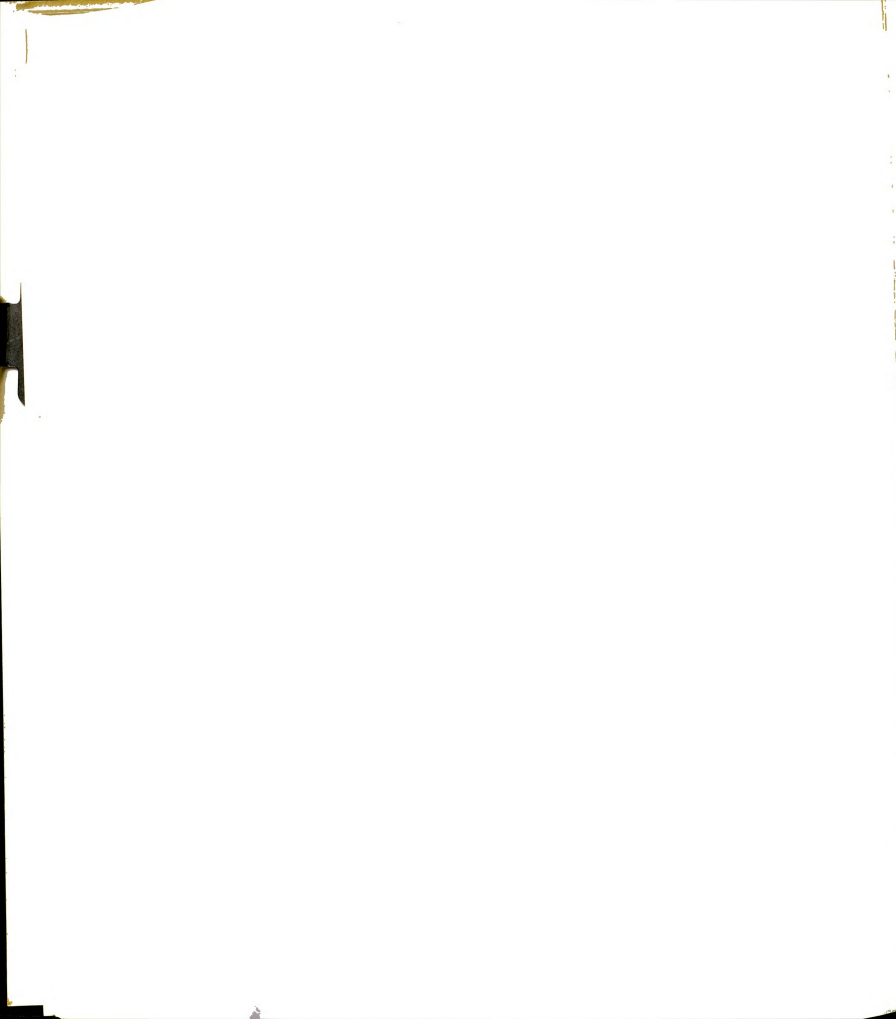
It is appropriate at this point to offer some comments to the reader who might use this work preparatory to further historical research in broadcasting. A number of works cited in the introduction have approached this kind of research from within the institution under consideration, and they have gone outside for facts and information to a much lesser extent. This study of WTAR reversed that process, by necessity rather than by design. For whatever reason, there is not much internal information available at WTAR about the early years of



the station. If the history was going to be written at all the facts had to come from outside sources. To a very great extent these sources were the Norfolk newspapers. These periodicals are a goldmine of information, not only about the station but also about Norfolk. It is much too strong to say that all research into the history of broadcasting ought to be done through contemporary newspapers, but one cannot be too strong in saying that the newspapers ought not to be overlooked, especially during the twenties and early thirties.

Originally this study was conceived of as being highly dependent upon the reminiscences of a number of the people who worked for WTAR from 1923 through 1934. The comments of these men and women were most useful in many instances, and they were employed extensively in the writing of this history. However, their real value seems to be anecdotal, providing the seasoning to the otherwise bland facts of history. It is possible that an individual might be able to offer additional information about a specific event, but more likely he will offer a clue which can put the researcher onto additional information. "Personal Sources" certainly ought not to be cast aside, but, if this study is any indication, they cannot form the basis upon which an institutional history can be built.

The station itself ought to be approached warily as a source of information, even if it has taken great care to save everything of value over the years. An overdependence upon



station files, or scrapbooks as in the case of WTAR, will introduce a bias in favor of the station which will omit numerous less favorable but equally important items from the history. In this specific study, if the author had depended upon the information available at the station he would have missed the events of 1930 entirely, just as an example. Station files, scrapbooks and similar repositories can be useful if they have been carefully maintained, but information obtained therefrom ought to be verified from outside sources in almost every instance.

Lastly, in this discussion of sources of information, one ought not to overlook the files of the Department of Commerce, the Federal Radio Commission and the Federal Communications Commission. Getting to the information can be a frustrating experience, but valuable information can be obtained, especially if the station was involved in a hearing, as was WTAR. Further, during the early years of the F.R.C. the radio station license renewal forms demanded much more information from the station than is presently the case, especially financial data, and at times this can be of value.

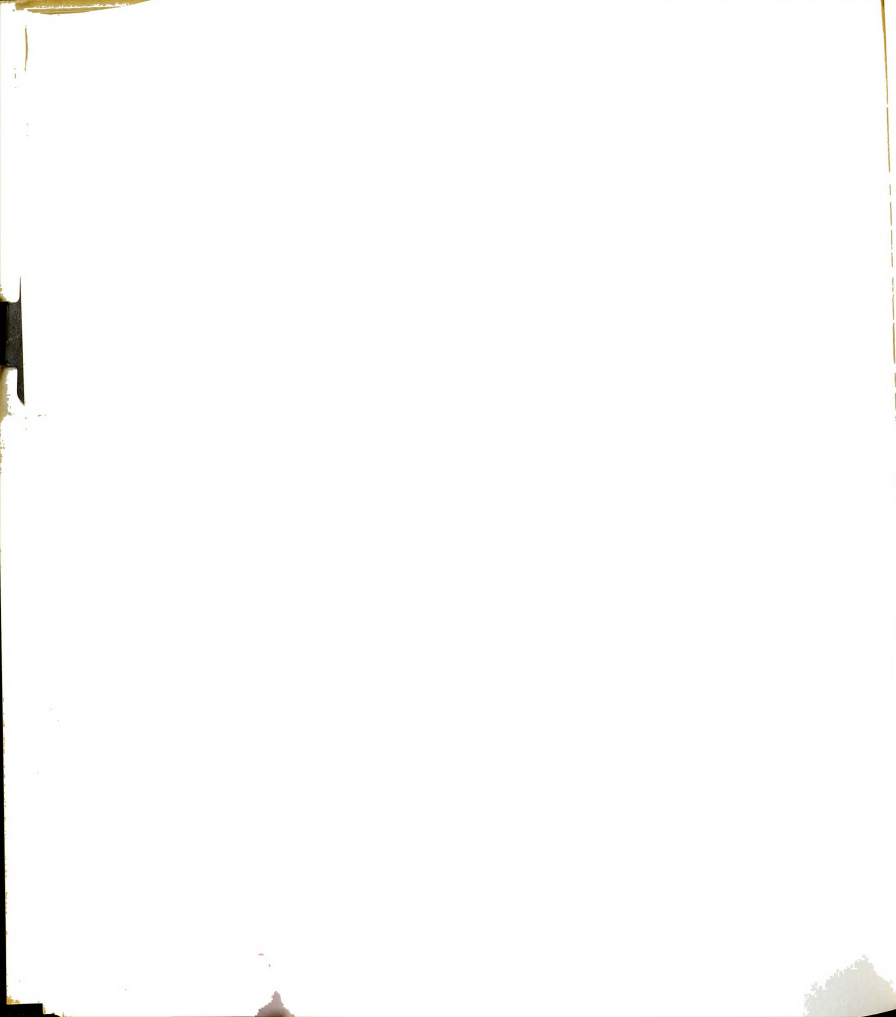
This study of WTAR from 1923 through 1934 is neither the beginning nor the end of the research into broadcasting's history. The introductory chapter enumerated some of the research of this type which has been done before, but there is still a great deal to be done. Most obviously the full, detailed story of WTAR from 1935 through the present day needs



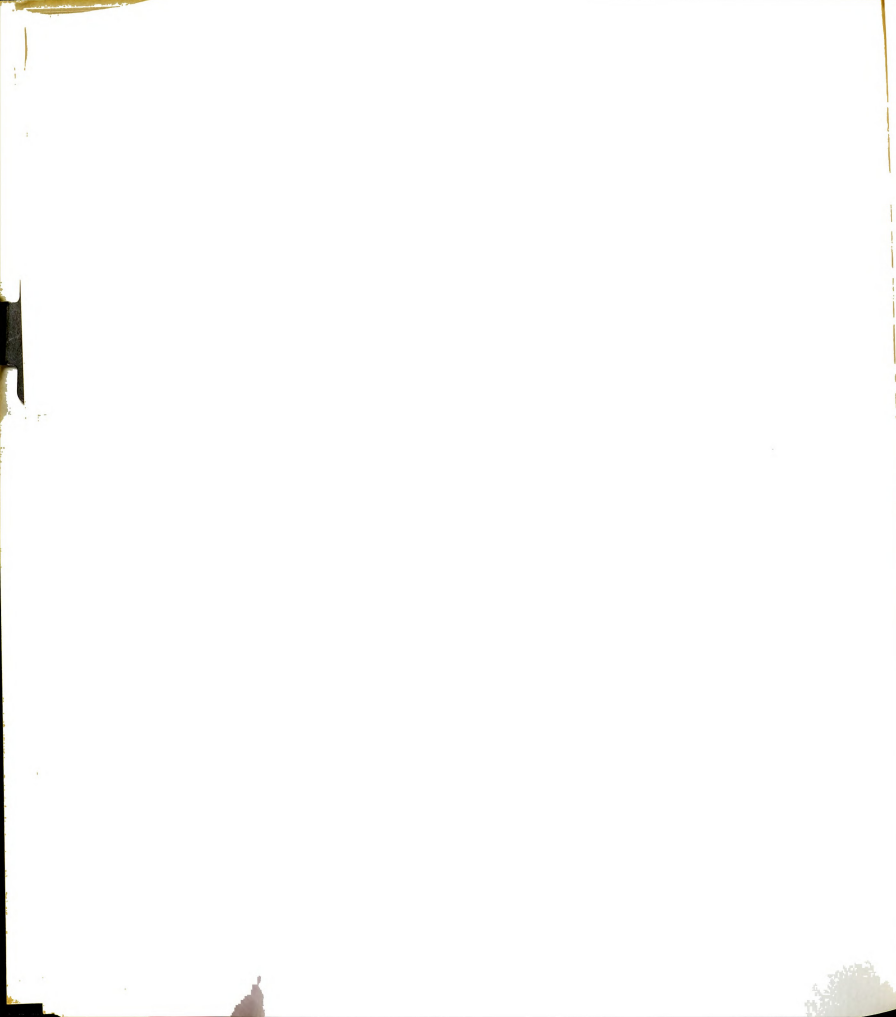
to be written. Within the city of Norfolk there is the curious story of the short-lived WSEA which, if written, might be able to offer some insight into the difficulties encountered by the hundreds of stations across the country which passed from existence almost as soon as they went on the air. Outside of Norfolk, but within Virginia, there are a number of stations which went on the air prior to 1930, and not one of these has been the subject of any detailed historical consideration. For research into the history of broadcasting, Virginia is virgin territory.

