



# THE HISTORY OF BROADCASTING IN MAINE

The First Fifty Years

# The History of Broadcasting in Maine

The  
First  
Fifty  
Years

by  
Ellie Thompson

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# Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the cooperation of a few select individuals who recognized the contribution of Maine's broadcasting pioneers and wanted to make certain that their history was recorded.

Ed Guernsey has made a second career out of studying the adventures of his cousin, Thompson Guernsey, the founder of WLBZ radio, Bangor. Ed himself was a very important player in Maine broadcasting, working for 35 years at WLBZ.

Norman Gallant and his wife Kay were co-hosts of their own radio show on WFAU-AM, Augusta in the 1940s. Norm later became the Executive Director of the Maine Association of Broadcasters, supplying several historical documents and allowing many History Committee meetings to be held in his home.

Terry Economy headed this committee for many years before business took him away from the project.

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All the elements have come together to make this a truly exciting history.

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# Maine Radio in the 1920s

**I**MAGINE A WORLD with no VCRs, no satellites, no television, no fax machines. Staples of everyday life which we now take for granted like electricity, telephones and automobiles were in their infancy. A telegram was the quickest method of written communication.

Hence, radio was hailed as "the miracle of the age." It was a new way of reaching large numbers of people and opened up a wealth of possibilities for entertainment, news, education, religion and politics. There was a surge of interest in this new wonder and little stations popped up like mushrooms throughout the state.

It was all so new and so experimental that it is no surprise that of the fifteen radio stations licensed in the 1920s, only three were still on the air by the end of the decade. Very little is known about most of them. They were brief bursts of enthusiasm with no financial support, often operated by a single person. Once the novelty wore off and the time and money it took to keep them on the air began to take their toll, they soon ran out of steam. In addition, once the concept that a radio station could be a business took hold, these smaller stations were overshadowed by larger and more powerful commercial stations.

## WMB, Auburn

The first radio station to be licensed in Maine was **WMB** in Auburn. In 1916, recent high school graduate Thurl Wilson went to work for Auburn businessman Elmer Nickerson. Nickerson owned the Auburn Electrical Company (an electrical store) on Court Street and a battery and tire store located at 95 Turner Street.

Like many young men at the time, Thurl Wilson's imagination was on fire about anything that had to do with electricity. Working after hours and at his own expense at the battery store, Wilson built a transmitting set. He began reciting poetry ("The Face on the Bar Room Floor" was a favorite). He also sang and played the mandolin and the banjo over the air.

However, local owners of crystal sets began complaining that his new station was cutting into their reception. This pointed out the need for a license and a licensed operator, which young Thurl was not. As Fate would have it, however, there was a licensed operator in Auburn. His name was D. Wayne Bendix.

In April of 1922, the Department of Commerce issued a license for **WMB** to the Auburn Electrical Company, with Bendix as operator and Wilson as assistant — although Wilson continued to do most of the broadcasting.

The Lewiston Evening Journal (April 22, 1922, p. 6) states that the first broadcast, an

*Maine's oldest continuing radio station, WABI, first took to the airwaves on June 30, 1923. The station was started and operated by the Bangor Electric and Railway Company, operating at 1250 kilocycles with 50 watts of power. The studio was in the Andrews Music House at 98 Main Street in Bangor. The transmitter and broadcast antenna (shown here) were located at 84 Harlow Street. In early 1924, WABI raised its power to 100 watts. A year later the station was purchased by the First Universalist Church and moved to 120 Park Street.*



Antenna on Building of Bangor Railway and Electric Company, from Which Maine Gets the Railway's Radio Programs

### *The First Fifteen*

The following is a list of radio stations that were granted licenses in the 1920s in Maine. The dates are when the licenses were granted, not the dates the stations went on the air. Only three of these first fifteen stations survived into the 1930s.

<u>Station</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Licensee</u>
<b>WMB</b> Auburn	April 1922	Auburn Electrical Company
<b>WFAR</b> Sanford	June 1922	Hall & Stubbs
<b>WJAL</b> Portland	July 1922	Victor Radio Company
<b>WLAN</b> Houlton	September 1922	Putnam Hardware Company
<b>WPAY</b> Bangor	January 1923	Bangor Radio Laboratory
<b>WABI</b> Bangor	May 1923	Bangor Railway & Electric Co.
<b>WTAJ</b> Portland	August 1923	The Radio Shop
<b>WCBL</b> Houlton	March 1924	Northern Radio Manufacturing Co.
<b>WDBN</b> Bangor	May 1924	Maine Electric Light & Power Co.
<b>WDBU</b> Skowhegan	June 1924	Somerset Radio Company
<b>WHBK</b> Ellsworth	February 1925	Franklin Street Garage
<b>WGBX</b> Orono	February 1925	University of Maine
<b>WCSH</b> Portland	June 1925	Congress Square Hotel Company
<b>WABI</b> Bangor	October 1925	First Universalist Church
<b>WLBZ</b> Dover	December 1926	Thompson L. Guernsey

Arbor Day speech, took place on Friday evening, April 18 and was repeated the following evening. **WMB** was one of only twenty-four government-licensed radio stations in the nation at the time and the only one north of Medford Hillsides, Massachusetts. As such, it was required to broadcast all government radio reports, which included crop reports, weather forecasts and government speeches.

It is mentioned in the newspaper article that in addition to this government programming "... local doctors will deliver into the air special speeches on hygiene and care of the body, local bankers will speak on thrift and banking principles, (and there will be) orchestra selections, as well as addresses by prominent persons who have come to Auburn or Lewiston."

**WMB** even had ambitious plans to do broadcasts from places such as Lewiston City Hall. The paper reports that "As now contemplated, the Auburn Electrical Company station will make wire connections with some place as the Lewiston City Hall when some famous speaker or well-known singer is present; and will broadcast the speech or song, whichever the case may be."

Around early May of that year, the station was moved from the battery shop to rooms leased on the top floor of Auburn Hall. The Lewiston paper (May 3, 1922, p. 2) reported that "... a 150 foot inverted 'L' type aerial was fitted onto the roof and a two 50-watt sending outfit installed with a 360-meter capacity."

That appears to indicate that **WMB** was a 100-watt station, although Ralph Skinner reported in a 1968 "Historically Speaking" broadcast on **WLAM** that **WMB** was a 5-watt station.

One thing certain is that the aerial installation caused a storm of protest. In preparation for a speech by Y. M. C. A. official Roy Handley, the aerial wire was stretched across Court Street from the Auburn Hall roof to the roof of the Auburn Electrical Company building. The day after this first official broadcast from the Auburn Hall location, Auburn city officials ordered the aerial removed.

The Androscoggin Electric Company of Lewiston had complained that the four-strand antenna passed directly over hundreds of heavily charged electric



light and power wires, as well as uninsulated trolley car wires. It was feared that if the aerial should fall in heavy winds, police and fire alarms would be knocked out in the ensuing electrical fireworks. Nickerson moved the aerial, explaining that it was only intended as a temporary arrangement while awaiting approval for stretching the wire from Auburn Hall to the Goff Block.

Another equipment problem involved the transformer, which had twenty-four wire connections. It would heat up after being in operation for a while and Wilson would have to shut down his broadcasting three or four times a night.

Nickerson bought a used grand piano from Bates College for \$10, according to one report. Another account says it was \$25. Whatever the cost, it took three men to carry it up the three flights of stairs to the station. Imagine how they felt when the person hired to play this piano on the air stomped out of the station after playing it only once, shouting that it was an insult to ask anybody to play such a piano!

In addition to live music and government programs, Ralph Skinner's 1968 "Historically Speaking" broadcast on **WLAM** reported that **WMB** advertised that it broadcast news, Arlington time signals and baseball reports. Although it covered about a fifty mile radius, **WMB** nonetheless received reception cards and calls from as far away as Denver, Colorado.

Then **WMB** received a letter of warning from the government because it had broadcast a business plug for the Lawrence Music Company. The government would not allow stations to sell advertising or play recordings. This was the beginning of the end for **WMB**. Wilson, who worked a regular job by day and worked at the station at night (without pay) was beginning to feel the strain.

Exactly when the station went off the air is uncertain. An article in the Maine TV-Radio News & Guide in 1953 reported that it was March 16, 1923, not quite a year after **WMB** had received its license. Ralph Skinner's account says it was "by 1926." Thurl Wilson remained interested in electronics all his life, going on to head his own electrical contracting business.

## WABI, Bangor

**WABI** in Bangor was first licensed to the Bangor Railway & Electric Co. (predecessor of the Bangor Hydro-Electric Co.) in May of 1923. With call letters **WIXC** and **WIXG**, the company had been experimenting with radio equipment since the previous year, to communicate between Bangor and Ellsworth. This experiment proved unsuccessful.



*WABI transmitted from this antenna rigged atop the First Universalist Church at 120 Park Street, Bangor from September 1925 to May 1930.*

The station we now know as **WABI** was born when Electrical Engineer Arthur L. Davis and Treasurer Philip L. Sprague brought the idea for a second try at broadcasting to company President Edward M. Graham. Known as "Radio-phone Station **WABI**," it used the slogan "The Pine Tree Wave." The transmitter was located on the fifth floor of the Graham Building at the corner of Central and Harlow Streets and the antenna was on the roof. The pickup circuits were run to the First Universalist Church on Park Street, City Hall on Hammond Street and the Andrews Music House on Main Street. A studio was constructed at the Music House and musical programs were broadcast from there weekly.

Personnel included Davis as engineer, Sprague as operator/announcer, W. C. Burrill as director and announcers H. D. Tucker and A. D. Marston. Broadcasts featured live music by local talent, including the **WABI** Trio and the **WABI** Orchestra.

In 1925, **WABI** became a religious broadcaster when it was bought by Ashley Smith and the First Universalist Church to broadcast its Sunday Church Services. Former Maine Governor Bob Haskell (then a **WABI** engineer) told Ed Guernsey how it happened. Haskell had to go to Harlow Street every Sunday to turn on the transmitter so that Smith could broadcast his Sunday Services. "I got tired of this," he said, "so I asked Mr. Graham about selling the station to Smith and then he could move it to the church. I don't know if Bangor Hydro was ever paid anything."

WABI not only survived the decade but also is now the oldest continuously operating radio station in Maine.

## WTAJ, Portland

Another young man with a fascination for this new medium was James Nicholson. When only twenty, he had a little radio sales and repair business called the Radio Shop at 218 Federal Street in Portland. On August 17, 1923, he was granted a license for WTAJ in Portland. A charter member of the Radio Club in Portland, formed in 1914, he had been an amateur radio operator since boyhood and had served in the Navy as a wireless operator. He was mostly interested in the technical aspects of the new medium. He said in an interview at WCSH, "Selling and business didn't mean a thing to me. I was just wrapped up in radio."

Broadcasting with a 20 to 30 mile radius, Nicholson did all the work himself at first. Then Manley Haskell, who was a salesman at the Radio Shop, got his operator's license and began to help out at WTAJ as well. Around 1925, Nicholson turned WTAJ over to Haskell in order to take on a new challenge: to help set up Maine's first commercial radio station.

## WCSH, Portland

The amateur radio stations (the predecessors of the "Hams" of today) and the early government-licensed stations (such as WMB), were not allowed to air advertisements. However, the concept of radio as a business had already been pioneered in 1920 at KDKA in Pittsburgh.

Henry P. Rines, President of the Congress Square Hotel Company in Portland, decided that radio would be a good way to promote his hotel interests. He had talked with Joseph Groce of WEEI in Boston and discovered that it might just be possible to make a little money from radio advertising as well.

Meanwhile, Bill Foss, then an enterprising young man in his thirties was also interested in building a broadcasting station in Portland. Foss had studied electrical engineering and worked for the Maine Central Railroad and the local power utility. He was selling and servicing home radio receivers when he first became interested in building a radio station. Legend has it that he walked up and down the streets of Portland looking for a business willing to invest in his proposed radio venture. He met with skepticism and indifference — until he came to the Congress Square Hotel.

Rines and Foss joined forces and found a used transmitter and other equipment at the seaside estate of Colonel Edward Green in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Foss began looking for

engineering expertise to help set up the new station and persuaded Jimmy Nicholson to accept the challenge and to stay on as chief operator.

And so, on July 13, 1925, Maine's first commercial radio station, WCSH, was born. It seemed only natural that the Congress Square Hotel should be its home. Two 70-foot steel towers, which supported a flat-top antenna were erected on the roof. The transmitter and studio controls took up half of the popular "sun parlor" with a brass rail separating them from the guests. The studio was one floor below the sun parlor. It was created from a private dining room. The walls and ceiling were draped with monks cloth and the floor carpeted for acoustical purposes.

It was warm the evening of the first broadcast, with Governor Ralph Brewster, the Fifth U. S. Infantry Band, several soloists and announcer Linwood T. Pitman assembled in that one relatively small room. Pitman left the newspaper field in 1926 to become WCSH's first paid announcer. He also helped General Manager Bill Foss with sales.

Foss sold advertising to WCSH's and Maine's first radio advertiser, the John J. Nissen Baking Company. Early advertisers bought program sponsorships rather than commercial announcements and used institutional copy rather than detailed descriptions of products or services. Mention of price was taboo.

Children's programming was one of the first genre of shows to be developed. The multi-talented Bill Foss became "Uncle Billy" on the Kids Klub program begun in the late 20s. He was aided by "Uncle Jimmy" Nicholson, who eventually took over the program.

Another early programming element was the broadcasting of church services. WABI was the first to do so and during the years that it was owned by the First Universalist Church, that was the station's whole purpose.

The First Radio Parish Church of America was another pioneer in the area of religious programming. It was founded by the Rev. Howard O. Hough at WCSH in 1926. Today, the program is heard on nine radio and TV stations in Maine and two radio stations in New Hampshire. An interdenominational program, it is the oldest continuously broadcast religious program in the country.

Early radio looked to newspapers as its source of news reports. In 1927, WCSH was broadcasting news bulletins twice daily from the newsroom of the *Portland Evening News*. In 1928, Guy Gannett invited WCSH to install remote equipment in the newsroom of the *Portland Press Herald and Evening Express*. Except on Sundays, three newscasts were broadcast daily using Gannett news people on the air. Charles "Chick"





*Mary Rines Thompson and her brother William H. Rines sat with their father, WCSH founder Henry P. Rines when the radio station went on the air on July 23, 1925. William began work as the station manager in 1941 after his father died and eventually became president of the Maine Broadcasting System (WCSH radio & TV, WLBZ radio & TV and WRDO radio ), a position he held until his death in 1970. Mary Rines Thompson took over at that time and eventually became chairman of the board until she retired in July of 1983. The Rines/Thompson family still runs the business and is one of the oldest NBC affiliates in the country, having helped form the network in 1926.*



Evans was often heard on these newscasts. He later joined the WCSH staff.

WCSH was the first Maine radio station to affiliate with a national network. Experimental network operation over telephone lines had begun as early as 1922 in New York. WCSH joined WEAJ in New York, which had become the NBC flagship station in March of that year.

When NBC was incorporated in the Fall of 1926, WCSH was one of its twenty-six basic Red outlets. WCSH thus was a charter member of the national NBC Radio Network. The Rines/Thompson family still runs WCSH-TV, which makes it the oldest NBC affiliate in the country still run by the same ownership, with 64 years of NBC affiliation.



*Original staff of WCSH radio, taken at the Congress Square Hotel Studios, Portland, in early 1926. Seated from left: Linwood Pitman, J. D. McDonald, Gwen Marshall and Archie Legro. Standing from left: James Nicholson, William Foss (station manager) and John Fraser. Nicholson started Portland radio station WTAJ on August 17, 1923 and ran it out of his radio shop on Exchange Street before turning it over to Manley Haskell in 1925 to go to work for WCSH. William Foss walked up Congress Street visiting several department store owners seeking an entrepreneur to help start a radio station. Only Henry P. Rines at the Eastland Hotel saw any future in this fledgling business.*



## WLBZ, Bangor

WLBZ grew out of a hobby of Thompson L. Guernsey, son of a prominent Maine Congressman. According to his cousin, Ed Guernsey, Thompson had begun experimenting with radio in 1917 at the age of thirteen. He was granted a license for Amateur Radio Station 1EE in 1921. At only twenty-two, he received a commercial license from the U. S. Department of Commerce. Using his then modified 1EE equipment, he put WLBZ on the air on December 30, 1926.

WLBZ's first broadcast was from the harness room in the chicken house at Guernsey's residence in Dover-Foxcroft. As his hobby grew into a business, Thompson moved WLBZ into the back room of the Andrews Music House at 98 Main Street in Bangor. The Andrews Music House was owned by Frank Atwood, whose son Jack later became one of Maine's leading broadcasters.

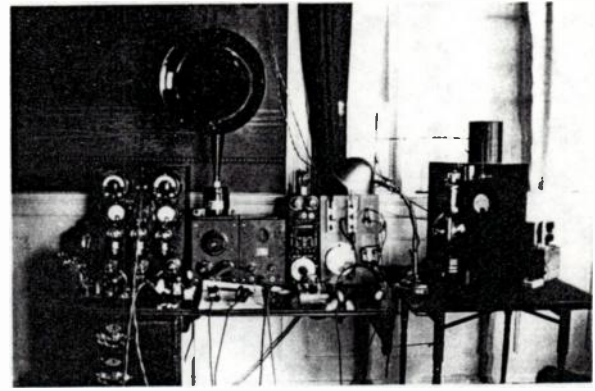
The first WLBZ antenna was described by Maine broadcast veteran Carleton Brown at a 1964 NAB convention as "... a flat-top antenna with four wires strung between bars and held up by two windmill towers." It frequently iced up in winter and, more than once, fell down.

Irving Hunter worked as a transmitter engineer at WLBZ in those early days. During a taped group interview of broadcast veterans on March 27, 1985, he told how during one winter the weight of the ice broke the wires and the antenna came tumbling down. Tom Guernsey drove down from Dover-Foxcroft with his big, beautiful, Straight-A Packard Roadster. "And so," Hunter said, "we mended the wires, soldered it all together and Tom hooked up onto the steel cable with his Packard to pull the antenna back up between the towers."

So far so good. Only it was so slippery and the car so fast and powerful, that it pulled the antenna up too quickly and "... split the thing apart and it came down and had to be done all over again."

An early program log at WLBZ, carefully preserved by Ed Guernsey, demonstrates how radio already reflected almost every aspect of life in Maine. It included a University of Maine Farm Bureau program, a broadcast of local church services, a political forum with Governor Ralph Brewster as the principal speaker and probably the first broadcast of a high school basketball game in Maine on January 20, 1928.

An early programming staple was the staff pianist. Norman Lambert began performing on WLBZ the day it went on the air at the Andrews Music House location in 1928. His long career there as traffic and music director is legendary. Lambert remembers having to wear a tuxedo for broadcasts, which were performed in



*Thompson Guernsey's amateur radio station 1EE in 1921. Part of this same equipment was used to build commercial broadcasting station WLBZ.*

front of a live studio audience. Equally talented on piano and organ, he was the first in the state to play the two instruments simultaneously. His theme song was "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows."

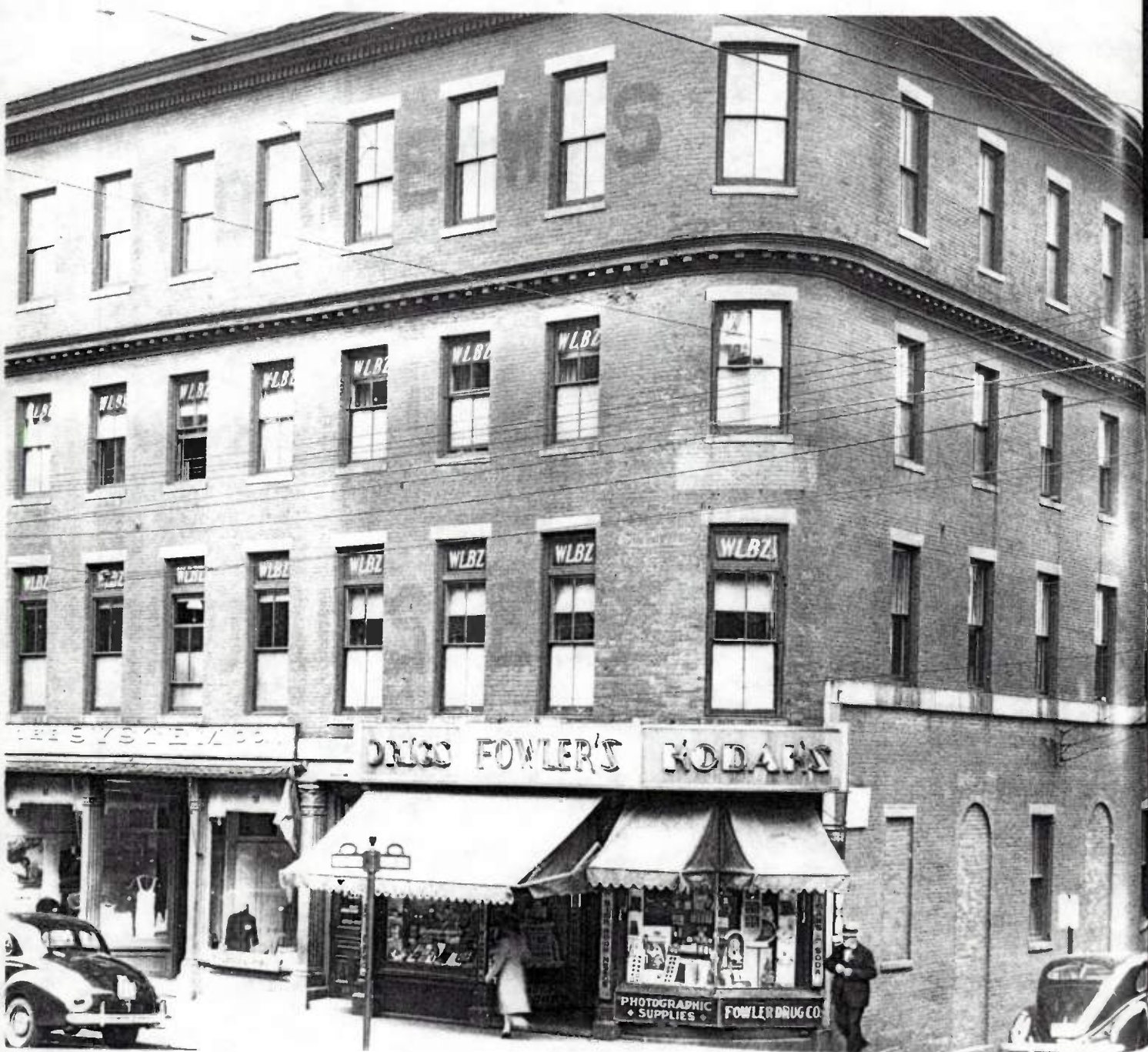
Carleton Brown got his start in broadcasting when Tom Guernsey decided to open a studio for WLBZ in Waterville in 1929. At the NAB convention in 1964, he told the story of how this WLBZ outlet got started:

"Tom Guernsey, who had been a graduate of the University of Maine, decided that he would like to extend the influence of WLBZ, so he decided to establish a Waterville studio. (It was) in the rear of a music store, and a curtain partitioned it from the rest of the store where records and sheet music were sold. We had two 78 rpm turntables and we had an (storage battery operated) amplifier."

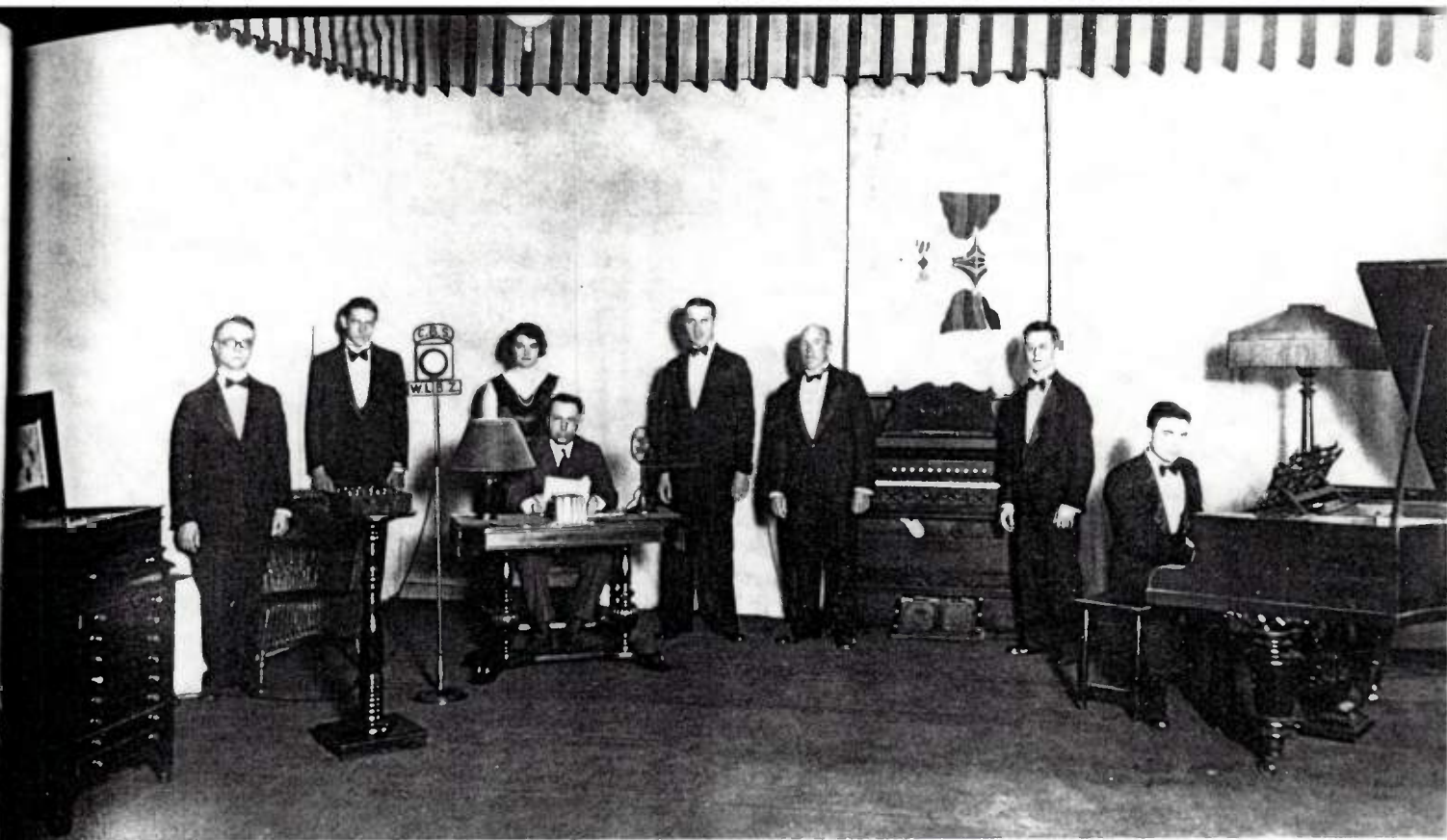
"We were sixty miles from Bangor where the transmitter was located. When the time came to go on the air, we would listen to a battery-operated radio with a little loudspeaker on it and we would listen to Bangor make the station break, then we would turn off the radio and turn on our amplifier."

"We were connected to the transmitting station by open wire line, Western Union. We hired circuits from the Western Union Telegraph Company and of course this wasn't a very high quality circuit but it did carry the intelligence."

The original studio location for WABI radio in 1924 was in the Andrews Music House at 98 Main Street in Bangor (section of building shown here marked "The System Co"). This became the studio for WLBZ when Thompson Guernsey moved his station there from Dover-Foxcroft in 1928. WLBZ later expanded to the second and third floors of 100 Main Street as shown in this photo taken in the 40s. WLBZ maintained its studios at this location until it moved to outer Broadway in 1960.







*To commemorate its affiliation with CBS Radio in 1930, the crew of WLBZ poses for the camera in the back of the Andrews Music Store in Bangor. From the left: Albert Weymouth Jr., Jack Atwood, Charlotte Carter, Jack Riley, Walley Poller, Harold Lloyd and Norman Lambert at the piano. Seated is Thompson L. Guernsey, founder and managing director. Carter was the first woman announcer in the state. Lambert worked at WLBZ until he retired in 1958 and Atwood went on to become the Executive Vice President of the Maine Broadcasting System until his retirement in 1974.*

The Waterville studio opened during Brown's first year in college. His father owned a dry goods store and was the largest retailer in Waterville. Here is his own account of how he happened to work for Tom Guernsey:

"When I learned what Tom was doing, I applied for a job. I was just a kid. I took the train to Bangor. (Tom) had built a studio on the second floor of the music store and the control room was behind a glass. It looked very awe inspiring. Tom gave me a Webster's Dictionary and said, 'Start reading' and then he said, 'Read faster.' So I read faster and he came out and said, 'Well, that's all right. You are hired.' And I said, 'What for?' He said, 'You are an announcer. Take the train back to Waterville and Alfred Childs will be there. You will go on the air at 5:00.' I said, 'What do we do?' 'I don't know,' he said. 'You and Alfred can do something.'"

Brown hosted an hour-long record show every day (using records from the music store in which the studio was located) and also did an hour of band music on Sundays. Guernsey had a fondness for band music, so the Waterville Military Band was a regular for several years.

By 1929, only three radio stations were still on the air in Maine. WABI in Bangor was non-commercial, broadcasting religious services for the First Universalist Church. WCSH in Portland was commercial and doing well. WLBZ in Bangor was also commercial and doing well with studios in Bangor and Waterville.



## Maine Radio in the 1930s

THERE WERE SEVEN commercial radio stations in the state of Maine by 1939. It is no surprise that these first stations had sprung up in the most populated areas of the state: Bangor (WABI, WLBZ), Portland (WCSH, WGAN), Augusta (WRDO), Lewiston (WCOU) and Presque Isle (WAGM).

From its earliest beginnings in the 1920s to the end of the 1930s, Maine radio had progressed from the hobby stage of amateur stations and the self promotional efforts of businesses and organizations to a staple of daily life and a profitable commercial enterprise. All three of the stations who survived the 1920s (WABI, WCSH and WLBZ), were on the air as commercial stations by the end of the 1930s.

WABI became a commercial station under manager Fred Simpson when Community Broadcasting Service, Inc. (of which Simpson was President) purchased the station from the First Universalist Church around 1938.

WLBZ closed and then reopened its Waterville outlet during the 1930s. Feeling the effects of the Depression, Thompson Guernsey closed Waterville in 1935. As remembered by Carleton Brown (in a speech at the 1964 NAB Convention), Guernsey could no longer support the staff there, which by then included Brown, engineer Alfred Childs and salesman/ manager Conrad Kennison. Kennison later became manager of WRDO in Augusta.

