

The History of RADIO in Mississippi

Bob McRaney, Sr.



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FOREWORD

By
Bob McRaney, Jr.
Executive Vice President & Managing Director
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One Sunday afternoon, in 1940, I sat on my father's lap and stared. . .frightened. . .at the imposing microphone. In seconds, I was to make my first station break and was keenly aware of the importance of doing the job correctly. That was a significant day in the life of a six-year-old boy.

Radio allowed me to meet the traveling luminaries of the day. . .Blackstone, the Magician, Tom Mix, Judge John C. Stennis, "Wrong Way" Corrigan, Gene Autry, Don McNeill, Primo Carnera, Lowell Thomas, Jack Dempsey and hosts of others. The magic, the significance of it all convinced me, then and there, that broadcasting was the most exciting and rewarding career in the world.

One year later in Columbus, the activity and excitement increased as the Mid-South Network came into being. Other operations were going on the air, singularly and in other groups, fashioned by men, who in their own inimitable styles, were shaping the radio industry in Mississippi.

Many of them came into our home. . .to talk, to laugh, to worry, to eat. . .and talk some more. And how those men could talk. . .endlessly about their first love. . .RADIO! They were a mixed breed and possessed admirable traits. They were, in varying degrees: bright, youthful, imaginative, hardworking, talented, sincere, honest and dedicated to their profession. They gave the business of radio stature. Stature in the eyes of the communities they were privileged to serve, stature to their fellow staff members and stature to one aspiring young enthusiast, in particular.

Stalwarts among those early leaders included names like Imes, Wright, Tibbett, Love, Mathis, Sepaugh, Harris, Smith, Ewing, Roden, Jones, Thompson and others, of course, including my father. To me, they were the giants of the world. . .and I admired and envied them all.

Mine was a grateful time, when youngsters could "hang around a station" and file records, type index cards, do high school radio shows and rub elbows with some unique, wonderful people. Later, the glamour wore thin as raceways had to be painted, linoleum tile laid, sound proof wallboard cut and glued into place, old buildings scrubbed and cleaned, and wires strung to hook up new operations. It was no fun toting 50 pounds of remote amplifier and cable to the top of a tiny press box for some high school football game, inevitably played in lousy weather. Yet, broadcasting's importance continued to grow in my mind and in the minds of Mississippians as they came to depend on it more and more.

Services like the "Musical Clock", "Swap Shop of the Air", "Weather Bulletins", "Community Calendar", and "Farm Almanac" were heard all over the state. News, at first, was limited to the dulcet tones of Murrow and Kaltenborn, Thomas, Foster and Heatter on the networks. Stations later began to concentrate on local news and local listeners responded enthusiastically.

It was a privilege to watch broadcasting grow, station after station, springing up in town after town. As those towns grew, the stations' contributions to that growth increased. And broadcasting prospered.

This book will chronicle the dates, the developments, the men and women, the events that forged and shaped what Mississippi Broadcasting is today. Mississippi broadcasters were there: during the great floods, the Big War, the peacetime boom and population explosion, the Dixiecrat Party, the Civil Rights tragedies, the industrial and business development, the crop reports both good and bad, the high school and college sports battles, the tornadoes and hurricanes, the bombastic and emotional political campaigns and the day-to-day activities that mean so much to so many Mississippians. The coverage of those and future events is critically important to the growth of our state. . .far more important than one six-year-old boy ever dreamed back in 1940. I'm sure you'll enjoy, and perhaps marvel, at the history of the broadcasting profession in Mississippi as it unfolds on the following pages.

DEDICATION



JOE PHILLIPS (1915-1978)

Friends and associates of the late Joe Phillips, who shall remain anonymous, contributed a portion of the costs of printing, binding, and distribution of this book.

Joe Phillips passed away on November 14, 1978, while on a trip with other Mississippi broadcasters attending a Communications Seminar in New York City.

He was born in Starkville, Miss., attended Starkville Public Schools and graduated from Mississippi State University. He served as a Captain in the Signal Corps of the USAF during WW II, while stationed in South America. He retired as a Colonel.

In 1948 he built and operated Radio Station WSSO in Starkville, Miss. He later built and operated WMPA—Aberdeen, Miss. He also installed a background music system, a cable TV system and Home Box office service in Starkville, as well as adding WSMU-FM stereo station to WSSO, in 1968.

For 15 years he was Producer and Director of football, basketball and baseball radio broadcasts for Mississippi State University Network.

In 1965 he was elected President of The Mississippi Broadcasters Association, after serving in other offices and as a member of the Board.

Joe was an avid "Ham" operator and through his amateur broadcasts made a legion of friends all over the world.

His business interests are being operated by his wife, Helen, and sons, Norvell Williams and Joe Phillips, Jr. He is also survived by two daughters, Sara Ruth Falbo and Eddie Sue Weeks.

To the memory of Joe Phillips, outstanding broadcaster and citizen of Mississippi, this page in "The History of Radio in Mississippi" is respectfully dedicated.

“The Richest Man Cannot Buy For Himself

What The Poorest Man Gets Free By Radio”

**David Sarnoff
Radio Corporation
of America**

“The Future And The Past Fight An

Endless Battle Over The Present”

Gene Allen Morgan

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Without the help, encouragement, cooperation and assistance of a host of persons, associates, historians, librarians, fellow broadcasters, persons knowledgeable in the art of preparing layouts, selection of photographs, proof-reading and friends, this book would never have become a reality.

Over a period of eight years, the author haunted libraries, pored over publications, consulted with authors, historians, and others. We pleaded with broadcasters everywhere, who had any connection or knowledge of the early history of the radio industry in Mississippi, to come forward with documents, photos, newspaper clippings, etc. from periodicals, books on broadcasting, FCC records, logs and factual information which might make this book an acceptable and recognized publication for posterity and useful as a reference.

Many responded and provided priceless photos, letters, station records, newspaper clippings documents, information and background, which would otherwise have remained in dusty files and attics, unknown to those generations to follow. To all these and others, the author is extremely grateful.

Deserving special mention for their valuable and courteous help, cooperation and time, the author wishes to pay special respects and thanks: To Quentin Proctor, formerly of the License Division of The Federal Communications Commission, who, in his own spare time, delved into the early records of The Federal Radio Commission and The Federal Communications Commission to obtain photostated copies of the actual records which officially verified dates, call letters, actions of the Commission, transfers, power assignments, licensing, deletions, construction permits, cancellations, correspondence and other valuable data, all of which has been made a part of the factual and authenticated records of radio in Mississippi in this book.

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 The author wishes to recognize F. M. Smith, Sr., President of MBA (1978-79), who made the original motion as a member of the MBA Board, to authorize the publication of this book, and gained approval of the MBA Board to fund the original research costs.
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 To include each individual who had a part in the accumulation of photos and materials for this book would require many pages. However, to express the appreciation by the author, indeed we extend thanks and appreciation to each person, mentioned or not, for making this all-inclusive photo narrative of how radio came to Mississippi, prospered and progressed into the vital industry we know today.