On a broader scale little has been written of the stations which went on the air early, but which never acquired the national prominence of stations such as KDKA, WWJ or KSL. Indeed, the criterion of "national significance," which has dictated the acceptability of so much research, is so restrictive that valuable information has been passed over, even though a station might have had tremendous value to a specific locale or region.

In short, there is so much left to be done that this history of WTAR, added to the others mentioned in the introductory chapter, offers only the sketchiest of outlines of the early picture of a medium which has developed into one of the most useful and important social forces man has ever created. It is important that research into contemporary problems be carried forth, but enough can never be known of the present if so little is known of the past.



SOURCES CITED

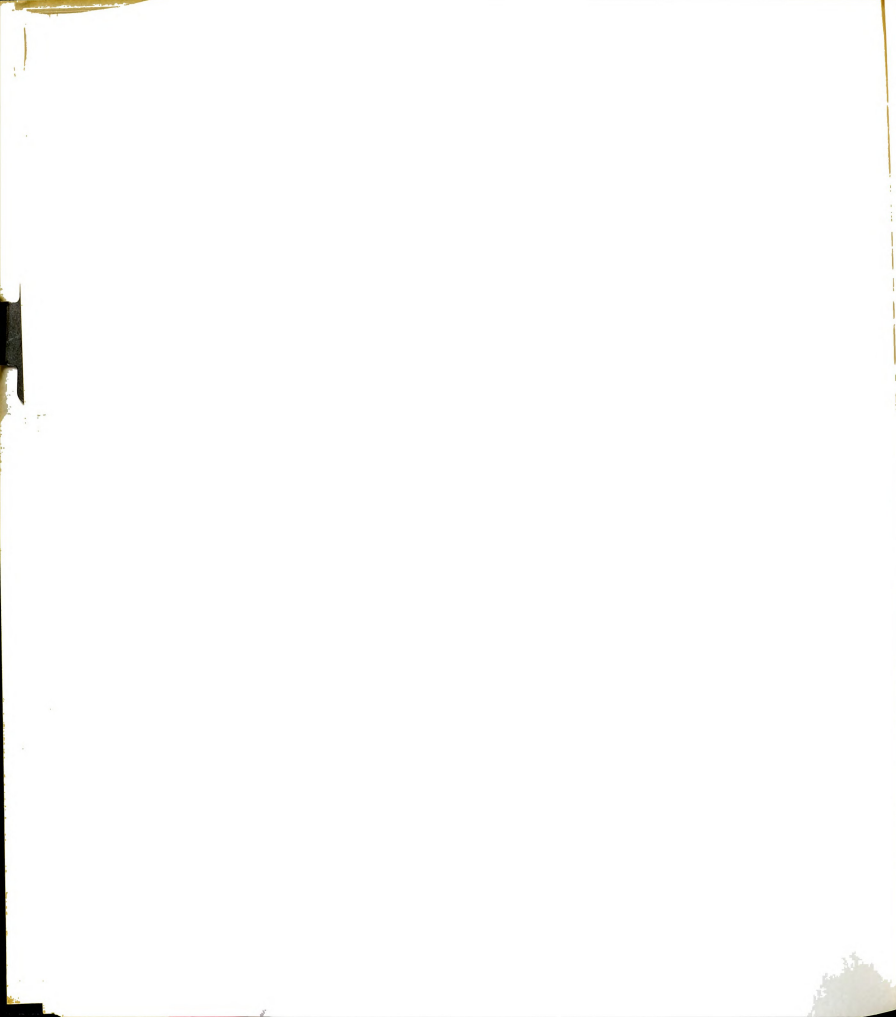


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The following are the lists of the major sources consulted and referred to in the preceding study. The sources are divided as follows:

- I Books and General Periodicals
- II Personal Sources
- III Unpublished Materials, Pamphlets and Government Documents
- IV Newspaper Articles

Because of the extensive number of newspaper articles which were cited in this study, section IV is arranged chronologically by date of article specifically cited. Within the remaining three sections the works or sources are listed alphabetically.



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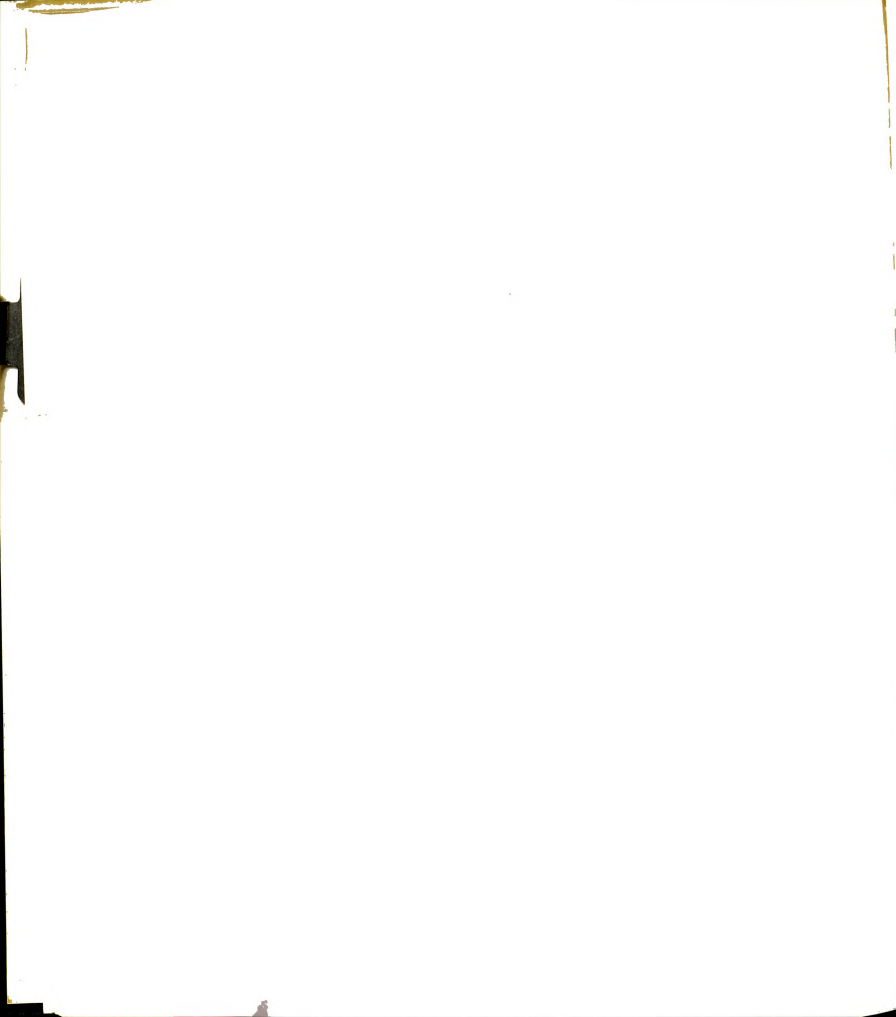
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1924