By 1938, Brown had graduated from college, had married, and had opened a photography studio in Waterville. Guernsey leased the space next to Brown's studio and reopened his WLBZ outlet there, with Brown as manager.

The first new station in the 1930s was WAGM in Presque Isle. Two young ham radio enthusiasts, Red Hughes and Bob McIntosh, were the principal stockholders when this small 100-watt station started in 1931.

With the success of WCSH in Portland, Henry Rines founded WRDO in Augusta in

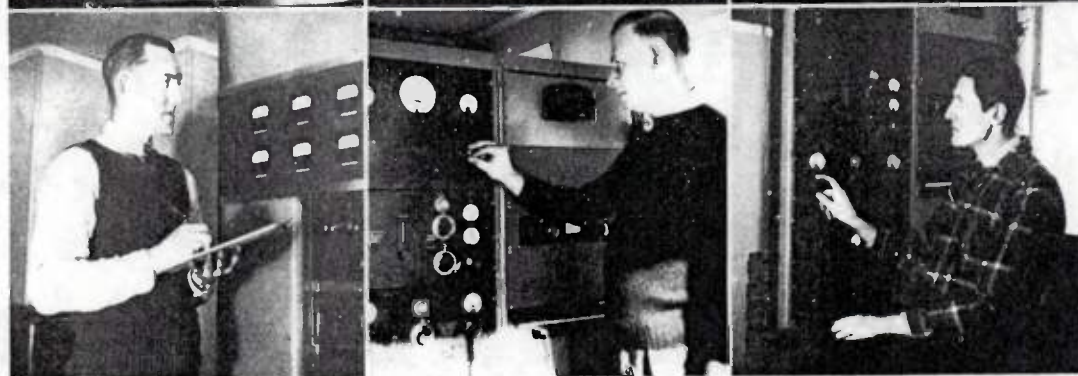
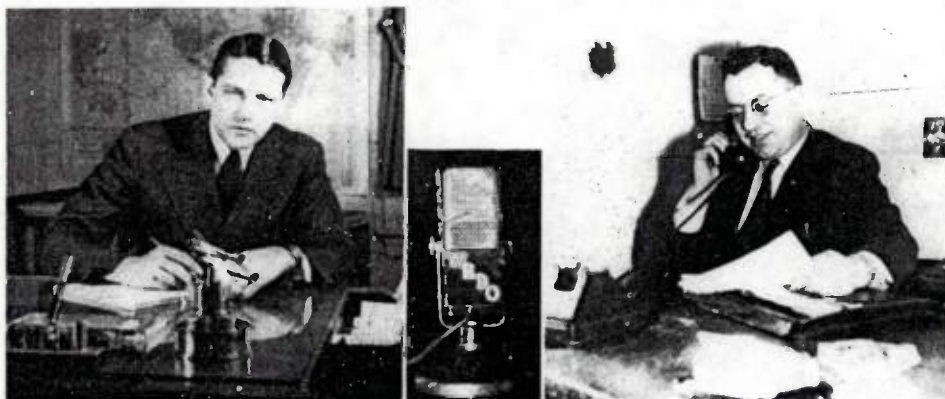
1932. The Maine Broadcasting System anniversary booklet, "The First 40 Years" states that corporate ownership of WRDO was vested in the Capitol Broadcasting Company and later assumed by WRDO, Inc. The 1935 *Broadcasting Yearbook* (the first year it existed) lists WRDO, Inc. as the name of the licensee, which suggests that this change had taken place by 1935.

Harold Dinsmore, who became chief engineer at WRDO in 1935, remembers that Thompson Guernsey made a proposal to purchase the station sometime in the late 1930s. Apparently, nothing came of this as WRDO remained in the Rines family.

WGAN in Portland and WCOU in Lewiston both debuted in August of 1938. They had something else in common: both were founded by newspaper publishers. Guy Gannett chose the call letters GAN after the first 3 letters of his last name. Faust Couture did the same with COU for his station.

These early radio entrepreneurs were men of vision who were not afraid to take risks. They had faith in their local areas and used their stations to promote their communities. They also were experienced businessmen with varied interests and heavy community involvement.

# WRDO ABOUT TO OBSERVE 15th ANNIVERSARY



BEHIND THE SCENES AT WRDO—Top row: Manager Jack S. Atwood, left, Walter Weightman, sales manager. Second row: left to right, Dan Kelly, traffic manager-announcer shown with studio group; Don Powers, program manager; Elliott Hold, chief announcer. Third row: Leslie Hubley, announcer; Agnes Day, receptionist; Richard Dysart, announcer. Bottom row: Harold Dinsmore, chief engineer; George Newell, technician; John Litwinowich, technician.

WRDO celebrated its 15th anniversary in this February 1947 edition of the Maine Broadcaster, a newsletter of the Maine Broadcasting System (WCSH, WRDO, & WLBZ). Mistakenly headlined "1922", WRDO went on the air in 1932. Several members of the Cony High School Radio Club worked at WRDO including Ben & Les Hubley, Dan Kelly, Don Powers and Richard Dysart. Dysart, shown here, went on to play the senior partner in the NBC-TV Network series "LA Law."



## Locations

Having faith in radio is one thing, actually getting a station on the air is another. First, you need a place from which to broadcast. In the 30s, there was no such thing as facilities especially built and designed for broadcasting. So Maine's radio pioneers used and adapted what was available.

Like WCSH, WGAN began broadcasting from a hotel, the Columbia, in the center of the city. Located on the second floor, the studios were designed by Electrical Research Products, Inc. and according to an article in the Portland Evening Express (May 3, 1954), were the first scientifically constructed studios in Maine:

"... sound treated and suspended from the main structure of the building."

WRDO started out broadcasting from the Augusta House. Dan Kelly tells a story he heard from either Harold Dinsmore or George Levensaller about WRDO's early broadcasts from this studio:

"It was located on the first floor in the back. It seems this room was also used at night as a storage room for the hotel's canaries. They would bring the cages in and cover them up so the birds could sleep peacefully. Tenor Roger Nye and his accompanist Marion McVea would come in early to rehearse for their early morning program of songs. The canaries would still be there. So when Roger sang, he often had a canary accompaniment!"

Harold Dinsmore recalls that WRDO's transmitter was located on Water Street and was built by Leslie Hall in 1932 out of leftover parts from WCSH and whatever else they could come up with. The studios were moved to Depot Street and then to 175 Water Street, corner of Bridge Street, in 1939. There was more room there and new and better equipment was installed.

The top floor of the Old Theater Building on Main Street in Presque Isle was the first home of WAGM. WCOU's first broadcast was from the stage of the Old Music Hall in Lewiston, which was packed with an enthusiastic audience despite the 92 degree heat. WCOU's first studio, however, was on the third floor of the building that housed the Couture family's French language newspaper "Le Messenger."

According to Norm Gallant, Faust Couture went to considerable expense to soundproof this studio. To avoid the press noises, he installed a floating floor, along with an early type of acoustic paneling. The studio was quite modern for its day: windowless, air conditioned and equipped with a fine grand piano and organ.



*Guy P. Gannett (right), President of WGAN radio, welcomes Maine Senator Wallace H. White (center) and Columbia Broadcasting System Vice-President Harry C. Butcher (left) to the studio's opening ceremonies in 1938. Gannett went on to build an empire that included several newspapers and radio and television stations. Gannett died in 1953. His daughter, Jean Gannett Hawley, took over and increased the family's media holdings. The Gannett family is still in the business and operates newspaper, radio and television properties in seven states.*

## Equipment

Keeping a station on the air in the 30s required heavy doses of Yankee ingenuity. It was a long way from the sophisticated equipment of today, but in its day, just as miraculous. Richard Marshall remembers the WAGM equipment as limited to the basics and all handmade.

Irving Hunter recalls his early days as a transmitter engineer at WLBZ: "Everything was improvised and if you got an idea, you put it into play, and you did it any way you could ... you never knew what was going to happen from one

moment to another. You had to be prepared."

Even something as small and seemingly harmless as a June bug could cause big trouble. Hunter traces the origin of the term "technical difficulties" to an incident one summer when a June bug flew into the transmitter between the blades of the hand-built air condenser. Of course it committed bug suicide and got zapped. It also caused a short-circuit which blew all the fuses and knocked the station off the air.

Norm Lambert (WLBZ) remembers the old carbon mikes hanging from wires. Sometimes they had to be tapped to get started and often



*In the 1930s and 1940s, network radio correspondents traveled all over the world to get their stories and all broadcasts were "live." Here Lowell Thomas broadcasts from the studios of WCSH.*





SAM HENDERSON  
Chief Announcer

*"Genial" Sam starts you off on the right foot every morning on the "Late Risers" Club at 7:30.*



CARLYLE N. DESUZE

*Announcer, whom everyone knows as "Uncle Carl" of the popular "WGAN Talent Club" broadcast Saturday mornings at 9:30.*



RICHARD E. BATES  
Program Manager



RUSSELL A. DORR

*Announcer, who presents "Songs for You" in his fine baritone voice every Wednesday evening at 8:30.*



CARLTON IDE

*Announcer, cheerfully answers requests on the "WGAN Musical Special" afternoons through Friday at 5 o'clock.*



failed, requiring another tap or two. Condenser mikes, which came along a little later, had problems of their own. They were square, enclosing a tube, an amplifier, and a switch, similar to a light switch. Only the switch often failed, and then you were in trouble. Ed Guernsey (WLBZ) remembers how "... if it failed while the mike was open, someone would have to keep talking. If it was failed closed, you would have to put another record on."

*Early WGAN personalities. Sam Henderson and Richard Bates went on to become radio station managers. Carl DeSuze became a household name, appearing for many years on Boston's WBZ radio.*

Maine stations did on-the-scene broadcasts from the very start: concerts, political speeches, public events, sports. The date of this incident related by Elden "Denny" Shute is not definite but it is a classic story of remote broadcasting.

"An important person in the community had passed away. The local radio station owner not only considered him a good sponsor but a good friend. The station manager scheduled a broadcast of the funeral eulogy. Remote lines were ordered into the church."

"The afternoon of the funeral arrived and people were crowding into the sanctuary. The front of the church, the casket and the platform were banked high with floral tributes. The station's engineer/announcer was hidden behind the flowers."

"But he was having difficulty raising anyone from the studio. The organ music was loud. In desperation, and to be heard down at the station and above the organ music the announcer resorted to shouting. Just as the music stopped and the pastor rose to approach the lectern, these stentorian words overwhelmed the audience: 'We're all ready up here if you're all ready down there!'"

These stories may give the impression that the equipment was less than reliable. Actually, most of the time things went quite smoothly. Then, as now, engineers and announcers were flexible and resourceful. The ability to improvise so that the "show can go on" despite the unpredictable nature of the equipment is the mark of the real professional.

## Local Programming

Local radio programming connected Maine listeners to their communities. Neighbors felt closer and towns more unified. Community spirit was heightened by broadcasts of local sports, school events, community calendar programs and the like. Radio became a forum for local politicians, the center of cultural and community activity. As Ben Hubley recalls, "Someone interesting and well-known was always doing something at the station."

Radio also provided basic information like the time, weather and road conditions. This was particularly important, as it is now, in time of emergencies, like the flood of 1935 and the hurricane of 1938.

Another important role of radio was as showcase and training ground for local talent. And there was plenty of that! Early stations usually had a talent show program, such as the "WGAN Talent Club" (which featured local people who could sing, play an instrument, read poetry, do imitations, etc.) and the "WRDO Radio Players" which premiered in 1932 or 1933.

Many individuals and groups had their own fifteen minute or half-hour shows of popular or classical music, comedy, commentary or variety. These included radio staff orchestras or shows like the WRDO Cony High School "Cony Speaks," a weekly program that introduced many Maine career broadcasters to the medium.

An early programming staple was the staff pianist, beginning with Norman Lambert at WLBZ as mentioned in the previous chapter. Early WGAN listeners tuned in to staff organist and pianist Allister "Sandy" Grant, whose "Piano Impressions" and "Organ Moods" aired five days a week. Ben Hubley recalls how WRDO staff pianist Harold Newcomb would take over if there was a technical problem or they had a programming hole to fill. At WABI, the staff pianist was Harold Dorr, who was also program director.

Country bands were a very popular segment of early programming. They performed live, often before an audience. Smiling Ken MacKenzie did two shows a day Monday through Saturday on WGAN. Then there was the Lone Pine Mountaineer and Curley O'Brien. Hal Dutch of WABI remembers Gene Hooper and his wife, who was the sister-in-law of the Lone Pine Mountaineer. Sometimes the two groups played together on WABI. The Pine Tree Revelers were a favorite at WLBZ, and "Smiling Ernie" was heard regularly on WAGM.

At first, stations were on the air in the evenings only. But as they began to expand their broadcast hours, they created daytime programming for those most likely to be at home: housewives. Stations soon developed programs like "The Housewives' Half Hour" on WLBZ, "Going Places" with Jean Murray on WRDO, and WGAN's "Social Calendar," hosted by Miss Gwendolyn Graves. These shows catered to the interests of women (most of whom were housewives in those days) with cooking, housework, child rearing and social news. The hostess was usually the only woman on the air staff.

A noteworthy exception to this was Roselle Coury. Roselle had attended the Radio School of Technique in New York and was a singer in a New York nightclub before coming to WCOU in Lewiston in 1939. Roselle was not limited to the usual women's programming. She sang on her own nightly music show, introducing

new songs and taking requests. Her favorite was Vincent Youman's "Without A Song." She did a talk show, "Strolling About Town," a giveaway show called "The Lucky Dollar Program" and even a fifteen minute newscast.

WCOU owner Faust Couture complimented her by saying that she could run a station all by herself if need be, for she had done writing, announcing, singing, servicing accounts, interviewing and administration. She was one of the few women of her day who successfully combined a career with the traditional role of homemaker for her husband and two children.

Another natural for daytime radio was children's shows, like the one hosted by "The WGAN Story Tell Lady," Miss E'Lora Pease. Dan Kelly at WRDO hosted and produced a popular Saturday morning talent show for kids called "Meet the Mike." In the early 30s, WRDO had a kids' talent show called "Aunt Pansy," on which Catherine Rice and Ben Hubley appeared. Manager Harold Glidden's wife Duska was the children's show hostess at WAGM.

"Uncle Hezzie Q. Snow" at WLBZ entertained enthusiastic young listeners on Saturdays on "The Children's Community Sing." This program was broadcast live before a studio audience and as Ed Guernsey recalls: "... seemed to draw every kid in Bangor, since the station passed out lollipops as the children left the building after the program." Snow enjoyed a long career in both Maine radio and TV.

Religious and inspirational broadcasts were also part of the programming in the 30s. Most stations featured live broadcasts of local church services. In addition, there were programs such as "Keep on Keeping On," which aired weekly on WRDO. It was broadcast from the bedside of Rev. Herman A. Clark in Gardiner. Blind and bedridden by severe arthritis, he voiced cheerful messages of hope and courage while his daughter played the organ. Pioneer broadcaster Harold Dinsmore engineered this program and married Rev. Clark's daughter. Dinsmore was the engineer and play-by-play announcer for many of WRDO's earliest high school football broadcasts.

The First Radio Parish Church of America, which had begun in 1926 on WCSH (as mentioned in the previous chapter), is another important example of religious programming in the 30s. It is still on the air on WCSH-TV.

Almost all local programming in the early days was live. News, music, commercials, everything. That meant in addition to technical problems, an announcer also had to worry about the inevitable slip of the tongue or, even harder to predict, practical jokes.



Early radio had no recording devices and until the mid 40s, all programming was "live." A popular band in the 20s and 30s was "Dick Lewis and His Sleep Chasers." Dick Lewis (at the piano) chats with WCSH radio manager Bill Foss (holding the clock). The woman is Lucille Potter (Lavin) whose daughter Linda starred in the network television series "Alice."



Stars of one of the most popular local programs appearing on WGAN radio and later on WGAN television; country-western singer Ken MacKenzie and his band, shown here in 1936. He always referred to his lovely wife as "Simone, the Mrs." Ken had some extremely talented members in his band, including Betty Gribben (lower left), the original singing cowgirl comic. MacKenzie started working full time for WGAN radio and TV in 1951, retiring in 1983.





Denny Shute tells the story of a broadcast on Christmas day 1937 at WCSH when he was just starting out as an announcer. The usual network news broadcast had been canceled because of the holiday and the news was fed to the station via teletype. WCSH announcer Elmer Chambers presented Denny with the news on a long roll of paper, just as it had come off the printer, without having cut out and arranged the individual news stories. Despite this, Denny was holding his own with the newscast when he smelled smoke:

"To my horror I saw the other end of the paper had been set afire! Elmer had crawled under the desk and ignited the newscast with his cigarette lighter! I tried to catch the other end with my feet, to no avail. I tried to read faster to reach the end of a story before the flames ate it. Abruptly I ended the newscast . . . and turned to Elmer, now in one corner of the studio holding his sides in silent laughter. 'Elmer,' I said, 'how could you do this to me?' 'Well, Shutey,' he explained, 'I just wanted to welcome you to the great world of broadcasting!'"

Another popular practical joke of the time was for an announcer in the studio to silently "mouth" words to disconcert his buddy in the control room. Being able to handle the unexpected came in handy for Richard Marshall at WAGM when he had to interview a monkey for a show on the Northern Maine Fair. He drew the line when they brought in the snake!

It's not surprising that early radio news reporting relied on newspaper sources, especially since WGAN and WCOU were founded by newspaper publishers. In fact, they often broadcast directly from their corresponding newspaper's newsroom. The exception to this practice was Tom Guernsey, who according to Ed Guernsey, always insisted on independent radio news gathering at WLBZ.

WLBZ began its pioneer regional news service, the Maine News Service, in January of 1933. Ed Guernsey remembers receiving letters from some 40 or 50 correspondents throughout eastern Maine, who were paid the glorious sum of 25 cents a story.

## Networks

WCSH was the first Maine station to affiliate with a network (NBC in 1926). NBC had two networks, the Red and the Blue until 1943. WRDO joined both the Red and the Blue in 1938. WLBZ joined CBS in 1930 but switched to NBC in 1938. WGAN and WABI joined CBS in 1938.

Maine stations not only received programming from these national networks but were also sources. WCSH fed the NBC network coverage of the takeoff of two groups of transoceanic fliers from Old Orchard Beach in June of 1929. In May of 1930, a performance of the University of Maine Band, with Jack Atwood announcing on WLBZ, was fed to CBS. In 1938, WRDO fed NBC live coverage of Maine's official reception for a young boy scout named Don Fendler, who had been lost in the Mt. Katahdin area for eight days.

Not only national networks sprang into life in those early days, but regional ones as well. Several Maine stations belonged to the Yankee Network by the end of the 30s. This regional New England network was started by John Shepherd and originated out of WNAC in Boston. WLBZ became affiliated with Yankee in 1930 and WRDO joined in 1935, as did WCSH in 1936. Yankee offered programs and news closer to home than the national networks provided.

In those early days, it was not unusual to carry programs from more than one network. There could be programs from one or more national networks and a regional network all airing on the same station.

John Shepherd founded another New England network, the Colonial Network. It originated out of WAAB, in the Boston area and lasted for five or six years from the mid 30s to early 40s. One of the last of the regional networks was the aptly named New England Regional Network, which originated out of WBZ in Boston. One of its cornerstones was the women's programs of Marjorie Mills.

Irving Hunter remembers the impact of network programming in the Bangor area:

"It was quite a thrill for people in this area of Maine to be able to get the network on their local station, and of course, you got better reception. In those days if you tuned in an outside station, you got a lot of static, and there weren't that many stations around. . . so when WLBZ went on the Columbia Broadcasting System, at the same time, they joined with WNAC in Boston for programs in that area . . . the people were treated to a lavish assortment of sports and entertainment and they were thrilled to death and could hardly believe it."

Networks linked Maine listeners to the outside world. They tapped their toes to the same tunes, laughed at the same comedies, cried over the same soap operas as other radio listeners nationwide. Radio in the 30s gave Mainers an awareness of other lifestyles and soon became a generating force of public opinion.



Like many other Mainers, Ben Hubley has vivid memories of getting up at 4 am — the early time of the broadcast was due to the time difference — to hear the King George abdication speech in 1930. Since his family had come to Maine from Canada, he wouldn't have missed it for the world. Another famous radio broadcast from the the 30s was the Hindenburg disaster. It was so powerful and emotional that Hubley remembers turning it off when it was replayed.

Franklin Roosevelt was a world leader who knew how to use radio to unite people. His "Fireside Chats" gave him the attention of a whole nation and at the same time provided the average citizen the opportunity to have an intimate "chat" with his President. The People and the President had never been closer.

Network stars (including singers, musicians, announcers and actors) of the 30s were as numerous as stars in the sky. They ranked with movie stars in popularity. Maine's own Rudy Vallee was one, along with Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Marie Wilson, Fred Allen and Gertrude Berg, to name only a few.

## Sales

Last, but certainly not least in our journey through Maine radio in the 30s is the area of sales. Early ad copy was institutional in nature and mention of prices was taboo. That taboo was beginning to be broken when Ed Guernsey first came to work at WLBZ as a copywriter. He was paid \$18 a week, and remembers the mind stretching exercise of having to write 50 versions of the same ad "... it was handkerchiefs for two cents, neckties for a nickel and how do you write that fifty different ways?"

Businesses sponsored programs rather than buying "spots" to air during breaks as they do today. Sometimes the program sponsor even provided the talent. For example, the Northern Maine Fair often purchased quarter hour time slots at WAGM and sent Fair participants to be interviewed during that time, in hopes of stirring up attendance. Some of the country bands did this as well, paying for their own radio shows, during which they would promote their upcoming dance hall appearances.

In those days, radio salespeople had to sell radio itself as a viable sales medium. They had to convince often skeptical businesses that radio was not a passing fancy and could do the job for them. It took several years of "missionary work" to build a solid client base.

What radio had as a strong selling point, however, was the novelty and excitement for the client's hearing his ad on the air for the very first

time. Some business people even called and asked for radio advertising, especially if they could voice the ad personally and have the additional thrill of hearing their own voices on the air.

An interesting comment on the economic climate of the 30s recalled by Ed Guernsey is Tom Guernsey's fondness for restaurants and theaters as advertisers. Why? In the Depression, these were some of the few businesses that always had cash at the end of the day to pay their advertising bills.

Who were some of the first Maine radio salesmen? Manager Bill Foss sold the first sponsorship for WCSH. WAGM Manager Harold Glidden was the lone salesman at his station until the mid 40s. Ed Emery was a longtime salesman at WLBZ, beginning in 1933. He already had more than eighteen years experience in sales, having worked first for a woolens firm and an automobile business.

Longtime WABI salesman Guy Corey also started his sales career in Maine radio in 1933. Guy played trumpet for twenty years in vaudeville before going into radio sales at the age of 44. For years he was the station's lone salesman. He cut a sturdy but rather flamboyant figure, sporting a bright tie, felt hat cocked at a jaunty angle, a battered briefcase and an ever present cigar. He once said his success in sales boiled down to four words: "What's good for him?" The "Dean of WABI sales" understood the importance of knowing his client's needs and wants and built his sales presentations around that basic question.

Commercials were all done live and were therefore subject to the human frailties of the "open mouth, insert foot" syndrome. Denny Shute tells a story about when he was a promising young announcer at WCSH, just before Christmas in 1937. The Jack Benny program had just ended and the Chase and Sanborn Hour was about to begin. Denny was to read a commercial for Bulova watches, which included the time check. It was Sunday evening at 8 PM. Here's what Denny proudly announced for all the world to hear: "The time is 9 PM, Bulova Watch Time. See the new Bulova President . . . curved to fit the foot!" Denny was transferred a few weeks later to a sister station in Manchester, NH — perhaps for training in anatomy and telling time.

## Maine Radio in the 1940s

**R**ADIO'S POWER TO EDUCATE, inform and entertain blossomed throughout the 1940s. It raised money for charitable causes; delivered political speeches to millions; became a companion to listeners with local and network stars who seemed more like personal friends. As world leaders were discovering, it could be used to help unify a nation politically, firing up the emotions that would lead to war.

This was to be a war different in many ways from all the wars that had come before. Radio brought home the terrible sounds of war: gunfire, explosions, planes, marching feet, shouts of "Sieg Heil!", air raid sirens, tanks and the terror of those caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. There were the unforgettable voices of Roosevelt, Churchill, Hitler and Mussolini—men who knew how to use the power of the spoken word. Because of radio, they spoke not to hundreds or thousands, but to millions.

World War II dominated the decade in broadcasting as in all other aspects of life. Radio brought the first news of the war as it happened. It helped rally the American people around patriotic causes. It reminded listeners to conserve food and gasoline, to collect for scrap metal drives, to buy war bonds. Radio stars broadcast from military bases to boost morale.

The war had other effects on radio as well. Many career radio men saw action in the armed forces, some with microphones in hand. These included owners such as Faust Couture, managers such as Jack Atwood and John Libby and air personalities such as Don Powers, Hal Dutch, Uncle Hezzie Q. Snow, Denny Shute and Ben and Les Hubley.

The war brought a freeze on new stations and also on new equipment for existing ones. All resources were reserved for the war effort, delaying the growth of AM and the development of FM.

After the war, there was a "Broadcast Boom" that paralleled the Baby Boom." In the three years from 1946-1949, eleven new Maine

radio stations went on the air. The eight AMs and three FM's brought the number of Maine stations to eighteen by the end of the decade. Five new stations debuted in 1946 alone! Some were the handiwork of the same entrepreneurs we met in the 30s, others of a new crop of innovators.

### 1946

WPOR went on the air in March, carrying Yankee and ABC network programming. It was owned by Centennial Broadcasting Co. Inc. and was located in the old Hotel Graymore in downtown Portland. Murray Carpenter was the principal stockholder, along with the Rea family of Pittsburgh and other investors. Carpenter, who had previously worked at the Compton Advertising Agency in New York, was also general manager.

In 1948, Dick Bronson arrived at WPOR as program director and chief announcer. Bronson recalls two important events that year: the name change to Oliver Broadcasting Co. (although ownership remained primarily with Carpenter





*During World War II, Hollywood made many films to help promote the American war effort. On a swing through Portland in June, 1945 Anthony Quinn discussed his latest release, "Return to Bataan" with WGAN announcers and U. S. Army representatives. On the far right is Quinn's new bride, a Philippino actress who starred with Quinn in the movie. Many entertainers who passed through Maine to promote the war effort would inevitably end up on radio.*

and the Reas) and the move across the street to the Chapman Building. Murray Carpenter's promotional talents made the most of this event with a week-long grand opening featuring tours for thousands of people.

WMTW in Portland also went on the air in 1946. Like WPOR (and so many others), its first home was a hotel—in this case the Falmouth. WMTW was owned by the Yankee Network and, of course, carried Yankee and Mutual network programming. John Shepherd was chairman of the board. Don Curran, who joined WMTW as a staff announcer in 1947, recalls that Yankee had planned for the station to be the first FM in Maine, with a link-up to a transmitter to be located in Poland Spring. Somehow that didn't happen, and it went on the air as an AM, with its tower legs implanted in the depths of an old abandoned water well in an enclosed cul-de-sac hotel courtyard.

Carleton Brown was the principal owner and president of Kennebec Broadcasting Company, which put WTVL in Waterville on the air on June 19, 1946. He also was general manager.

Bangor also got a new radio station in 1946. WJOR was owned by Bangor Broadcasting Service, Inc. and located at 22 State Street. Stephen Verladi was president and chief engineer,

Sidney Sloan was manager and program director and Lawrence Sloan, commercial manager. WJOR brought Yankee and Mutual network programming to Bangor.

Faust Couture's Twin City Broadcasting Co. put WFAU in Augusta on the air on October 2, 1946. As with WCOU, Couture chose call letters from his own name (FAU for Faust). Couture had originally planned for his second station to be located in Waterville. However, his frozen wartime application had lapsed while he was in the army and the filing was picked up by Carleton Brown. WFAU's first general manager was Robert Payne and its second manager (with the longest tenure in that position) was Norman Gallant.

## 1947

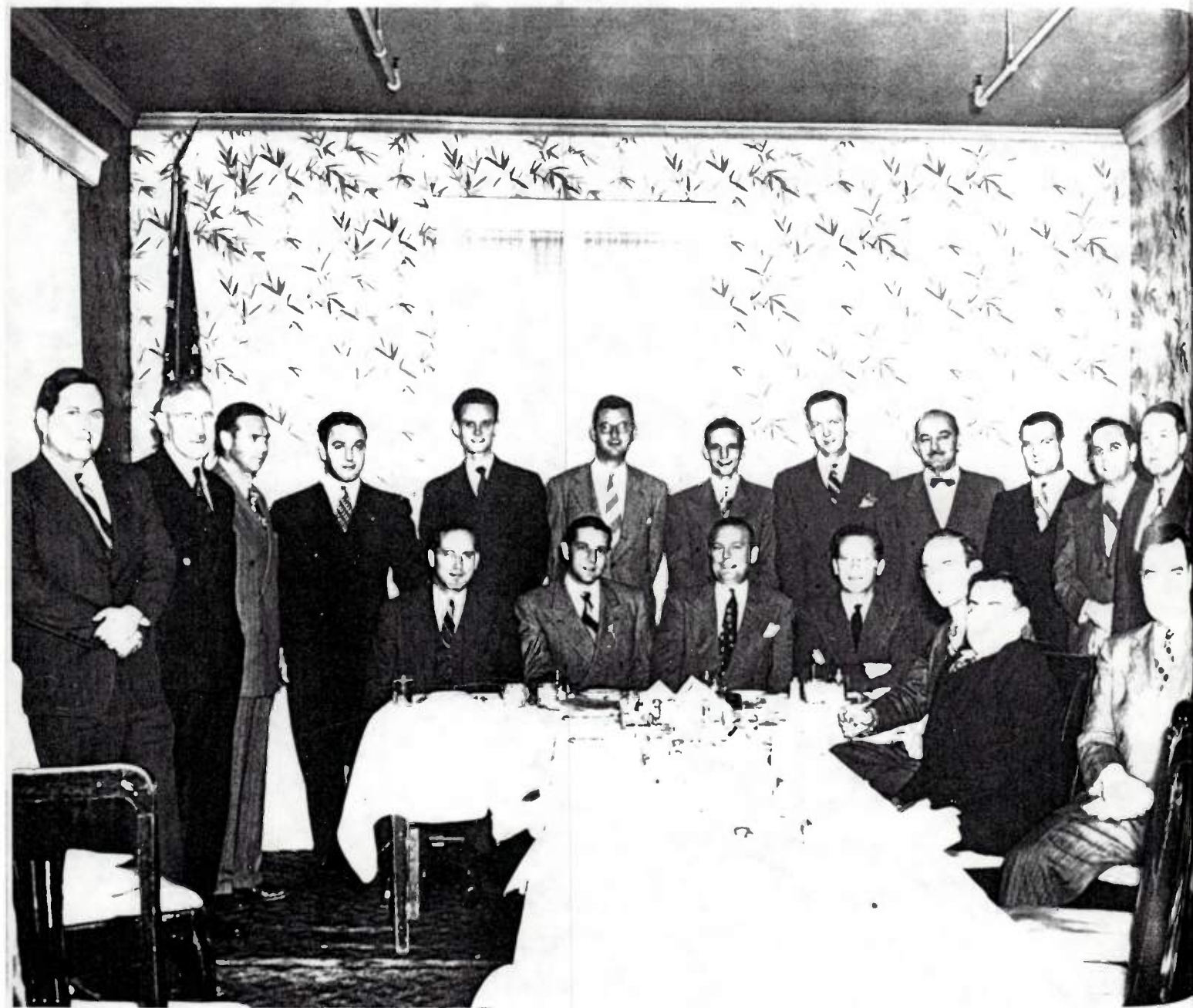
Four stations debuted in 1947, including the state's first two FMs. Lewiston got its second AM station on September 4, 1947 when the Lewiston-Auburn Broadcasting Corporation put WLAM on the air. Offices and studios were on the top two floors at 129 Lisbon Street in Lewiston and a newly constructed transmitter building and towers were located on Washington St. in Auburn. Chief owner and general manager was Frank S. Hoy. Denny Shute was station manager.