—The Author

RECOLLECTIONS

By The Author

Somewhere high in the oak trees on the campus of Seminary High School, Seminary, Miss., one might well discover some ancient copper wires and insulators, remnants of an outside antenna put in place by a group of small boys back in the early twenties. The author was one of those boys.

The antenna and lead in wires were connected to a battery operated radio receiver, the first one in Seminary, owned by banker H. J. Hauenstein. It had a series of dials across the front, a gooseneck speaker and an outlet for earphones.

The banker issued a blanket invitation to local citizens (all 350 of them), to attend weekly "radio concerts", to hear this marvel of the age, capable of bringing music and talk from "thin air", amid squeaks and squawks and static.

Every Saturday evening the populace would gather in the assembly hall of the high school to hear radio broadcasts from such stations as KDKA, which featured mostly barn dance music, with occasional classics and a vocalist or violinist.

Mike Conner, later to become one of Mississippi's greatest Governors, would invite the public to his hilltop home to hear the sports broadcast of the day. He had a battery operated set, with a square loop antenna. It was the largest set available and the hilltop location, plus a long outside antenna made for improved reception.

In 1926 the author entered Forrest County AHS in Brooklyn, and there built his first crystal set, consisting of silk covered wire on an oatmeal box, with a small sliver of quartz as a crystal and a small "cat's whisker" wire, which, when moved to a certain point, would detect a weak signal, audible through earphones. Thus, my interest in radio began.

In my early boyhood home, we had an old fashioned pump reed organ. I took it to Forrest County AHS where I was permitted to keep it in my room. An interest in music stemmed from my talented Mother and Father. Tunes were fashioned "by ear", as musical lessons were limited to the girls in Brooklyn.

In 1927, a classmate, Bill Martin, Sr., who, many years later, built and operated WABO AM-FM in Waynesboro and WKRN AM in Brandon, Miss., inveigled theatre manager C. B. Anderson at the Anderson Theatre in Hattiesburg to allow me to fill in at the pipe organ one weekend. Pipe organs were used to accompany silent movies.

From this beginning came a short career as a theatre organist for the Saenger group in the South, and later the Paramount-Publix chain, as guest organist.

Several theatres on the tour had remote lines installed and the theatre organ was broadcast daily. It was my duty to do these broadcasts during my appearances. The year was 1929.

The handwriting was on the wall. Sound had come to the movies and demand for theatre organists, professional or otherwise, was diminishing. In 1931, on a visit to hometown, Hattiesburg, Miss., a chance meeting with William Barclift, one of three brothers who had just purchased WRBJ, the ten watt station operated by The Woodruff Furniture Co., led to my employment as announcer-organist for the radio station, which they announced would be increased to 100 watts, ten times as strong!

Spurgeon "Strut" Suttle, another FCAHS graduate, had teamed up with the author on the road for Paramount-Publix, and likewise was hired as an announcer-singer.

Call letters were changed to WPFB, reflecting the first names of the new owners, William, Paul and Frank Barclift. The year was 1931.

Engineers for WPFB were veteran Jerry Harbour, who had built and operated WRBJ for The Woodruff Furniture Co., O. S. "Ossie" Droke of Jackson was also added to the engineering staff. The new 100 watt transmitter was custom built by engineer Jack Temple, son-in-law of the well-known W. K. Henderson of KWKH radio fame in Shreveport, La. It was redesigned and improved by "Ossie" Droke.

Jones Herrin and Otis Perry made up the rest of the announcing staff. Henry "Hank" Smith was Program Director. Among local artists appearing on WRBJ and later WPFB, included Mrs. B. D. Moore, Miss Ethel Powe, Richard Joseph, Max Williams, Ted Lott, Jack Stewart, Eddie Hinnant, The Hawaiians, The Hattiesburg High School Sextette, (which included Helen Perry, whose introduction to the author triggered a romance, culminating in marriage in 1932.) The Southern Collegians Orchestra from Mississippi Southern, directed by Bert Massengale; The Texas Drifter, Bill and Bob of Shell Oil Network fame, Paul King, who later won an Atwater-Kent audition contest, Vance Collum, Ernestine Pack, Jack Griffith, organist, Emma Rogers, organist, Oakley West, organist, Buck Turner and his Buckaroos; Homer Sudduth, who once managed the station and played "Uncle Zeke" on the Children's Hour, Hazel Bennett, pianist; Wycliff Wright, Baritone, Little Jack Turner; Phillip Joseph, Cecil and

Ottis Knippers and The Cullie Wilson Trio; Lamar Cooper, violinist; "Little Joe" Petro; "The Little Girl in Blue", Helen Williams. Rev. W. F. Hardwick, conducted a morning devotional program. Dr. Thomas F. Harvey broadcast morning and evening services from The First Baptist Church. (Remote.) Otis and Inez Perry did vocals and piano numbers.

WPFB went silent during the depression of 1932. It was bought from a local bank by Otis Eure, a college professor, who assumed a \$300.00 note, at \$25.00 a month. The author and engineer O. S. Droke were recalled and put the station back on the air in 1933. The author accepted a new job in Birmingham, Ala. in 1935.

After an interlude with WSGN, The Birmingham News Station in Birmingham, Ala., (1935 to 1940), the author returned to Mississippi radio as General Manager of WCBI-Columbus, Miss., organized the Mid-South Network of seven radio stations, AM-FM, and WCBI-TV, retiring in 1958.

In 1941 a group of broadcasters, consisting of Col. Birney Ines, Sr., P. K. Ewing, Sr., L. M. "Mac" Sepaugh, Wiley Harris, Hugh Smith; C. J. "Chuck" Wright and Bob McRaney, Sr., met to organize The Mississippi Broadcasters Association. From this initial meeting, a Committee of three, C. J. Wright, Sr., Hugh M. Smith and L. M. Sepaugh, were appointed to draw up the charter for the organization. The date was Nov. 28, 1941. C. J. Wright was elected to serve as the first President, serving for the remainder of 1941 and all of 1942. The author served as the second President in 1943.

The Mississippi Broadcasters Association did more to weld the industry together during the war years and afterwards than any other single effort. A strong relationship and friendship developed among owners and managers, with exchanges of equipment, personnel, ideas, and programs. This made MBA a cohesive and close knit organization, recognized as one of the strongest and most effective State Associations in the nation.



*When Uncle Sam Wants to
Talk to All the People.*

From VINTAGE RADIO by Morgan E. McMahon.

CHAPTER I

“How It All Began . . . ”

RADIO HISTORY

Regulation of Broadcasting

The Wireless Ship Act of 1910 applied to use of radio by ships, but the Radio Act of 1912 was the first domestic law for general control of radio. It made the Secretary of Commerce and Labor responsible for licensing radio stations and operators.