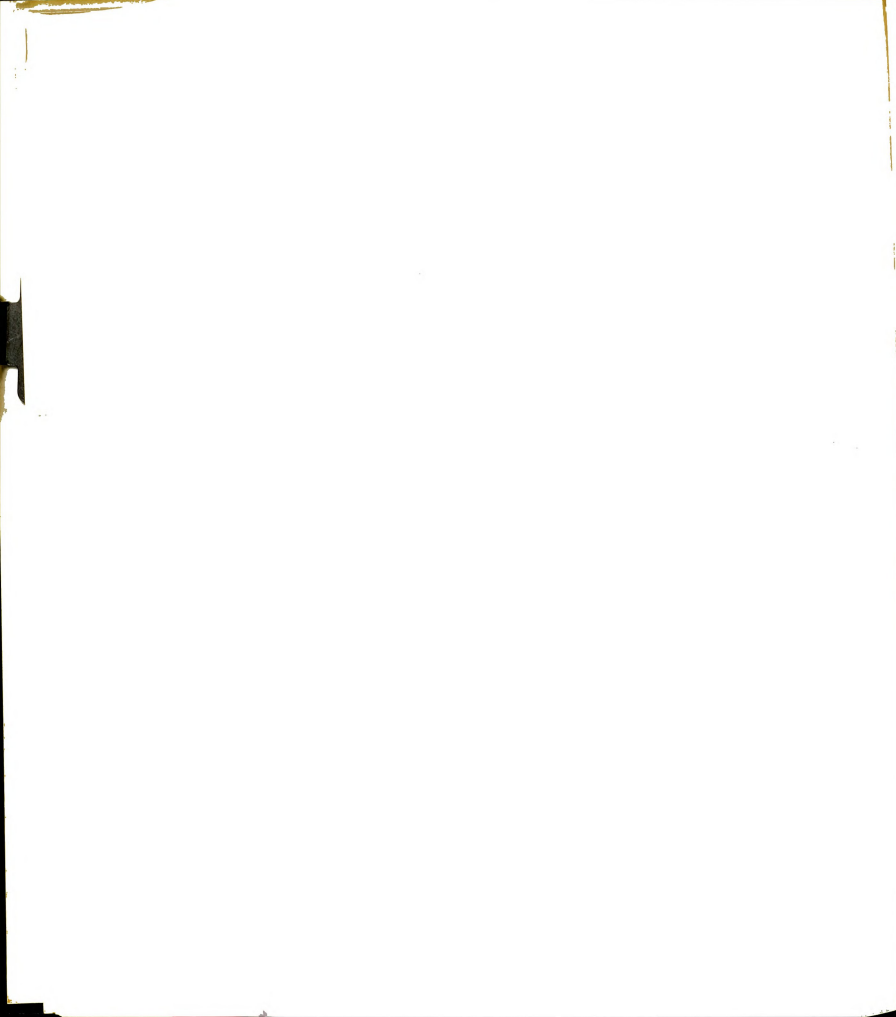
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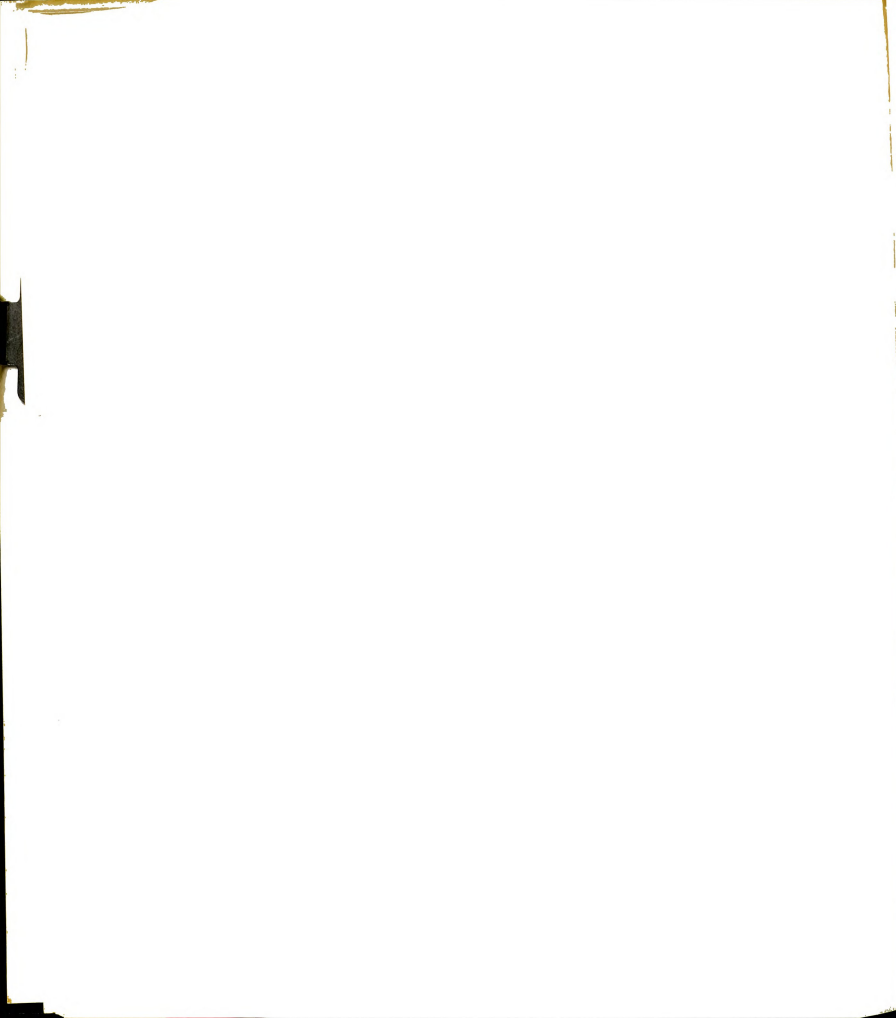
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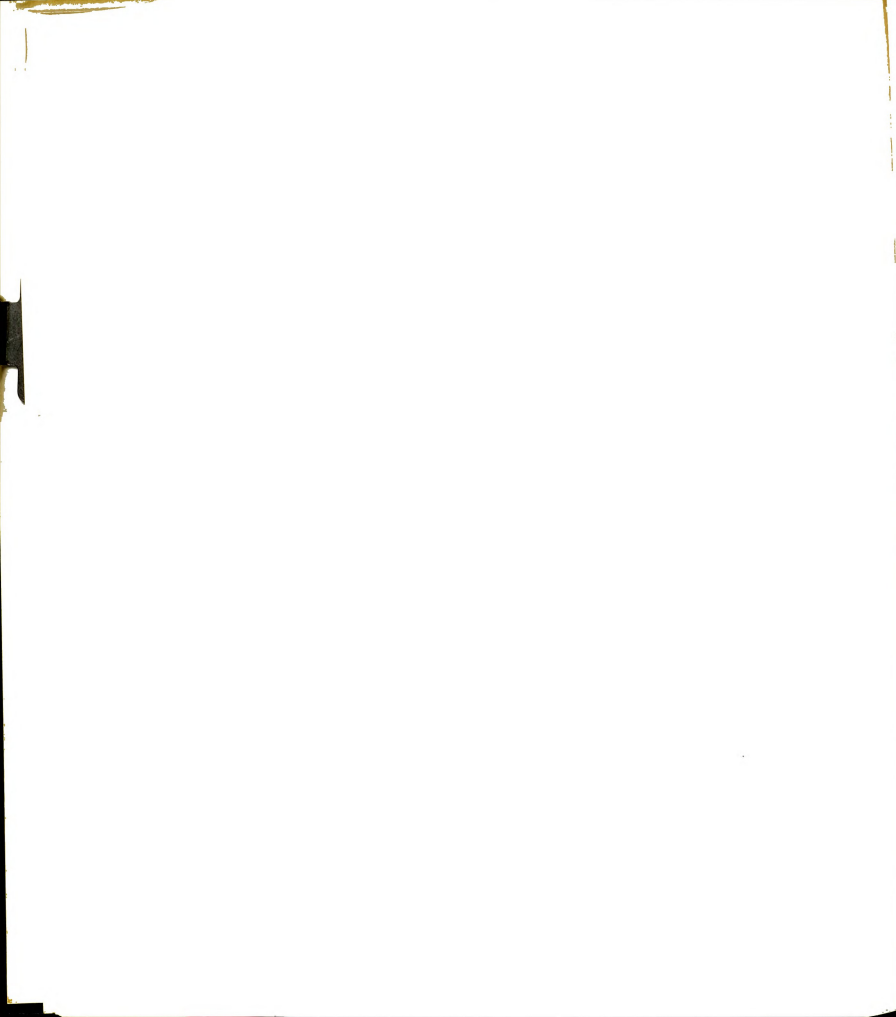


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- "Four Programs Weekly by WTAR." February 8, 1924, p. 3.
- "Mrs. W. Harvey Clarke to Speak by Radio Tonight." February 9, 1924, p. 6.
- "Dokkie Quartet on Radio Bill." February 16, 1924, p. 9.
- "Boy Scout Orchestra on Radio Program Tomorrow." February 22, 1924, p. 4.
- "Chamber Plans to Employ Radio." March 3, 1924, p. 4.
- "Chamber Plans to Employ Radio." March 11, 1924, p. 4.
- "WTAR Plans Owl Concert." March 22, 1924, p. 9.
- "Booster Radio Starts April 15." April 2, 1924, p. 5.
- "Cosmopolitan Club Will Give Tonight's WTAR Bill." April 12, 1924, p. 17.
- "First Booster Program WTAR's Offering Tonight." April 15, 1924.
- "WTAR Will Broadcast from Ghent Methodist." May 3, 1924, p. 15.
- "Radio Fans Receive Convention Speeches." June 12, 1924, p. 9.
- "WTAR Billed Weeks Ahead." June 21, 1924, p. 9.
- "Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR to Broadcast Convention Summary." June 25, 1924, p. 1.
- "Norfolk Radio Fans Get Convention News." July 1, 1924, p. 4.
- "Radio Owners Want Politics WTAR Learns." July 9, 1924, p. 2.
- "Cosmopolitan Club to Give Program from WTAR Tues." July 12, 1924, p. 9.
- "Radio Fans to Sit in On Fight." September 11, 1924, p. 2.
- "WTAR Will Broadcast Entire World Series." October 4, 1924, p. 9.
- "Will Radiate Dance Music." October 28, 1924, p. 2.



1925

- "To Broadcast Voice of Mystery Man." January 7, 1925,
p. 14.
- "Last Monticello Program from WTAR Tonight." January 31,
1925, p. 9.
- "Weather News for Small Craft." February 14, 1925, p. 20.
- "WTAR is Heard in Schenectady." June 20, 1925, p. 20.
- "WTAR Changes its Schedule." June 27, 1925, p. 19.
- "Election Bulletins." August 4, 1925, p. 20.
- "WTAR Getting Overhauling." August 22, 1925, p. 20.
- "Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR Ready to Broadcast Series."
October 2, 1925, p. 24.
- "Scoreboard and Radio Delight Fans." October 8, 1925,
p. 10.
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1925, p. 24.
- "Ledger-Dispatch and WTAR Broadcast Football Scores."
October 24, 1925, p. 1.
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p. 10.
- "WTAR Offers Dinner Music." November 21, 1925, p. 24.
- "Try to Clear Way for New Broadcaster." December 2, 1925,
p. 1.
- "Radio Dealers to Take Vote on New Station." December 4,
1925, p. 1.
- "Suffolk Radio Station Plan is Failure." December 5, 1925,
p. 1.
- "WTAR Plans 2 Music Nights Next Week." December 12, 1925,
p. 10.
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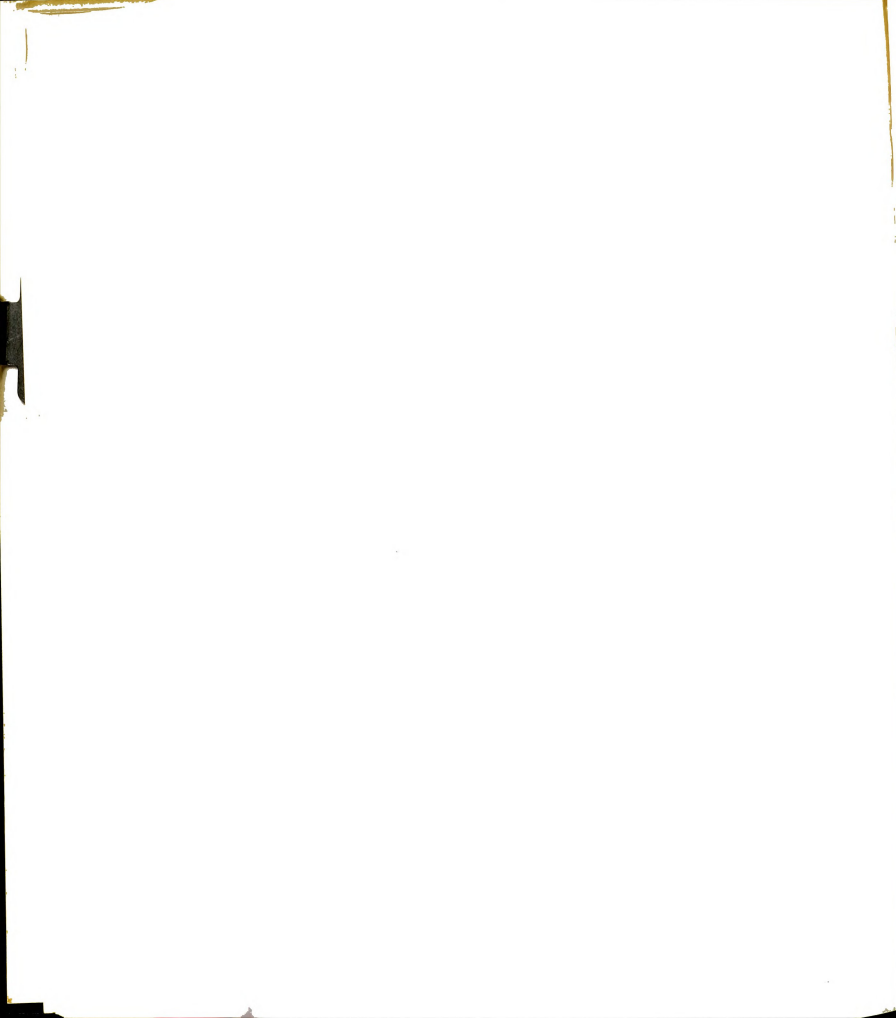