WPOR-AM announcers Lee Nelson and Ray Mercer clown around with audience participants during "Brunch at the Lafayette," a daily radio show sponsord by 20th Century Market in 1949. Dick Bronson, then a young program director, looks on with glee.





The founding members of the Maine Association of Broadcasters during their organizational meeting at the Augusta House in November, 1947. The Who's Who of owners and general managers of the pioneer stations in Maine. Seated left to right: Governor Horace Hildreth, Jack Atwood, NAB President Harold Fellows, Augusta Mayor Charles Nelson, Murray Carpenter, Carleton Broxen, Harold Vigue. Standing left to right: Francis Simpson, Frank Hoy, Creighton Gatchell, Larry Sloane, Elden Shute, William Rines, Robert Payne, John Libby, Faust Couture, Unidentified, Edward Guernsey, Fred Simpson.



A little more than two weeks later, on September 20, Guy Gannett Broadcasting Services put WGUY in Bangor on the air. WGUY brought ABC programming to Bangor listeners who now could choose from four networks. The call letters GUY spell out owner Guy Gannett's first name. Station manager Sam Henderson would also be in charge of WGUY-FM, Maine's first FM station, which went on the air in November 1947.

Gannett put a third station, WGAN-FM, on the air in Portland on December 14, 1947. Both FMs were engineered by Roger W. Hodgkins, chief engineer of Guy Gannett Broadcasting Services. Creighton E. Gatchell, who had been manager of WGAN-AM since 1938, took on the same responsibilities at WGAN-FM. Another WGAN-AM veteran, Richard E. Bates, became program director for the new FM station.

The coming of static-free FM received favorable press, with Bates College president Charles F. Phillips hailing it as "another step in the progress of radio" in the *Portland Sunday Telegram and Sunday Press Herald* on 12/14/47. The paper even included a hopeful mention that, "the small wartime number of such receivers has increased rapidly during the past two years."

## 1948

Maine's third FM, WCOU-FM, debuted on February 29, 1948 in Lewiston. It was the third station for Faust Couture's Twin City Broadcasting Company. John Libby was general manager for both the AM and FM stations.

The last Maine station to come on the air in the 40s was WIDE, located at 234 Main Street in Biddeford. It was the only AM station without network affiliation. Gordon J. Lewis wore a number of hats that first year as president of Biddeford Broadcast Group and as general and commercial manager of the station.

## Changes at the Original Seven Stations

Meanwhile, among the seven original stations, there had been some ownership changes. Henry Rines died in 1939. His widow, Adeline Rines, became head of the Maine Broadcasting System, which by the end of the 40s consisted of WCSH, WRDO and WLBZ. WLBZ had been purchased from Thompson Guernsey in 1944.

After preparation at Harvard and RCA Institute, Adeline's son William H. Rines took over the management of the Maine Broadcasting system in 1941 and became general manager of WCSH. Ed Guernsey was general manager at WLBZ and Jack Atwood managed WRDO.

The Rines family was the first to own more than one Maine station. By the end of the

decade, Guy Gannett Broadcasting Service owned four (WGUY-AM & FM and WGAN-AM & FM) and Faust Couture's Twin City Broadcasting Co. owned three (WCOU-AM & FM and WFAU).

At WAGM in Presque Isle, Richard Marshall remembers that the station was destroyed in a fire in the winter of 1944 and was rebuilt by manager Harold Glidden, who was now principal owner. Glidden moved the station to State Street, bought all new equipment, raised the power to 250 watts, joined the Keystone Broadcasting System and added to his management team Forrest Craig as commercial manager and Ted Coffin as program director.

Late in 1949, Fred Simpson sold the Community Broadcasting Service (WABI) to Murray Carpenter and former Maine Governor Horace Hildreth. This was to be the beginning of the Hildreth Stations network. Hildreth was then president-elect of Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and Carpenter had sold his stock and was no longer involved at WPOR.

Walter Dickson recalled that Carpenter had gotten Hildreth interested in the broadcasting business as a way to further his political career. At the time of the purchase of WABI, Hildreth became president of the company and Carpenter became treasurer and general manager of the station.

## Locations

The majority of new stations continued to emerge in the heavier population centers. By the end of the 40s, Portland and Bangor each had five stations (including one FM), Lewiston had three (including one FM) and Augusta two stations. Stations were also located in Waterville and Biddeford, with Presque Isle remaining as the northernmost station location in the state.

As in the 30s, many new stations were originally located in hotels (like WMTW in the Hotel Falmouth). But by the end of the decade, stations began to design and build facilities specifically for broadcasting.

WPOR started out in the Hotel Graymore, but two years later moved to the Chapman building. Dick Bronson recalls that, at the time, the new, specially designed facilities were very modern and state-of-the-art. Built in the Chapman Arcade, the main studio on the second floor had poly-cylindrical walls, with curved surfaces for sound control and a large plate glass window so that the public could observe the studio activities.

WTVL was housed in a private home which had been adapted to the needs of the station. Denny Shute remembers the UPI machine was in a closet, the sales offices were in the bedrooms and the front office and reception area were in the living room. The remainder of the house



*The WABI radio studio was located here at 57 State Street, Bangor from 1937 until 1962 when it was moved to "Studio City" on Hildreth Street.*





*Young Congresswoman Margaret Chase Smith spoke to a civic group in 1947 and was heard in Portland, Bangor and Augusta on the stations of the Maine Broadcasting System. In the 40s, it was small networks like this that allowed a politician to speak to the entire state from one location. Taken for granted today, it was impressive then to hear a politician speak from another town "live" and to realize that the speaker could be heard simultaneously all over the state.*

consisted of an announcing booth and two studios.

WFAU was one of the first Maine radio stations to house its studio and transmitter in the same building, according to "The First Ten Years," by Lucille Dostie (former WFAU Record Librarian). A new building was constructed in 1946 at 160 Bangor Street in only sixty-nine days and the tower was flown in.

A year later in 1947, Guy Gannett Broadcasting Services built a facility on Mt. Hope Avenue in Bangor to house WGUY-AM & FM. The glass and brick building and facilities were designed by Gannett manager Creighton Gatchell and chief engineer Roger Hodgkins. This building was later occupied by WLBZ-TV.

## Engineering

The role of the engineer in the day-to-day operations of radio stations in the 40s was much more prominent than it is today. The task of keeping the programs on the air and the equipment functioning properly usually required more than one full-time engineer/technician. Many programs were still performed before a live audience. The people in front of the microphones (host, announcer or talent) were not operating the controls. It was a technician who set up the microphones, kept an eye on the levels, cued the music or sound effects, and switched from a studio show to a remote.

Stations were not on the air twenty-four hours a day, so transmitters had to be turned on and off and power output had to be strictly regulated. Nowadays this is often done by computer and is taken for granted. Here is a description of one of the daily engineering duties from an article about WGAN which appeared in the Portland Evening Express on 2/2/46:

"Starting a transmitter is not the simple matter the listener finds when he turns on his home receiver. With an opening program at 6 a.m. the engineer has about twenty minutes work warming up and testing the transmitter before the 'sign on.' He has to be there in ample time, too, for he can't hurry that warm-up period if he has any respect for tubes that cost hundreds of dollars each."

Equipment was still sometimes hand-made or improvised, and even technical advances such as wire recorders had problems. The wire recorder was the predecessor of the reel-to-reel tape recorder. Eddie Owen, who started at WLBZ in 1942, recalls that it usually worked quite well and made it possible to reduce a whole basketball game to a half hour by recording only the action



and excluding the time-outs. "The only trouble with a wire recorder, if that wire ever broke, forget it. It was like a ball of steel wool; you could never get it unwound."

Don Curran, who joined the WMTW announcing staff in December of 1947, also remembers the wire recorders:

"Wire recorders were used on some remotes and used, I should say, with misgiving and trepidation. The wire was subject to extreme temperatures. If, for example, you recorded a Winter Olympics, as we did in Rumford when Lake Placid ran out of snow, you could not be sure of the result. If the wire didn't tangle, then the sub-zero temperatures were sure to affect the voice quality."

Perhaps one of the most dramatic events of the decade were the fires of 1947, during which it seemed at one point that the whole state was on fire. Telephone lines and wire recorders were used to provide new coverage. Ed Guernsey remembers this as the first use of the Webcor wire recorder at WLBZ:

"We not only used it for the first time, but John Wibby . . . could make things work with what he had and NBC covered the Bar Harbor fire from the Ellsworth telephone office or City Hall . . . The only amplifier John had down there with him was the wire recorder and he used that to feed the NBC network, with a little plastic microphone."

It was an occasion for improvisation and bravery. Don MacWilliams, working at WMTW at the time, remembers that WCSH's Phil Johnson even went so far as to phone in a report on the fire from a burning building.

In "the show must go on" tradition, Harold Dinsmore gives this account of a WRDO remote he was doing at a Boy Scout Jamboree. He is not sure of the exact date, but it was probably early 40s. The governor was to be the keynote speaker. Just two minutes before he was due to go on the air, someone accidentally tripped over his audio wire, and broke it in two. But the broadcast went on as scheduled:

"I didn't have time to splice it, so I held it (the audio line) between my fingers, one end in each hand. Somebody got the idea that I was holding the electric line together and they said the electricity was running right through my body and I was quite a hero. It sounded a little more weird than it was."

Joe Eaton recalls attempts made to solve the problem of a noisy newsroom at WLBZ. What with the UPI Teletype machine and "a little ticker" Western Union gave them which brought telegrams on tape into the station, Eaton had trouble hearing the reporters and correspondents who would call in on the phone. First, they tried putting an amplifier in the phone but it amplified the background noise too. Then they built a sort of sound proof booth around the news machines and that quieted it down quite a bit.

Engineers kept busy not only with studio and remote equipment but with transmitters and towers as well. Walter Dickson tells an interesting tale about WABI's tower:

"We would have to go out and check the towers, see if the lights were on and everything was all right. I went up there one day in the fall and I was standing there looking at the tower. It was a four-legged tower, self-supporting, 260 feet . . . and all of a sudden one of the legs of the tower where it is supposed to be welded on a plate lifted up about two inches. It had broken away from the weld and that tower would lift up there and drop back, lift up and drop back . . . So I called Fred (Simpson) because Fred was always in the office and he was happy to come out to the transmitter and . . . we finally called some people and we had to shut the transmitter off and they came out with a welding deal and spot welded that leg. But it is a wonder we hadn't lost it, you know, four-legged tower like that on three legs and in the wind."

Microphones were becoming more sophisticated in the 40s. Eddie Owen at WLBZ recalls the so-called eight ball microphone, which resembled a black pool ball. Then there were the "salt shaker" microphones, which he remembers as being durable, efficient and used extensively for sports.

Don MacWilliams at WCSH recalls electrical transcriptions containing programs, music or sound effects which were on big sixteen-inch in diameter disks. There were also station recordings made on acetate-coated disks. This made it possible to record a network show (such as a soap opera) which could be played later. During the war, glass replaced aluminium as a base for the acetate, leading to some embarrassing situations when they were dropped or even bent.

Dan Kelly, who began his professional career at WRDO in 1942, recalls how for one reason or another WRDO couldn't carry one such soap opera live each day from 11:30 to noon. So

WCSH would make a transcription and ship it to them. It usually got there in plenty of time, but he recalls one time when it came very late. Dan was standing at the head of the stairs, waiting for the package. It was getting closer and closer to broadcast time, with only seconds to go:

"I was unwrapping the package while I was running into the control room, getting ready to give the station break ... I placed the disk on the turntable, looked at the label and uh-oh, it was the wrong side! So I flipped it over quickly, and looked at the label. It was the same label! They had put the identical label on both sides of the disk! I had a 50% chance of playing the correct side, so I just let her go. As it turned out, luck was with me and the right program played."

Kelly had another interesting transcription experience the day he received his package on time but with a neat break right across the middle of it. Undaunted, he taped it together. Except for a slight rhythmic clicking sound twice every revolution, it played just fine. "The tricky part was when I had to flip it over during the break to play the other side."

Ed Guernsey recalls two other technical firsts, both from 1949. One was the first broadcast

using the WLBZ radio mike on the "Bangor Sportsman Club Show" at the old Bangor Auditorium. Norm Lambert would play requests taken from the floor over this mike. The second was a phone conversation during a Jean Murray program with a woman in the radio listening audience.

Many changes of frequencies and dial positions occurred in the early 40s, caused by the increased need during the war for clarity and organization. The 1941 *Broadcasting Yearbook* shows that all Maine stations except WGAN and WLBZ had changes that year.

## Networks

By 1949, all Maine stations, except WIDE and the three FMs, had at least one network. Most had more than one, usually one national and at least one regional network. In 1943, the FCC passed chain broadcasting rules which prohibited the operation of two services by one network in the same area at the same time. As a result, NBC sold its Blue Network, which became the American Broadcasting Company.

A new network appeared in Maine in the 40s, called the Keystone Broadcasting System (KBS). It first appeared in the 1945 *Broadcasting Yearbook* at WAGM in Presque Isle. Dick Bronson, a veteran of WPOR and WABI, describes it as a



John McKernan Sr. gives the play by play on WLBZ radio during the action between South Portland and Waterville High Schools for the state basketball crown at the University of Maine gymnasium in 1949. Joining him are announcer Eddie Owen and engineer John Wibby. McKernan died in the early 50s, but his love of sports survived in his son, "Jock," a high school and college athlete who became governor of Maine in 1986. The universal appeal of sports and radio's ability to bring the action into every household was one reason for the explosive growth of this medium.



*Popular ABC radio network talk show host Don McNeill aired his nationally broadcast "Breakfast Club" live from WPOR-AM Portland studios on August 18, 1949.*



radio sales organization with nationwide accounts, which supplied stations with programs and commercials in the form of electrical transcriptions. The stations were not interconnected by radio lines.

The power and popularity of the networks continued to grow through the decade, with big band music, soap operas, comedies, dramas and network stars such as Bing Crosby, Amos 'n' Andy, Chet Huntley and Betty Crocker.

Maine's own Marjorie Mills starred on the New England Regional Network. A native of Waterville, she attended Colby College for two years. Calling herself "The Soup and Beans Lady," her half-hour programs included chats about cooking, gardening, children, pets, poetry, hobbies, her grandchildren, new books and philosophy. She was known for her gentle good nature and friendliness.

Maine stations continued to provide as well as carry network programs. On August 2, 1940, for example, WLBZ fed NBC a half-hour broadcast of an interview with Admiral Byrd. It originated in the WLBZ third floor auditorium (studio B) and was relayed to the Byrd expedition at Little America using the General Electric Company short wave station WEEO. Ed Guernsey believes this to be the first broadcast from a Maine station involving overseas transmission.

### Local Programming

Local programming continued with the types of shows begun in the 30s. Most stations carried programs of local news, weather, sports, food and fashion, juvenile, education, variety, comedy, music, drama, quiz and religion.

French language programming, pioneered by WCOU, was carried on at least four other stations by the end of the decade. This is a reflection of the large number of French Canadians who had settled in Maine, especially in the north.

Along with the big bands, country music remained popular, with groups such as "The Sweethearts of the Air," Tony and Juanita on WCSH and WLBZ. Hal Dutch remembers "Jimmy and Dick" (Jimmy Klasi and Dick Pierson) who came from St. Louis every summer to perform on WABI. Johnny McRae commented that Smiling Dave and Pappy Rappy built a special studio, accommodating 125 to 150 people for their western-cowboy music performances at WABI.

The new FMs featured mostly classical music. WGUY-FM offered broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera Company every Saturday. During a special broadcast before the first of these opera programs on November 15, 1947, Raymond Floyd, music supervisor of the Bangor schools,

was so impressed with the educational potential of FM radio that he declared that, "radio today is the most important factor in the dissemination of music."

Local children's programs continued to flourish in the 40s. At WTVL, Waterville youngsters celebrated their birthdays on "Birthday Party," hosted by Allison Day. At WFAU, "The Story Book Revue" premiered in November, 1947.



*Radio contests have always been popular as WRDO radio announcer Dan Kelly found out as he stood knee deep in 75,000 Drew's Dairy bottle caps sent in by listeners in 1948. Fans voted for their favorite talent on the popular local WRDO program "Meet the Mike," and sent in a bottle cap with each submission. Many radio contests exceeded wildest expectations, again proving the power of the medium and the enthusiasm of the listeners for such promotions.*



*WCOU staff in the mid 40s. Faust Couture, left, the dynamic owner/operator of WCOU, Lewiston and WFAU, Augusta was responsible for many Maine pioneer broadcasting careers. Faust was also a big believer in French language broadcasts and had his own French announcer/commentator on the air every day.*



It dramatized children's stories and featured Norman Gallant and Catherine Rice (soon to be Mrs. Gallant). "Uncle Hezzie" Q. Snow hosted the "Junior Trading Post" on WCSH Saturday mornings.

"Uncle Hezzie" was a character invented by singer/actor/disk jockey Gilbert Snow. He was patterned after Snow's childhood hero, a seafaring Downeaster named Captain Dan Hoxie from Orrington, Maine. In addition to his children's show, Snow hosted "Snow's Trading Post" and "Snow's Visit With Uncle Hezzie Show." At night, he lulled listeners to sleep with his late night music program as "Sleepytime" Gil. His "Paul Gil" persona and "Uncle Hezzie" character carried on a hilarious feud, with audiences not realizing that both characters were played by the talented Gilbert Snow.

Shows for that separate breed called "teenagers" emerged in the 40s with shows like "Peck's Teen Age Coke Party" on WLAM, hosted by Cecilia Butler and Fred Hagerty, WFAU's "Teen Town Capers Club" and WPOR's "Teen Spotlights," hosted by Ray Mercier. According to Dick Bronson, Bruce Mc Gorrill, later of WCSH-TV, was one of the young participants on this show, which featured local bands made up of high schoolers.

Women's shows continued to flourish. Catherine Rice hosted "Listen Ladies" at WFAU, a show popular for its household hints. Well-known statewide, home economist Agnes Gibbs endeared herself to Portland and southern Maine housewives on WCSH all through the 40s, and went on to WCSH-TV in the 50s. At WMTW, Don MacWilliams recalls the time when Ivy Hall upheld "the show must go on" tradition when she continued undaunted even though the ceiling fell in on her during one of her broadcasts in the old Falmouth Hotel!

WIDE had Chris Drivas, who used the air name of Jane Colby. After a brief career as a painter in New York after high school, she headed home to Maine and joined WIDE in 1948 as a copywriter. She was promoted to office manager in 1950 and became assistant manager in 1952. She was probably the first woman to hold a management level position at a Maine radio station.

Jean Fallon joined WLBZ in 1949 as "Jean Murray" to do her "Going Places With Jean Murray." Jean originated this show at WRDO in 1948 where she worked prior to moving to Bangor. It was not the typical cooking show but focused instead on community service and club activities. A native of Augusta, she had attended Colby College and was graduated from the Massachusetts General Hospital School of Nursing. In the 50s Jean was the first Maine woman to cover a

Governor's News Conference (for radio) and later became Maine's first woman television reporter.

The morning show and the "morning man" were now important fixtures, with special programming to get listeners off to a good start each day. Often patterned after NBC's "Cheerio," local shows and local personalities like "Alarm Clock" at WLAM with Fred Hagerty and "Johnny Rise and Shine" (Johnny McRae) at WABI became popular. On his morning show at WPOR, Dick Bronson countered the usual upbeat and bouncy approach. Calling himself "The Grouch," he complained a lot and gave his weatherman Ernie Klieman a hard time—all in fun, of course.

One of the first male/female "morning teams" entertained daily on WLAM's "Coffee Time." It combined the talents of Sonia Forgue and Denny Shute. Probably the most successful male/female on-air team was the pairing of Catherine Rice and Norman Gallant. This duet was successful in real life as well: they married in 1949. They hosted "Storybook Revue," "Melody House," "This is Maine" and "Across the Footlights" at WFAU.

Written by Catherine and produced by Norman, "Across the Footlights" presented weekly half-hour plays on WFAU including westerns, murder mysteries, comedies and romances. On "This is Maine," the Gallants interviewed such well-known stars as Edward Everett Horton, Billie Burke and Zazu Pitts, when they appeared in Lakewood Theater productions. This genial couple broadcast their "Melody House" program from their home, which they had actually named "Melody House."

## Sales

Although selling radio was still very tough, especially against the newspaper, advertisers were beginning to look at radio as a viable sales medium in the 40s. Most stations continued to sell program sponsorships rather than spots.

One of the first local news sponsorships was "The Esso Reporter." The account was handled by an out-of-state ad agency, and was probably the first national account in Maine. Esso sponsored daily news reports on several stations nationwide and the competition among Maine stations for this advertising plum was legendary. WLBZ aired "The Esso Reporter" for more than ten years beginning in 1939, according to Ed Guernsey. According to the fortieth anniversary booklet published by the Maine Broadcasting System in 1965, it aired on WCSH beginning in 1939 as well. John Cooper was hired to serve as the "Esso Reporter" and the United Press International wire service was installed.



*After World War II Europe was in turmoil and Mainers were willing to give a helping hand. Organized by WCSH radio and coordinated by 20 Maine Rotary clubs, 30 tons of food, clothing and toys were sent to France on a fishing trawler from Portland in July 1948. The send-off ceremonies were broadcast to France "live" by WCSH announcer Ellis O'Brien who spoke the language fluently. Public service commitments were taken seriously by early broadcasters and are still a very important part of most broadcasters' programming.*



Apparently there were strict rules about how the broadcasts were to be done. At some point "The Esso Reporter" had switched to WABI. Johnnie MacRae remembers, "They had a format that you had to adhere strictly to. Although there was nobody in the building, you had to hang a banner on your microphone and all this superfluous stuff."

MacRae also remembers the friendship between WABI's durable salesman Guy Corey and his chief competitor, longtime WLBZ salesman Ed Emery. Apparently, at least in this case, radio sales competition could be both keen and friendly.

Commercial copy remained pretty straightforward and low key, sometimes very simple and low key. Eddie Owen, who came to WLBZ in 1942, remembers this unforgettable piece of copy: "Keene's Ice Cream, it's deliciously different. Thank you. That is all." According to Eddie, that was the only commercial the gentleman ever wanted.

Most commercials continued to be done live and there was always the possibility of a slip of the tongue. Dan Kelly remembers one day at WRDO as the crew was sitting around telling

funny stories just before the live cut-in during the 6 o'clock news. The last story was about bananas and monkeys and had them all in stitches. Kelly can't recall which of them stepped up to the mike to do the live commercial, which was for a financial institution. He does remember that after flawlessly reading the live copy, the young announcer closed with: "... and loans up to 1500 bananas." Says Kelly, "I always wondered how many people in town tried to borrow 1500 bananas."

Dick Marshall, who came to WAGM in Presque Isle as an announcer in 1943, remembers that commercials there had no sound effects or music, except for one account which used a jingle. Sales improved considerably when power was increased to 250 watts in the late 40s, which gave the station good coverage of "the Golden Triangle" of Caribou, Fort Fairfield and Presque Isle.

The line-up of commercial managers in the 1949 *Broadcasting Yearbook* included such familiar names as Don Powers at WRDO, Guy Corey at WABI, John Libby at WCOU and Leon Gorman at WPOR. Gorman would move to WABI soon after Carpenter and Hildreth purchased that station.



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## Maine Radio in the 1950s

**M**AINE BROADCASTING continued to boom in the 1950s. Fourteen AMs and two FM's went on the air from 1950 through 1959, bringing the total number of stations to thirty. Veteran broadcasters such as Faust Couture and Carleton Brown consolidated and added to their interests and new entrepreneurs came on the scene.

Group ownership continued to grow with the Hildreth Group (Community Broadcasting Service Stations) now owning three stations, the Rines Family (Maine Broadcasting System) three stations and Stone - Couture - Tarlow eight stations by the end of the decade.

There were a few stations which did not survive the decade. **WGAN-FM** no longer appeared in the *Broadcasting Yearbook* after 1949, 1950 was the last year **WJOR** was listed, 1951 the last year for **WMTW** and 1954 for **WGUY-FM**.

### *The Early 50s*

Until the latter part of the decade, radio continued to be all things to all people. Music played only a small role in radio programming until television took hold in the late 50s. The high hopes for the new improved fidelity of FM's in the late 40s did not materialize in the 50s. As Bruce McGorrill remembers, "Who needed great sound when radio programs were mostly talk?" Few people had FM receivers and the incentive to buy them was limited to those few who wanted to listen to the classical music the FM's played. This association of "high fidelity" with "high falutin' music" continued into the 60s and kept the FM's struggling for survival.

The decade ended as it had begun with three FM's, but they were not the same three. **WGAN-FM** and **WGUY-FM** were silent, but **WFST-FM** in Caribou came along on October 1, 1956 and **WMTW-FM** in Poland Spring went on the air on June 11, 1958.

The Aroostook Broadcasting Corporation, which owned **WAGM** in Presque Isle, put **WABM** in Houlton on the air in 1950. It had the same management as **WAGM**: President H. E. Umphrey, General Manager H. D. Glidden, Commercial Manager Forrest Craig, and the busy Ted Coffin, who was program director, farm director and promotion manager.

**WAGM** was purchased by Hildreth's Community Broadcasting Service stations in 1957, with Leon Gorman as executive vice-president and Walter Dickson as vice president of operations. The Houlton station became **WHOU** when it was bought on June 4, 1959 by Northern Maine Broadcasting Corporation. Bernard E. Esters became president and general manager and Glenn H. Hilmer vice-president and treasurer.

Carleton Brown's Knox Broadcasting Company put WRKD in Rockland on the air on October 1, 1952. Brown, who also owned and managed WTVL in Waterville, served as president and brought in his WTVL program director Paul Huber as general manager. Frank Knight was WRKD's first morning announcer and also served as program director and farm director. WRKD's present station manager, Terence Economy, began his career at the station in 1958.

August 21, 1953 at 5 PM was an exciting moment for Rumford residents when the long-

awaited radio station WRUM went on the air. It was owned by the Rumford Broadcasting Company, an affiliate of the Rumford Publishing Company, which published the *Rumford Daily Times* and the *Rumford Falls Times*.

Owners Melvin Stone and Albert Rowbotham were following in the footsteps of Guy Gannett and Faust Couture, also newspaper owners who branched out into radio. According to Bruce McGorrill, the FCC and the general political thinking at the time not only allowed but encouraged newspapers to get into radio, feeling



The crew of WRKD, Rockland in 1953. Sitting left to right: Sherman Rutter, sales manager; Carleton D. Brown, president and owner; Paul Huber, station manager. Standing left to right: Louise Veazie, secretary; Alfred Thurlow, engineer; Donald Wilson, chief engineer; Frank Knight, program director; V. B. Crockett, salesman; Margaret Hanks Dana, women's director; Richard Weatherbee, engineer; Robert Mayo, news director.



# Group Ownership by 1959

## Rines Family Stations

WCSH, Portland .....original owner 1925  
 WRDO, Augusta.....original owner 1932  
 WLBZ, Bangor.....acquired in 1944

## Hildreth Group

(Community Broadcasting Service Stations)

WABI, Bangor.....acquired in 1949  
 WAGM, Presque Isle.....acquired in 1957  
 WPOR, Portland.....acquired in 1958

## Stone-Couture-Tarlow Stations

### 1. Faust Couture

WCOU, Lewiston	(Twin City Broadcasting Co.)...original owner 1938
WFAU, Augusta	(Twin City Broadcasting Co.)...original owner 1946
WCOU - FM, Lewiston	(Twin City Broadcasting Co.)...original owner 1948

### 2. Melvin Stone

WRUM, Rumford	(Rumford Broadcasting Co.).....original owner 1953
WGHM, Skowhegan	(Pineland Broadcasting Co.).....original owner 1956
WSME, Sanford	(York Broadcasting Co.).....original owner 1957

### 3. Sherwood Tarlow (50%) Melvin Stone (25%) Faust Couture (25%)

WLOB, Portland	(Casco Broadcasters Corp.).....original owner 1957
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### 4. Melvin Stone (33 1/3%), Faust Couture (33 1/3%), David Royt (33 1/3%)

WGUY, Bangor	(Bangor Broadcasting Corp.).....acquired in 1958 from Sherwood Tarlow, who had bought it from Murray Carpenter in 1954
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that this was a natural progression, if not a civic responsibility.

Stone and Rowbotham had purchased the Rumford Publishing Company in 1948. In 1949, they founded a weekly paper called *The Wilton Times*. In 1950, they took over another weekly, *The Westbrook American*. They purchased *The Lisbon Enterprise* in 1951. They began publishing both a daily and weekly paper in Rumford in 1952.

They continued this successful partnership in the operation of WRUM. Stone, a Portland native, was president of the company and station manager. Rowbotham was treasurer. As with publishing, once Stone had a taste of broadcasting, he quickly expanded his broadcast holdings.

## Mid 50s

Two stations debuted in 1955. WCME in Brunswick took to the airwaves on December 16, and was owned by Westminster Broadcasting Company with Roger Strawbridge as president and general manager. WKTQ in South Paris was the first of two stations started by Elden Shute and Gerald Higgins. Former managers at WLAM and WLAM-TV, they formed the Oxford Broadcasting Company and spent the summer of 1955 building

the studio-transmitter building for "Katie-Q." The station began its broadcast life on October 28.

In 1956, three more AMs and one FM station came on the air. In Caribou, Northern Broadcasting Corporation debuted WFST- AM on July 15 and WFST-FM on October 1. F. Sidney Tibbetts was the owner and chief engineer and Elby Stevens was general manager, program director and promotions manager.