Early broadcasting was experimental and, therefore, noncommercial. In 1919 radiotelephone experiments enabled operation of “limited commercial stations.” In 1922 the wavelength of 360 meters (approximately 830 kilocycles per second) was assigned for the transmission of “important news items, entertainment, lectures, sermons, and similar matter.”

Recommendations of the first National Radio Conference in 1922 resulted in further regulations by the Secretary of Commerce. A new type of AM broadcast station came into being, with minimum power of 500 watts and maximum of 1000 watts (1 kilowatt). Two frequencies (750 and 833 kilocycles per second) were assigned for program transmission.

So rapid was the development of AM broadcasting that upon recommendation of subsequent National Radio Conferences in 1923 and 1924, the Department of Commerce allocated 550 to 1500 kilocycles per second for standard broadcast and authorized operating power up to 5000 watts (5 kilowatts).

Increasing numbers of AM stations caused so much interference that, in 1925, a fourth National Radio Conference asked for a limitation on broadcast time and power. The Secretary of Commerce was unable to deal with the situation because court decisions held that the Radio Act of 1912 did not give him this authority. As a result, many broadcasters changed their frequencies and increased their power and operating time at will, regardless of the effect on other stations, producing bedlam on the air.

In 1926 President Coolidge urged Congress to remedy matters. The result was the Dill-White Radio Act of 1927.

Federal Radio Commission

The Radio Act of 1927 created a five-member Federal Radio Commission to issue station licenses, allocate frequency bands to various services, assign specific frequencies to individual stations, and control station power. The same act delegated to the Secretary of Commerce authority to inspect radio stations, to examine and license radio operators, and to assign radio call signs.

Much of the early effort of the Federal Radio Commission was required to straighten out the confusion in the broadcast band. It was impossible to accommodate the 732 broadcast stations then operating. New regulations caused about 150 of them to surrender their licenses.

Communications Act of 1934

At the request of President Roosevelt, the Secretary of Commerce in 1933 appointed an interdepartmental committee to study electrical communications. The committee recommended that Congress establish a single agency to regulate all interstate and foreign communication by wire and radio, including telegraph, telephone and broadcast. The Communications Act of 1934 created the Federal Communications Commission for this unified regulation. This is the statute under which the FCC operates and which it enforces. Several of its provisions were taken from the earlier Radio Act.

Federal Communications Commission

The FCC began operating on July 11, 1934, as an independent federal agency headed by seven commissioners, who are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.

FCC Broadcast Regulation

One of the FCC's major activities is the regulation of broadcasting. This has three phases.

The first is the allocation of space in the radio frequency spectrum to the broadcast services and to many nonbroadcast services which also must be accommodated. In view of the tremendously increased use of radio technology in recent decades, the competing demands for frequencies are among the commission's most pressing problems. Fortunately, as technology has advanced, frequencies higher and higher in the spectrum have become usable. Apart from the frequencies used for broadcasting, frequencies in other portions of the spectrum are allocated for "broadcast auxiliary" use for remote pickup and other transmitters auxiliary to main broadcast stations (see Auxiliary Broadcast Services).

The second phase of regulation is the assignment of stations in each service within the allocated frequency bands, with specific location, frequency and power. The chief consideration, although by no means the only one, is to avoid interferences with other stations on the same channel (frequency) or channels adjacent in the spectrum. If his application is granted, an applicant for a new station or for changed facilities receives a construction permit. Later, when the station is built and it is capable of operating as proposed, a license to operate is issued.

The third phase is regulation of existing stations inspection to see that stations are operating in accordance with FCC rules and technical provisions of their authorizations, modifying the authorizations when necessary, assigning station call letters, licensing transmitter operators, processing requests to assign the station license to another party or transfer control of the record licensee corporation, and processing applications for renewal of license. At renewal time the commission reviews the station's record to see if it is operating in the public interest.

The Nature of American Broadcasting

Although educational and other noncommercial stations share the airwaves, the American broadcasting system for the most part is a commercial system. In this respect it is supported by revenues from those who advertise goods or services to the audience. Advertising messages are presented as commercial "spot announcements" before, during, and after programs, or as a part of "sponsored" programs.

Broadcast stations are licensed to serve the public interest, convenience and necessity. Because radio channels are limited and are part of the public domain, it is important to entrust them to licensees with a sense of public responsibility. By law, each license must contain a statement that the licensee does not have any right to operate the station or use the frequency beyond the term of license. The maximum term of increase is three years.

A Short Course in Broadcasting

There were 8,240 radio stations operating in the United States at the beginning of 1977. Of these, 4,497 were commercial AM's, 2,873 were commercial FM's and 870 were noncommercial FM. There were 984 operating television stations: 517 commercial VHF's, 211 commercial UHF's, 101 noncommercial VHF's and 155 noncommercial UHF's. Most commercial TV's are network-affiliated; approximately 115 operate as independents.

No single entity may own more than seven stations in each service (AM, FM or TV). In TV, no more than five may be VHF. No owner may have two stations of the same service in the same community. No owner of three VHF's in the top 50 markets may purchase other VHF's in the top 50 without a showing of compelling public interest. Newspaper owners may no longer purchase broadcast properties in the same market, nor may radio station owners acquire TV stations there, nor TV owners radio outlets. TV stations may no longer acquire cable TV franchises in the same city, and networks may not own cable systems at all.

In 1975, the last year for which official FCC figures are available, commercial broadcasting had total revenues of \$5.8 billion. Profits were \$871 million. Television accounted for \$4.1 billion (70.7%) of revenues and \$780.3 million (89.6%) of profits; radio, for \$1.7 billion (29.3%) and \$90.7 million (10.4%). Public broadcasting had a 1975 income of \$364.8 million—25.3% from the federal government.

There are more than 71.5 million U.S. homes (97% of all homes) with television sets, about 45% of which have more than one set. About 54 million sets are in color. It is estimated that about 91% of TV homes can receive UHF signals, and that about 14.8% are linked with cable systems, according to Arbitron Television. There are an estimated 425 million radio sets in the U.S., 310 million (72.9%) of them in homes and 115 million (27.1%) out of homes.

The average American home watches TV for six hours and eight minutes a day, according to A. C. Nielsen statistics. And the latest study by The Roper Organization (commissioned by the Television Information Office) shows that 65% of the U.S. public turns to TV as the source of most of its news, and that 51% ranks it as the most believable news source.

The average 30-second prime-time network television announcement now costs \$50,000 (the highest cost to date, for the first television broadcast of the film "Gone With the Wind," was \$130,000; low-rated spots average about \$20,000). An estimated 75 million people watched the 1977 Super Bowl telecast. Minute announcements during that event cost \$250,000. Thirty-second announcements on individual TV stations range from \$15,000 in top-rated specials in major markets to as low as \$5 in the second-hundred markets. Radio spots cost from \$275 or more in major markets to less than a dollar in small towns.