1926

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- "WTAR Invites Volunteers for Programs." January 23, 1926, p. 12.
- "WTAR to Demonstrate Community Advertising Value." February 6, 1926, p. 24.
- "WTAR Staff Deluged with Phone Calls." February 10, 1926, p. 2.
- "Two Programs from Local Station." April 2, 1926, p. 3.
- "Four Musical Programs from Station WTAR Next Week." April 24, 1926, p. 36.
- "WTAR Presents Double Bill." May 1, 1926, p. 25.
- "Fans Deluge WTAR with Requests for Loew Programs." May 8, 1926, p. 24.
- "License for 1000-watt Set Promised WTAR." May 19, 1926, p. 9.
- "Elliott and WTAR High-Power Radio Plans Given Boost." July 17, 1926, p. 26.
- "WTAR to Keep Present Wave and Not Boost Power This Year." July 24, 1926, p. 30.
- "Fall Sports Broadcasting Plans are Unusually Promising." September 16, 1926, p. 26.
- "WTAR Delivers When Others Can't Be Heard." September 25, 1926, p. 16.
- "Electric Club Arranging Local Theater Broadcasting." October 16, 1926, p. 26.
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1927

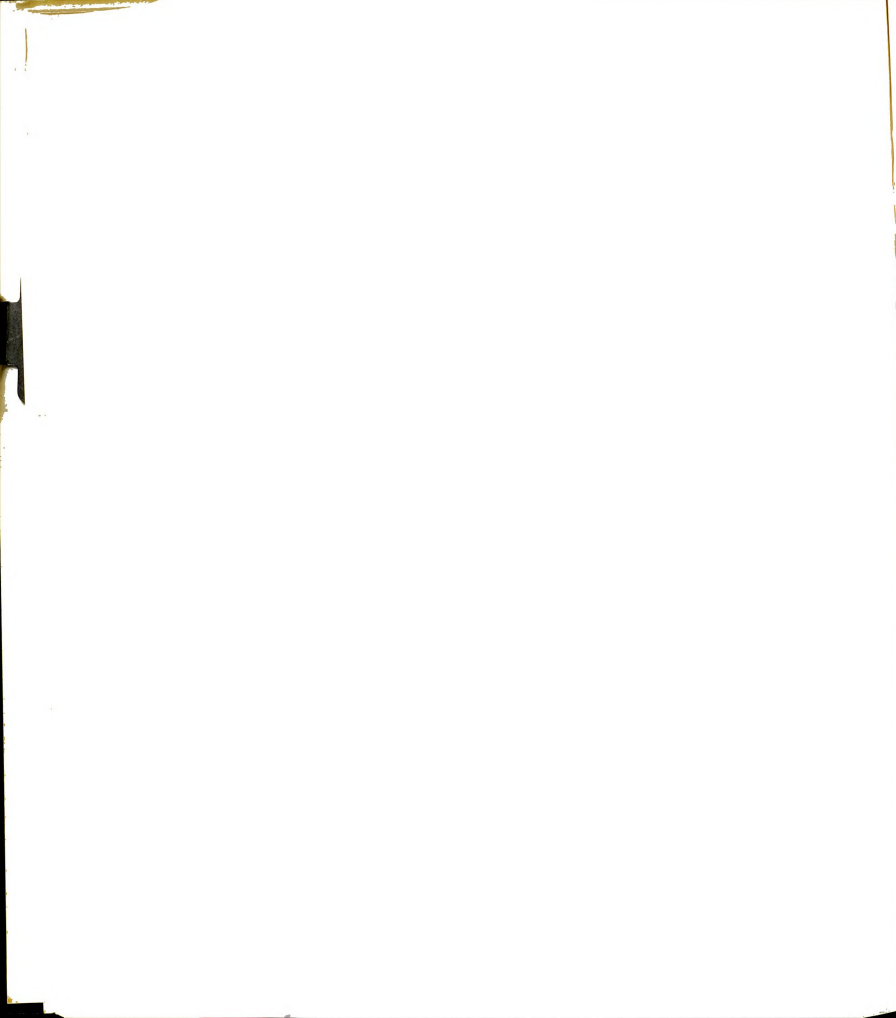
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- "WTAR 500-Watt Set May Be On Air By March 1." February 5, 1927, p. 24.



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- "Sharp Tuning Noted in Test of New WTAR." March 12, 1927, p. 26.
- "WTAR's 500-watt Outfit Goes on Air Sunday Night." March 26, 1927, p. 24.
- "McKendree and WTAR in Year's Sunday Tie-Up." April 9, 1927, p. 24.
- "Record and Radio to Join in Daily WTAR Programs." May 14, 1927, p. 26.
- "WTAR Prepared to Serve Fans During Summer." May 18, 1927, p. 30.
- "Use WTAR in Broadcasting New Programs." May 26, 1927, p. 21.
- "40 Artists on WTAR-Chamber of Commerce Inaugural Program Tonight." September 14, 1927, p. 17.
- "New Programs Scheduled as Radio Season Draws Near." September 14, 1927, p. 16.
- "Waves to Carry Gospel of Love." September 14, 1927, p. 16.
- "WTAR Receives Plaudits Upon Its New Move." September 15, 1927, p. 19.

1928

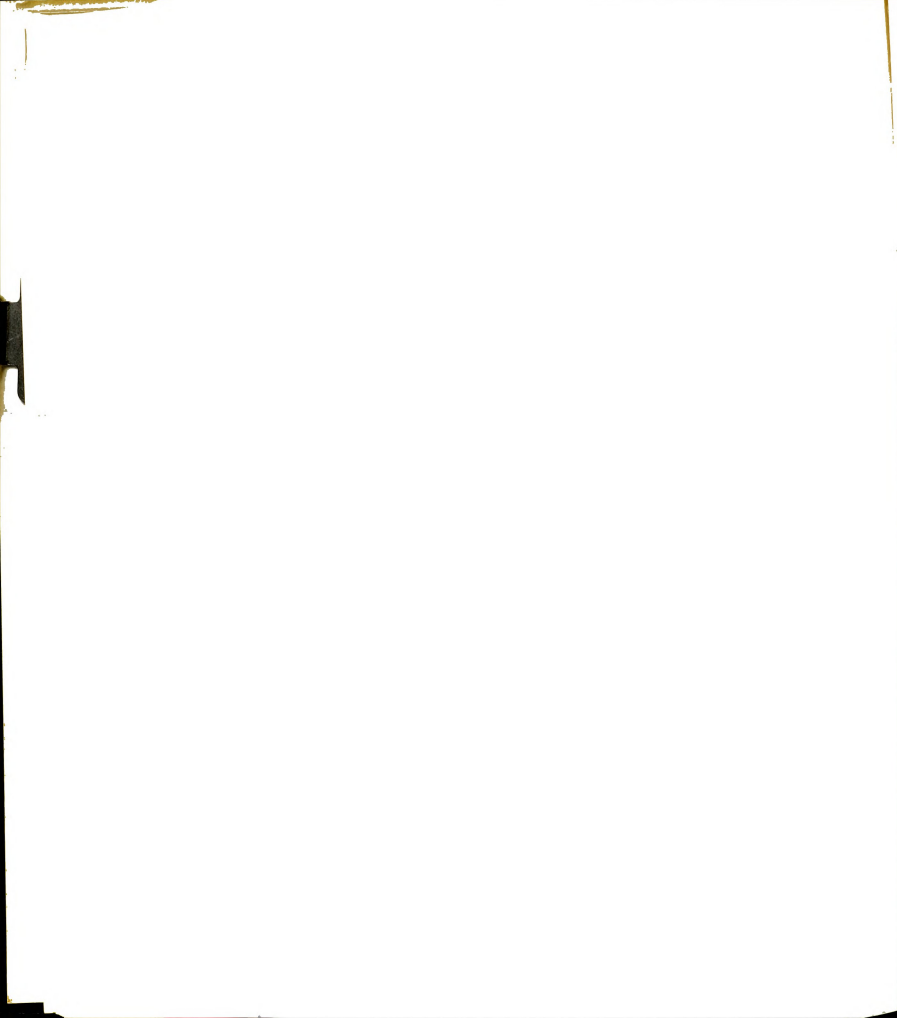
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- "Norfolk's First Chain Broadcast Tomorrow." April 12, 1928, p. 28.
- "WTAR Planning to Broadcast from Cavalier." April 14, 1928, p. 17.
- "WTAR Completes Arrangements for Beach Broadcasting." April 28, 1928, p. 26.
- "Dance Music at Beach Will Be Broadcast Nightly." May 26, 1928, p. 18.
- "WTAR to Offer Chain Program on August 5." July 7, 1928, p. 24.