Portland's newest station was WLOB, owned by Casco Broadcasters Corporation. Sherwood J. Tarlow was president and Melvin Stone was vice-president and general manager. Faust Couture was also a major stockholder. According to Bob Fuller, a broadcast veteran of several Maine stations, WLOB was "the powerhouse popular music station" of greater Portland until the early 60s.

Skowhegan got its first radio station in 1956 with WGHM. It was operated by Pineland Broadcasting Company with Melvin Stone as co-owner (55%) and general manager and Edward Trembley as co-owner (45%) and chief engineer. Trembley sold out in the late 50s to put his engineering talents to work for General Dynamics in San Diego. He later worked as head of the electronics division at the Bath Iron Works.



*The cast of WFAU's Radio Guild at the mike during their weekly show "Across The Footlights" from the WFAU studios in Augusta in July 1953. Produced with local talent, this show rivaled some of the nationally broadcast programs. Romantic plays were intermingled with murder mysteries, westerns and comedies. Shown left to right are Laura Carpenter, Walter Dolcon, Norman Gallant (who later became executive director of the Maine Association of Broadcasters), Helen Dempsey, Catherine Rice Gallant and Harry Simmons.*

Stone had a busy year in 1956, with WLOB going on the air on February 2 and WGHM on March 17. He became president of York Broadcasting Company, which put WSME in Sanford on the air on November 9, 1957 as well. Herbert Hoffman, owner of a Boston station and DJ Arnie "Woo Woo" Ginsberg were Stone's partners at WSME. Ginsberg had a flamboyant show on WBOS in Boston called "Woo Woo Ginsberg and the Night Train."

Melvin Stone recalls that John A. Carlson wore many hats at WSME as general manager, commercial manager, program director and promotions manager—practically a one man show! About a year after the station went on the air, Carlson bought out Ginsberg's share and became a one third owner.

Bath got its first station in September of 1957. There seems to be some confusion about the exact date: the 1958 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists it as September 29, the 1959 edition lists it as September 20, and the 1960 edition lists it as September 30. There is no question, however, of the fact that WMMS was owned and managed by Winslow Turner Porter. No company or corporation is listed, so it seems WMMS was the only Maine station at the time which was owned by an individual.

Mt. Washington TV Inc. put a new FM, WMTW-FM, on the air on June 11, 1958. It was unique for a corporation which operated a TV station to put a radio station on the air—it was usually the other way around. As Bruce McGorrill



has commented, just as the FCC and political powers had encouraged newspaper publishers to become radio entrepreneurs, they had encouraged radio operators to get into television

WDEA in Ellsworth debuted on December 13, 1958. It was operated by Coastal Broadcasting Company with owners Milton Chapman as president and Donald E. Knowles as general manager. Chapman and Knowles had worked together at WABI in the early 50s. Chapman was formerly WABI-TV sales manager, while Knowles headed the WABI radio sales department. Chapman's interest in the station was purely as an investment.

Knowles remembers that the call letters were chosen to describe their station's location—"Wonderful Down East Area." This phrase was used as a slogan during the early days at WDEA and reflected why they had chosen Ellsworth in the first place: because it was "the crossroads for the Down East area."

The last year of the decade was as active as the rest, with three stations coming on the air. There were fireworks and celebration in the air when WQDY signed on the air on Independence Day, July 4, 1959. Calais' first radio station was operated by St. Croix Broadcasting Company with John H. Vondell Jr. serving as vice president and general manager. WQDY was one of three Maine stations built by Buffalo Bob Smith of "Howdy Doody" fame. Smith was strictly an investor in the station and did not perform on the air or participate in station management. WQDY's longtime general manager Dan Hollingdale began working at the station around Christmas of 1959 as a part-time announcer.

The call letters "QDY" are an abbreviation of "Passamaquoddy," which is the name of a local Indian Tribe. It is also the name of the Bay, a dominant geographical feature of the area, which has sometimes been known as the "Quoddy Area."

WJAB in Westbrook was next to come on the air on November 8, 1959. Raymond B. Durgin was both general and commercial manager and Bob Fuller one of the first DJs. It was operated by Westbrook Broadcasting Company and promptly challenged WLOB in nearby Portland as the dominant popular music station.

The last station to come on the air in the 50s was WKTJ owned by Franklin Broadcasting Corporation in Farmington. This was the second station of the partnership of Elden Shute and Gerald Higgins. It debuted on December 21, 1959, with Shute serving as president and general manager and Higgins as treasurer and commercial manager.

They chose call letters beginning with "KT" because they wanted to call their two sta-

tions "The Katie Stations" and thus establish a real personality for them as the Katie sisters "Katie-Q" and "Katie-J." Denny Shute recalls that they had a drawing of the "Katie Sisters" (done by either his wife or his daughter) that was used for advertising to further personify the stations.

## Locations

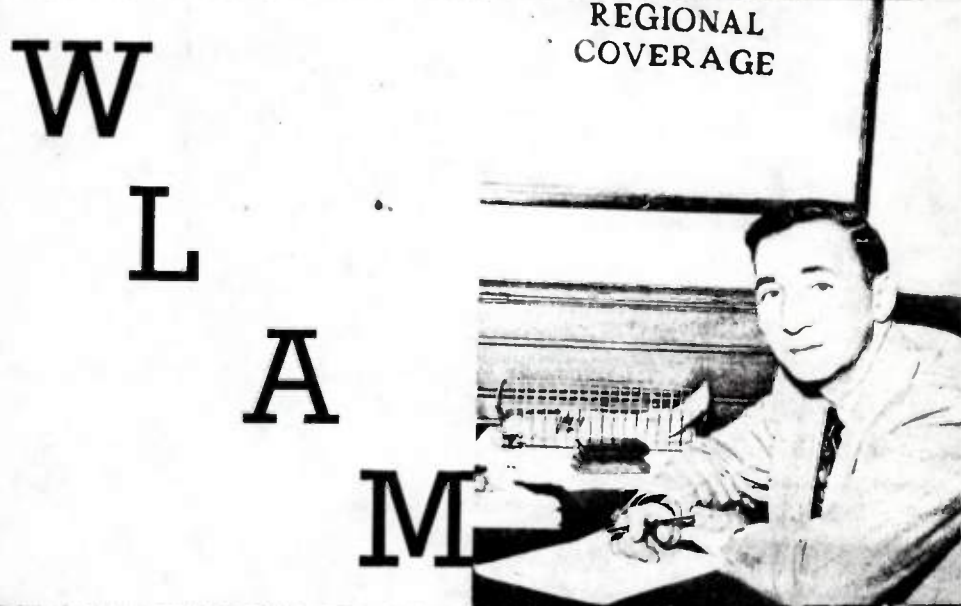
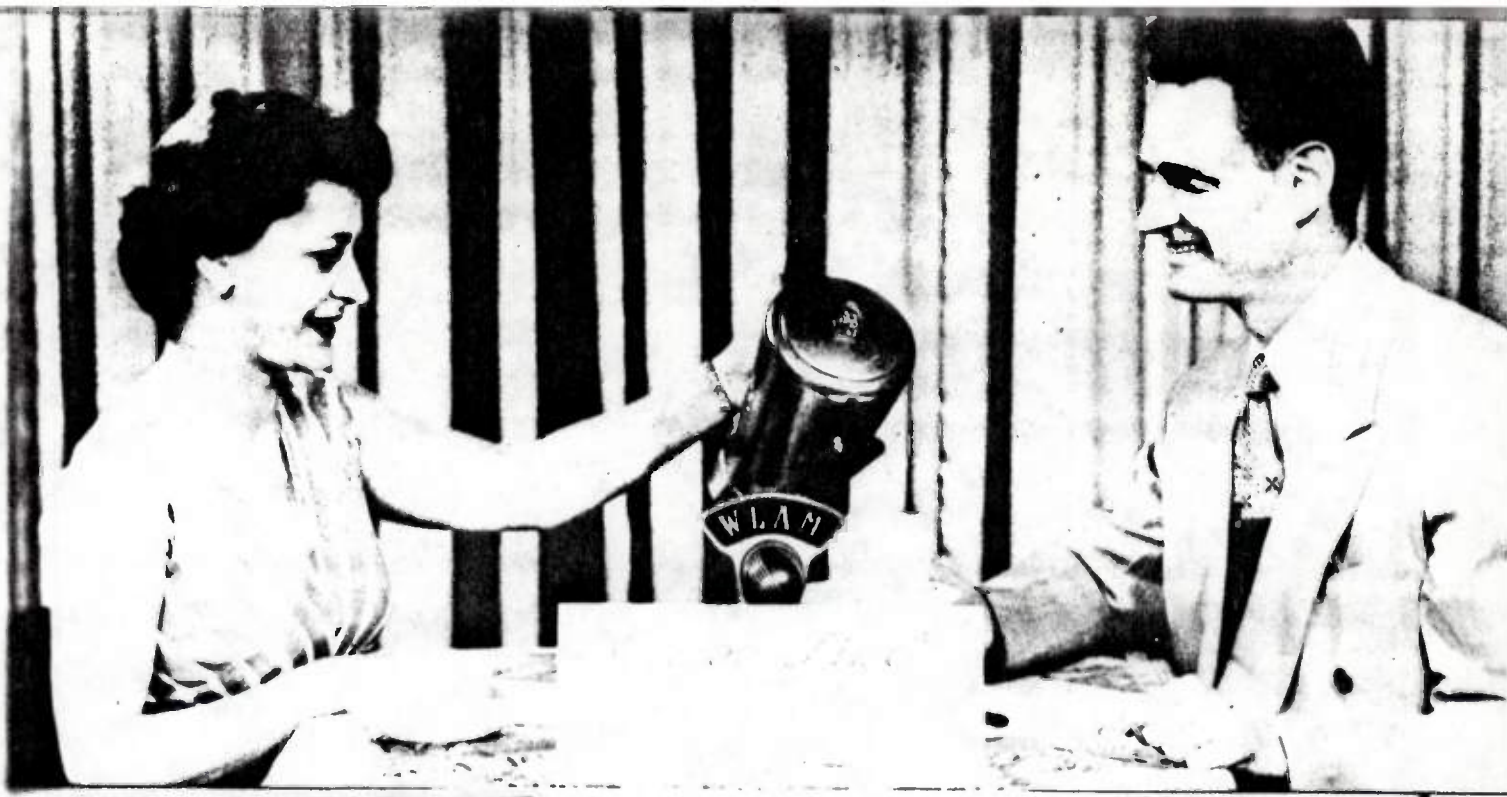
Unlike the previous decades, twelve of the fourteen stations that came on the air in the 50s were not in the large population centers, but in smaller, more remote communities that previously had no primary radio coverage. The exceptions were WLOB in Portland and WJAB in Westbrook, which was close enough to Portland to be heard clearly. There were now radio stations in Maine from as far north as Caribou to as far south as Sanford, from as far west as Rumford to as far east as Calais.

The opening of a radio station was an exciting and eagerly anticipated event in these more isolated areas, where reception of stations from cities was poor due to the distances involved as well as the terrain. It opened up these small towns and connected them to the rest of the world, bringing news, information and entertainment.

Such was the case with WRUM in Rumford. The station was first located in the *Rumford Daily Times* newspaper building at 40 Prospect Avenue (which was owned by WRUM owners, Stone and Rowbotham). The newspaper took up about two thirds of the building and the remaining space had formerly been used as a Studebaker dealership called the Times Square Garage, Inc.

According to the *Rumford Daily Times* (Radio Edition, Aug. 20, 1953), this space was completely renovated to provide offices for the receptionist and station manager, a control room, transmitter room and work area. There were two studios for news broadcasts and interviews, the smaller of which could hold four people, the larger (complete with piano) could accommodate

*The on air staff of WLAM in 1953 was a very talented crew and spent many years in the industry in Maine. Top: Sonia Forgue and Denny Shute doing their popular "Coffee Time Show." Second row: announcer Norm Buker and program director Harold "Hal" Dutch. Bottom: announcers Bob Joyce and George Ouellette. WLAM station owner Frank Hoy took many of his talent with him when he started Portland's first television station WPMT in 1953.*





up to twenty-five! Thus they transformed a garage into a state-of-the-art radio facility.

Stone and Rowbotham had received help and advice from veteran broadcaster Faust Couture in building their station. In fact, according to Norman Gallant, the 204-foot tower they erected was the original WCOU tower, which had been purchased from Couture and then transported and re-erected at the foot of the former Chisholm Ski Club championship ski jump.

Then, a terrible thing happened. As Norman Gallant reported in the MAB Newsletter of Jan./Feb. 1989: "On the air only a few months, the station suffered a disastrous fire, triggered from a nearby lumberyard. It kept on the air from emergency quarters and later relocated at 89 Congress Street in the Island business section."

WRUM survived this early setback with equipment borrowed from other stations, records brought in by the announcers and listeners and the quick thinking of program director Ken Ellis, who rushed bravely into the burning building and

rescued all the files with the station's program logs and billing information.

In a 1989 interview, Mel Stone called the story of the WRUM fire "an outstanding tale of cooperation between Maine broadcasters." From an empty building (formerly a grocery store) around the corner on Maple Street, WRUM was back on the air less than 24 hours after the fire with all borrowed equipment. Stone reports that Hal Meyer from WPOR sent its 250-watt standby transmitter and that other stations sent a turntable, tape recorders and even a control board. The DJs brought their own records and had special "request" programming—if listeners would bring in their records, the station would play them!

Denny Shute and Gerald Higgins housed their "Katie" stations (WKTQ and WKTJ) in wooden buildings built and designed especially for broadcasting. They were simple, barn-like structures, with shed type roofs. Shute recalls that he and Higgins did a lot of the actual construction work themselves. WKTQ had a studio,

*Many celebrities had careers in radio before becoming familiar faces on television. Here is the line up of CBS radio talent that was heard in Maine on Guy Gannett Broadcasting Company stations WGAN, Portland and WGUY Bangor.*



MARIE WILSON  
as "My Friend Irma"



ARTHUR GODFREY



JACK BENNY



HELEN HAYES  
"Electric Theatre"



BERGEN, MCCARTHY and SNERD



CBS IN MAINE—Here are just a few of the galaxy of Columbia Broadcasting System stars, whose programs beamed to Maine listeners over stations WGAN and WGUY.

office, reception area and transmitter/control room. **WKTJ** was built at the foot of Voter Hill with a similar floor plan.

**WDEA's** first home was on Christian Ridge Road in Ellsworth. A small unfinished building, already on the site when it was purchased, was divided into a transmitter room, an office and one studio/control room. The tower was also located on this site.

**WQDY** is still housed at its original location, a former doctor's residence on Main Street. Private homes were often used by these small town stations, which gave them a personal and homelike atmosphere.

Mel Stone moved a former Air Force housing unit from a recently phased out Air Base to land he had bought on School Street in Sanford. Thus **WSME** had instant offices and studios, all at a cost of \$1,800.

### Networks

By 1959, the role of networks had already begun to change dramatically. National network

programs quickly switched to TV and the days for "MOR" (middle of the road) radio were numbered. Network comedies, soaps, game shows, dramas and children's programs—once the mainstays of Maine's radio programming—soon disappeared, as the networks cut back mostly to news and features.

This is reflected in the fact that by 1959, only eleven of the thirty stations in Maine carried one of the big three national networks (CBS, NBC, or ABC). Six stations carried ABC, two CBS and three NBC. Mutual was carried by four stations, two of which also carried ABC.

The role of regional and local networks grew in the 50s. About two-thirds of Maine stations carried at least one regional and one local network. The Yankee Network and the New England Regional Network were the two most used regionals. Statewide, the Maine Broadcasting System was supplying up to 6 stations primarily with news and informational programming. The *Broadcast Yearbook* lists **WRDO**, **WLBZ** and **WCSH** as belonging to this network in

*Network radio stars were often already accomplished performers from the theater, movies or vaudeville.*



CHICO MARX



LUCILLE BALL  
in "My Favorite Husband"



BING CROSBY



EYE ARDEN  
as "Our Miss Brooks"



AMOS 'N' ANDY



JOAN DAVIS



RED SKELTON



# Networks By 1959

## National

### ABC

WABI, Bangor  
WLAM, Lewiston  
WPOR, Portland  
WRKD, Rockland  
WTVL, Waterville  
WMTW-FM, Poland Springs

### CBS

WGAN, Portland  
WAGM, Presque Isle

### NBC

WRDO, Augusta  
WLBZ, Bangor  
WCSH, Portland  
WFAU, Augusta

### Mutual

WABI, Bangor  
WIDE, Biddeford  
WCOU, Lewiston  
WFAU, Augusta  
WPOR, Portland

## Local

### Maine Broadcasting System Hildreth Network

WRDO, Augusta (1953)	WABI, Bangor (1959)
WLBZ, Bangor (1953)	WPOR, Portland(1959)
WCSH, Portland (1953)	
WLAM, Lewiston(1958)	

### Lobster Network

WCOU, Lewiston (1953)  
WRUM, Rumford(1953)  
WRKD, Rockland (1953)  
WFAU, Augusta (1953)  
WGUY, Bangor (1956)  
WLOB, Portland (1957)  
WFST, Caribou (1958)  
WSME, Sanford (1958)

### No Network

WMMS, Bath  
WCME, Brunswick  
WQDY, Calais  
WDEA, Ellsworth  
WHOU, Houlton  
WGHM, Skowhegan  
WKTQ, South Paris

1953, with WAGM and WABM joining in 1954 and WLAM in 1958. By the end of the decade, there were only four stations, as WAGM and WABM had dropped out.

The Hildreth Network is first mentioned in the 1959 *Broadcasting Yearbook*. WABI and WPOR were its first stations. WQDY joined in 1960.

Following the example of the Keystone Network, Melvin Stone and Faust Couture formed the Lobster Network in 1953. It was strictly a sales, not a line-tied network. It provided group promotions, and station IDs of the sound of a lobster clicking its tail, as well as the commercials. With eleven stations participating at one time or another during the decade, it provided an excellent way to advertise statewide.

WFAU, WRKD, WCOU, WPOR, and WTVL were listed as Lobster Network stations in an ad placed by the Lobster Network in *The Rumford Daily Times* on August 20, 1953. This ad welcomed WRUM as its newest network member. The *Broadcasting Yearbook* first lists WGUY and WGHM as Lobster Network stations in 1956.

The network's flagship station WLOB ("LOB" for Lobster) is first listed as a Lobster Network station in 1957, although one would assume it actually joined in 1956 when WLOB first went on the air. Because the *Broadcasting Yearbook* was an annual publication, it could have taken a year for this to show up.

WCME, WFST and WSME all appear in the *Broadcasting Yearbook* as part of this network in 1958. With the 1959 Yearbook, WPOR, WTVL, WGHM and WCME had dropped out, leaving eight stations still active in this group.

Yet another interesting development was that eight of Maine's thirty stations ended the decade with no network affiliation at all! This was a radical change from 1950, when all the stations had at least one network. These were all stations from small areas that had recently come on the air during the 50s. Their decision to go without network affiliation may have been partly due to expenses, but was also because of the growing emphasis on local programming.

## Equipment

The most sweeping technical innovation of the 50s was the reel-to-reel magnetic tape recorder. Invented in Germany in the mid 30s, it was first called a "Magnetophon" and used by German radio stations. Most of the machines and the factories that made them were destroyed in WWII. However, a few machines were acquired and shipped back to the U.S. by the Army Signal Corps.

By 1948, Ampex had developed its model 200 machine, which was first used on the Bing Crosby show on NBC. No longer would network shows have to be done two or three times a day, because of the three hour time difference coast-to-coast. Networks now could feed their programs on a time-delay basis on tape.

The quality was far superior to electrical transcriptions and wire recorders. Furthermore, the tape was easily edited, so it was now possible to remove bloopers, so that every performance could be "perfect."

It took a little longer for Maine stations to obtain these machines, but by the mid 50s they were common. Now a local radio reporter could do on-the-spot news or interview politicians or other newsmakers and then have the luxury of editing the tape to include just the most relevant

parts. The interview could take place at a time and place convenient to all. And it could be broadcast whenever and as often as desired. This also applied to live performances and commercials, which will be discussed further later.

Don Powers, who joined **WRDO** full-time in 1940 and went on to be head of the Maine Broadcasting System's three radio stations, remembers ribbon mikes as the mainstay of the 50s, with remotes done with telephone lines and a simple two or three dial remote unit. **WCSH** used a small aluminum box with no dials, two mike outlets and a wire for telephone hook-up for sports play-by-play.

Dan Kelly at **WRDO** remembers the appearance of 45 rpm records for the first time in the 50s. These were smaller than the 78s, but had a much larger center hole. The turntables often had difficulty accommodating this larger hole (although they came with an adapter) and 45s often had to be stabilized by placing a coin on them.

**WDEA** owner Don Knowles tells a 50s version of the "bug in the works" story about the time his transmitter mysteriously went down. His engineer was baffled. Knowles noticed a spark when he tried to turn the transmitter on. Upon close examination, he discovered the problem: a small, burnt-to-a-crisp bug in the air space between the metal condenser plates. "His presence caused it to short out and kicked the transmitter off the air," explained Knowles. Apparently insects in the transmitter (like Irving Hunter's **WLBZ** June Bug) were still a problem in the 50s. "A bug in the works" may have a literal meaning in broadcasting!

## *Local Programming*

The 1950s were a time of dramatic change and innovation. Radio in 1960 was very different from what it had been in 1950. Why? Television, magnetic tape and rock'n'roll!

There were those doomsayers who predicted the extinction of radio once television arrived in the mid 50s. But then, there had been those who had had similar pessimistic views about newspapers when radio arrived. True, network shows and sponsors abandoned ship with lightning speed and many radio broadcasters were worried.

So they looked around to see what radio could do that no one else was doing or could do, and for what radio could do better than TV or newspapers. They expanded upon radio's traditional role as the community voice and reporter of the local scene. When network programming was cut back to just news and features, even more emphasis was placed on local news, sports,

information, and interview/talk shows.

Don Powers, who came to Portland in 1957 to be in charge of the Maine Broadcasting System's three radio stations (**WCSH**, **WRDO** and **WBLZ**) remembers those decisive times. Once the realization hit that TV was not just a fad or primarily an educational tool, it was tough. Powers conducted his own survey in the Portland area, going door-to-door himself to about 60-100 homes. "It was an eye opener," Powers recalls. "There was no doubt the radio network soaps were losing their audience, and also, interestingly, people would say they didn't listen, yet the radio was on in the background, playing the youngsters' music."

The "youngsters' music," also known as rock'n'roll, came along just in the nick of time! The idea of "Top 40" music had been evolving since the end of the war. With Elvis Presley at the head of the parade of increasingly popular rockers, radio seized the opportunity to play a new role, to cater to a new audience: the teenager. Listening and dancing to the latest records became the focus of teen life. And the DJs and stations who played that music became immensely popular and influential heroes, role models, and friends.

The formal and dignified announcers of the early years were becoming "DJs," with show-biz personalities. The perfect diction, formal dress and authoritative manner of the past was giving way to a more relaxed style that would reach its heyday in the 60s. These "DJs" were real local celebrities—hip, outrageous, trendsetting, wise-cracking, fast-talking and sometimes irreverent. Don Powers remembers Jim Sands at **WCSH**, Ray Mercier at **WPOR** and Howie Leonard at **WLOB**.

Opportunities for local people to participate in radio was greater than ever, and participate they did. Harold Dutch, who came to **WLAM** in 1950 as an announcer, and later became program director, recalls the "Sidewalk Interviews" hosted by Bill Dey and George Gamble. This "man on the street" type interview show aired at noon on Saturdays outside the Lisbon Street studios. Says Dutch: "We dropped a mike from the window of that fourth floor studio. . . and talked with people in the street and let them express their opinion." **WLAM** also had "Junior Town Meeting," on which students from three local high schools debated and discussed current affairs. It was moderated by Edward Little High School teacher Frank Wimmer.

Local sports continued as a major component of local programming. Almost every Maine station had several sports shows daily and many broadcast local games as well. **WFAU** broadcast Colby basketball and football games and even received an award in 1951 for promoting the Little



League. WLBZ did the first tandem basketball broadcast in the state, covering two games at the same time. Eddie Owen reported the Beals-Rangeley game in Waterville, while John McKernan covered the Stearns-Old Town game at Orono during the 1952 tournaments.

WFAU broadcast Cony High School games, but at WRDO there was another connection with local youth. "The Cony Revue," originated in 1937 by then-student Ben Hubley was a weekly program in which Cony High School students and faculty participated. Among the talented "Cony Revue" student alumni who continued to professional broadcast careers are Ben and Les Hubley, Don Powers, George Curtis, Dan Kelly, Jean Murray and Richard Dysart (who went on to star in the NBC television series "L.A. Law").

Game shows, French broadcasts, children's shows and women's programming were still prevalent well into the 60s. Some of the material on the women's shows would be rather amusing to a 90s listener. Imagine how this bit of advice for a happy marriage, offered in 1953 by NBC's Meredith Wilson, would be received today:

"A wife should wipe off her husband's shoes, last thing before he leaves the house in the morning. This is a psychological move. It goes all the way back to the times when a husband was the 'Lord and Master.' A wife suffers no humiliation by such a gesture. . . . When he goes off to work with a mental picture of his dear little wife on her knees wiping off his shoes, how can he carry a grudge about something he got mad at last night or at breakfast? Even if she's mad at him, let her wipe off those shoes of his at the door and false vanities and temper will fly out the window."

As in World War II, the careers of many radio men were interrupted by a call to serve in the armed forces. The impact of the war is recalled in yet a different light by Don Curren, who was station manager at WMTW at the time:

"One of the sad times during my three years in Portland had to do with the Marine Corps Reserve Unit, which had its training site on Commercial Street. Every Thursday night, we recorded a program called, 'Tell It to the Marines.' It featured Marine personnel from the local unit. We had some great times at those recording sessions. The organization was called to active duty in 1950 and sent to Korea. Many of the lads who took the train out of Portland did not return. I remember many of their faces to this day."

*Chuck Sanford, a 38-year veteran of broadcasting in Maine prepares to go out on assignment in the early 1950s. Sanford started as an announcer/reporter for WGUY, Bangor. During his substantial career, he worked his way up to station manager at each of the three Guy Gannett Portland facilities (WGAN-AM, WGAN-FM and WGAN-TV).*

## Sales

Radio sales people in the 50s faced a triple challenge. They still had the task of easing the hold on the advertising budget that newspapers had always enjoyed. According to Don Powers, print was still the advertising mainstay of local retailers: "Most radio sales came from additional money spent, not from out of the newspaper budget. We used the approach that now you have a new approach, with all the advantages that sound can bring you." With the advent of magnetic tape, radio sales people could bring "spec tapes" to show clients the advantages of sound and what radio could do for them. Spec tapes soon became a major tool in radio sales efforts.

Second, they had to face the prospect of a whole new advertising medium: television. By the end of the 50s, television could not be ignored. Although it was expensive, it had already taken over the bulk of network shows, and with them, the national sponsors of those shows. So radio began selling more and more "spots," the kind of 30 or 60 second ads we have today, rather than program sponsorships. The practice of sponsoring local news broadcasts and features continued. Radio put even more emphasis on local advertising to go along with the heavier emphasis on local programming.

Since no other station could get a signal in there because of the terrain, stations in smaller areas such as WDEA in Ellsworth and WRUM in Rumford had "captive audiences." They had an easier time of it. However, stations in larger areas such as Portland and Bangor, which had more than one local station, had a third challenge. They had to split the advertising pie further with other radio stations as well as with newspapers and TV.

As a result, the use of surveys (such as the "Pulse") was on the rise as radio headed into the 60s. The idea of surveys was not new. The Radio Advertising Bureau made stations used to the idea of using statistics in their sales efforts. In its newsletter to subscribing stations, it provided material about the number of people who owned radios, comparisons of the number of radio listeners to



Well ma -  
I finally  
made it big  
in show biz!



newspaper readers, etc., mostly on a national basis.

Many stations did their own independent telephone surveys, which were at first primarily for their own edification. But this could be time consuming, and the professionally done surveys also offered the objectivity of an outside party plus a more standardized approach. They became yet another useful sales tool.

The advent of magnetic tape changed the way radio commercials were done just as dramatically as it had changed programming. Ads could be done over and over until they were perfect. No more danger of fluffed or forgotten lines. Tape also made it easier to use background music, jingles and sound effects in radio ads.

In addition, ads could be voiced by someone other than the announcer on duty. It could be an actor or actors, or one or more of the other announcers. Even the client could now come to the station at his convenience and tape the ad himself. This "ego" sell gave clients the lift of hearing their own voices on the air and was also very effective advertising (and still is). So it's no wonder that this personal touch, the "direct from the horse's mouth approach" became quite popular.

Negative advertising was a no-no in the 50s. You didn't knock a competitor, make a comparison showing superiority, or even mention that there was any competition. And you would never, ever mention a specific competitor by name. That was thought of as giving the other guy a free plug—even if it was a negative mention. The idea was simply to sell your own product.

According to Don Powers, a real selling point for radio was creativity and ideas: "We would study the client's business, who the customers were, what the plusses were to the public—and then develop ideas to convey that on the radio." Most of the programming staff wrote commercials. Since Don had come out of programming, he continued writing copy as a salesman.

One of his most memorable "ideas" was sold to Red Snell who had a tire business in Augusta. At first the commercials consisted of one line: "Red Snell wants to see you about your tires." Everywhere he went, people stopped Snell to ask him what he wanted to know about their tires. After a while another line or two was added to the campaign to keep listeners' curiosity keen.

# Maine Radio in the 1960s

**T**HE DECADE OF THE 60s was a time of tremendous upheaval. Everything was changing all at once. The stability and complacency of the 50s gave way to a time of reevaluation and massive social movements. Civil Rights, Vietnam and Women's Liberation were among the issues that suddenly became the topics of songs heard on the radio.

More than ever, radio became an industry that was attractive to youth. Most on-air people were young. It was the young people with their music and their protests on college campuses who seemed to be leading the nation, as America became a youth-oriented society. It was their musical taste that was reflected in many radio station formats. Young people were more likely to trust their local DJ than their senator or congressman. "Don't trust anyone over thirty!" was a popular slogan of the time.

Radio was changing too. Music became much more important, as did listener surveys, ad agencies and on-air personalities. Music formats, wacky DJs, and crazy contests became ammunition in ratings wars in larger markets, as competition became more intense. Audiences were becoming more fragmented and specialized by age and musical preferences.

However, smaller and more remote areas were much slower to react to all these social changes, to television and to the rock'n' roll revolution. Most small towns still had only one radio station (if they had one at all) and many still got poor (if any) TV reception.

By 1969, Maine had nineteen new radio stations. Ten of these were FM's added to existing AM's. The day of the "AM/FM combo" had arrived. The FM's continued to play mostly classical or beautiful music formats in the 60s (often automated) and were financially carried along by their stronger AM sister stations.