[From *Broadcasting Yearbook*, 1977]

THE ABC'S OF RADIO AND TELEVISION

A description of broadcasting—how it evolved, how it works, how it is regulated—as reported by the FCC

One of the most dramatic developments of the 20th Century technology has been the use of radio waves—electromagnetic radiations traveling at the speed of light—for communication. Radio communication designed for reception by the general public is known as "broadcasting". Radio waves of different frequencies (number of cycles per second) can be "tuned". Hence, signals from many sources can be received on a radio set without interfering with each other.

In everyday language, the term "radio" refers to aural (sound) broadcasting, which is received from amplitude-modulated (AM) or frequency-modulated (FM) stations. "Television," another form of radio, is received from stations making both visual and aural transmissions. AM radio, sometimes called standard broadcasting, was the earliest broadcast service and operates on relatively low "medium" frequencies. FM and TV are newer and occupy considerably higher frequency bands.

Radio communications was born of many minds and developments. In the 1860's, the Scottish physicist, James Clerk Maxwell, predicted the existence of radio waves. Heinrich Rudolph Hertz, the German physicist, later demonstrated that rapid variations of electric current can be projected into space in the form of waves similar to those of light and heat. (His contributions have been honored internationally by the adoption of Hertz as a synonym for cycles per second.) In 1895, the Italian engineer, Guglielmo Marconi, transmitted radio signals for a short distance, and at the turn of the century, conducted successful trans-Atlantic tests.

The first practical application of radio was for ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore telegraphic communication. Marine disasters early demonstrated the speed and effectiveness of radiotelegraphy for saving life and property at sea.

This new communication medium was first known as "wireless." American use of the term "radio" is used to about 1912 when the Navy, feeling "wireless" was too inclusive, adopted the word "radiotelegraph." The use of the word "broadcast" (originally a way to sow seed) stems from early U.S. naval references to "broadcast" of orders to the fleet. Now it is used to describe radio service to the public.

The origin of the first voice broadcast is a subject for debate. Claims to that distinction range from "Hello, Rainey," said to have been transmitted by Nathan B. Stubblefield to a neighbor, Rainey T. Wells, in a demonstration near Murray, Ky., in 1892, to an impromptu program from Brant Rock, Mass., by Reginald A. Fessenden in 1906, which was picked up by nearby ships.

There were other early experimental audio transmissions. Lee De Forest put singer Enrico Caruso on the air in 1910, and there were trans-Atlantic voice tests by the Bell Telephone Co. at Arlington, Va., in 1915. But it was not until after World War I that regular broadcasting began.

The identity of the "first" broadcasting station is also a matter of conflicting claims. This is due largely to the fact that some pioneer AM broadcast stations developed from experimental operations. Although KDKA Pittsburgh did not receive a regular broadcasting license until Nov. 7, 1921, it furnished programs under a different authorization before that date. Records of the Department of Commerce, which then supervised radio indicate that the first station issued a regular broadcasting license was WBZ Springfield, Mass., on Sept. 15, 1921. (WBZ is now assigned to Boston.)

There was experimental network operation over telephone lines as early as 1922. In that year WJZ (now WABC) New York and WGY Schenectady, N.Y. broadcast the World Series. Early in 1923 WEAJ (now WNBC) New York and WNAC Boston picked up a football game from Chicago. Later that same year WEAJ and WGY were connected with KDKA Pittsburgh and KYW Chicago (now Philadelphia) to carry talks made at a dinner in New York. President Coolidge's message to Congress was broadcast by six stations in 1923.

In 1926 the National Broadcasting Co., a subsidiary of RCA Corp., started the first regular network with 24 stations. For its first coast-to-coast hookup, in 1927, it broadcast a football game. In that same year, the Columbia Broadcasting System, first called the Columbia Phonography Broadcasting System, was organized.

For some years NBC operated two networks, the Red and the Blue, but when the FCC adopted chain-broadcasting rules in the early forties, one organization was prohibited from operating two networks serving the same area at the same time. RCA sold the Blue Network to Edward J. Noble in 1943. It ultimately became the American Broadcasting Co. (In 1968, ABC itself was given a limited exception in the dual-network rule in order to operate four radio networks, each providing a specific service.)

FM and TV broadcasting emerged from their experimental stage just before U.S. entry into World War II. Wartime restrictions retarded expansion of radio facilities, although the emergency produced new techniques and apparatus that are in use today. In the decades following the war, broadcasting expanded domestically, and the development of communication satellites has opened new possibilities for international relay.

Official Count of U.S. Broadcasting Stations

(From records of FCC)

Jan. 1, 1922-----	30
March 1, 1923-----	556
Oct. 1, 1924-----	530
June 30, 1925-----	571
June 30, 1926-----	528
*Feb. 23, 1927 -----	733
July 1, 1928-----	677
Nov. 9, 1929-----	618
July 1, 1930-----	612
July 1, 1931-----	612
Jan. 1, 1932-----	608
Jan. 1, 1933-----	610
†Jan. 1, 1934 -----	591
Jan. 1, 1935-----	605
Jan. 1, 1936-----	632
Jan. 1, 1937-----	685
Jan. 1, 1938-----	721
Jan. 1, 1939-----	764
Jan. 1, 1940-----	814
Jan. 1, 1941-----	882
Jan. 1, 1942-----	923
Jan. 1, 1943-----	917
Jan. 1, 1944-----	912

*Federal Radio Commission takes over regulation from Dept. of Commerce.

†Federal Communications Commission replaced Federal Radio Commission July 11, 1934.

[From *Broadcasting Yearbook-1944*]

CHAPTER II

“The Early Years” (1916-1921)

Radio took its first faltering steps in Mississippi shortly before World War I, when amateurs across the nation were putting together their own versions of spark gap transmitters, capable of sending and receiving Morse code. It was a hit or miss proposition, and most sending and receiving stations had a short range, due to low power and inefficient components. However, from these “home made” contraptions, messages could be transmitted by the “radio nuts”, as they were sometimes called.

Mississippi A and M College, now Mississippi State University, and The University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), both operated early day laboratories for experiments in the new art, and Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College offered courses in electrical engineering.

From these sources Mississippi produced some of its early electronic pioneers who built stations for both Morse code and later voice transmissions.

One such graduate at Mississippi A & M College was Hoyt Wooten, who worked his way through college by operating movie projectors for the local picture shows, and later in and around his hometown of Coldwater, Miss. Hoyt was bitten by the “radio bug” early in his college years and upon graduation set up a small sending and receiving station in one room of his home in Coldwater. His first broadcasts were made in 1919, without benefit of a commercial license, as most operators selected their own frequencies and operating hours were optional. They operated mostly at night when conditions were more favorable due to atmospheric conditions and the lower ozone layers reflected the signals at angles which permitted “skip distance” radiation, making reception possible over long distances. Very few went to the trouble of applying for permits. Congress assigned the authority to make such grants and permissions to the Department of Commerce. Usually such grants or permissions were temporary and of short duration. Overseeing the operations of stations was informal at best. Station licensees were expected to operate more or less on an “Honor Basis”.