- "Fairfax Hotel to House WTAR; Will Move Soon." July 14, 1928, p. 26.
- "WTAR to be in Biggest Radio Chain Tomorrow." August 4, 1928, p. 24.
- "WTAR Offers New Service." August 11, 1928, p. 13.
- "WTAR a Unit of Vast System on Wednesday." August 18, 1928, p. 22.
- "WTAR Will Protest Time Sharing Plan." September 11, 1928, p. 2.
- "WSEA to Fight Time Division." September 12, 1928, p. .
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- "WTAR Seeking More Chain Connections." October 22, 1928, II, p. 20.
- "S.A.L. Gives Studio to WTAR; Railroad Program Likely." November 3, 1928, p. 21.
- "New Channel Tried by WTAR; Satisfactory." November 11, 1928, p. 24.
- "Rutherford on Air Tomorrow." November 17, 1928, p. 19.

1929

- "Eddie Cantor Star of First WTAR-Columbia Bill." January 5, 1929, p. 16.
- "Paul Whiteman's Music for WTAR Audience." January 12, 1929, p. 13.
- "WTAR May Soon Be On Air Continuously." April 13, 1929, p. 21.
- "Coming Week Over WTAR." April 20, 1929, p. 26.
- "Over WTAR Coming Week." April 27, 1929, p. 25.
- "Over WTAR Coming Week." June 15, 1929, p. 11.
- "WTAR's Fan Mail Growing." August 10, 1929, p. 22.
- "Tie-Up With Columbia Helps WTAR Programs." September 17, 1929, II, p. 2.



"WTAR Will Broadcast World Series Direct from Playing Fields." October 5, 1929, p. 1.

"WTAR Schedule to Run from 10 AM to 10 PM Sunday." December 14, 1929, p. 24.

1930

"Norfolk's Station Threatened." January 16, 1930, p. 8.

"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write." January 25, 1930, p. 8.

"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write." January 31, 1930, p. 8.

"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write." February 3, 1930, p. 8.

"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write." February 4, 1930, p. 8.

"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write." February 8, 1930, p. 8.

"Listeners Asked to Give Program Ideas to WTAR." February 8, 1930, p. 14.

"Ledger-Dispatch Readers Write." February 10, 1930, p. 8.

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"WTAR Upheld by Officials." February 14, 1930, p. 3.

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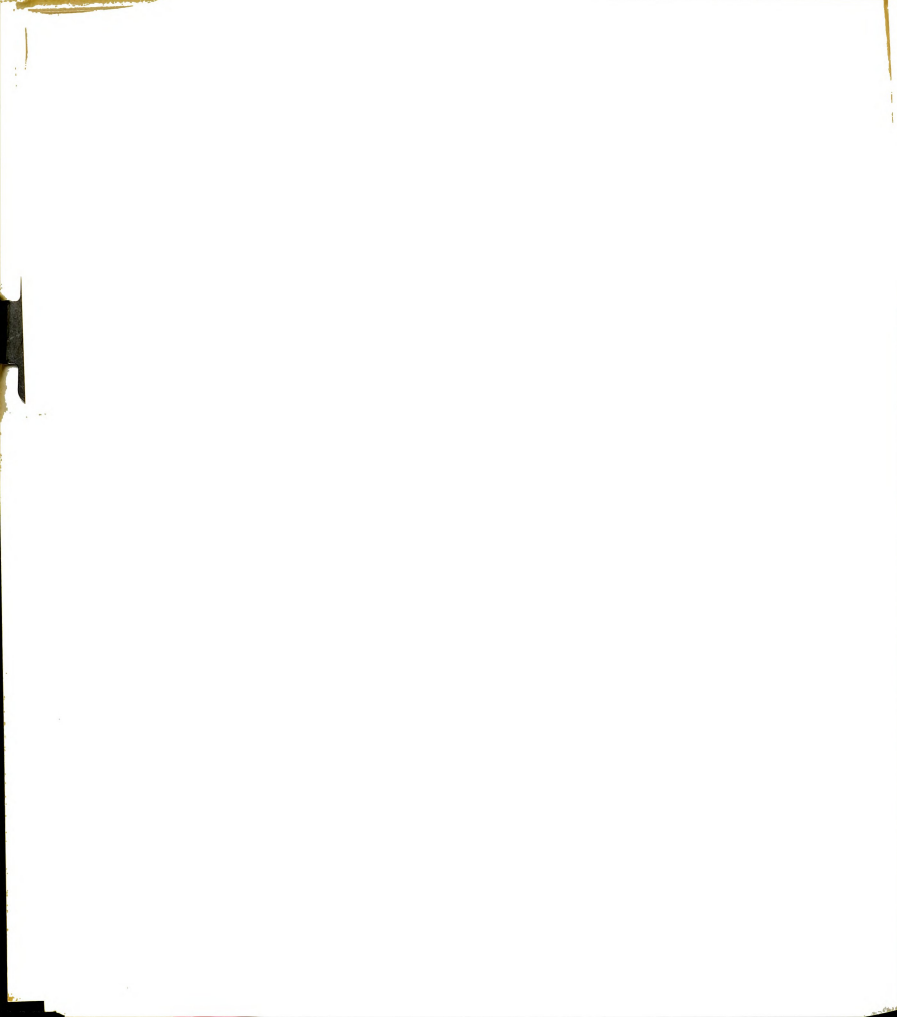
"Tells Why WTAR Didn't Broadcast McCall Talk." February 21, 1930, p. 3.

"WTAR and Petersburg." February 22, 1930, p. 8.

"Tired of WTAR Letters." February 25, 1930, p. 8.

"WTAR Wins in Fight Against Sharing Time with Station WLBG." February 26, 1930, p. 1.

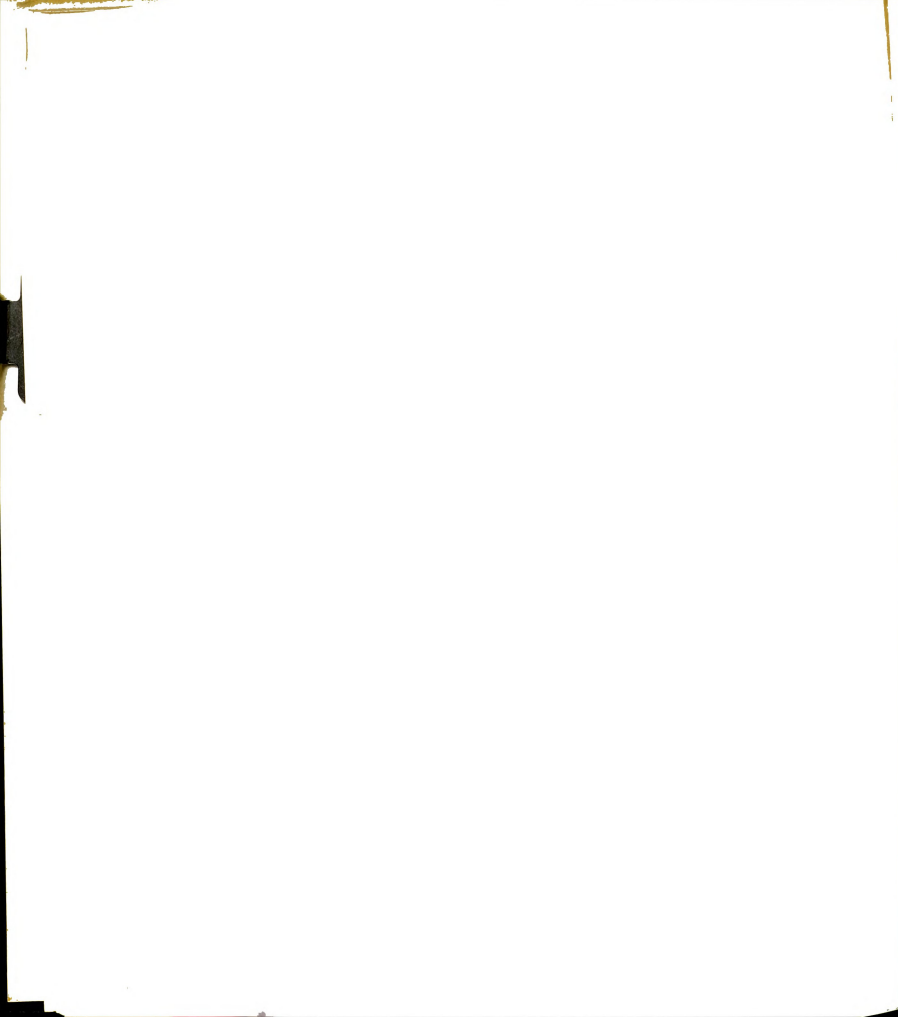
"WTAR Planning Improvements for Listeners." February 28, 1930, p. 2.



- "WTAR to Seek Clubs Support." March 3, 1930, p. 3.
- "WTAR Will Not Raise Power While in City." March 13, 1930, p. 2.
- "Spindle Heads Radio League." March 14, 1930, p. 29.
- "Station WTAR Has Hard Fight for Full-Time." April 10, 1930, p. 2.
- "WTAR to Start Tests for New Site at Once." July 8, 1930, p. 2.
- "Radio 'Test Car' Coming to Norfolk Next Week." July 19, 1930, p. 2.
- "Davis Corner Undesirable as Radio Site." August 13, 1930, p. 1.
- "WTAR Studios Moved Without Going Off the Air." August 16, 1930, p. 5.
- "National Chain to Carry WTAR Birthday Party." August 23, 1930, p. 3.
- "WTAR Birthday Celebration on Chain Monday." September 20, 1930, p. 2.
- "WTAR Buys Site Out of City." October 18, 1930, p. 1.
- "New Moves in Radio Controversy Fail to Bring Agreement Here." March 19, 1930, p. 2.

1931 to 1934

- "Pilgrimage Exercises to Be Broadcast." April 21, 1931, p. 2.
- "Rain Breaks Up Pilgrimage." April 27, 1931, p. 1.
- "WTAR Ready to Dedicate Transmitter." May 23, 1931, p. 2.
- "WTAR Is Picked as Key Station for Big Hook Up." August 5, 1931, p. 3.
- "Army Bombers Fail to Reach Vessel." August 11, 1931, p. 1.
- "Why Radio Programs Are Omitted." May 16, 1932, p. 8.
- "Ledger-Dispatch Purchases WTAR from Goodridge." October 14, 1932, p. 1.



"The Ledger-Dispatch Acquires WTAR." October 15, 1932, p. 8.

"Norfolk Papers Effect Merger." December 31, 1932, p. 1.

"WTAR Most Popular Station Among Norfolk Listeners." March 3, 1933, p. 3.

"Byrd to Say Good-Bye in Broadcast from Norfolk Sunday Night." October 2, 1933, p. 1.

"Cut in Wire Stopped Byrd Radio Address." October 16, 1933, pp. 1 and 3.

"WTAR Invites Public to Studios Tonight." April 6, 1934, p. 12.