Bob Fuller, a popular Portland DJ in the 60s, (now president of Fuller-Jeffrey Broadcasting Companies, Inc., owner of 12 radio stations

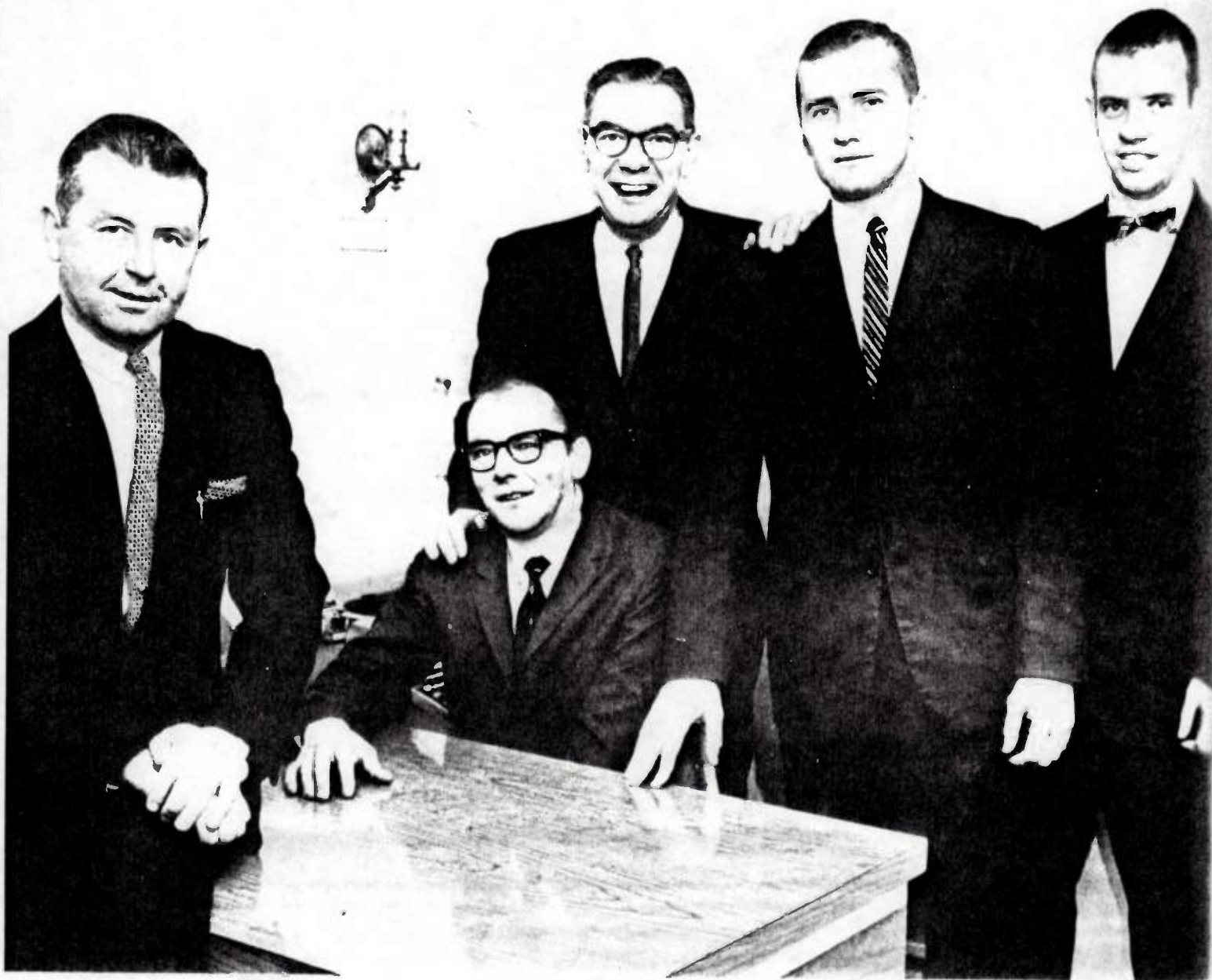
nationwide), recalls that one of the problems was that the technology had not been developed yet to manufacture small and inexpensive FM receivers, so not many people had them. Even though **WLOB** was simulcasting its top 40 music on the FM, not enough people were listening for the improved sound of FM to catch on as it did a decade later. **WMTW-FM** was the sole stand-alone FM, while the only two AM/FM combos were **WCOU AM/FM** in Lewiston and **WFST AM/FM** in Caribou. By the end of the decade there were thirteen FM's (25% of the total number of stations) and twelve AM/FM combos.

## New FM's

For the most part, new FM's sprang up in the larger markets and represented the bulk of the growth in these markets. For example, three of the four Portland stations added an FM in the 60s. The first was **WLOB-FM** (now **WPKM**), which debuted on June 1, 1960. The Hildreth network added its first FM, **WABI-FM** in Bangor, on March 15, 1961. **WFAU-FM** in



*The executive staff of WQDY, Calais in the early 1960s: (left to right) Gene Townsend, sales manager; Bill Casey, office manager; "Buffalo Bob" Smith, owner; Dan Hollingdale, station manager; Don Clarke, announcer.*



Augusta debuted in July of that year. Two more FMs came along in 1965: **WCME-FM** in Brunswick (4/11/65), and **WDEA-FM** in Ellsworth (12/27/65). **WCME-FM** later became **WXKA** and is now **WCLZ**. The call letters **WCME** now belong to an FM in Newcastle, founded in 1984. This is not the same station that went on the air in Brunswick in 1965.

Portland listeners had their choice of four FM signals by the end of the decade with the addition of two FMs in 1967. In addition to **WMTW-FM** and **WLOB-FM**, they could also tune to **WGAN-FM** (2/67) or **WPOR-FM** (10/31/67). Carleton Brown got on the FM bandwagon with **WTVL-FM** in Waterville (11/67) and **WRKD-FM** in Rockland (4/16/68) as well. The last FM to be born in the 60s was **WGHM-FM** in Skowhegan in September of 1969.

## New AMs

The remaining nine new stations were AMs, many of which were located in small remote areas that had no previous primary radio coverage. Nearly half of the state's 48 stations by 1969 were the only ones in town, giving them a captive audience.

Presque Isle started off the 60s with a new radio station in town. **WEGP** was put on the air by original owner Edwin G. Perry on June 24, 1960. In the tradition of Guy Gannett and Faust Couture, he named the station after himself choosing the same call letters "EGP" as his initials. Madawaska received its first station on December 1, 1962 when **WSJR** debuted. Located at the very top of the state on the Canadian border, it replaced **WFST** in Caribou as the northernmost station in the state.

**WMKR** became Millinocket's first radio station when it began broadcasting on December 7, 1963. The original owner was a Dr. Gillman. It was bought by "Buffalo Bob" Smith of "Howdy Doody" fame on November 1, 1967. Smith also bought **WHOU** in Houlton that year, and had previously purchased **WQDY** in Calais in November of 1964. He was now the owner of three AM radio stations in Maine. Dan Hollingdale supervised all three stations for Smith, traveling the triangle from Calais to Houlton to Millinocket.

Hollingdale, who had been working full-time at **WQDY** since 1960, remembers his first encounter with "Buffalo Bob" just before Smith's purchase of the station. Smith, whose real name is Robert E. Smith had a camp in Maine. A mutual friend, a Dr. Mitchell, brought Hollingdale and Smith together.

Calais couldn't get any television reception at that time, so Hollingdale had never seen "Howdy Doody" and had no idea that he was

talking to a genuine "star." He was not prepared for the Hollywood-style greeting he received. "Danny, Booby Baby! How ya doin'?" was not the customary greeting in Calais, Maine. It was nonetheless the start of a long friendship as well as a business association between the two.

What's in a name? Plenty, or so Frank A. Delle must have thought. When he put **WLKN** on the air on November 9, 1964, he decided to honor its hometown of Lincoln. He not only chose the call letters "LKN," but named the company which held the station's license (of which he was president), "The Radio Voice of Lincoln."

**WBME** became not only the first radio station in Belfast, but also the first in Waldo county when it debuted on November 20, 1964. It was acquired by the Belfast Broadcasting Company on January 1, 1967, which was owned and operated by David F. and Jane Milligan.

Winston D. Chapman carried on the tradition of the one-man show at **WMCS** in Machias, which took to the airwaves on December 5, 1965. The 1970 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists him as president, general manager, commercial manager, promotions manager and news director—a very talented and very busy man!

Like **WBME** in Belfast, **WDME** was the only station in its town and county. It thus brought primary coverage to the small town of Dover-Foxcroft in Piscataquis County on August 13, 1967. Frank A. Delle Jr. was president of Radio Voice of Dover-Foxcroft.

John J. Pineau, President of Andy Valley Broadcasting System, Inc. put **WPNO** (now **WTME**) in Auburn on the air on July 9, 1968. It is no coincidence that the call letters sound like the name of its founder. Pineau's partners at **WPNO** were his brother Gerald and James Aikman, who was the station's general and commercial manager.

Pineau says that after waiting some eighteen months for the FCC to respond to his application for **WPNO**, he decided to do something about it personally. So he went to Washington, D.C. The FCC was housed in what appeared to be the attic of the U. S. Postal Service building. Literally buried in paperwork, the man behind the desk was astounded that Pineau had actually come there in person. "Where's your lawyer?" he kept asking. He eventually found the application and they had a brief discussion about the matter. Within thirty days the application went through.

The last new AM to join the ranks of Maine broadcasters in the 60s was **WABK** in Gardiner, on September 1, 1968. The 1970 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists its owner as the Abenaki Company with Jon A. Lund as president, Donald A. Roberts as general and commercial manager and James Chadwick as chief engineer.



## Changes At Existing Stations

John Pineau had come on the scene in Maine as a television engineer at Channel 13, **WGME-TV** (then **WGAN-TV**) in Portland in 1963. Along with his brother Gerald and two other investors, he formed the Central Maine Broadcasting Company and bought **WCME** in Brunswick in 1964. After launching **WCME-FM** in 1965, the Pineau brothers sold their interest in the Brunswick stations and bought **WGHM** in Skowhegan from Mel Stone. Pineau took over as president, general manager and chief engineer of that station, and added **WGHM-FM** in 1969.

In 1965, Mel Stone sold his interest in three stations because he was interested in getting into television (Channel 7 in Bangor). On March 3, 1965, he sold **WLOB** in Portland to the Portland Broadcasting Corporation (Ralph Guild, president). He sold **WGHM** in Skowhegan to John J. Pineau's Kennebec Valley Broadcasting System, Inc. on May 7, 1965. Stone sold **WSME** in Sanford

to Sound Enterprises, Inc. (William Sweeney, President) on August 1, 1965.

Stone retained ownership of **WRUM** in Rumford, which became a daytimer and got a new tower in the 60s. It was around the time of the Bay of Pigs and the Cold War feeling was strong. Stone recalls that **WRUM**'s new tower site was located on a farm in South Rumford and that the government built a bomb shelter, complete with emergency broadcast facilities, under the new **WRUM** tower building there.

Stone was still President of **WGUY** in Bangor in 1969. However, Lou Borgatti had bought into **WGUY** in 1961, as Faust Couture began preparing for retirement. Couture sold **WFAU** and **WCOU** to his former managers and proteges, Norman Gallant and John Libby in 1965, according to his wife, Nancy Couture. She noted that since they had no children of their own, Faust felt that it seemed only right to pass on the stations to these two men with whom he had worked for so long.

## Multiple Ownership by 1969

(Radio)

### Existing Groups

#### Rines

**WCSH**, Portland  
**WRDO**, Augusta  
**WLBZ**, Bangor

#### Hildreth

**WABI**, Bangor  
**WABI-FM**, Bangor  
**WAGM**, Presque Isle  
**WPOR**, Portland  
**WPOR-FM**, Portland

#### Stone

**WRUM**, Rumford  
**WGUY**, Bangor

#### Brown

**WRKD**, Rockland  
**WRKD-FM**, Rockland (1968)  
**WTVL**, Waterville  
**WTVL-FM**, Waterville (1967)

#### Hoy

**WIDE**, Biddeford  
**WLAM**, Lewiston

#### Shute/Higgins

**WKTJ**, Farmington  
**WKTQ**, South Paris

### New Groups

#### Smith

**WQDY**, Calais (acq. '64)  
**WMKR**, Millinocket (acq. '67)  
**WHOU**, Houlton (orig. owner, '67)

#### Pineau

**WGHM**, Skowhegan (acq. '65)  
**WPNO**, Auburn (orig. owner, '68)

#### Delle

**WLKN**, Lincoln (orig. owner '64)  
**WDME**, Dover-Foxcroft  
(orig. owner, '67)



*"Broadcast House," home of radio stations WWMJ and WDEA, was built in 1829. It was a residence and doctor's office before becoming a broadcast facility in 1965. The two-and-a-half story Greek Revival frame dwelling was built by Andrew Peters, architect and builder of several 19th Century buildings in Ellsworth.*

Capitol Communications Corporation became the owner of WFAU AM & FM on August 4, 1965. Norman Gallant was general manager, Harold Vigue, president, Joseph Roy, chief engineer and Paul McClay, sales manager. These four partners owned and operated WFAU until 1981. Gallant had first worked for Faust Couture at WCOU in Lewiston in 1944. He became general manager of WFAU in 1949.

Androscoggin Radio Corporation acquired WCOU AM & FM in August of 1965, with John Libby as president and general manager and Joseph Roy as chief engineer (as he was at WFAU). Both were longtime employees of Faust Couture at WCOU. Libby had been general manager of WCOU since 1938 and was a charter member of the National Sportscasters Association and was the voice of the Boston Bruins during the 50s.

Milton Chapman sold his interest in WDEA in Ellsworth to William Fitler, III in 1963. Fitler became sole owner of this station in 1972.

A change in FCC policy is worthy of note

at this time. In the 60s, the FCC prohibited ownership of more than one communications outlet in the same geographical area (i.e. you couldn't own both a television station and a newspaper in the same city). As Mel Stone recalls, it was "grandfathered" so that no one had to divest; but from then on, newspapers were no longer expected or allowed to get into radio or television, and likewise radio and television owners couldn't become owners of one of the other media in the same coverage area.

### *Locations*

Since FMs added to existing AMs usually simulcast or were automated, they were housed with their AMs and required little space. Many were placed in a closet-like setting, visited only by an engineer or AM DJ on duty when it was time to change the tapes, add a commercial cartridge or update the weather.

The exception to this was WMTW-FM, which had no AM sister station, but was the



offshoot of WMTW-TV. Ray Knight, who was an engineer/technician for Mount Washington from 1954-1968, recalls that WMTW-FM had no studios of its own and was completely automated. It operated from the TV transmitter site atop Mount Washington, playing music that originated at a classical FM station in Boston.

Bob Fuller recalls his days as program director at the "Big Jab," from 1962-1965. WJAB was a major player in the Portland market even though it was actually licensed and located on the second floor of 841 Main Street in nearby Westbrook. There was only one studio, so all commercial production had to wait until the station signed off the air. Since it was a daytimer, that was pretty early in the winter months. "We used to have production parties and a lot of fun. . . it was like a toy radio station. . . and we lived for the summers when we could stay on the air longer," recalls Fuller.

Bob Gold ran WJAB for Chet Steadman (whose Chandler Broadcasting Group owned WJAB and two New Hampshire stations) from 1968-70. Located over a department store, WJAB had limited space, Gold remembers, with only one sales office and one manager's office, which he shared with Steadman.

Bud Sawyer, who was morning man at WGAN from 1962-1974, recalls that Gannett's radio, TV and newspaper were operated separately even though they were housed in the same building. The radio operation was on the sixth floor except for the newsroom, which was on the fifth floor with the TV operation. This meant that the DJ on duty couldn't see if the newsman was ready or even in the booth when it was time to do a newscast. So they had an intercom between the floors, which sometimes didn't work.

Sawyer will never forget the time Ed Needham, who followed him on the air for the 10-2 shift, was upset one day because the intercom wasn't working. So he left a note requesting it be repaired. The next day the intercom still wasn't working, so he left a note again. The third day, when it still hadn't been fixed, he threw it out the window. The next day, there was a new intercom—and it worked, too! In addition to being a colorful personality, Needham had a truly magnificent voice and was a fine war correspondent, according to Sawyer.

Unlike the situation at WGAN, the WLBZ radio and TV operations were housed in separate locations. WLBZ radio moved to a new specially constructed building (the WLBZ Radio Building) on outer Broadway in Bangor in April of 1960. This was previously the site of the transmitter only. The building was of contemporary design with offices and studios planned for broadcasting efficiency. Ben Hubley, who was in charge of the

Maine Broadcasting System (WCSH, WLBZ and WRDO) at the time, noted that with the decline in live performances in favor of record shows, radio studios had become much smaller. One of the old WLBZ studios had been a showplace large enough to seat an audience of 250, who enjoyed the musical or theatrical performance of a large cast of live performers. Those days were gone by the 60s, and the new WLBZ studios were only large enough for a DJ and equipment.

WDEA in Ellsworth outgrew its original two-room location on Christian Ridge Road and moved its studio and office to a large and beautiful three-story colonial-style house on State Street (its present location) in 1961. Built in the 1800s, this former sea captain's home had been used as a doctor's home and office. Care was taken to preserve its beamed ceilings and antique furniture, so that it provides a more elegant and luxurious setting than is usually found in small market radio stations.

John Pineau remembers that the deal Mel Stone offered with the purchase of WGHM in Skowhegan included 100 acres of land. It was Stone, by the way, who had chosen the call letters "GHM," which stood for the "Golden Heart of Maine." The WGHM tower was on Middle Road and the studios were on the third floor of a downtown building. Pineau recalls he paid all of \$75 per month rent (heat included) for this space, which consisted of two studios, an open office area and a sales area.

WPNO in Auburn was located across from the courthouse on Court Street in a building that had formerly been a store. The newsroom was situated in the front room, which featured a large window so that the broadcast activities were visible to people on the street and in cars.

## Networks

The 60s saw the shift of network programs from radio to television become complete. Networks continued to provide national and world news reports and features, but the days of radio network soaps, dramas and comedies were over by the end of the decade.

Despite this shift to heavier local programming, for the most part the national networks were hardly abandoned in Maine. ABC went from six stations in 1959 to ten in 1969. CBS had an even larger gain, going from two stations in 1959 to eleven in 1969. NBC remained the same with only two stations. One casualty was the old Yankee/Mutual network, which disappeared by the end of the decade.

The local sales networks were also on the way out due to the rise of national representatives. The decline of the Lobster Network was also

# 1969 Network Affiliation

(Radio)

## National

### ABC

WABI, Bangor  
WLAM, Lewiston  
WTVL, Waterville  
WPNO, Auburn  
WIDE, Biddeford  
WQDY, Calais  
WSJR, Madawaska  
WAGM, Presque Isle  
WRKD, Rockland  
WGHM, Skowhegan

### CBS

WFAU, Augusta  
WDME, Dover-Foxcroft  
WDEA, Ellsworth  
WHOU, Houlton  
WCOU, Lewiston  
WLKN, Lincoln  
WMCS, Machias  
WMKR, Millinocket  
WPOR, Portland  
WRUM, Rumford  
WSME, Sanford

### NBC

WLBZ, Bangor  
WCSH, Portland

## Local

### Lobster

WLOB, Portland  
WRUM, Rumford  
WSME, Sanford  
WGHM, Skowhegan

### Pinetree

WQDY, Calais  
WMKR, Millinocket

### Keystone

WGHM, Skowhegan

### Maine State

WFST, Caribou  
WDEA, Ellsworth

### MBS

WKTQ, South Paris  
WJAB, Westbrook

## No Network

WGUY, Bangor  
WCME, Brunswick  
WRDO, Augusta

WJTO, Bath  
WABK, Gardiner  
WEGP, Presque Isle

WBME, Belfast  
WGAN, Portland  
WKTJ, Farmington

\*As listed in the 1970 *Broadcasting Yearbook*

hastened by the change in ownership of its stations. Faust Couture had retired and sold his stations, and Mel Stone had sold three of his stations in order to get into television. As Stone explained in a 1989 interview, "As long as the station owners also owned a piece of the network, everything worked fine. When the ownership split, it became difficult to package and set rates."

Nine stations chose to go without a network. The 1969 *Broadcasting Yearbook* listed just one more than in 1959. However, they were not

the same stations. WMMS in Bath, WCME in Brunswick and WKTJ in Farmington were the only three who remained without a network from 1959 to 1969.

Three well established stations chose to shed their networks during this time: WGAN in Portland (formerly CBS), WRDO in Augusta (formerly NBC), and WGUY in Bangor (formerly Lobster). Three stations came on without a network: WABK in Gardiner, WEGP in Presque Isle and WBME in Belfast.



## Equipment

The reel-to-reel tape recorder made many things possible in the 60s: not only pre-recorded commercials, news and features but also "canned" music. This made adding an automated FM fairly easy and inexpensive. It was not necessary to add to the staff, as sales people could sell both stations and the AM announcers and news staff simply added the recording of weather and news reports for the FM to their daily routines. This was further simplified when audio cartridge tapes came along, so that individual commercials could be recorded rather than having all the ads on one long reel-to-reel tape.

The situation at WMTW-FM was unique. Its classical music originated at an FM in Boston. When the Boston station pushed a certain button at its transmitter, it turned Boston off and turned on the taped announcements at the WMTW-FM transmitter on Mount Washington. Ray Knight, who worked as an engineer/technician for both WMTW-FM and WMTW-TV credits John Ricker with developing a clever way to switch back automatically to the Boston broadcast after the commercials had finished. He developed a special solvent that would leave a clear spot on the 1/4 inch tape. Light could then pass through the tape and would hit a photo-electric cell that stopped the tape and switched back to Boston.

Knight recalls that the WMTW-FM transmitter was a used one, purchased from a Portland FM that had gone off the air. A man named Alford from Massachusetts designed the antenna. Knight remembers icicles forming that weighed half a ton, and having to climb sixty feet up the tower with an ax to clear off the accumulated ice.

Remotes were still being done with telephone lines and were very popular. However, whenever there are men and machines, Murphy's Law can kick in at any time. Bud Sawyer remembers the day the phone line went dead during the broadcast of a heavily promoted Thanksgiving Day ball game, and the time a sports announcer (who shall remain unnamed) hooked himself up to the wrong phone line and broadcast his scintillating play-by-play of an important game on the wrong radio station!

## Programming

Programming in the larger areas such as Portland and Bangor differed from more remote ones. This became more pronounced in the 60s. Smaller areas were slow to change. Surveys and ad agencies were not an important factor. They had little competition from other radio stations or from television due to geography and terrain. Therefore, they continued to provide "something for everyone" with middle-of-the-road music, local news, interview programs, remotes and public affairs programming.

Dan Hollingdale remembers that WQDY was still using block programming in the early to mid sixties. Here is his description of a broadcast day during this time: "First, there'd be some country music, followed by a couple hours of MOR (middle-of-the-road), then some after school teenage music and easy listening after 8 pm." Remotes were popular, like the Saturday morning broadcasts from the local bowling alley which featured kids aged 8-12 in the children's league.

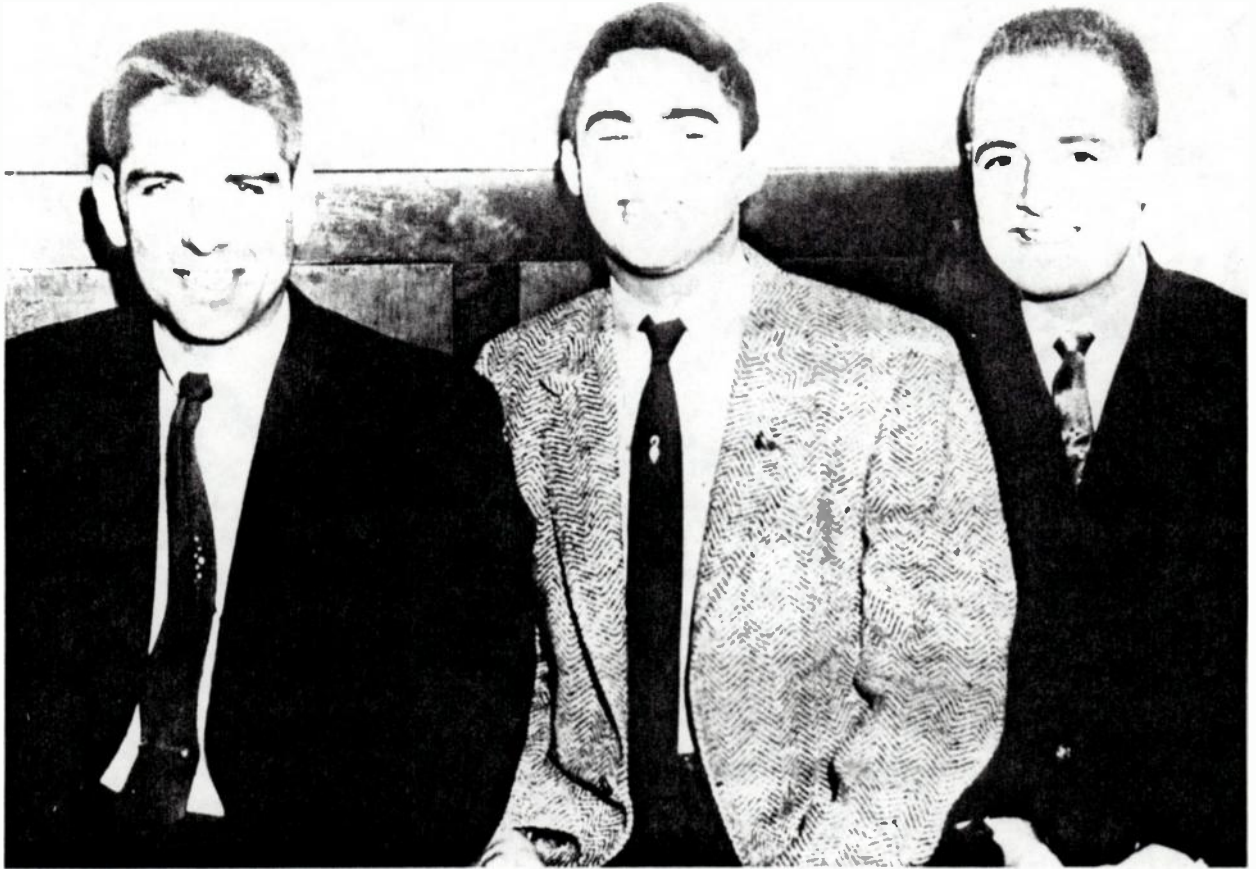
Don Knowles describes WDEA programming in the 60s as 40% information (news, public service, talk shows). The remainder of the programming was MOR standards and specialty shows such as Boston Pops or Philadelphia Symphony broadcasts. George DeForrest did an evening show called "Words and Music." He would choose a topic or theme (like love, death, or life) and then in his own laid-back style, weave together poetry, music and quotations from famous people and books with his own distinctive comments.

At WGHM, John Pineau recalls a Saturday morning show for high school students. An audience participation show, it featured guests such as cheerleaders, drama and the glee club members and local basketball and baseball teams. "It was great for building listenership. All their friends would be tuned in, and so would all the parents," explained Pineau.

All stations learned that this was the decade of the DJ. On-air personalities were very important, and this included talk show hosts. Some were laid-back, some manic, some cool, some kooky. Each was distinctive in his own way.

For example, there was "Surfer Joe," overnight DJ at WLOB from 1963-69. A free spirit, Joseph Shevenell started as a high school reporter for the station in 1959. He attended Maine Vocational Technical Institute, where he was studying to be a sea captain. He more or less lived in a 1939 Chevy panel truck, which he had outfitted like the hippie vans that became popular a little later. Rick Snyder recalls Surfer Joe's classic farewell line when he left WLOB: "My wave came in. See ya."

Left to right: Program Director Frank Fixaris (age 26) with disk jockeys Bob Fuller (age 19) and J. J. Jeffrey (age 19) at WJAB, Westbrook in March 1960. Frank Fixaris later became a popular sports director at WGME-TV (WGAN-TV) in Portland. Fuller and Jeffrey became partners and very successful radio operators, owning several radio stations across the country, including WBLM, Lewiston/Portland.



Looking back, Surfer Joe commented in a 1989 interview that one of the biggest changes since the 60s is that DJs then had more freedom regarding what music they played and how they presented it.

Smaller stations primarily used and developed local talent because it was difficult to lure people to these remote areas. Markets like Portland, however, had the option of importing people like Rick Snyder. Snyder came to Maine in 1967 with six years of experience at radio stations in Toledo, Albany and Syracuse.

Snyder was the program director at WLOB from 1967 to 1973. Although Portland was more competitive and up-to-date than most Maine markets, Snyder remembers programming there as being less sophisticated and a step behind the other markets in which he had worked: "Portland was a slow-paced, sleepy seacoast town that didn't really start to pop until the early 70s." Even so, each station had its own niche and personality, as did each DJ. "Back then, if you were on the air, you were good. DJs were local heroes and they could ad-lib and be spontaneous," recalls Snyder.



Snyder and his then wife Mary Jo were known as "Snyder and Snyder" and did a morning show on **WLOB** that set the pace for years to come. They gave time and temperature checks, pseudo-traffic reports and other information; but mostly they interacted as husband and wife, joking and arguing about kids and laundry and the like.

Bob Fuller, who was program director at **WJAB** from 1962-1965, recalls a wealth of talented personalities he worked with in those days, including Jim Sands, J. J. Jeffrey, Bob Caron (Jon E. Dee), Frank Fixaris and Jack Tupper.

While **WJAB** and **WLOB** battled for Top-40 dominance, **WGAN** took a different approach, calling itself "Rainbow Radio," for the many colors of music. Bud Sawyer, **WGAN** program director from 1962-1974, recalls the emphasis was on companionship, not controversy, as reflected in its MOR music.

**WCSH** also opted for a MOR format and had its share of strong and distinctive on-air personalities. Ben Hubley recalls the late Will Whitten, famous for his humorous stories and remotes with local jazz bands. Farm Director Jake Brophy, broadcasting on the Maine Broadcasting stations from the 40s to the mid 60s was also unforgettable. As Bruce McGorrill recalls, Jake was an unintentional "Master of Malaprop," so totally immersed in his subject that he was unaware of the mayhem he committed daily on the English language. All through the 1952 presidential campaign, for example, he repeatedly referred to presidential candidate "Adelaide Stevenson." Another classic Brophyism came when he advised apple growers to beware of "incest in the woods."

**WCSH** News Director Phil Johnson hosted a popular daily call-in talk show called "Speak For Yourself." Johnson later went on to **WCSH-TV**, as did Sports Director J. Donald MacWilliams. **WCSH** put a heavy emphasis on local news, with a staff of four in that department. Another public interest show hosted by Johnson was "Project 97," in which he interviewed a leading citizen and then invited listeners to call in and ask questions.