In 1922 Hoyt Wooten’s station held a temporary permit to operate. Even with crude components and sparse operating facilities, Hoyt’s station required a certain amount of money, and being a farsighted and ambitious young man, he sought and found sponsors for his weekend broadcasts, and thus the first commercial radio broadcasts began in Mississippi.

The official records of the U.S. Department of Commerce show that permission was granted to Hoyt Wooten to operate a “limited Commercial Radio Station”, under call letters KFNG, on January 17, 1924.

The records also show that a “limited Commercial Station” license was granted to Radio Station WHAU in Corinth, Miss., in 1924, but nothing in the records show this station ever went on the air. It was deleted three months after the first grant. A diligent search in Corinth, and contacts with persons or members of families of the first grantees could throw no further light on this station.

Quentin Proctor, head of the License Section for many years at The Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C., researched the complete files of early day Mississippi Radio Stations and indicated KFNG was the first to be licensed and operated as a commercial radio station in Mississippi. In 1972, Radio Station WREC, Memphis, Tenn., published a book entitled “The First Fifty Years”, which gave the complete history and background of Hoyt Wooten’s early station in Coldwater, Miss., from 1922 to 1972, complete with photos. KFNG was later moved to Whitehaven, Tenn., and eventually to Memphis, and the call letters changed to WREC, which stood for “WOOTEN RADIO AND ELECTRIC COMPANY”. WREC operated from studios in the grand Peabody Hotel for many years.

Fortunately Chief Engineer Wilson Rainey and others preserved the original transmitter, receiver and other equipment used by KFNG, and the family of Hoyt Wooten donated it to The Mississippi Broadcasters Association, through Executive Secretary Bob McRaney, Sr. It was officially presented to Bob McRaney, Jr., President of the MBA, at its convention in 1969 in Biloxi, Miss. On January 24, 1975, this equipment with other memorabilia of early day Mississippi Radio, was enshrined in the Mississippi Radio Museum in the old capitol building in Jackson, Miss., where it may be seen today.

The records also show that The University of Mississippi operated an experimental station, WCBH, as part of their Department of Physics. Dr. A. B. Lewis, now retired Dean of Liberal Arts at Ole Miss, was one of the

first members of the faculty to show interest in the station.

Another member of the Ole Miss faculty, Dr. Addy F. Cullen, was also a former Chairman of the Physics Department and recalls that WCBH operated with antenna wires stretched between two tall cypress poles on the campus. Much of the original WCBH equipment remains in the physics department and the Physics Museum on the campus.

WCBH operated until World War I, when it was used as part of a training service for operators and signal corpsmen. All stations were ordered off the air by the government for the duration of the war. It was licensed again Feb. 28, 1924.

WCBH was again placed in service after WW I and operated until Sept. 1927 when it left the air. It was later reactivated and put into regular operation in the Communications Department, and has operated as a closed circuit campus educational station to this date.

On March 6, 1924, one of only five portable radio stations in America, was licensed to Howard S. Williams, former Editor of The Hattiesburg American, in Hattiesburg, Miss. Authority was granted the station to be moved from one location to another in Mississippi, for the purpose of broadcasting revivals, which usually lasted two weeks. Williams was a popular lay evangelist. His appearances helped promote the sale of radio sets. Two long poles were erected and a "t-top" antenna was strung between the poles. Otis Perry was the song leader, and it was his responsibility to transport, erect and operate the station, as well as take it down after each revival and haul it, along with the huge circus-type tent, from one location to another. The Department of Commerce required the station to renew its license each time it was moved. It was deleted December 8, 1925.

The next station to be granted in Mississippi was WDBT, licensed to Joseph C. Taylor, who operated a book store in Hattiesburg, Miss. The station transmitted on 1270 KC, power of ten watts, with an estimated coverage of twenty-five miles. The transmitter was located on the grounds of the old Country Club. It went off the air April 10, 1925.

The First Presbyterian Church, 10th St. and 23rd Ave., Meridian, Miss., was granted a license to operate a small station, with call letters WIBP, on June 17, 1925. It was deleted Sept. 30, 1925.

Columbus, Miss. got its first station, WCOC, licensed to the Crystal Oil Company, on Feb. 4, 1927. It was moved to Meridian, Miss. in 1930.

In 1927 there was a need for daily cotton market reports in the Delta area of Mississippi. A radio station, WQBC, was licensed on Feb. 18, 1928, for Utica, Miss. It was built and operated by I. R. Jones, a licensed engineer. It broadcast from one room of an old school building. It was moved to Vicksburg, Miss. in 1931. It is now the oldest operating station in Mississippi, in point of continuous service.

WGCM-Gulfport, Miss. came into being on Feb. 18, 1928. It was licensed to Gulf Coast Music Company, whence the call letters WGCM, later to be known as "Wonderful Gulf Coast of Mississippi". E. L. Staples was President of the music store and the station.

Hattiesburg, Miss. had been without a radio station since April 10, 1925. On May 18, 1928, a license was granted to Woodruff Furniture Company, and J. H. Harbour, one of the few licensed operators in the State. It was a 10 watt station, and operated from a studio, consisting of a small room, draped with burlap cloth for sound proofing. It operated a few hours each day and a short period in the evening. It helped promote Atwater-Kent Radios, for which the furniture store was the local dealer. Jerry Harbour operated a repair shop and installed the radios for the store. Some local talent appeared on the station. There was little news or talk programs, but phonograph records made up most of the program time. In 1931 it was sold to William, Paul and Frank Barclift. The power was increased "ten times", to 100 watts, and the call letters changed to WPFB.

The next radio station to be built in Mississippi was WRBQ in Greenville, Miss. Pat Scully was the major domo. It was granted on May 31, 1928.

It seems strange that Mississippi's largest city, Jackson, the State Capitol, did not acquire a radio station until May 19, 1929. It was licensed to The Lamar Life Insurance Company, and was located in the tower of the Lamar Life building, located directly opposite the Governor's mansion on Capitol Street. Leigh Parker was the first manager of the station.

Tupelo, Mississippi obtained its first radio station on August 22, 1930. It was a short-lived operation and eventually was moved out of State.

Practically all of the early day stations were small in wattage. The equipment was mostly handcrafted and hours of operation were, at most, sporadic. There were very few commercials. The stations were mainly supported by the licensee—usually a local business. Very few, if any, were built with much hope of expansion, and certainly with a dim view of making money. They did help to develop local talent and as the number of stations increased, so did the number of radio sets. The pattern of growth and progress was established, and had it not been for the great stock market crash of 1929 and the coming of the great depression, radio might have blossomed, grown and borne fruit during the "early years".

The years 1916-1922, as far as radio development in Mississippi was concerned, offer little in the way of historical background or photos.