"WTAR Joins NBC Network Friday Night." July 5, 1934, pp. 1 and 2.

"WTAR and NBC Join Tonight in Offering Better Service Here." July 6, 1934, p. 1.

1935 to 1950

Grether, J. L. "Technical Director Tells How Changes Improve Reception." July 14, 1937, II, p. 1.

"Public Service Placed First." November 25, 1941, p. 15.

Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Landmark or the Virginian Pilot

1923

"More Talk About Radio Broadcasting." March 22, 1923, p. 16.

"Radio Station Asked for City." April 19, 1923, p. 15.

"Radio Station to Cost \$15,000." May 3, 1923, p. 3.

"Plans Under Way for Radio." May 24, 1923, p. 4.

"Radio Station Here Pleases Listeners-In." December 22, 1923, p. 16.

1924

"Fascination of Radio Swells Ranks of Army of Eager Listeners-In." January 20, 1924, IV, p. 5.

"Radio Program Entertains Bay Steamer's Passengers." January 21, 1924, p. 12.

"Chamber Accepts Offer of Use of Reliance Radio." March 21, 1924, p. 3.

"Radio Programs Begin April 15." April 2, 1924, p. 5.

"WTAR Gains Rights to Radio Patents." April 3, 1924, p. 3.

"First of Booster Radio Programs Set for Tuesday." April 13, 1924, II, p. 2.

"Chandler and Lee on Radio Program." April 27, 1924, II, p. 1.

"Ghent Methodist Will Broadcast Sermons by Radio." May 3, 1924, p. 14.

"Sermon Broadcast from Pulpit." May 12, 1924, p. 10.

"Preacher Pleased with Success." May 13, 1924, p. 5.

"Radio Again to Carry Sermon Tomorrow Into Hundreds of Homes." May 17, 1924, p. 6.

"Glass Would be Strong Candidate, N. Y. World Holds." May 28, 1924, p. 1.

"Keynote Speech of Carter Glass to Be Broadcast." June 6, 1924, p. 1.

"The Nation Looks to Virginia." June 10, 1924, p. 4.

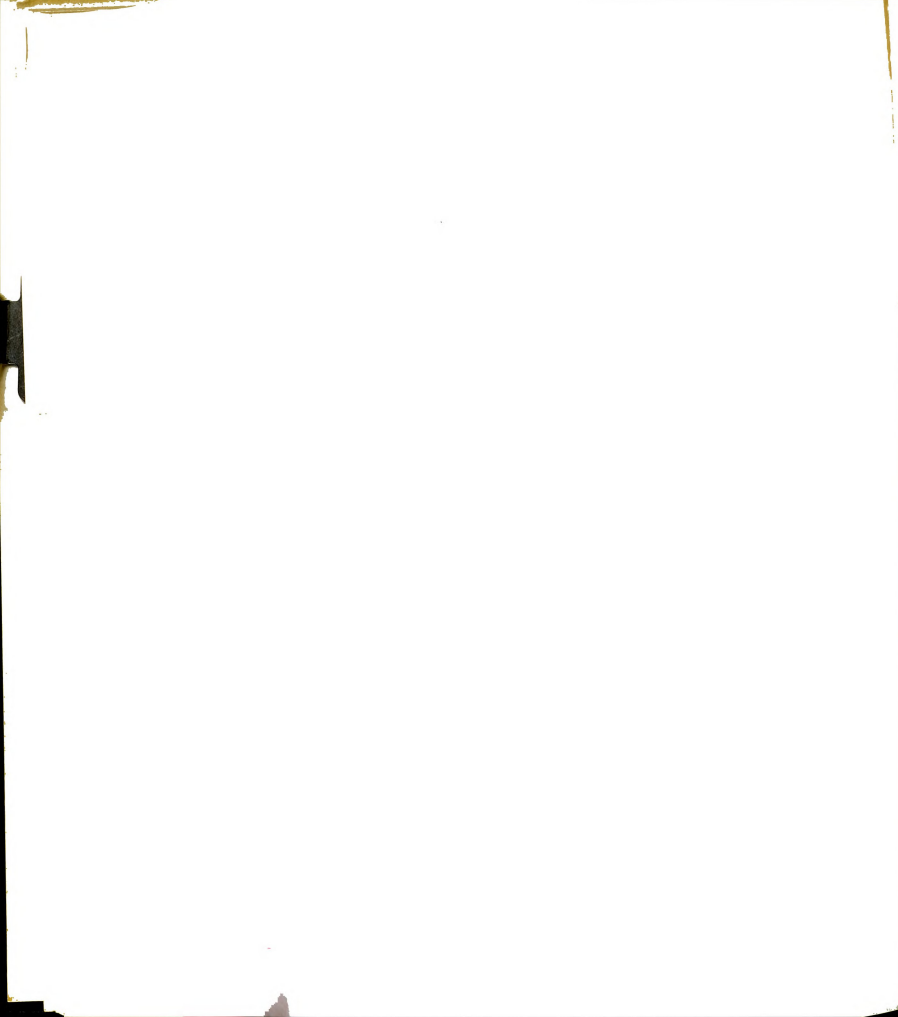
"Daylight Radio Program Arranged." September 21, 1924, p. 1.

"Radio Advertising Proving of Value to Hampton Roads." November 13, 1924, p. 14.

1925

"Station WTAR Will Add to Weather Report." February 15, 1925, IV, p. 8.

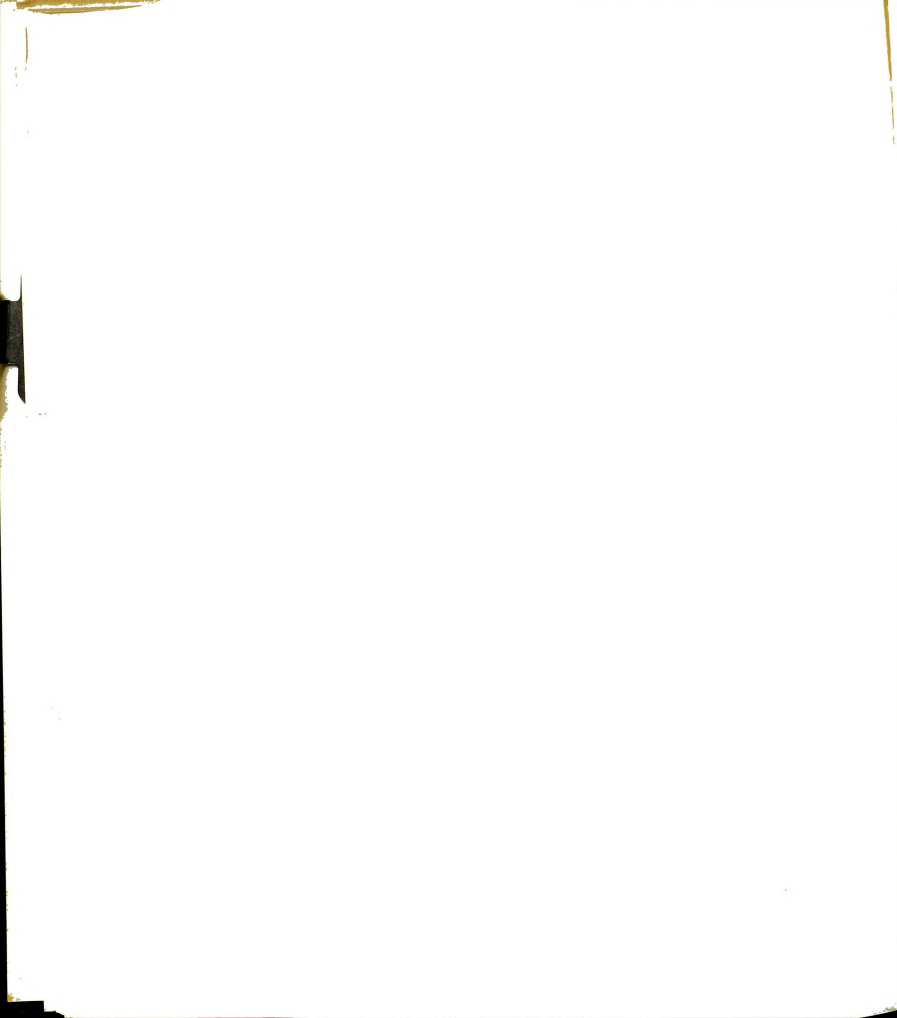
"Pender Celebration to Be Broadcast Over Radio Tuesday Night." April 12, 1925, II, p. 7.



- "Final Chamber Radio Program." June 7, 1925, III, p. 7.
- "WTAR To Be On Air Again Within Two Weeks." September 27, 1925, III, p. 8.
- "Virginian Pilot Scoreboard to Flash Games, Play by Play." October 7, 1925, p. 1.
- "Public Must Support WTAR, or Lose Station." October 30, 1925, p. 16.
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- "WTAR Operator Opposes License for Suffolk." December 1, 1925, p. 16.
- "Ruling on Suffolk Radio Station Expected Today." December 2, 1925, p. 14.
- "Radio Men Delay Action Regarding Suffolk Station." December 5, 1925, p. 14.

1926

- "WTAR to Conduct Distance Test." February 9, 1926, p. 14.
- "Visitors Will Appear on Station WTAR." April 1, 1926, p. 4.
- "Steel Saw Artists on Station WTAR." April 2, 1926, p. 8.
- "WTAR to Broadcast Saturday Night Dance Programs." April 11, 1926, III, p. 10.
- "Mystery Entertainment Tomorrow Night." April 25, 1926, III, p. 10.
- "Support Needed by WTAR in Order to Raise Power." July 18, 1926, I, p. 9.
- "Local Broadcast Station to Radio Theater Programs." October 21, 1926, I, p. 4.
- "Will Go on Air at 6:30 from Granby Daily." October 24, 1926, p. 6.
- "Granby Theater and WTAR to Begin New Joint Program." October 25, 1926, p. 12.