Another popular talk show host of the 60s was Norm Gallant. His "Talk Back" program at **WFAU** debuted on February 1, 1965 and aired until March 21, 1981—that's 4,195 shows! Gallant interviewed more than 3,000 guests on this call-in/interview show. His favorite was author Edgar Rowe Snow. Snow was also known as "the Flying Santa Claus" because he delivered Christmas gifts to families in remote Maine lighthouses. Typical "Talk Back" subjects were pets, gardening, and taxes.

AM radio in the 60s focused on live, locally-programmed music and distinctive on-air

personalities. FM was a different story. FM did not really take off until the 70s. FM stations remained in the shadow of AM radio in the 60s because not many listeners had FM receivers in their homes or cars. FMs either simulcast with their AM affiliates or used automated classical or easy listening formats.

## Sales

As in the area of programming, the challenges facing the radio sales people in the small markets differed from large markets. In areas such as Portland and Bangor, surveys and ad agencies played a significant role. "Living by the numbers" had become a fact of life. Although Arbitron came along later, the Pulse (which used diaries) and Hooper (which used phone methods) surveys were important factors.

These surveys were simpler than their modern day counterparts. As Bud Sawyer recalls, "They were less sophisticated methods of measuring than what we have today. Back then, all you had to do was get an audience over twelve." These surveys were also shorter and came out only once a year. John Pineau recalls that the Pulse survey was only one page long when he put **WPNO** on the air in 1968.

Surveys were irrelevant in the small areas where there were no other radio stations to compete with—or television stations in some cases. Don Knowles of **WDEA** in Ellsworth commented, "You didn't need surveys because you didn't have a fractionalized audience. People listened to the strongest signal they could get. So if you were the only signal that came in clearly, you had a captive audience."

Dan Hollingdale recalls **WQDY** continued to hold a captive audience in Calais in the 60s: "It wasn't until the 70s that regional stations began to get a signal in. Even today, because of our being located in a valley, no one else can get a clear signal into our Main Street."

Even if there was no competition from other radio or TV stations, there was still the challenge of the newspapers. When John Pineau bought **WCME** in 1964, he was surprised at how strong a hold newspapers had on the advertising dollar: "I thought selling ads would be easier than it turned out to be. They all kept saying, 'Well, my father always used the paper, and so did my grandfather. Guess I will too.' It was like coming up against a stone wall."

In both small and large markets, most sales were to local businesses. Bob Gold was local sales manager at **WPOR** and then national sales manager for all the Hildreth stations from 1963 to 1968. According to Gold, local selling was simple and direct: "With TV coming into its own, radio

In the late 1950s and early 1960s WLOB AM "owned the market" of Greater Portland with 50 to 60 percent of the young listener audience. The WLOB "disk jockeys" pictured here were tremendously popular. Left to right: Bob Fuller, Jim Sands, Dick Fixaris, Charlie Brown and Alan E. Alan. This photograph was taken at Portland City Hall in October 1965.





had to reposition itself. There were increased opportunities for local sales, especially with local promotions like local sports and remotes." He remembers national sales as only 5 to 8%. Don Knowles remembers that at WDEA only 10% was national and regional.

Promotions became even more important in the 60s for both audience and image building and for increasing sales. In a 1989 interview, Rick Snyder related the story of a WJAB promotion done by DJ Johnny Dollar. Dollar made quite a stir when he threw money-real dollars-off the W. T. Grant building in downtown Portland! He made such a stir that he was arrested for creating a public disturbance.

Bob Fuller describes 60s promotions as "kinda hokey and silly." He cites the WJAB Bowling Tournament, in which he competed against Bob Caron (Jon E. Dee), as an example. The loser got a pie in the face. Bob's not all that fond of pie to this day.

Ben Hubley recalls that promotions at WCSH were timed to coincide with the surveys. That much has not changed since the 60s. WCSH did very popular beach remotes in the summer just for the exposure of the air personalities.

One WCSH sales promotion involved "Lucky Bucks." If you had the dollar bill with the serial number that was announced on the air, you won. Another promotion was called "The WCSH Treasure Hunt." Tickets good for prizes were placed in egg-shaped plastic capsules, which were buried on the beach. Clues were then given which led to the buried treasure. First prize was a snazzy foreign sports car.

Hubley recalls that when no one had won this first prize after quite some time, he began to worry. So he went and searched the area himself. Perhaps an animal had dislodged it or eaten it. Maybe a child had dug it up and lost it. After what seemed like hours of anxious searching, he found the capsule and then reburied it. The Treasure Hunt ended successfully when it was found by a happy listener not long afterward.

WGHM also had a car as a grand prize in its "Second Family Car" promotion in 1967. This was a really exciting event for the people of a small area like Skowhegan in those days. The fairgrounds were opened especially for the grand drawing, which was held on Mother's Day. This promotion snowballed beyond what had been

originally planned. As John Pineau recalls, "The stands were full with at least a thousand, maybe a couple thousand people. It all happened spontaneously. The Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis all got involved and had booths and a local politician came to draw the winning name."

Many commercials were recorded on reel-to-reel tapes. Later in the decade they were recorded on cartridges. Some commercials were still done live and every station had a copybook with the scripts of ads to be read, live. Bob Fuller, who was at WJAB in this decade, describes typical radio copy as rather corny. Although usually written by a copywriter, he remembers the DJs often added their own embellishments: "Sometimes the DJs would get playful and would mark up the copy to have fun with it. Parker's Dress Shop copy was altered so that it announced a Pre-fire Sale. It was read like that for weeks and nobody picked up on it!"

Copy was usually written by either a copywriter or the announcing staff. At WQDY, owner Buffalo Bob Smith wrote and produced jingles, station IDs and some commercials. Dan Hollingdale recalls the fun they had when Smith would get together with some of his professional friends from Buffalo, who sang the material written by Smith. They were done barbershop quartet-style, with Smith playing the piano and sometimes joining in the singing. An example of commercials done in this manner was a series of ads for Oland's Schooner Lager Beer, which aired all over Maine and Nova Scotia.

At first, in cases where the same company owned both a radio and TV outlet, the same sales people sold for both. By the 60s this had changed. According to Ben Hubley, both WCSH and WLBZ radio were totally separate from their television affiliates in the 60s. They no longer shared sales, news or on-air personnel. Bud Sawyer commented that the same was true at WGAN radio with regard to WGAN-TV and the Gannett-owned Portland newspaper: "We operated independently, competing with our own as much as anyone else."

Rick Snyder sums up the sales situation in the 60s this way: "We have more tools now—like car phones, computers and amazingly detailed statistics. But the basic sales techniques were the same then as now: build relationships, emphasize benefits and eliminate objections."

# Television Comes to Maine

**T**ODAY'S CHILDREN CAN NOT IMAGINE a world without television. Like radio in the 30s, television made dramatic changes in American life—in politics, business, news reporting, entertainment and family lifestyles. The world grew even smaller, as television brought us closer to the concept of the "global village."

Philo T. Farnsworth pioneered the first all-electronic television transmission in San Francisco in 1927. The Olympic Games in Berlin were telecast in 1936. There was a demonstration of television at the New York World's Fair in 1939. A few television stations went on the air in large cities immediately after World War II.

Southern Maine as far as Portland fell within the "fringe area" of **WBZ** (Ch4) and **WNAC** (Ch7) in Boston and **WJAR** (Ch11) in Providence. As early as 1949, if the weather conditions were right and if viewers had good sets and antennae, they got their first taste of television.

Then came the FCC "freeze" from 1948 to 1953 during which no new television station license allocations were made. Realizing that there were not enough channels available for nationwide service, the FCC added 70 UHF channels to the existing 12 VHF channels and adopted a table of more than 2,000 channel assignments. These included 242 for non-commercial use.

Note: Although there are more UHF channel allocations, the inherent electronic nature of VHF channels allowed VHF stations to broadcast over further distances. Therefore, the VHF television stations have always been in higher demand.

During the freeze, existing stations became profitable, the potential of TV became clear and the backlog of applications became larger. When the freeze was lifted, the competition for allocations was intense. As it had encouraged newspaper owners to get into radio, the government encouraged radio operators to get into television.

So it is no surprise that some familiar radio names were popping up on television applica-

tions. The Rines Family, Faust Couture and Guy Gannett had radio broadcast interests dating back to the 20s. Murray Carpenter, Carleton Brown and the Hoy Family had been involved in Maine radio since the mid 40s.

Bangor was the birthplace of **WABI-AM**, the oldest radio station in Maine still on the air. It was also the first city in Maine to have a television station. **WABI-TV** (Channel 5) went on the air on January 25, 1953. Its license was held by Community Telecasting Service. The 1953 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists Horace Hildreth and Murray Carpenter (partners in **WABI** radio) as the two equal owners.

Maine's first TV station was staffed primarily by **WABI** radio personnel, with Leon Gorman as general manager, Milton Chapman as commercial manager, Walter Dickson as chief engineer and Richard Bronson as production manager and local programming manager.

By the time the 1954 *Broadcasting Yearbook* came out, ownership at **WABI-TV** had changed. Carpenter sold out not long after the station went



One of the true pioneers and most endearing on-air talents in Bangor was Eddie Driscoll. Eddie started on WTWO-TV (later WLBZ-TV) as the host of the weekly children's program "Toby Time" which ran from September 1954 to January 1955. Shown here with "Mason Mutt," one of his many guests, he hosted "Coffee Shop" Monday through Friday "live" from 7 to 9 AM from January 1955 to June 1956. After his first week on "Coffee Shop," WTWO station manager Murray Carpenter called Eddie into his office and said, "Ed, last week on your show we counted ten times when you used the words 'Hell' and 'Damn.' We want you to tone it down a little, but don't worry, the whole town is talking about the show." Eddie retired in 1988 after 34 years as promotion manager and "live" talent for Channel 2.



on the air. Ownership in 1954 was listed as: Horace Hildreth (60%), William Rea (34%) and Carleton Brown (6%).

Carpenter bought and operated WGUY radio for about a year. He is listed as owner of WGUY in the 1954 *Broadcasting Yearbook* but by 1955 WGUY's ownership was listed as Bangor Broadcasting Corporation with Sherwood Tarlow as president.

Meanwhile, in southern Maine, three applicants were battling for Channel 8 in Poland Spring, two applicants fought for Channel 6 in Portland and two for Channel 13 in Portland. Former Lewiston Sun-Journal general manager

Frank Hoy (who owned WLAM radio) took advantage of this situation and put Portland's first TV station, WPMT-TV (Channel 53) on the air on August 30, 1953. It was the second television station in Maine and also the first UHF station. The license was held by the Portland Telecasting Corporation.

It was a family-owned station, with the 1954 *Broadcasting Yearbook* listing the stockholders as: Frank S. Hoy (73%), Parker Hoy (9%), and Gladys P. Hoy (18%). George Curtis, Jr. was station manager, Gerald Higgins commercial manager, Fred Crandon chief engineer and Bob Joyce chief announcer.

*Stars like Gene Autry and Gale Davis (Annie Oakley) were extremely popular when television started in Maine during the early 1950s. The stars dropped into the WCSH-TV studios to visit with (left to right) then Salesmen Bruce McGorrell and Jack Martin and Station Manager Jack Atwood.*





On November 26, 1953, just three months later, the Hoys put a second UHF station, **WLAM-TV** (Channel 17) on the air in Lewiston. Licensed to the Lewiston-Auburn Broadcasting Corporation, it was also primarily family owned and operated, with a few other small investors who were employees.

The 1954 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists the stockholders as: Frank S. Hoy (67%), Gladys Parker Hoy (16%), Fred Parker Hoy (9%), Gerald T. Higgins (2%), Romeo E. Sancoucy (2%), George E. Ouelette (2%) and Elden H. Shute Jr. (2%). Henry

Root was chief engineer, Gerald Higgins was commercial manager, Elden (Denny) Shute was in charge of "film buy," F. Parker Hoy was news director and Frank Hoy was general manager.

The FCC, in an effort to get stations on the air as soon as possible after the freeze was lifted, decided that it would process uncontested applications first. This made it possible for these two pioneer UHF stations to get on the air early. However, this advantage was soon lost. In just two years the situation had dramatically changed due to increased competition, the loss of network programming, and the technical expenses and disadvantages of early UHF equipment. As Denny Shute remembers:

"It is agreed by most in hindsight, that while both stations more than fulfilled their public service obligations, the U's were twenty years ahead of their time. When the log-jam of VHF's ended, NBC went quickly from **WPMT-TV** to **WCSH-TV**, CBS to **WGAN-TV** and ABC to **WMTW-TV** . . . Dumont was in its dying days and the summer of 1955 saw the demise of the two pioneer UHF stations."

The last of the four Maine television stations to debut in 1953 was **WCSH-TV** (Channel 6) in Portland. Licensed to the Congress Square Hotel Company, it went on the air on December 20, 1953. It was a family owned and operated station. Adeline B. Rines, widow and trustee of the estate of Henry B. Rines, was the principal stockholder and president. Her son,



*Three WABI pioneers. George Hale, (right) pictured here in 1955, has been the morning show host for WABI-AM radio for 35 years. Walter Dickson (above) worked first as the chief engineer for WABI-AM in 1938, eventually becoming president of WABI-AM /FM /TV in 1959. Retiring after 42 years at WABI, Walter maintained that at each job title change he was told that "this was only temporary until they could find someone better qualified." They never did. Richard Bronson (opposite) WABI-AM program director and station manager from 1949 to 1975.*





William H. Rines was general manager. Jack Atwood was commercial and station manager, Arthur Owens program director and Daniel Smith chief engineer.

The Rines family had not been the only applicant for this frequency. The Oliver Broadcasting System had also filed but withdrew in favor of its stock in Mount Washington TV.

Three television stations aired in 1954. **WGAN-TV** (Channel 13) was Portland's third station and the third VHF in the state. Licensed to Guy Gannett Broadcasting Services, it first took to the airwaves on May 16, 1954. Original stockholders were listed in the 1954 *Broadcasting Yearbook* as Guy Gannett Publishing Company (99%), Guy P. Gannett estate (0.2%), Anne M. Gannett estate (0.2%), Roger C. Williams (0.2), Laurence H. Stubbs (0.2%),

and Creighton E. Gatchell (0.2%).

Longtime Gannett employees Creighton Gatchell (general manager), Richard Bates (commercial manager) and Sam Henderson (program director) were among the staff headed by president Jean Gannett Williams Hawley.

The rivalry for this frequency was complicated and Gannett's victory hard-won. Initial competition was from Hildreth's Community Broadcasting Services. Gannett and Hildreth had clashed in the political arena when Hildreth was Maine's governor. Hildreth had also applied for Channel 8, in Poland Spring, which easily covered the Portland area. Gannett successfully petitioned the FCC to make Hildreth choose between his two filings for the Portland area (Channel 13 or Channel 8). Hildreth chose Channel 8.



But it wasn't over yet. A new player entered the field. Murray Carpenter had sold his interests in WPOR, WABI-TV and WMTW-TV. Even though he had filed for Channel 2 in Bangor, Carpenter also filed for Channel 13. When the dust cleared, Gannett had Channel 13 and Carpenter had Channel 2. This put Carpenter in competition with his old associate Leon Gorman, now station manager at WABI radio in Bangor. As the managers of two competing broadcast facilities in the same city, they became fierce rivals.

WTWO-TV (Channel 2) went on the air on September 12, 1954. Bangor's second TV station was licensed to Murray Carpenter & Associates. Carpenter and his wife Marie were the sole owners but WLBZ had an option for 40%. Early staff included Rudy Marcoux (commercial manager), Clifton Reynolds (program director), William Clark (chief engineer) and Margo Cobb (sales).

WLBZ exercised its option and bought Channel 2 from Carpenter on June 16, 1958 and changed the call letters to WLBZ-TV. WLBZ Television Inc. became the licensee and the station became the second television component of the Maine Broadcasting System, headed by William H. Rines.

Melvin Stone tells a story about how that sale took place. Stone describes Rines as, "quiet, but with a twinkle in his eye and a great sense of humor, he walked along with his head down, as if he was looking for nickels. He was intense, loyal and an honorable businessman." He also had a flair for the dramatic. According to Stone, Rines waited until the last day, indeed the last hour, before the option to buy WTWO-TV was due to expire, to call Carpenter with his decision. "Murray sat staring at the telephone waiting for Bill to call. Two minutes before the option was due to run out, Bill Rines called--at the very last minute."

The most complicated filing was finally resolved when WMTW-TV (Channel 8) went on the air on September 25, 1954. From atop Mount Washington near North Conway, New Hampshire, its coverage would include half of Maine and large parts of New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. With coverage like that, no wonder everyone wanted it! Frank Hoy applied but opted to go the UHF route instead. Faust Couture also applied but withdrew his application and became a minority stockholder in Mt. Washington TV, Inc. (If you can't beat 'em, join 'em).

The license was granted to Mt. Washington TV, Inc. There were many stockholders. Who they were and what their percentages were changed from year to year. However, Horace Hildreth was always in the picture as a major stockholder, along with the Rea family and Carleton Brown. The 1954 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists the stockholders as: Horace Hildreth (35.2%); John

Guider, owner of WMOU in Berlin, NH (11.8%); Tyrone Corporation, controlled by the stockholders of WPOR, primarily the Rea family (35.2%); WTVL, owned by Carleton Brown (11.8%); and Granite State Network Inc., owner of four NH radio stations (5.9%).

Original staff included John Guider, president, John Norton, Jr. as vice-president and general manager, John Madigan, program director and Parker Vincent, chief engineer.

The 1960 *Broadcasting Yearbook* reveals some changes in ownership, with a three way split of 24% each for Hildreth and family, John Guider and Peter Anderson. Additional stock was held by Oliver Tyrone Corp. (12%), Oliver Broadcasting Corp. (3%), Henry O. Rea (1%), Kennebec Broadcasting Corp., which owned WTVL, (4%).

The last TV station in Maine to debut in the 50s was WAGM-TV (Channel 8) in Presque Isle. It was licensed to the Aroostook Broadcasting Corp., which owned WAGM in Presque Isle and WABM in Houlton. WAGM-TV went on the air on October 13, 1956. Harold Glidden served as general manager, Forrest Craig was commercial manager, Ted Coffin program director and Elmer Snow chief engineer. This was essentially the same line up as WAGM radio's.

The 1956-57 *Broadcasting Yearbook* lists ownership of WAGM-TV as Harold Glidden (49.4%), H. E. Umphrey (23.7%), Francis J. Rardon (23.7%) and others. By the following year, Glidden owned 95% of the stock. On October 1, 1957 Hildreth's Community Broadcasting Service Stations bought Aroostook Broadcasting Corporation, which owned WAGM radio and WABM radio as well as WAGM-TV.

By 1960, most of the group owners of radio had also begun building television empires. The Rines family had WCSH-TV in Portland and WLBZ-TV in Bangor. Horace Hildreth (along with the Rea family and other investors) had WABI-TV in Bangor, WMTW-TV in Poland Spring, and WAGM-TV in Presque Isle. Guy Gannett was in the powerful position of owning three newspapers (the *Portland Evening Express*, the *Portland Press Herald* and the *Maine Sunday Telegram*), a radio station (WGAN-AM) and a television station (WGAN-TV) in the key city of Portland.

## Locations

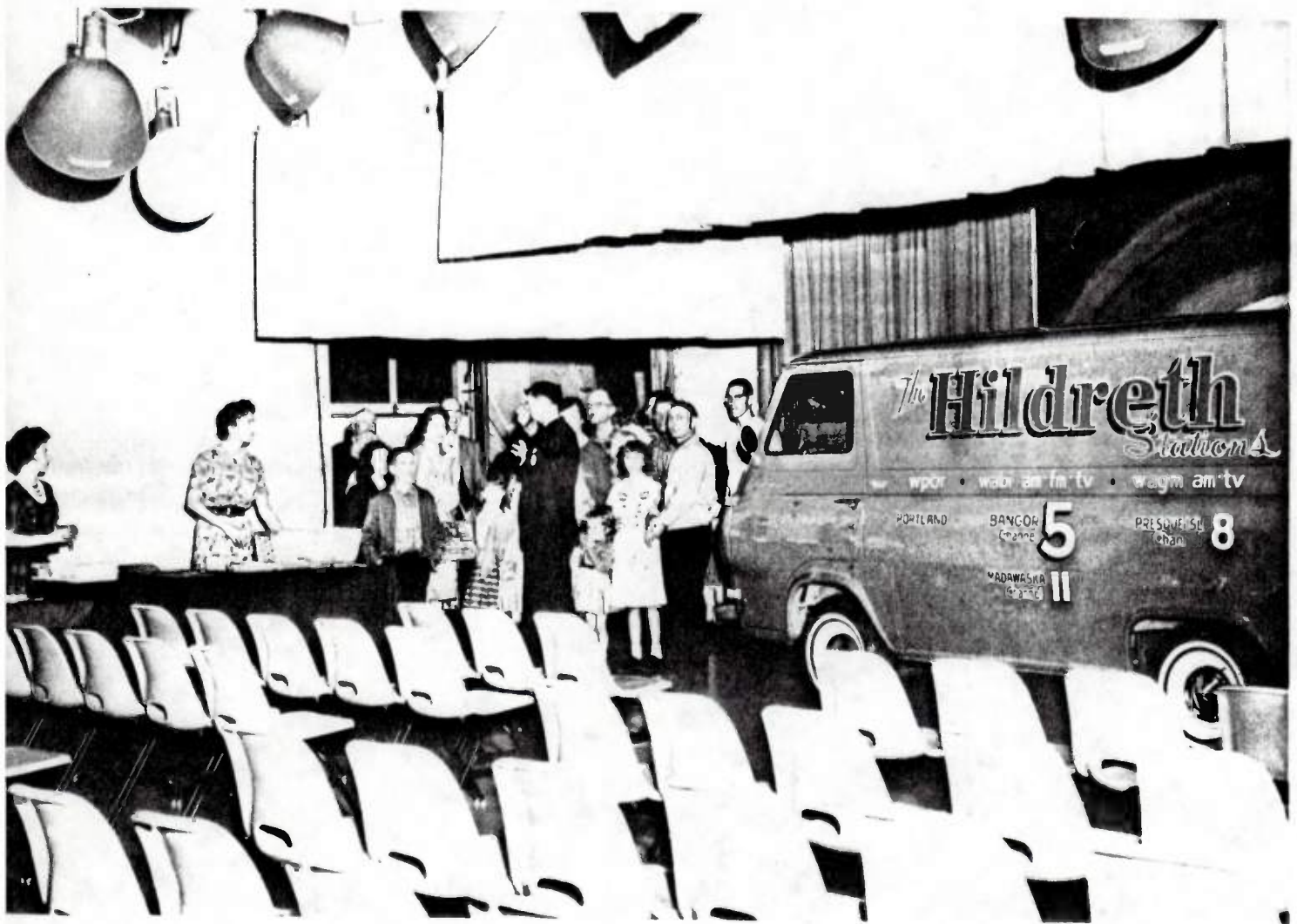
In many ways, early television followed in the footsteps of radio. The first stations appeared in the larger populations centers of Bangor (WABI-TV and WTWO-TV), Portland (WPMT-TV and WCSH-TV and WGAN-TV), Lewiston (WLAM-TV) and Presque Isle (WAGM-TV). These were the same locations as the first radio stations in the 30s, with the exception of Augusta.



During the fall of 1953 "Hiram Hoehandle" had a short-lived career on the "Crackerbarrel Club" on WPMT-TV, Channel 53, Portland and Channel 17, Lewiston. Allen Bonney was "Hiram" and Norman Ayers played the piano three nights per week from 6 to 6:30 PM. "We used to do all kinds of stuff," said Bonney. "Anything to fill the time, including singing songs like 'Stink'n River,' poking fun at the Presumpscot." Bonney claims that there were many innovative programs during those years on southern Maine's first television station. "We did a 'live' Easter Parade right outside our studios at the Columbia Hotel on Congress Street. One camera—one announcer. We also did L. L. Bean's first TV commercial because L.L. himself saw that I was wearing an old pair of his hip boots on my show and he wanted the public to know that they didn't always look that beat up." Ayers, a very talented pianist, went on to work for many years at WCSH-TV and Bonney became a Maine state senator. WPMT-TV and WLAM-TV went out of business after a few years because they could not match the inherent wider coverage of their VHF competitors.



*"Heerre's Marty" was the introduction for Martin Engstrom (opposite), who served as a popular WMTW-TV weather reporter from the transmitter atop Mt. Washington in the 1960s and 1970s. His wry smile and easy downeast accent caught the fancy of many northern New England weather watchers and tourists who took a liking to his unique style.*



*Tours during the opening of WABI-AM/  
FM/TV's "StudioCity" in 1963.*



WMTW-TV had its studios in Poland Spring but maintained a business office in Portland. On April 7, 1964, at the NAB Convention, Carleton Brown said in an interview with Len Johnson that WMTW-TV reached a 1,500,000 people in three states, providing service to 21 major cities and 521 towns. It was able to reach people in secluded areas of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont where television would have been unavailable for years because of their remote locations and terrain.

WMTW-TV could do this because it broadcast from the top of Mount Washington in New Hampshire. At 6,228 feet, it is the highest point of land in northeastern U. S. But this location provided challenges to men and equipment that had never been faced before. Here is Brown's account of some of the conditions that Mt. Washington TV Inc. faced in setting up and operating a tower and transmitter from this lofty location, where winter temperatures dropped to 50 below zero :

"The highest wind velocity ever recorded on the face of the earth has been recorded at the top of Mt. Washington. . . in excess of 200 miles an hour. . . no man had ever climbed to the top of Mt. Washington with

a motorized vehicle of any sort. . . it was necessary to scale that mountain on foot with a pack on your back and to live up there as much as a week or ten days at a time."

"This meant that we had to provide facilities for housing our people and our equipment in a manner as you would provide to set up a station in Antarctica."

"We had to build facilities for storing 200,000 gallons of fuel oil to carry us over a winter. We had to stock it with food enough to last from November to May. We had to provide spare parts and tools and equipment to make repairs to take us over a winter. We had to generate all our own energy with diesel engines."

"We did it, but it wasn't without many, many problems and frankly, the first three years of our operation were horrendous ones."



Construction began in 1953, and according to Brown, it went quickly because everything was assembled down at sea level and transported to the top:

"We built a prefabricated structure with plywood walls. . . four inches thick with heavy insulation between and steel-reinforced to stand these heavy winds. . . We had to have tremendous facilities for de-icing, to get the ice off our transmitting tower. We had to build devices to protect our microwave interconnections and there were many, many things that we had to do that just had never been done in these weather conditions before."

As you can tell from this description, the start-up costs of a television station were quite a bit more than for radio. AM radio towers did not have to be located at the highest elevation possible as was necessary for TV (and FM) and were often located right next to or on top of the studio building.

WABI-TV chose Copeland Mountain in Holden at 800 feet above sea level for its transmitter and tower. A road had to be built to the site, along with a building to house the equipment and operators. Just to make it more fun, they did all this in the dead of winter, in order to get the station on the air as soon as possible. There was a tremendous competition to be the "first" in the state, and WABI-TV won that race. Chief engineer Walter Dickson described the construction of the TV facility in the Maine TV-Radio News & Guide in 1953:

"As soon as the land is cleared and the road is built, the power company and telephone company must move in, set poles, run power lines and cables, trees must be cut back for clearance. And this is on a mountain, where weather conditions are usually much more severe than downtown. While the construction is going on, you must be negotiating for transmitting equipment, have a supporting structure designed for a tower. . . decide whether you intend to have studios on the mountain, or downtown."

WABI-TV erected a prefabricated steel and aluminium building and chose to originate most of its programs from the mountain. This was because it would require an elaborate and expensive microwave relay transmitter to get the signal from a downtown studio to the mountain for transmission.

The business office was located at 57 State Street where WABI radio was located. WABI

radio and TV soon took over that whole building and in 1955, as space became more cramped due to expanded TV programming needs, a television studio was built in the Roundy Building in Hampden.

In May of 1962, Hildreth built Studio City at the corner of Hildreth and Rice Streets in Bangor. Hailed as the "Showplace of New England," it housed all facilities for WABI AM-FM-TV in one modern building that was state-of-the-art. Constructed of steel, brick, glass and insulated paneling, it was especially designed for broadcasting and was even air-conditioned. Studio City had 50 rooms, including two TV studios (one of which could hold an audience of 200 people), 20 offices, separate control rooms for AM and FM radio, a carpenter shop and a garage.

WPMT-TV set up its pioneer UHF operation in the former quarters of WGAN radio in the Columbia Hotel in Portland. Unlike the VHF stations which built transmitter towers high atop mountains, WPMT-TV erected its 200-foot steel tower, which supported a 40-foot antenna, at the rear of the hotel.

WLAM-TV broadcast from its studio and transmitter site on Applesass Hill on Pleasant Street in Lewiston with business offices at 129 Lisbon Street.

WCSH-TV erected a transmitter building and 300-ft. tower on Blackstrap Road in Falmouth. Its major studio was in the former Observation Dining Room of the Congress Square Hotel. It shared a second studio on the same floor with WCSH radio. This studio was used for news and special programming.

WGAN-TV's transmitter site was also located on Blackstrap Hill in Falmouth, which placed its antenna at 819 feet above sea level. The building which housed the transmitter, antenna and microwave unit had specially designed ventilating ducts for cooling the equipment. The studio and offices were in the Gannett Building at 390 Congress Street in Portland.

*"The Lone Ranger" was a popular television series for Maine viewers in the 1950s and 1960s. Here the "Masked Man" and Tonto discuss the series with announcer Cliff Reynolds in the WCSH-TV studios in 1955. Note the early camera, microphones, backdrop, curtains and tile floor.*

WTWO-TV (later WLBZ-TV) had studios in the former WGUY radio building built by Guy Gannett on Mount Hope Avenue in Bangor. Murray Carpenter bought the building when he acquired WGUY radio in 1953. He retained the building after he sold WGUY to Sherwood Tarlow in 1954. WTWO-TV business offices were opened in downtown Bangor at 7 Main Street. The transmitter was located on Rider's Bluff in Holden.

After WTWO-TV was purchased by the Maine Radio and Television Co. on July 1, 1958, an addition to the Mount Hope Avenue facility was built so that the entire operation could be housed under one roof. It then included air-conditioned offices, expanded studios, production facilities, a conference room, art department and workshop.