The earliest activities, no doubt, consisted of experimental or amateur stations, which transmitted only Morse code, via equipment which used the old spark gap transmitters and receivers with headsets.

One of the earliest known stations was built and operated by John Hugh England, a high school student of Lynch High School in West Point, Miss. He was born in West Point, Miss., in 1900.

Beckett Howorth, another Lynch High School student, lived across town from John Hugh England, and also built and operated an amateur station almost identical to England's rig. They communicated regularly via their stations, which were both equipped with a three-quarter kilowatt spark gap transmitter, operated by Morse key sending unit. The receivers had electrolytic detectors and a pair of Brandies headsets were used.

John Hugh England was a brilliant student with high marks in mathematics and physics. Following graduation he became an electrical engineer and worked for Westinghouse for 35 years. During World War II he worked for Raytheon. He returned to Westinghouse and completed his tenure and upon retirement, returned to West Point.

By sheer coincidence, his transmitter was operated from his residence at 14 Grove Street in 1916. In later years the house number was changed to 570 Grove Street. The author happens to live at 548 Grove Street, at the opposite end of the block from Mr. England.

Jack Rowell of West Point, a jeweler by trade, and a member of the Tombigbee Chapter of the Amateur Radio Club, learned of the book being written on the History of Radio in Mississippi, and provided the excellent photo of the England transmitting station, and arranged for an introduction of the author to Mr. England. Mr. England stated there was very little radio activity in the State after World War I was declared, thus the skip in information from 1916 to 1919.



John Hugh England about 16 years of age. He built and operated a $\frac{3}{4}$ KW spark gap transmitter, and used a Morse telegraph key to send messages from his home on Grove St. in West Point, Miss. [1918]

This is the earliest known photo of a spark gap transmitter which operated in Mississippi at 14 Grove Street, West Point, Miss. It was built and operated by John Hugh England. Mr. England later became an electrical engineer for Westinghouse and is now retired and lives in West Point. Note glass insulators on the chair legs to prevent shocks.



CHAPTER III

“The Fledgling Years” (1922-1929)

1922

In 1919 Hoyt Wooten of Coldwater, Mississippi, who graduated from Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College in Starkville, Miss., with a degree in electrical engineering, built and operated an experimental amateur radio station from his home in Coldwater.

At that time The Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, was the government agency overseeing all radio operations. It was customary to issue short term licenses or permits, for such stations.

It was September 22, 1922, when KFNG went on the air with ten watts power, battery operated, to become the first commercially operated station in Mississippi. The studios and transmitter were located in a room of the S. D. Wooten, Sr. residence in Coldwater, Miss. The license was a “limited commercial.”

An inverted L type antenna was suspended between two wooden poles, fifty feet above ground. Two #14 copper wires, insulated at both ends and a 40 foot leadin wire, constituted the system. Two eight-inch porcelain insulators and a six foot spreader bar were used at each end of the antenna. The system was grounded to a water pipe. In the original application, Wooten requested an assigned frequency of 286 meters.

The receiving equipment consisted of a three circuit-inductive coupled unit. The detector was a non-regenerated audion, capable of receiving 200 to 650 meters. The operating frequency was 1180 KC.

Some of the early commercial advertisers, in addition to local firms, were Bry's Department Store and W. R. Herstein's Electrical Supply Company of Memphis, Tenn.

Fan letters poured in from all 48 states, and as many as 10,000 cards and letters arrived within a week. Hoyt Wooten and his brothers realized the potential of radio and began building sets of their own design to sell.

When the Peabody Hotel opened in Memphis in 1925, one of the first businesses to operate on the lobby floor was Wooten's Radio-Electric Company, offering a complete line of radio sets. From this company name came the call letters WREC. Broadcasts continued from KFNG in Coldwater, mostly on Sunday afternoons.

KFNG was moved to Whitehaven, Tenn. in September, 1925, in order to eliminate travel time between the station and Wooten's Radio-Electric Co. The power was increased to 200 watts and the frequency was changed to 600 kilocycles, sharing time with WOAN, Lawrenceburg, Tenn.

The call letters were changed from KFNG to WREC in 1928.

On April 23, 1929, Wooten moved into new studios in the Peabody Hotel, in Memphis. He purchased WOAN, increased the power to 500 watts. Another increase was made later to 1,000 watts. Mississippi's first commercial station was now in big time radio to stay.

On April 5, 1922, The Commercial Dispatch-Columbus, Miss. reported that the first radio messages from the “big broadcasting companies” were received over radios owned by Wiley Johnson and B. P. Ferriday.



Hoyt Wooten in the bomb proof underground monitoring station in his home in Whitehaven, Tenn.

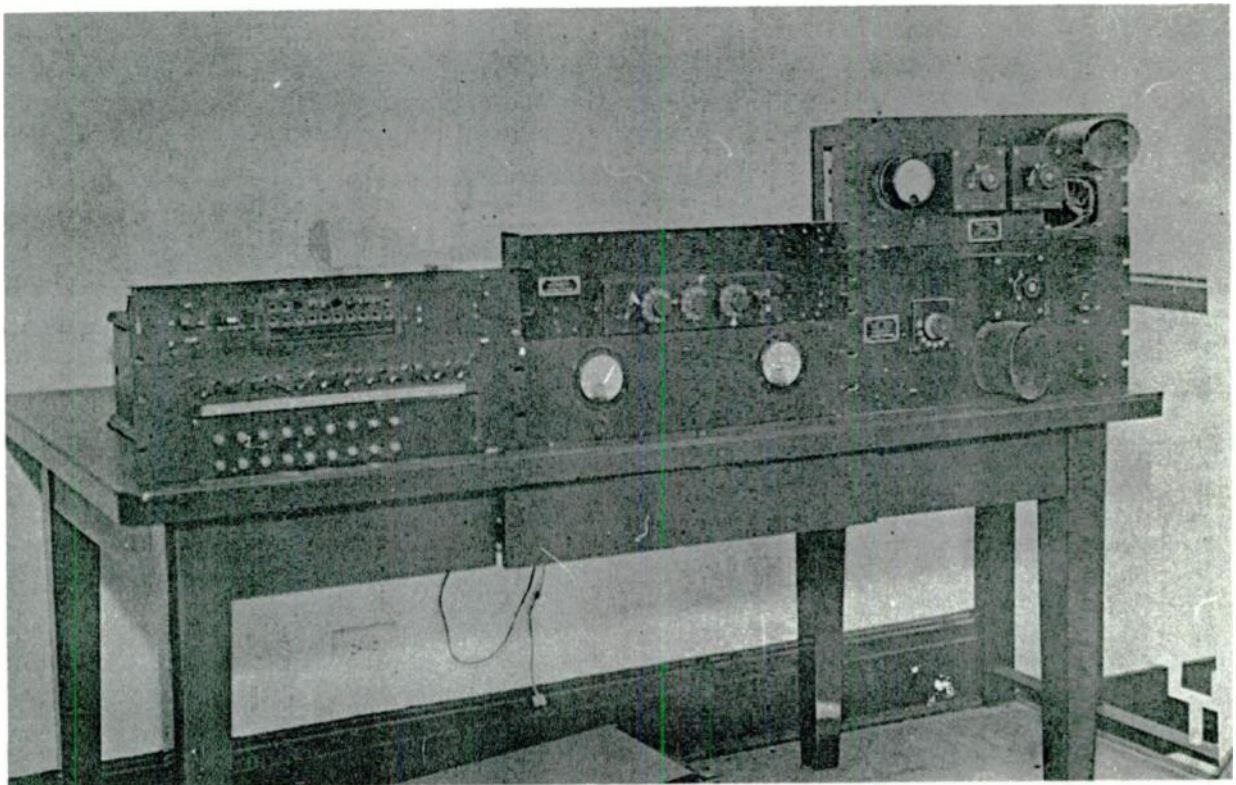
Wooten operated KFNG in Coldwater, Miss. the first radio station in Miss. in 1922. The station was officially licensed as the first Commercial station in Mississippi. Later it was moved to Whitehaven, Tenn. and subsequently to the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, Tenn. and became WREC.