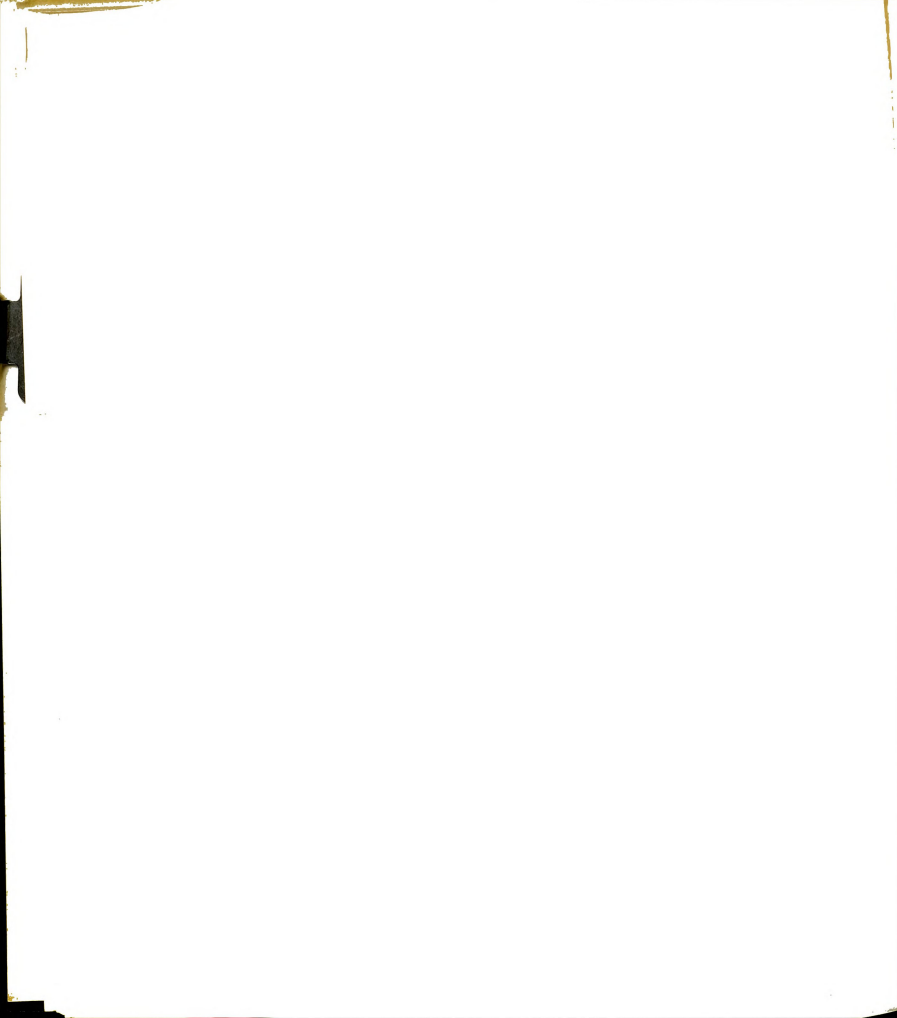


1927

- "WTAR to Use Higher Power Next Sunday in Church Programs." March 6, 1927, I, p. 10.
- "WTAR Available for Commercial Radio." April 10, 1927, II, p. 9.
- "Elaborate Radio Program Tonight Promise of WTAR." April 15, 1927, p. 5.
- "WSEA to Begin Regular Programs." April 17, 1927, II, p. 11.
- "WTAR Announces Summer Schedule." May 19, 1927, II, p. 12.
- "WSEA Workers Present Plea in Washington." August 6, 1927, p. 12.
- "WTAR Not Opposed to Restoration of WSEA Wave Length." August 7, 1927, II, p. 2.
- "Local Stations to Divide Time on New Frequency." August 18, 1927, p. 1.
- "Radio Squabble Expected to Go to Commission." August 21, 1927, p. 12.
- "Radio Fight Taken to Washington by Warring Stations." August 22, 1927, p. 12.
- "Different Wave Lengths Assigned Norfolk Stations." August 23, 1927, p. 14.
- "WTAR Injunction Has No Effect on Suffolk Programs." November 12, 1927, p. 14.

1928

- "Norfolk Station Part of National Broadcast Today." May 13, 1928, III, p. 11.
- "Reallocation of Radio Facilities of Country Arouses Local Protest." September 11, 1928, pp. 1 and 5.
- "Political Radio Addresses." October 23, 1928, I, p. 2.
- "New Studio Opens Tuesday." November 11, 1928, II, p. 1.
- "Radio Listeners Condemn and Laud New Wave Lengths." November 13, 1928, p. 3.



"Radio Dealers and WTAR Split on Wave Length." November 16, 1928, p. 24.

"Radio Wranglers Set Forces for Determined Tiff Because of WTAR's New Wave-Length." November 17, 1928, p. 16.

"WTAR Quits Air at Night Next Week in Truce." November 18, 1928, II, pp. 1 and 4.

"Local Radio Fans Generally Satisfied with New Wave Length." December 2, 1928, V, p. 1.

"WTAR Awarded Place in Big Radio Hookup by Columbia." December 2, 1928, II, p. 1.

1929

"Radio Interest Grows and Sale of Instruments Rivals Record." January 1, 1929, III, p. 19.

"Norfolk Broadcasting Station Hooks Up with Columbia Chain Today." January 6, 1929, IV, p. 6.

"Columbia Chain Adds Two Hours to WTAR Program." January 20, 1929, II, p. 2.

"Two Thousand Letters Attest Popularity of WTAR Over Country." June 2, 1929, II, p. 10.

"Light Announces Added Features for Station WTAR." August 11, 1929, I, p. 10.

1930

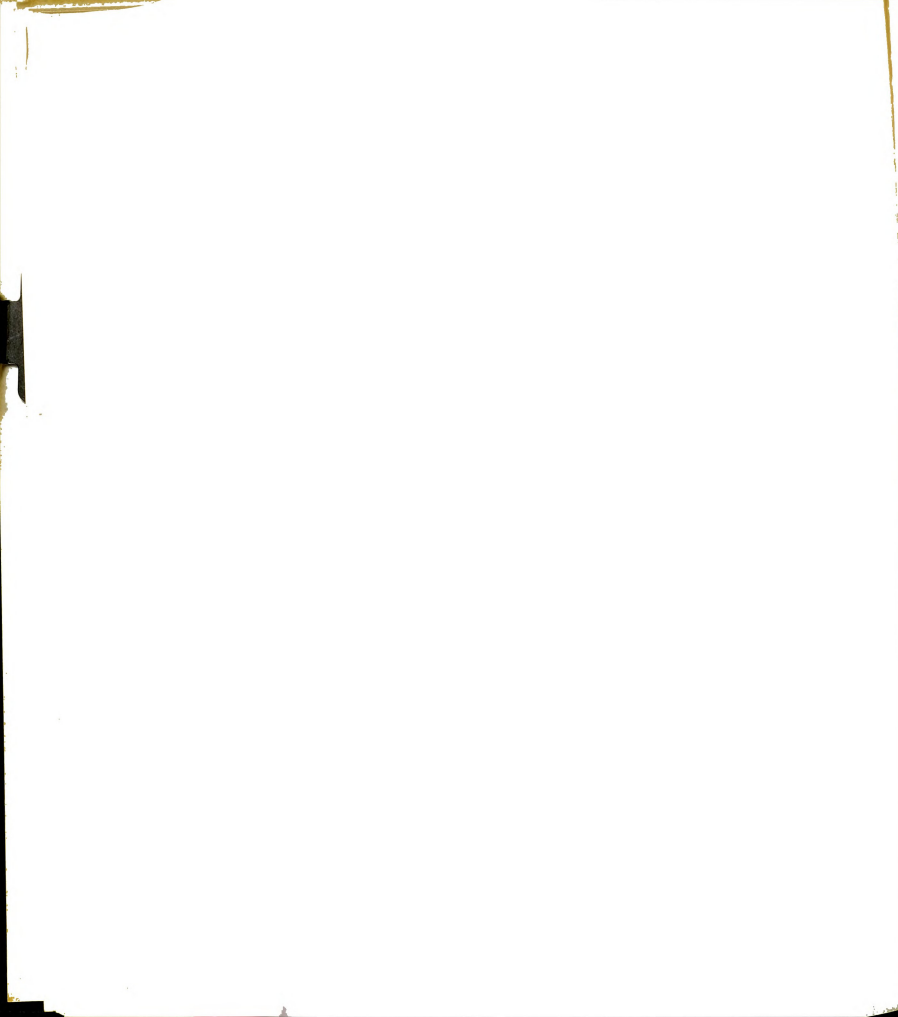
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"WTAR Applies for Permit to Boost Power and Move Transmitter Outside City." February 28, 1930, II, p. 1.

"Civic Organizations Expected to Aid WTAR in Operation Changes." March 2, 1930, II, p. 1.

"WTAR Transmitter Removal Request Not Yet Submitted." March 11, 1930, p. 16.