*Jack Paar (left) and Lee Nelson discuss station matters under the WMTW studio sign in 1965. Paar, a popular network television talk show host, purchased WMTW-TV, Channel 8 in Poland Spring in the early 1960s. Lee Nelson had a lengthy career in Maine broadcasting starting at WPOR-AM in Portland in the late 1940s. He became Maine's first television announcer on WABI-TV in 1953, and worked as the news director at WMTW-TV from 1960 to 1966. Lee's son, Lee Nelson Jr., became a television reporter in Portland in 1989.*



## Equipment

All but one of the eight early television stations used RCA transmitters, antennas, cameras and slide projectors. The exception was **WGAN-TV**, which used General Electric equipment.

Most of these stations started out with only one studio, the average size of which was 30' X 20'. Some had a separate announcer's booth. **WCSH-TV** started with the most studio space of these pioneer stations, with two studios (21 X 35 and 50 X 55) and an announcer's booth. It didn't take long for stations to realize that television needed more room than radio, and studios were soon expanded in number and size.

The equipment list for a television operation was longer and more expensive than for radio and included lights, sets, props, microphones and booms for microphones, film cameras, motion picture cameras, wide-angle camera lenses, transmitters and antennas, rear screen projectors, film projectors, slide projectors, film processing equipment and microwave equipment.

In spite of the fact that competition was keen, Walter Dickson remembers that TV stations would help each other out, whether in terms of manpower or equipment in order to stay on the air: "There's no question—engineers, manpower, or whatever was needed, we'd help another station and get them on. It was a great relationship, really."

Networks mailed shows to the stations on film or kinescopes. Kinescopes were films made from a television picture in the originating studio. They often looked cloudy or washed out and were inferior to material shot on film.

Television sets themselves were built by American companies with familiar names like RCA, GE, Zenith, Admiral and Du Mont. Some perhaps less familiar names of TV set makers included Raytheon, Crosley, Hallicrafters and Trav-Ler. A 21" set in the mid 50s ranged from \$239 to \$299, a major investment in those times.

Many viewers were confused by the many factors to consider in purchasing this all-important new piece of furniture and technology. Should they choose VHF or UHF or get a converter to accommodate both? Should they buy an antenna and, if so, what kind? Should they buy black-and-white or wait for color?

Although **WABI-TV**, **WCSH-TV**, and **WGAN-TV** were equipped to colorcast network shows in the mid 50s, color sets were very expensive (about \$1,000) and did not become common until the end of the 60s. Color cameras and equipment were also very expensive and local stations did not begin using them for commercials, newscasts and other locally-produced programming

until about the same time.

Turning on the TV to watch your favorite show was not as simple as it is today. It was often necessary to adjust various knobs and controls in an effort to match up the lines on the test pattern, which was supposed to be round. TV "ghosts" (double images, one fainter than the other) were common. A reflected signal from a building or a hill arriving a fraction of a second after the direct transmitter signal caused these "ghosts." The remedy was to turn your antenna until the "ghosts" disappeared.

It has been mentioned that expensive equipment was one reason for the demise of the pioneer UHF stations. Denny Shute explains:

"Remember these were the days before the printed circuits. Vacuum tubes were the mainstay. **WPMT** engineers have reported that when 'technical difficulties' arose in the **WPMT** transmitter, 'twenty dollar tubes were popping like firecrackers, one after another!' This problem was typical of many others that contributed to the darkening of the U's."

VHF stations had the advantage of a larger coverage area and the networks (except for Dumont, which was in its dying days) switched to the VHF stations once they got on the air. It was not long until there were more VHF than UHF stations and few people had UHF adapters. When these factors together took their toll, VHF emerged dominant.

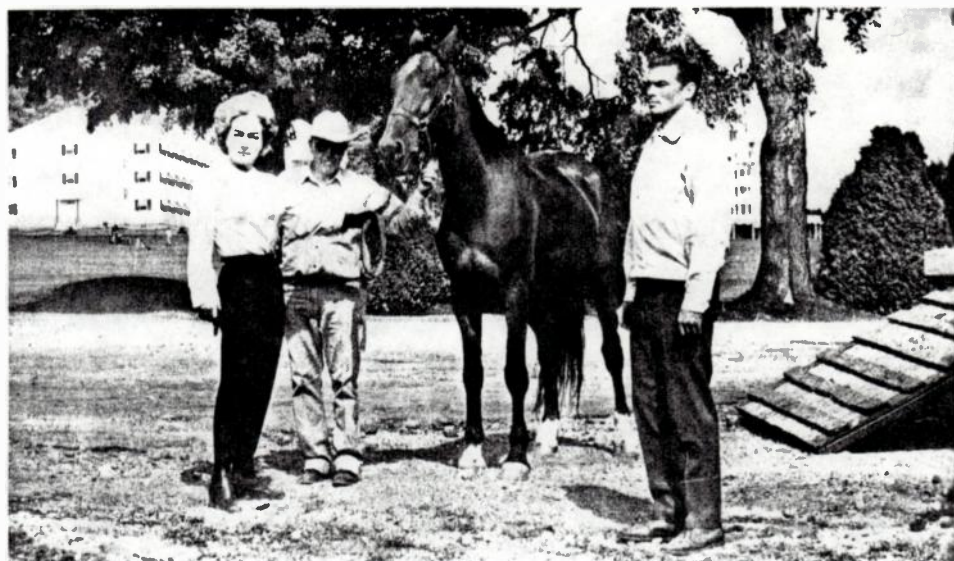
VHF equipment was also expensive. Walter Dickson tells the story of **WABI-TV**'s live remote broadcast of the Eastern Maine Basketball Tournament in 1953, the first of its kind in Maine. Dickson and Murray Carpenter were discussing how they really needed a zoom camera lens, but it cost something like \$5,000. As Dickson tells it, here's what they did:

"So we said, 'Let's get it and worry about paying for it later.' It was probably the only piece of equipment we bought without asking the Governor's permission first. But it worked out so well, nobody questioned it afterwards. That's an example of how we did things we really didn't have the equipment to do but we did it anyway. That's the way it really was in those days."

It was an expensive undertaking, and not only because of the new camera lens. It took three days to set up all the equipment and a crew of fourteen men to do the broadcast! Three RCA technicians as well as **WABI**'s Walter Dickson and



*In 1963, the production crew of the popular network television series "Route 66" filmed in Maine. Pictured here are film star Joan Crawford and "Route 66" co-star Glen Corbett as they prepare for a scene next to the golf course at the Poland Spring House.*



Wally Edwards operated the equipment at the game, while Bob Patten and Bud Leavitt did the play-by-play. Back at the station, Lee Nelson and Hal Shaw did the live commercials, while four WABI-TV technicians and an additional RCA man operated the controls from that end.

They built an 18 X 6 foot wooden platform in the bleachers for their equipment and personnel. This platform took up the space of 24 seats, which WABI-TV had to pay for at the full cost for each game. In addition, they arranged a transmitter on top of Memorial Gymnasium which broadcast via microwave to a receiving antenna dish five feet in diameter, weighted down with sandbags and lead weights (to withstand the wind) at the station.

Special lighting was provided by eight 500-watt photoflood lamps mounted around the gym, since direct light was dangerous to the cameras. It was also necessary to keep this type of camera in motion at all times, regardless of what action was taking place on the playing court.

To top it all off, four camera tubes, (at \$1,200 each) were ruined by the flash of cameras from the crowd. The Maine TV & Radio Guide reported that the tubes were "affected by a white spot each time a camera flashgun went off in the range of the TV camera lens."

Despite the expense, it was worth it, for WABI-TV had made history and shown what TV could do. Televised sports broadcasts not only generated increased interest in local sports but changed the nature of sports announcing. TV announcers were interpreting instead of simply reporting the action because viewers could see for themselves what was taking place. And that was just the beginning, for the potential and the impact of television were just starting to be explored.

## Networks

Construction of coaxial cable relay services began in 1948. By 1951 A.T. & T.'s transcontinental radio relay system linked major U.S. cities in a coast-to-coast television network. Events like a live telecast of an atomic bomb test in 1952, the Academy Awards and the World Series were among the first to air on the networks.

In 1956, videotape would do for TV what audio tape had done for radio network programming. Kinescopes of programs filmed directly from the TV tube were still being mailed to stations in other time zones. Quality was grainy and faded at best. Videotape was a dramatic improvement.

Many radio programs and stars successfully adapted their shows to television (such as Burns and Allen and Jack Benny). Most shows were on in the evenings only but by the end of the decade, a full schedule of programs was offered by all three major networks. Network news at this time was only 15 minutes.

*(opposite) Extremely popular "Cap' n' Lloyd" Knight hosted "Cap' n and the Kids" on WGAN-TV, Channel 13 in Portland from 1959-1973. Commenting on the show, Lloyd said, "I gave each kid a shopping bag with two Coca Colas, three Humpty Dumpty potato chips, a Tootsie Roll and anything else I could get my hands on."*

The first television stations had their choice of networks and often carried programs for more than one network, as radio had done in its earlier days. Soon Maine viewers were enjoying such TV classics as "GE Theater," "The Jackie Gleason Show," "Dragnet," "The Life of Riley," "I Love Lucy" and "Your Show of Shows."

### Local Programming

Local television programming followed the path blazed by radio with sports, news, community events, children's shows, women's shows

and game shows. As the networks had done, some local radio shows and personalities simply adapted what they were doing for TV. "The Jimmy and Dick Show" on WABI-TV and Agnes Gibbs' program on WCSH-TV are two examples of this.

Walter Dickson remembers the early days at WABI-TV. Instead of hiring additional staff from the outside, the radio staff from WABI-AM began doing television work in addition to their radio duties. They received no special training. "We learned by doing—camera work, lighting and so forth— we were on our own." Until the end of the decade, everything was live: "It was hectic—if





Anyone who attended high school in southern Maine in the late 50s and early 60s would recognize the set of "The Dave Astor Show" on WCSH-TV, or its counterpart, "For Teenagers Only" on WGAN-TV. Both were produced and hosted by Dave Astor. Joining his regular performers were students from area high schools. The "dance party" aired "live" Saturday afternoons and featured the young people dancing to records and lip-synching songs sung by popular recording artists. Quite innovative for its time, Astor put a tremendous effort into the program. He rehearsed for many hours each week with the regulars, working out complicated television camera shots and production techniques and finally putting a show on the air that flowed naturally and appeared effortless.



you saw it today you'd probably think it was a comedy or something. But back then it was fun, people were quite excited about Channel 5 coming on the air."

Because network programming was scarce at first, having something local to put on the air was important and often a challenge. Events that might get a 20-second "sound bite" today became feature presentations. Like Dickson's story about the time he caught the Presidential salmon in the Bangor Salmon Pool:

"I'll tell you how important local programming was. In 1953 in May, I caught the Presidential fish, the Atlantic salmon. Caught it about 9 o'clock in the morning. Murray Carpenter says, 'Gee, this could make a great show today.' We had about an hour's program of showing that fish. We had the Jones Fish Market people come up and pack the fish in ice in a box and explain how they do it... and this was one of the features of the day—a fish!"

The first live performer on WABI-TV was Yodelin' Slim Clarke, who had appeared for three years on WABI radio. Billed as an "honest to gosh"

cowpoke, he actually spent many years as a trail guide, western dude ranch hand and rodeo contestant. His country-western music recordings were reportedly selling like hot cakes in Switzerland, where yodeling is a highly appreciated talent.

Early local programming at WCSH-TV included "Romper Room," a children's show featuring Lewiston native Connie Roussin as Miss Connie and hundreds of Portland area pre-kindergarten children. For teen viewers, there was "The Dave Astor Show," a talent showcase for area high school students. For housewives, Agnes Gibbs' home economics show was very popular, as was interior decorator Roger Withington's, "Your Home and You."

WGAN-TV's early programming included "Expedition," with George Barker, which according to the *Portland Evening Express* on May 3, 1954, "... takes viewers on explorations of the world of nature and explains the mysteries of animal life. Also on the schedule was "Lloyd's Soda Bar," with singer/comic Lloyd Knight, which featured cartoons, songs, adventures stories and guest appearances. An early educational show on WGAN-TV was the "Show Me Show," presented by the Junior League. The country-western music genre was represented by "The Ken MacKenzie Show."

WLBZ-TV had "Tea On Two" a women's show with Aileen Rawley, "The Weird Show," with Eddie Driscoll as "Dr. Splint" and Shari Jones as "Nurse Squeeze," and a game show called "You Name It," hosted by Al Rawley. Rawley also doubled as "Captain Al," host of a children's show featuring cartoons, games and contests which was set aboard a submarine.

Uncle Hezzie appeared on WPMT-TV with his Trading Post program and also introduced a new character, "Skipper Dan the Weather Man." This colorful television weatherman was described in the *Maine TV & Radio Guide* as "a friendly old sea captain who knows the wind and waves and can often tell you about tomorrow's weather, 'by the look of things' but who would also have the official word from the U. S. Weather Bureau in Portland to suit the more skeptical people."

*Howdy Doody and "Buffalo" Bob Smith were favorites with Maine audiences in the early days of television. Seeking escape from the brightness of the national spotlight, Smith bought a home in Maine. He liked it so much he purchased three Maine radio stations as well: WMKR, Millinocket; WHOU, Houlton and WQDY, Calais.*

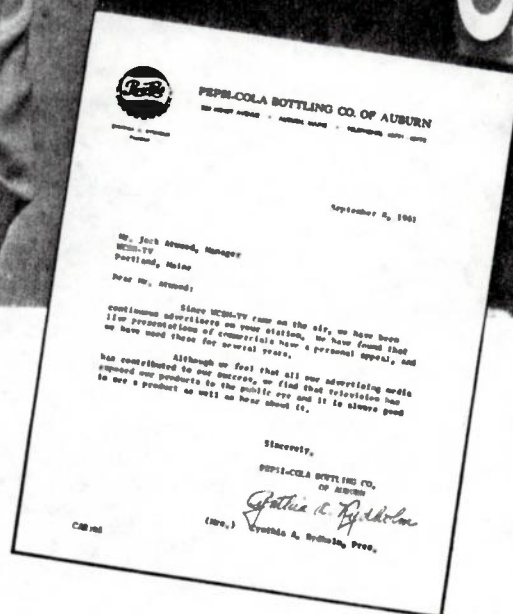




One of the more familiar faces in Maine broadcasting was Clif Reynolds. Clif was a station break announcer, "Weekday" host, commercial talent and newsman. He started at WGUY radio and went to work at WCSH-TV in 1955. He anchored the early morning news without interruption until he retired on December 30, 1988. During the early days of television, Clif would memorize several 60-second commercials and rattle them off "live" several times an hour. Here Clif promotes the product of the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company of Auburn.



**ninety  
months  
of  
commercials!**



## Sales

WLAM-TV had a cooking show with Helen Richan, a local amateur talent show hosted by Norm Buker and George Ouellette with a news panel show.

News and sports were an important part of local television programming right from the start, and became even more so. At first, WABI radio news people doubled at WABI-TV and were all housed in one building. Soon a split was made and television news people started doing their own coverage. This happened at several stations where a radio and television outlet was held by the same ownership (such as WCSH and WLBZ).

WGAN-TV had the advantage of access to the facilities and reporters of the *Portland Press Herald-Evening Express* as well as to WGAN radio for its news department, since all three were under the same ownership.

Don MacWilliams, who has covered sports in newspapers, radio and television, recalls the entrance of television sports reporting at the interview done with Red Sox players at Fenway Park in Boston:

"When TV came along, it was the TV reporters who got the attention. . . we set up cameras on the field and interviewed the players. . . the print media had to go in the lower stands and wait for the players to come over. . . so we were preferred. . . because TV all of a sudden was all the rage."

Walter Dickson recalls that advertisers were eager for the coming of television when WABI-TV pioneered in 1953: "The advertising support was tremendous—they even sold the test pattern. No problem there, they supported us all the way."

Nationally, television time was sold mostly by the hour and many programs had a single sponsor, like "GE Theater" and "Hallmark Hall of Fame." On the local level, the Standard Electric Company became the first in Northern New England to advertise appliances on a regularly scheduled live TV talent show when it sponsored Yodelin' Slim Clarke on WABI-TV.

Rates were considerably higher than radio because of greater equipment and production costs. Rate cards from the *Broadcasting Yearbook* show that rates for an hour ranged from \$180 to \$550 during the 50s. One minute commercials were also available at rates ranging from \$22 to \$60.

Commercials were all done live until video tape began to be used on a regular basis in the early 60s. Don MacWilliams remembers memorizing 60-second commercials. He never used a teleprompter until the 60s. His talent fee for doing three commercials was all of \$25.

*The original WCSH-TV news team and the set as they appeared in December, 1953: Ellis O'Brien, weatherman; Phil Johnson, news anchor; Don McWilliams, sportscaster. Beginning in the mid-1940s on the three radio stations of the Maine Network News Service (WCSH in Portland, WRDO in Augusta and WLBZ in Bangor), this news team stayed together for over 20 years.*





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# Jockeying for Channel Position

*Bruce McGorrill, Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of the Maine Broadcasting System (WCSH-TV in Portland and WLBZ-TV in Bangor), relays this story of the process by which Maine television station licenses were fought for and eventually allocated. Ben Hubley conducted the interview at the Cumberland Club in Portland on May 9, 1989. Bruce told this story as part of a narrative about the early days of television in Maine.*

**I**T STARTED WITH "THE FREEZE" that went on in 1948. The government issued no television licenses between 1948 and 1953 because all of a sudden the television industry in the United States started to explode on them. They did not know where it was headed and so, to re-examine all the allocations they put a halt on all applications.

When the freeze came off there was a pent-up demand for the limited availabilities. During that five years, television accelerated and those stations with licenses were, quite frankly, making a small fortune until the freeze came off. The potential of television was now fully understood. Originally, this was not the case. In fact, there were many who urged caution.

One story involved WTIC in Hartford, owned by Travelers Insurance Company—a big, successful broadcast operation. It applied for Channel 3, Hartford in late 1947. It got the construction permit but the board of directors of Travelers Insurance Company were not sure that television was here to stay. The company turned the grant back to the government. Then, the freeze went on. Nothing could be done for five years. When the freeze came off, it was faced with a multitude of other applicants for that channel. It took Travelers five years, until 1958, to successfully win what they had owned in 1947. So, it was not a given that television would succeed.

In 1953, when the freeze came off, everybody understood that this was going to be a successful enterprise. Therefore, there was a backlog of applications. Some channels had as many as 15 and 16 applications.

What the commission said was, "We will address those allocations for which there are single applications first and grant that license, in order to accelerate the development of this communications system. When we go through all of those, we will go to those that have two applications, then to those who have three, etc."

So in Portland, you had the Rines family applying for Channel 6 along with the then owner of WPOR, which was a family named Rea from Pittsburgh. They owned a couple of acres of land in Pennsylvania which happened to be downtown Pittsburgh.

Then you had Guy Gannett and Murray Carpenter applying for Channel 13. At this particular time, WABI radio in Bangor had been in business for some time, run by Carpenter. WABI got into television because it was the single applicant in Bangor and it got a grant early in 1953.

*Murray Carpenter, left, poses with Professor Quiz and a guest on WPOR radio in June 1946. "Professor Quiz" was a nationally syndicated program on which listeners tried to stump the professor. Carpenter later became a major factor in early Maine television.*





But Murray Carpenter and Horace Hildreth, the owners of WABI-TV parted company and Murray's interest was bought off. With that money, he applied for Channel 13 in Portland. So there were two applications for Channel 6 and two for Channel 13.

Channel 8 was allocated to Lewiston.

Faust Couture and Carleton Brown dreamed up the scheme that ultimately became WMTW. They sold the concept to four investors: Horace Hildreth, Peter Anderson of Suburban Propane, Duke Guider, who had been a lawyer at the Nuremberg Trials for the United States Government and who lived in Lebanon, New Hampshire and the Rea family from Pittsburgh. That meant that the Rea family had to withdraw its application for Channel 6 and join Channel 8.

Now why would they do that? The pitch was that if Frank Hoy, who owned WLAM radio in Lewiston applied for Channel 8, all three channels would be tied up for years in competing applications. He was the logical person to apply for Channel 8 in Lewiston, as was WCSH radio and WGAN radio in Portland. They convinced him that it would be foolhardy and he would lose a lot of money. In addition, no one was applying for the UHF stations available. Hoy could apply, get those, be on the air and make a lot of money.

He bought that idea and applied for Channel 53 in Portland and Channel 17 in Lewiston. He actually had the two on the air, but of course, in those days there were no universal TV sets and the dials included only channels 2 to 15. To get UHF, you had to buy a converter, a little box on top of the set which one had to dial separately to get the station. Norm Ayers, who worked for us at Channel 6, worked at Channel 53. He said management would get excited upon receiving a letter from the Airport because that was about as far as the signal went. So Frank Hoy went on the air with those two stations. He was the first on the air in Southern Maine because he did not apply for Channel 8.

That left it to this group of four investors, each of whom had 24%. Carleton Brown and Faust Couture kept 2% each for the legwork. They didn't put up any money. It was their commission for putting the deal together. The concept was that they would be the first VHF station on the air, since there was no competing application. As a result, all the antennas would be pointed toward Mount Washington. In addition, the station would have all four networks, including Dumont. Then, as Channels 6 and 13 came on the air, they would have to fight Channel 8 for antenna orientation and for network affiliation. Mount Washington would be the dominant station in Northern New England.

Why they didn't figure out that when the Reas went from the Channel 6 application to join Channel 8, that it would leave the Rines family wide open for a quick grant, I don't understand, but that is exactly what happened. The Reas withdrew their application from Channel 6 to Channel 8, the commission immediately granted Channel 6 to the Rines family and Channel 6 went on the air. That meant that Guy Gannett's application would be held up for a year or more because of Murray Carpenter's application for Channel 13, while "Billy Rines" station was the first on the air in Portland on Channel 6.

At that point, Gannett's competitive juices got going. No sooner had the grant come through for Channel 6, when lo and behold, Murray Carpenter, who was out of work and had used his sale proceeds from Horace Hildreth to apply for Channel 13, ended up one day as the sole owner of WGUY in Bangor—real estate, license and everything. WGUY, of course, was owned by Gannett and was the GUY of Guy Gannett. The implication was, and I have no knowledge of course, but it made people wonder if WGUY became available to Carpenter at very attractive terms, just to withdraw that Channel 13 application. He did so and Channel 13 was granted to Gannett. It went on the air six months after Channel 6.

In the meantime, for some reason, the application for Channel 8 had lagged and when the license was granted, it had to be built on top of Mount Washington. The end result was that it was the third station on the air. And instead of Channels 6 and 13 fighting Channel 8 for antenna orientation, Channel 8 ended up fighting Channel 6 and 13 for antenna orientation. Of course, in most instances, the three were in diametrically opposing geographic areas. Stations didn't have omni-directional antennas then so a viewer had to put two antennas on the house, one aimed at Mount Washington and one aimed at the Portland stations.

WMTW didn't start with all four networks, it started with three. Channel 8 had CBS, ABC and Dumont, duplicating a lot of WGAN's audience by carrying a lot of the same schedule, which made it very easy for Channel 6. "The Colgate Comedy Hour" was always Number 1 on Sunday night instead of Ed Sullivan, because Ed Sullivan was on two stations. The audience was split. It was enjoyable in those days to compete in that environment but it was artificial.

Now, let's carry that situation from Portland to Bangor. There you had Murray Carpenter owning WGUY radio. Bangor was a single television station market. When Murray had left WABI, he was replaced as general manager by his sales manager, a man named Leon Gorman. Both had

started at WPOR in Portland and had moved to Bangor to work for Horace Hildreth. These gentlemen were tough competitors. When they worked together they must have been quite effective in a community, but now one owned a radio station and the other operated a television station—and they weren't working together any more.

Murray Carpenter, once he owned WGUY then applied for **Channel 2** in Bangor, selling WGUY's license to Mel Stone to pay for putting **Channel 2** on the air. Carpenter kept the real estate. **Channel 2** and WGUY for a while operated out of the same building. In fact, it was the real estate that kept Murray going because he operated **Channel 2** as an independent station for over 18 months. That was tough because it was not interconnected and not affiliated. All his programming was film or kinescope (filming of a television screen, and then played back). It would be filmed in negative and played back in positive. All this had to be delivered by post.

That's how Carpenter operated, because WABI-TV had all the networks under contract. In those days, the FCC did not force anyone to divest in a situation like that. Because of the FCC ruling, Carpenter was forced to wait until one of the contracts literally expired. It so happened that CBS expired first. By now Carpenter and Lee Gorman had become rivals, bitter rivals. Lee had a sign in his office that said, "What have you done to win the fight today?" The "fight" was against Murray Carpenter, his former mentor.

One falling out they had was particularly interesting. Harold Glidden in Presque Isle, who owned radio stations in Caribou and Presque Isle, had decided he had better apply for **Channel 8**. Some independent investors were looking for available allocations and had filed for **Channel 8** in Presque Isle, which was then operated by Limestone Air Base as a service for the Air Station. Very small coverage, but it was being run for the servicemen. Carpenter decided that this was his rightful domain.

Understand that in those days the commission encouraged radio broadcasters to go into television. That was the government's way of forcing the development of this new industry, just as they looked to newspapers in the 20s and 30s to go into radio. The government would say to the newspaper interest, "It is your duty to bring this new form of communication to America; you who are in the news business should broaden your scope into this new technology."

So the government urged newspapers to go into radio, urged radio station owners to go into television. This is how media conglomerates of newspapers who also owned radio and television stations in town came to be. It wasn't that they were out for a monopoly. The government really encouraged them to do that, which is all so odd—because later on the government said, "You're a monopoly, we've got to break you up."

So, in Aroostook County it was only logical that when someone applied for **Channel 8**



*Governor Horace Hildreth signs the papers to purchase WAGM-TV, Presque Isle from Harold Glidden while Lee Gorman looks over the documents in July, 1957.*



Glidden said, "Now wait a minute—that should rightfully be mine. I'm the local radio station owner here." However, he went into it reluctantly. There was no interconnection and there were no microwaves then. He was operating everything on film and kinescope and probably dying financially. It was a small market and it wasn't generating any national business.

So Murray Carpenter said to Harold Glidden, "Look, let me sell your coverage along with mine. For every spot I sell John Doe, I'll send you \$5." That was \$5 more than Harold Glidden was getting so he said, "OK, go ahead." At that point, Murray Carpenter could say, "now covering all of Maine."

Lee Gorman couldn't say that about **WABI-TV**. So, the rivalry began heating up again. To counter, Lee Gorman talked to Hildreth, who had just come back from Pakistan as the ambassador, about buying out Harold Glidden. That took the competitive edge away from Murray.

However, there was an ironic twist. Prior to Hildreth's return and in order to compete against Carpenter, Gorman had talked the Federal Communications Commission and the Canadian Radio and Television Commission into entering into an international agreement to move **Channel 10** from New Brunswick, Canada to Presque Isle, Maine. It had to be an international treaty to move this allocation of a VHF channel, which he intended to apply for. Then Gorman could compete against Harold Glidden's and Carpenter's sales combination.

Hildreth returned and Gorman talked him into buying out Glidden. The government proceeded to make that treaty and the channel was allocated to Presque Isle. Then, when Community Broadcasting bought **Channel 8** in Presque Isle, it went back to the FCC and said, "Cancel the agreement. Send the channel back to Canada." The government replied, "No way!" That's why today you have a VHF public broadcasting station in Presque Isle. That channel was originally allocated to Canada.

It didn't go to Public Broadcasting automatically. What happened was **Channel 8** was purchased by Community Broadcasting and the sales advantage now went to Lee Gorman and **WABI-TV**. Whereupon, Carpenter politely and blithely applied for the new VHF channel which **WABI-TV** had very nicely gotten the government to insert from Canada into Presque Isle, rubbing salt into the wound one more time.

At that point, the Rines family bought out Murray Carpenter, inheriting the application for Presque Isle. The decision was made to withdraw the application, because it was deemed too small a market to have two stations competing, particularly in the 50s. When the Rines family withdrew, there was no other application and ultimately it became part of the Maine Public Broadcasting System. This result was just one of the competing personality struggles between these two men.

During the depths of Murray Carpenter's operating an independent on **Channel 2** in Bangor (which made him financially strapped), Murray had an odd quirk. When things were going well, he would grow a goatee. He had done this for years. It was a sign of "All's well with the world and I can grow a goatee and the heck with everybody else." But, of course, when he was having these struggles he wouldn't grow the goatee.

Except that, all of a sudden, in the midst of this he started growing a goatee, and the word got to Lee Gorman. Gorman was beside himself saying, "He knows something we don't know. Something is happening with him that's good for him. And if that's good for him, that's bad for us." Just growing the goatee would drive his competitor crazy. He often used such psychological quirks.

Murray Carpenter left Maine having been bought out by Horace Hildreth, bought out by Guy Gannett and bought out by the Rines family. He's still alive living down in Florida (as of May 1989) having really made his money off the three media families in the state.

## *roadcasting in the Public Service*

ONE THING that has always differentiated broadcasting (both radio and television) from the print media is broadcasting's ongoing commitment to serve the public. From the earliest experimental, amateur and government-run stations to commercial radio and television—education, news, public affairs and local community activities have been offered to the public over the airwaves.

This was done both voluntarily and because up until 1985, it was required by the FCC. Even though those regulations have been changed, broadcasters continue to air messages about health and safety (like the dangers of drunk driving and the perils of drug usage) and cultural and community activities (like church suppers and school plays). Radio auctions and telethons which benefit charitable organizations are also still going strong.