*[Wooten Radio and Electric Co.]
Hoyt Wooten died December 6, 1969*

[Photo made in 1969]



The original transmitter-receiver, mike and earphones used by KFNG-Coldwater, Miss. —1922—Presented to MBA 1969. Now in the MBA Radio Museum in the Old Capitol Building—North State St.—Jackson, Miss.



Early patch panels and audio amplifiers used by KFGN-WREC—Mississippi's first Commercial Radio Station [1922—Early 1930's].

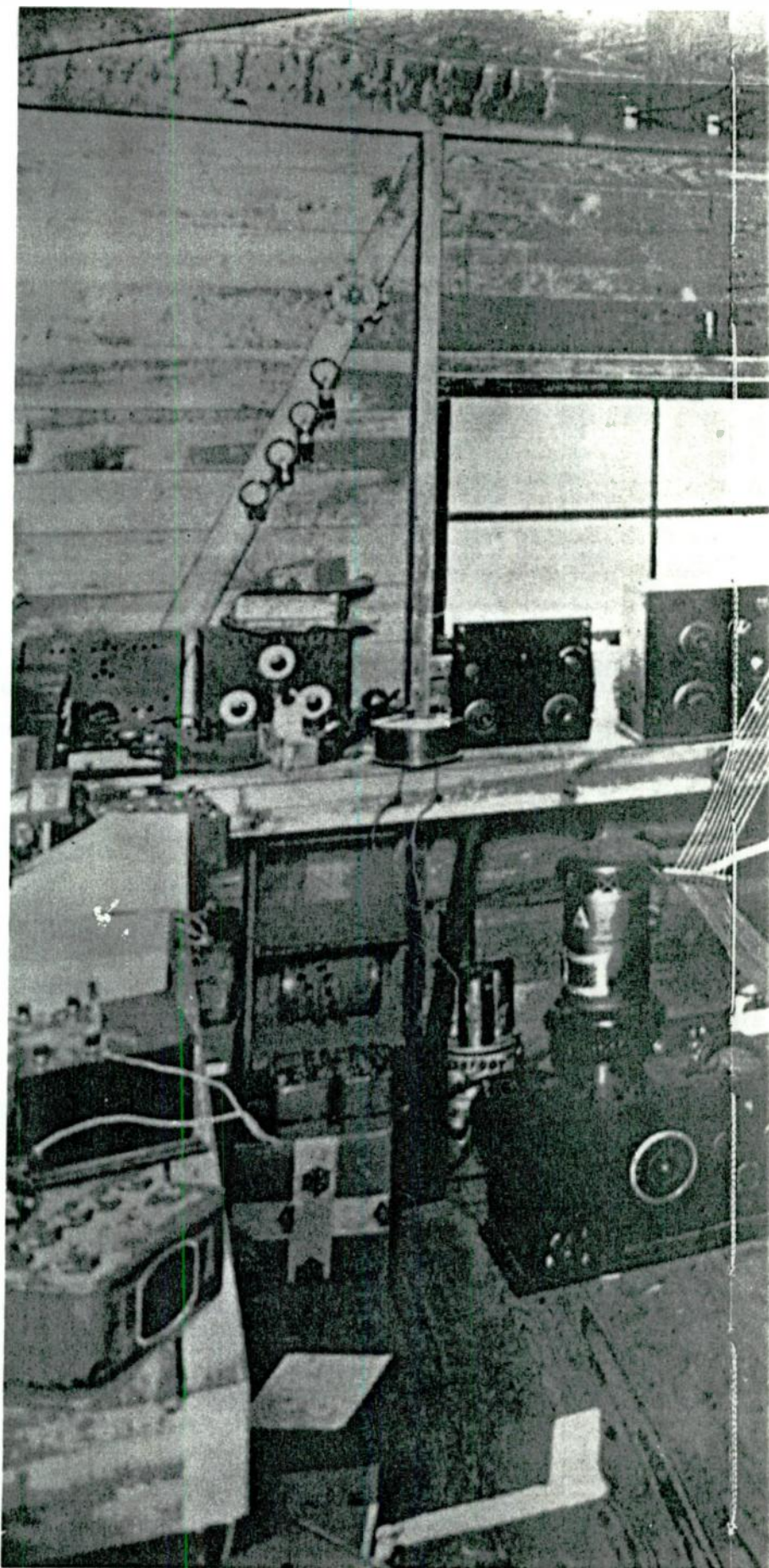
This is the only known photo of Mississippi's first Commercially operated Radio Station, KFNG-Coldwater, Mississippi, as it appeared in 1922.