- "WTAR is Reported in Long Contract with Broadcast Chain."
April 12, 1930, p. 2.
- "WTAR Definitely Committed to Removal of Transmitter If
Allowed Power Increase." March 13, 1930, p. 16.
- "Radio Listeners' League Organized." March 14, 1930, p. 14.
- "WTAR May Remove Transmitter Even on Present Power."
March 15, 1930, p. 12.
- "Peace Move Made in Radio Wrangle as Troubles Fade."
March 16, 1930, II, p. 1.
- "WTAR Withdraws Request for Increased Power." March 20,
1930, p. 16.
- "Citizens League and WTAR Iron Out Their Differences."
March 23, 1930, II, p. 2.
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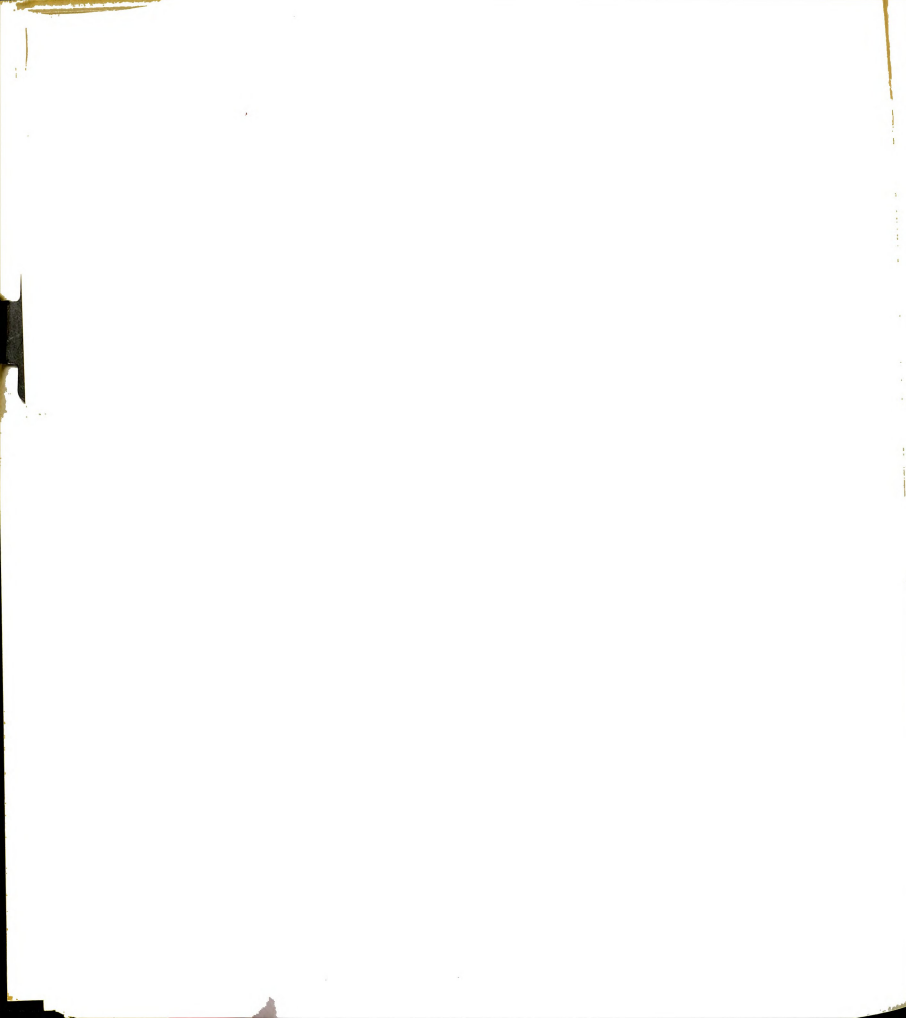
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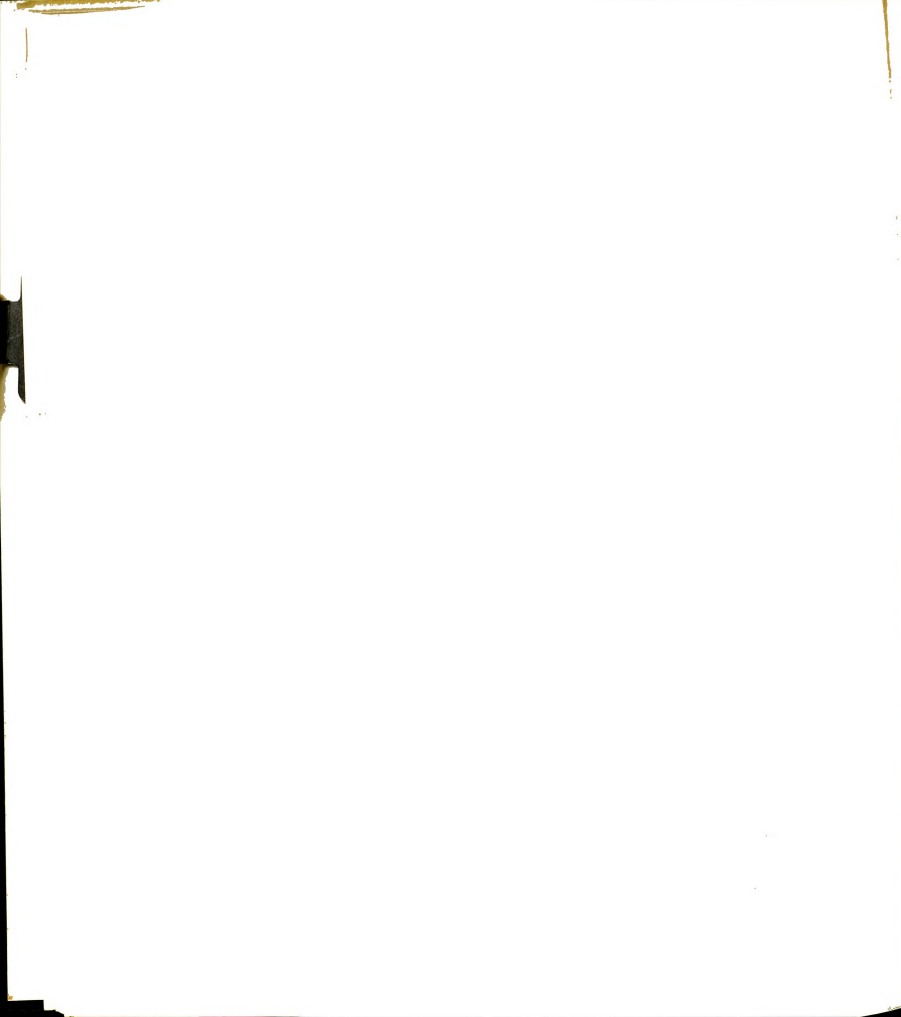


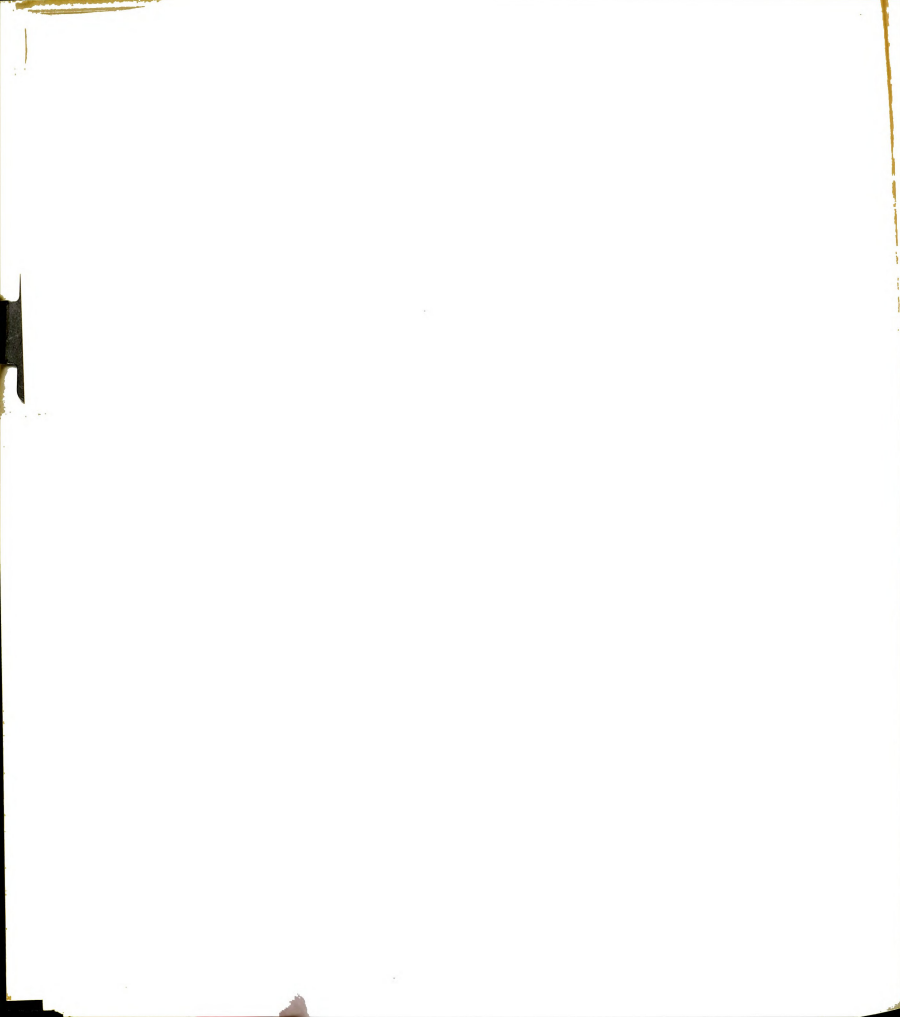
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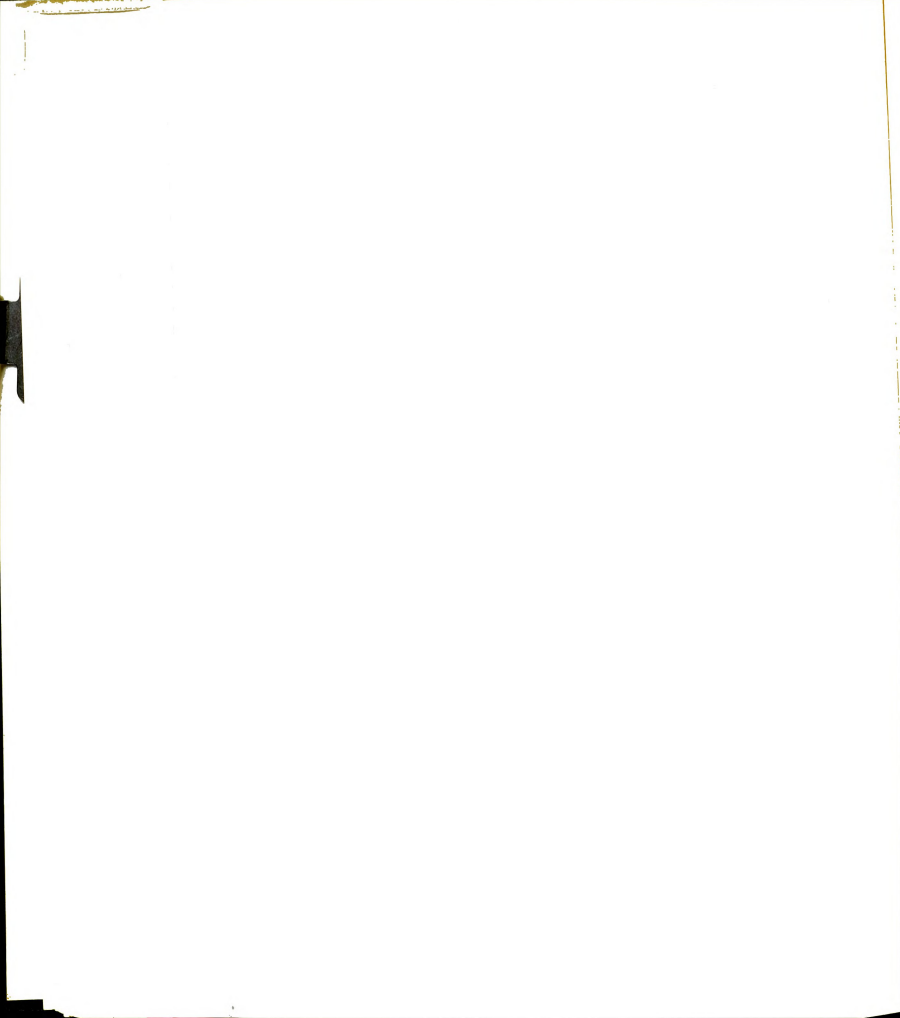
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