"Buffalo Bob" Smith continues to help with the all-day radiothon at WQDY in Calais to raise money for "The Jimmy Fund," which benefits the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. The local Rotarians man



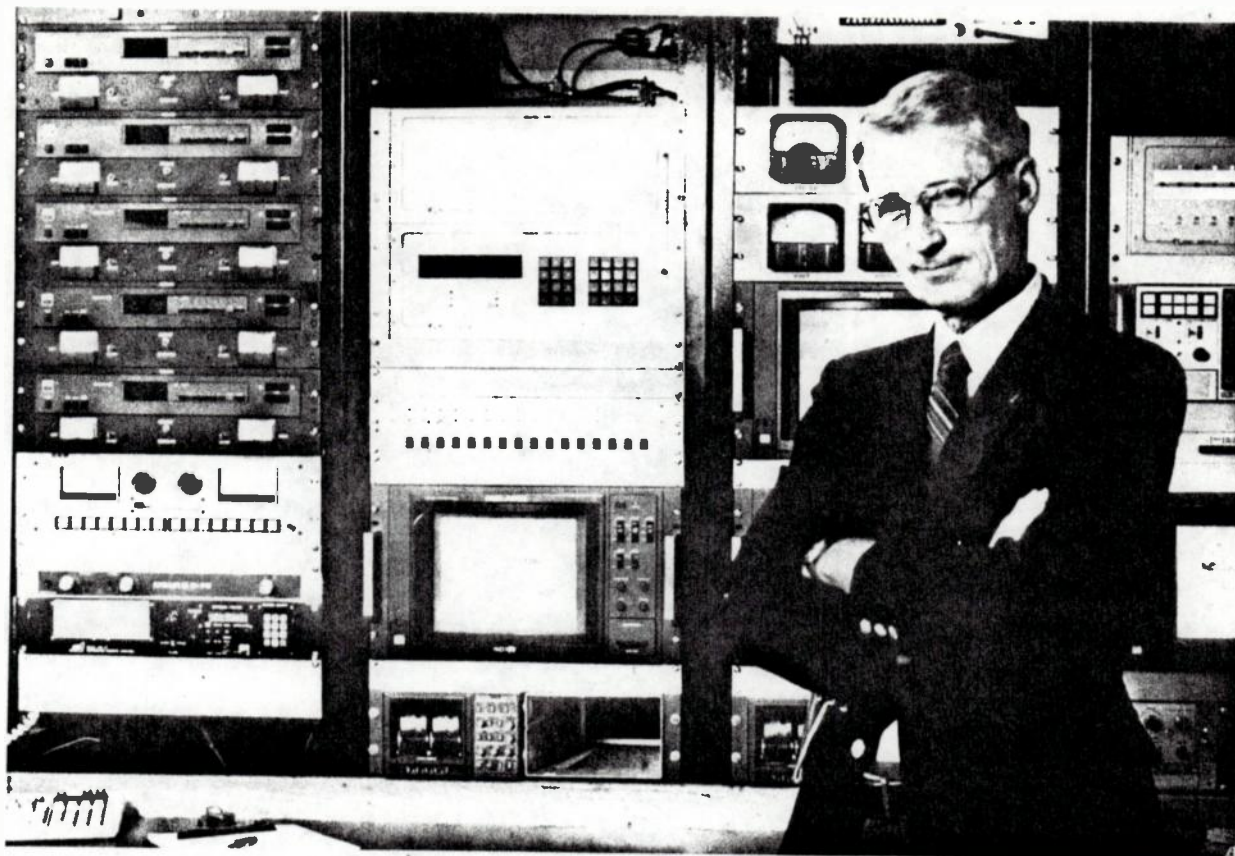
President John F. Kennedy's favorite Washington correspondent was May Craig, the Guy Gannett publishing journalist who covered the nation's capitol for the state of Maine. Here May fields questions from the audience on WGAN radio's "Points and Pointers" program in 1961. Public service talk programs like this were (and still are at many stations) a major part of Maine broadcaster's commitment to keep the public informed on important social issues.



*William H. Rines, general manager of WCSH radio, congratulates Reverend Howard O. Hough on the 25th anniversary of the First Radio Parish Church of America on April 18, 1951. Premiering on WCSH in 1926, it is the oldest continuously broadcast religious program in the country. It currently is in its 64th year and airs daily on two television stations and five radio stations in Maine.*



*During this "400 Fund Broadcast" in the early 1960s, members of the Salvation Army and WGAN radio announcers Bud Sawyer, Craig Worthington (at the turntable) and Dick Fixaris raise money for the 400 neediest families in the Greater Portland area. WGAN radio sought contributions for needy families in this way for several years at Christmas time, eventually bringing the number of families helped to 700 by the mid-1960s.*



*Maine Public Broadcasting Network General Manager Edward Winchester*

the phones while well-known broadcasters like Ken Coleman and Bill Mockbee join in the fun, along with talented local people, providing vaudeville-style songs and comedy. WQDY has been doing this since the late 70s.

WCSH-TV has aired a Sidewalk Art Festival every summer for 25 years. Over 350 artists display their work at this Festival, which is attended by 40,000 people. It was started in 1965 by WCSH Art Director Arthur Hahn.

### *The Maine Public Broadcasting System*

In addition to the efforts of commercial radio and television stations, a new dimension was added to this commitment to public service with the establishment of Maine Educational Television. The enabling legislation was passed by the 100th Maine Legislature in 1961, with administrative and legal responsibility assigned to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine. WMEB-TV, Channel 12, signed on the air in Orono on October 7, 1963 with "The Friendly

Giant" and "History with Herb Hake." It was joined by WMEM-TV, Channel 10 in Presque Isle in February, 1963 and WMED-TV in Calais in September, 1964. WMEA-TV, Channel 26 in Biddeford/Portland went on the air in December, 1974.

These stations have aired programs such as "The French Chef" with Julia Child, "High Adventure" with Lowell Thomas, "The Penny Pitou Ski Report" and "A New England Town Meeting," broadcast live in 1967 from East Corinth by Channel 12 over the Eastern Educational Network.

In 1968, The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) was formed. Maine ETV became the Maine Public Broadcasting Network (MPBN) by legislative act in 1971.

WMEH-FM in Bangor, the first of Maine's five public radio station, signed on the air in November, 1970. Early programming included "Down East Smile In" with Maine humorist Marshall Dodge and the PBS premiere of "Evening at the Pops." WMEH was joined by WMEA-FM, Portland in April, 1974, WMEM-FM, Presque Isle in 1977, WMED-FM, Calais in 1983 and WMEW-FM,



Waterville in 1984.

National Public Radio was formed in 1971 and Maine listeners were introduced to programs such as "Morning Pro Musica" and "All Things Considered." MPBN Radio introduced local programs such as the "Maine Performance Series," "The Humble Farmer" and "Prime Cuts" in 1978.

In December, 1985, MPBN moved to new facilities at 65 Texas Avenue, Bangor—just in time for the first snow storm of the season. The original location for MPBN radio was Alumni Hall at the University of Maine in Orono. MPBN Television's original address was Shibbes Hall, also at the University of Maine, Orono.

MPBN general manager Edward Winchester has held that position since 1980. Bernie Roscetti was appointed MPBN television program manager in 1977 and became MPBN Television station manager in 1981. Les Myers was appointed MPBN radio program manager in 1983 and became MPBN radio station manager in 1984.

## WCBB-TV

In March 1961, the Colby-Bates-Bowdoin Educational Telecasting Corporation was chartered as the first non-commercial television station in Maine. Licensed to Augusta, the call letters are the first letters of the names of the three colleges.

WCBB-TV, Channel 10 first broadcast from its transmitter on Danforth Hill, Litchfield in November, 1961. Early broadcasts were on weeknights only, with all programs produced by out-of-state facilities. As station Vice-President Roland Desjardins explained, "We had no studio, so we couldn't originate."

Desjardins built the station, served as chief engineer and was one of the four original staff members. WCBB-TV's first general manager was Elmore "Buck" Lyford. Engineer/Operator Roger Barton and Traffic Manager Ellen Lee completed the original crew.

WCBB-TV's original office location was in Chase Hall at Bates College in Lewiston. Studios and offices are now located at 1450 Lisbon Street, Lewiston. Desjardins recalls that the first WCBB-TV studio was located "in the back garage at the

Litchfield transmitter." Its first cameras were black-and-white and came from the CBS network in New York. Previously used for the Ed Sullivan Show, they were made available to WCBB-TV when CBS changed to color.

WCBB-TV offers well-known PBS network programs such as "Sesame Street," "Masterpiece Theater," "The French Chef" and "The Mac Neil/Lehrer Report" to 240 communities in South-Central Maine from Waterville to Sanford. In September, 1971, "Take Thirty," WCBB-TV's first locally produced program aired. The public affairs program "Maineweb" began in January, 1975. WCBB-TV initiated "Statewide," an interconnected public affairs program with MPBN in August, 1978. Another WCBB-TV produced program of note is "So You Think You Know Maine," which received the Corporation for Public Broadcasting award for excellence in children's programming in 1981 and 1983.

WCBB-TV became the first television station in Maine to receive network programming via satellite in September, 1979 when the earth satellite terminal receiver in Litchfield became operational. Two months later, WCBB-TV became the first Maine TV station with a one-inch videotape machine. This added stop action and slow motion capability plus a frame store, which greatly enhanced the station's productions.

Another first in Maine for WCBB-TV was stereo television broadcasting in March, 1986, made possible by the a PBS system known as Videocipher II. Videocipher II facilitates the transmission of multichannel audio, not only stereo but simultaneous second language translations and descriptive video service, or "DVS." "DVS" is a service for the visually impaired where a narrator describes the characters, action and atmospheric detail of a program on a separate audio channel.

PBS and WCBB-TV have aired captioned programs for the hearing impaired since 1974. Today, about 65% of WCBB-TV's programming is presented this way.

Presently headed by President and General Manager Robert H. Gardiner, WCBB-TV will celebrate its 30th anniversary of service in 1991.

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# Thompson Guernsey 1904-1979

## The Eccentric Genius from Dover-Foxcroft

by Fred Thompson

**A**MERICA LOVES AN ECCENTRIC GENIUS and Thompson Guernsey deserves the title. He was an amateur radio buff whose early interest in radio became a thriving business; he was an electronics engineer whose early interest in television turned into disaster and financial ruin; he was a promoter of the state of Maine who would fly Wall Street tycoons to the heart of Maine's wilderness for the weekend to fish, dance and eat to their heart's delight and he held the patent on a miniaturized television tube that he developed 40 years before the Japanese.

Guernsey was born on February 17, 1904 in Dover-Foxcroft to Frank E. and Josephine L. Guernsey. Frank was a successful lawyer, woodland owner, banker and a Maine Representative in the U. S. Congress.

At the age of 13, Thompson began experimenting with radio, which led to an amateur radio license and eventually WLBZ radio. Early experiments included spark coils, spark gaps, condensers, galena crystals, homemade tuning coils and, later, some of the first vacuum tubes which were built into homemade receivers and transmitters and used under amateur license 1EE beginning in 1921.

While maintaining his interest in radio, Guernsey graduated from the University of Maine in Orono in 1926 with an A. B. in electronic engineering. That same year he was granted a license by the Department of Commerce to operate commercial broadcast station WLBZ, Dover-Foxcroft.

He ran the station out of his home on Main Street, then moved into a small harness room-henhouse building out back with a gutter pipe antenna on River Street and later from a more modern studio in the former Bank Building in Union Square.

In 1928 he moved his studio to the back of the Andrews Music House, then owned by Jack Atwood's father Frank, at 100 Main Street and connected to his transmitter located at 861

Broadway with its own interconnecting line.

Radio was new to everyone in 1926, and aside from WCSH in Portland, his was the only commercial radio station in the state. Since music was the major staple on early radio broadcasts and everything had to be done "live," it made sense to move into a music store. The fact that the studio was located at Frank Atwood's store and that Guernsey had known Jack's mother from Dover-Foxcroft, it only followed that young Jack Atwood then a student at the University of Maine at Orono should be hired to work at the station and become Guernsey's first announcer at the new facility.

Jack Atwood went on to become the executive vice-president of the Maine Broadcasting System. He retired in 1974 after working 46 years in the radio and television business in Maine. Norm



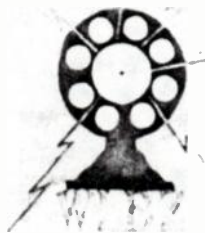
Lambert, Ed Guernsey and Carleton Brown also owe their careers to Guernsey, who hired them to work at his Bangor station. Both Norm and Ed worked many years at WLBZ radio. Norm worked for 30 years and retired in 1958. Ed worked for 43 years and retired in 1975. Carleton spent 45 years in the business as owner-operator of WTVL Waterville and a founder of WMTW-TV.

Only a few years after WLBZ radio went on the air, Henry P. Rines from WCSH in Portland began to negotiate with Guernsey to purchase his station. It was Rines' intention to have a statewide

network of radio stations. The negotiations went on for 16 years before WLBZ was acquired by the Rines family on February 18, 1944.

In the meantime, WLBZ radio did very well. The studios were expanded from the Andrews Music House's first floor location into the second and third floors. In 1930, WLBZ became the first CBS affiliate in the state. The residents of Bangor could now tune in to the events of the outside world for the first time.

However, Thompson Guernsey's heart never strayed very far from his beloved Dover-



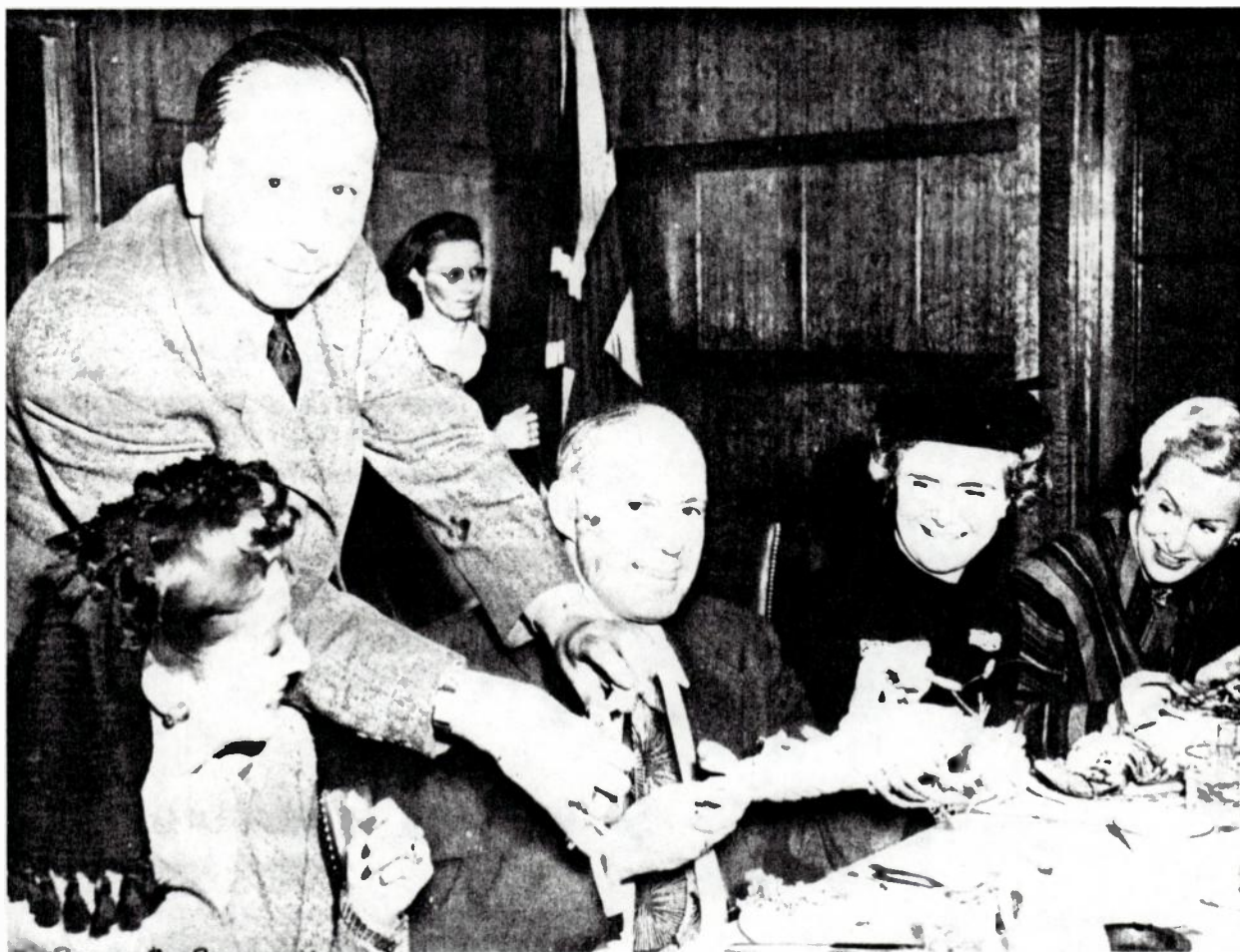
*Thompson L. Guernsey, founder and managing director of WLBZ radio at work in his office circa 1940.*

Foxcroft. In 1938, as an advertising promotion, he built Sebec Aircamp, Beach and Cabana Club and Winter Sports Theater under the umbrella title of Maine Recreation Inc., with offices at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in New York City.

For several years Guernsey operated a flying service with three planes. One of these, a two-motor Douglas Dolphin, flew each weekend between Wall Street Skyport and the Sebec Lake properties. Every Friday afternoon during the summer and fall of 1939 and 1940, his flying service picked up four to eight executives seeking the

peace of the wilderness and flew them deep into the Maine woods. A stewardess accompanied each flight. Guernsey wanted to demonstrate that one could leave New York Friday afternoon and be in the heart of Maine for supper.

The plane landed at Greeley's landing on Sebec Lake, just up the road from Dover-Foxcroft and the executives were escorted to Sebec Lake Lodge. Many were network or advertising agency people whom Guernsey would try to impress with the beauty of Maine or the advertising value of WLBZ.



*Mary Livingston, Thompson Guernsey (standing), Jack Benny and friends enjoy a lobster dinner at the Bangor House in 1943. This was prior to the Bangor broadcast of the "The Jack Benny Show," which performed live before the airmen of the U. S. Air Force stationed at Dow Field.*



The Sebec Lake Lodge was a farmhouse which had been converted into a log lodge with comfortable rooms as well as dancing and dining space. A live orchestra performed on Saturday nights. WLBZ staff were required to dress up and attend these functions to make the place look active. Former WLBZ radio announcer Norm Lambert led the orchestra. The staff was window dressing to this promotional scheme.

If you were a very special guest, Guernsey took you to Boarstone Mountain ten miles farther north. Here was a luxurious log cabin with connecting dining facilities on the shore of a string of



*Radio network star Rochester enjoys ice skating at the Sebec Lodge rink during the Jack Benny tour in 1943.*

ponds in a notch near the top of the mountain. Boarstone Mountain is one of the most unusual mountains in Maine with three ponds and wonderful fishing. To add to the atmosphere, Guernsey bought several Wisconsin deer which he kept in pens. The Japanese cook and groundskeeper prepared scrumptious meals from fish caught nearby.

Guernsey did all this to promote the state of Maine. On reflection, his cousin and WLBZ company Treasurer Ed Guernsey felt that this was a sincere effort to promote and vitalize the area. Guernsey maintained an air service along with two magnificent lodges and staff and stocked the lakes with fish and the lounges with employees just to impress the groups of executives who flew in from New York on a couple of dozen weekends a year. All this was supported and underwritten by his only other source of income, WLBZ radio.

On January 3, 1943, the Jack Benny Radio Show toured Dow Air Force Base in Bangor to help entertain troops during World War II. Since the entire crew was on the road and the performers had their live weekly radio show to do, they did it from WLBZ studios. After the show, the crew was invited up to Sebec Lodge for lobster and skating. Benny and his crew skated out onto the lake and must have presented quite a sight to the locals as Dennis Day, Jack Benny and Rochester did pirouettes for the crowd.

Not one to sit still for a minute, Thompson Guernsey had other irons in the fire. Since he had had an interest in aviation since 1926, and was a licensed pilot who owned two planes, he was Governor Barrow's logical nominee to the Maine Aeronautical Commission on January 1, 1940.

But his fascination for a new industry, beginning in 1934, was to consume him for the rest of his life. In that year he founded and became the major stockholder in the General Television Corporation. Now he was interested in starting his own television station. Fascinated by its possibilities, he planned and built the equipment necessary to construct a television station in one of only three cities in the country to be granted a license by the federal government: Boston. The station was originally licensed to the eccentric professor, Hollis Baird. Guernsey bought the crude operation in 1940 and established television station WIXG-TV, Channel 1, Boston. This channel was later reallocated to Channel 4.

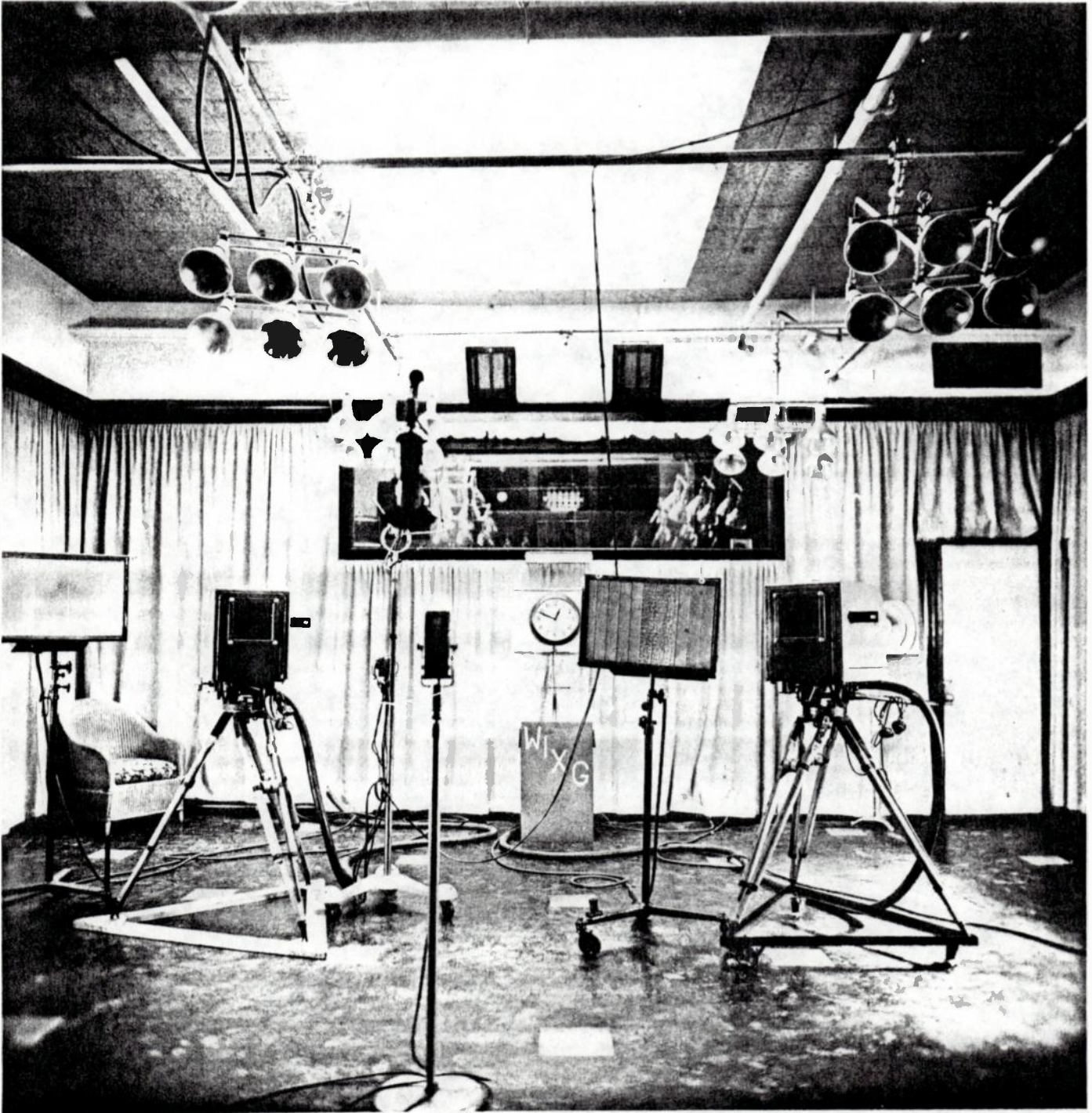
The transmitter and antenna were located on the Sears Roebuck Building near Fenway Park. The studio was located at 70 Brookline Avenue just outside of Kenmore Square and a special television viewing room was located just across the street from the Music Hall on Tremont Street. Since these were experimental licenses they were not yet given commercial status. Guernsey ran

*Transmitting from atop the Sears, Roebuck Building near Fenway Park, WIXG-TV broadcast to the entire population of Boston. There was only one problem —no one had a television set! Today, Thompson Guernsey's 1940 television license for the city of Boston would be worth several hundred million dollars. Guernsey could not convince backers that television would ever work and turned back his license to the government in 1946. He died a recluse in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine in 1979.*





*The site of the first "live" telecast in New England: the WIXG -TV studio at 70 Brookline Avenue, Boston. Thompson Guernsey owned and operated this studio with income generated at WLBZ radio in Bangor. This was an experimental television station and not licensed to collect revenue.*





WIXG-TV to promote television and its anticipated success, with no expectation of income until a commercial license could be granted.

He ran the operation from 1940 to 1945 solely from the proceeds of WLBZ, Bangor. His sale of the station to the Rines family in 1944 allowed him to funnel the last of his resources into the Boston project. From the October 8, 1940 program schedule of television station WIXG-TV the following program is listed: "Maine Recreation-News and Pictures from the Pine Tree State. . . 9:00-9:15 PM." WIXG-TV broadcast for only one

hour every day. All programs were live or on film. Videotape did not yet exist.

On April 2, 1945 Guernsey leased his studio to the Twentieth Century Fox Corporation. It was Fox's plan to run the studio as Guernsey had, but using its movies to save on program costs. Like Guernsey, Fox intended to promote the new medium and build up demand on the speculation that the public and the advertiser would respond. In fact, Guernsey's idea was so in tune with Fox's that he was hired to run the facility. It seemed a perfect match: Guernsey had the idea,



*The WIXG-TV studio in action in the early 1940s. The station broadcast "live" for an hour a day in anticipation that Boston viewers would respond to this infant medium and that someday television would catch on. WIXG-TV owner Thompson Guernsey was 10 years too early with his idea.*



Fox had the venture capital.

However, in 1946 Twentieth Century Fox failed to renew its lease. The company became disillusioned with television after one year and felt that this was not a business it wanted to be in. Fox saw no future in this new industry. Guernsey, after six years of trying to accustom Boston viewers to this infant medium, finally gave up and returned to Maine disillusioned and with empty pockets. His license for experimental television station WIXG-TV, Boston, was given back to the government.

Out of money and out of work, he returned to Dover-Foxcroft. He had one last scheme on his mind. One that, if successful, would produce an industry even larger than the television broadcasting business. With his electronics background with radio and television and his engineering degree, it was no surprise to find that he had himself designed much of the equipment needed to build the WIXG-TV transmitter, antenna and studios. Much of this equipment had been jerry-rigged by Guernsey and his engineers.



*Interior of WIXG-TV viewing room, located on Tremont Street, Boston in the early 1940s.*

Out of these tinkering came the patented Guernsey "TV Scope," a small television set which was contained in a 10-inch square box. Thompson's cousin, Ed Guernsey, remembers looking at this set in the 1940s:

"You peered into the large end of a megaphone-type arrangement and looked at this picture tube approximately one and a half inches in diameter. With no other reference in this dark viewing area the picture became as large as the imagination could conceive. It was really very effective."

Back at Dover-Foxcroft in the late 1940s, Guernsey became obsessed with his invention and was convinced that it would be a success someday.

Meanwhile, the bank foreclosed on his home and he was rumored to have spent at least

one winter in an abandoned lumber camp. Whenever he had any spare change he would travel to Boston to work on his invention.

Other than those times that he was traveling he spent the last 30 years of his life as a recluse in Dover-Foxcroft.

In 1979 Thompson L. Guernsey died at his home in Dover-Foxcroft, the same year that the Sony "Watchman" was introduced to the United States.

In 1988 the Twentieth Century Fox Corporation spent nearly \$1 billion getting back into the television business. Today, **WBZ-TV, Channel 4** in Boston, is probably worth several hundred million dollars.

**WLBZ** radio has changed call letters and is presently **WZON**, Bangor. The station is owned by author Stephen King and is the only commercially licensed radio station in the United States which intentionally runs no advertisements.

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# Maine Broadcasting Facilities

District 1		District 2		District 3		District 4	
WBLM-FM	Portland	WABK-AM	Gardiner	WABI-AM	Bangor	WAGM-TV	Presque Isle
WCDQ-FM	Sanford	WABK-FM	Gardiner	WABI-TV	Bangor	WBPW-FM	Carrabassett Valley
WCLZ-AM	Brunswick	WCBB-TV	Augusta	WALZ-FM	Machias	WCXU-FM	Carrabassett Valley
WCLZ-FM	Brunswick	WCME-FM	Boothbay	WCSN-SW	Greenbush	WCXX-FM	Madawaska
WCQL-FM	York Ctr.	WFAU-AM	Augusta	WDEA-AM	Ellsworth	WFST-FM	Carrabassett Valley
WCSH-TV	Portland	WHQO-FM	Skowhegan	WDME-AM	D. Foxcroft	WHOU-AM	Houlton
WGAN-AM	Portland	WKCG-FM	Augusta	WDME-FM	D. Foxcroft	WHOU-FM	Houlton
WGME-TV	Portland	WKTJ-AM	Farmington	WERU-FM	Blue Hill	WLVC-AM	Fort Kent
WHOM-FM	P. Springs	WKTJ-FM	Farmington	WHCF-FM	Bangor	WMEM-FM	Presque Isle
WHYR-FM	Saco	WKTQ-AM	S. Paris	WHMX-FM	Lincoln	WMEM-TV	Presque Isle
WIDE-AM	Biddeford	WKZS-FM	Lewiston	WHSN-FM	Bangor	WOZI-AM	Presque Isle
WIGY-FM	Bath	•WLAM-AM	Lewiston	WKIT-AM	Brewer	WREM-AM	Monmouth
WKZN-AM	Gorham	WMCM-FM	Rockland	WKIT-FM	Brewer	WSJR-AM	Madawaska
WJTO-AM	Bath	WMEW-FM	Winslow	WKSQ-FM	Ellsworth	WSYY-AM	Millville
WLOB-AM	Portland	WMME-AM	Augusta	WLBZ-TV	Bangor	WSYY-FM	Millville
WLPZ-AM	Westbrook	WMME-FM	Augusta	WMCS-AM	Machias	WTMS-AM	Presque Isle
WMEA-FM	Portland	WMMR-FM	Rumford	WMEB-TV	Orono	WTMS-FM	Presque Isle
WMEA-TV	Biddeford	WOXO-FM	Norway	WMED-FM	Calais		
WMGX-FM	Portland	WRKD-AM	Rockland	WMED-TV	Calais		
WMTW-TV	P. Springs	WRUM-AM	Rumford	WMEH-FM	Bangor		
WPKM-FM	Portland	WSKW-AM	Skowhegan	WPBC-FM	Bangor		
WPOR-AM	Portland	WTBM-FM	Mexico	WQCB-FM	Brewer		
WPOR-FM	Portland	WTHT-FM	Lewiston	WQDY-AM	Calais		
WPXT-TV	Portland	WTME-AM	Auburn	WQDY-FM	Calais		
WSJB-FM	Windham	WTOS-FM	Skowhegan	WQSS-FM	Camden		
WSME-AM	Sanford	WTVL-AM	Waterville	WTOX-FM	Lincoln		
WLPZ-AM	Westbrook	WTVL-FM	Waterville	WVII-TV	Bangor		
WYJY-FM	Biddeford	WXGL-AM	Lewiston	WWFX-FM	Brewer		
WYNZ-AM	Portland	WXGL-FM	Lewiston	WWMJ-FM	Ellsworth		
WYNZ-FM	Portland			WYOU-FM	Bangor		
				WZON-AM	Bangor		