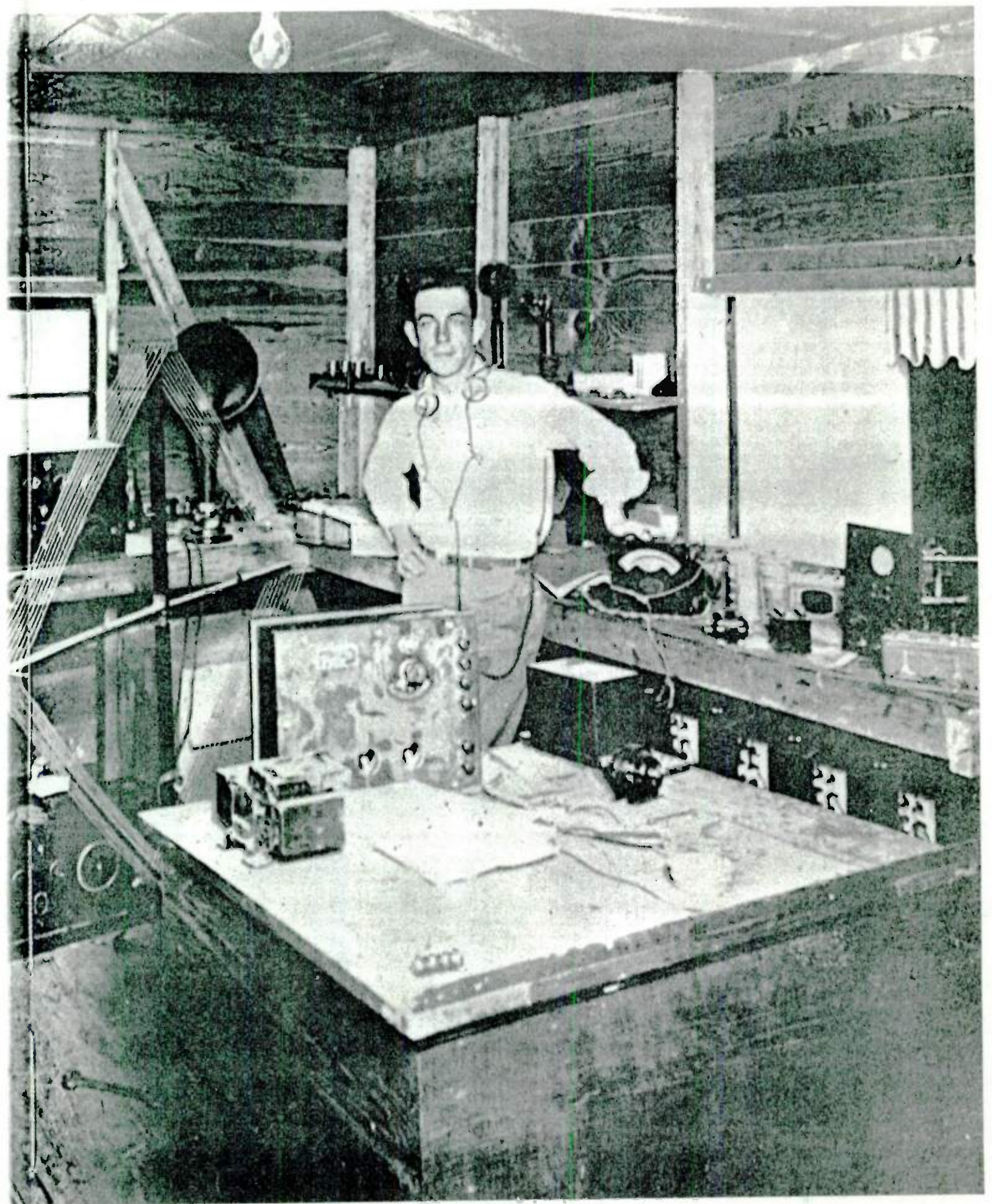
Shown at right is Hoyt B. Wooten, who built and operated KFNG. In the picture may be seen the original Westinghouse Type T-F 10 watt transmitter, and the Colin B. Kennedy Model 110 Universal receiver with two stage amplifier, made in 1922.

Also in the picture is the square loop receiving antenna, tuning coils, volt meter, spare tubes, old telephone transmitters, [on shelf behind Wooten], used as early microphones; a kerosene heater on the floor in center of picture; knife type switches mounted on table at right, assorted transformers, wire and other equipment.

Note the original ear phones around Wooten's neck. Lighting was from a bare bulb suspended by insulated wires on the ceiling.

From this small wooden shack, built across the street from the S. D. Wooten, Sr. home in Coldwater, Miss., and amid the primitive equipment shown, became the fountainhead of the radio broadcasting industry in Mississippi.





1923

Research for the year 1923, through all available sources, does not reveal any radio activity in Mississippi. No stations were added, no permits nor grants were issued, and no deletions.

However, it is fairly certain there was continued activity among the amateur Morse code stations and experiments by enthusiasts and in the labs of Mississippi A & M and The University of Mississippi.

1924

Things began to happen in Mississippi radio in 1924.

KFNG, which actually began commercial broadcasting in Coldwater, Mississippi in 1922, became Mississippi's first commercial station. It was granted a full commercial license on January 17, 1924. Hoyt Wooten was probably the most active and experienced station operator in the State at that time. He had a consuming desire to "make radio work", and being married, and still living in his parents' home, there was some effort on the part of his father to persuade him to "go to work" and carry his share of the family expenses. Hoyt and his brother, S. D., also an electrical student at Mississippi A and M College, finally built a small shack for KFNG, across the street from the home of their parents. Many nights were spent crouched over their crude transmitter and receiver, straining to pick up any station which happened to be transmitting. Their efforts were rewarded occasionally, when conditions were right, and KDKA-Pittsburgh and others would be heard amid the squawks and screeches.

An application for a Class A radio station was filed with the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Navigation, in Washington, for a ten watt station, to be operated by the Department of Physics at Ole Miss. The address on the form specified that all correspondence regarding the application was to be mailed in care of W.L. Kennon, P.O. Box 216, University, Miss. It stated the station would be located on campus, near the City of Oxford, Miss. The application proposed to broadcast news and entertainment. Details of the original application, taken from the files, indicated the source of electrical power would be obtained from the University power plant, 110 volts, 60 cycles. The power plant had a capacity of 100KW.

The proposed radio system consisted of vacuum tubes as oscillators and modulators for the transmitter, and a vacuum tube detector and conductive or inductive type of receiver.

The application specified a "T" type antenna system, using two wooden masts, supported by guy wires, with a height of 95 feet above the ground. Length of the antenna, 6 wires of stranded #22 copper, 65 feet in length, with insulators of Electrose material. Other essential dimensions given included a counterpoise system, used with ground to water pipes. The proposed station would be located above the physics laboratory, according to the application. Under "Remarks", it was stated "best of materials and construction used throughout". The application stated the station was prepared to use any wavelength between 200 and 300 meters. A wavelength of 242 meters, 1240 kilocycles was assigned.

The application proposed to use Weston wattmeters, voltmeters, ammeters, milliammeters etc. Conductive coupling with Mica Faradon primary condenser and both tuned or untuned secondary circuits would be used.

The application was signed on behalf of the University of Mississippi by Joseph Neely Powers, Chancellor.

A report signed by Theodore G. Deiler, Supervisor of Radio, with headquarters in New Orleans, La., recommended a provisional Class A broadcasting license be issued and subsequent renewals be made. It was dated Feb. 24, 1924. It was deleted September 12, 1927.

The next station to be granted a license to operate in Mississippi was WCBG. The unusual part of this application, filed in the name of Howard S. Williams, Layman Evangelist of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, specified it would be a movable or portable station, to be moved from one town to another approximately every two weeks. It was one of only five such stations ever authorized in the United States. Hours of operation were specified between the hours of 7 PM to 10 PM, Central Standard Time. The application stated the station would be used to broadcast revival services, and advance notice would be given each time the station was moved.

Sturle J. Parks was listed as the operator of the station.

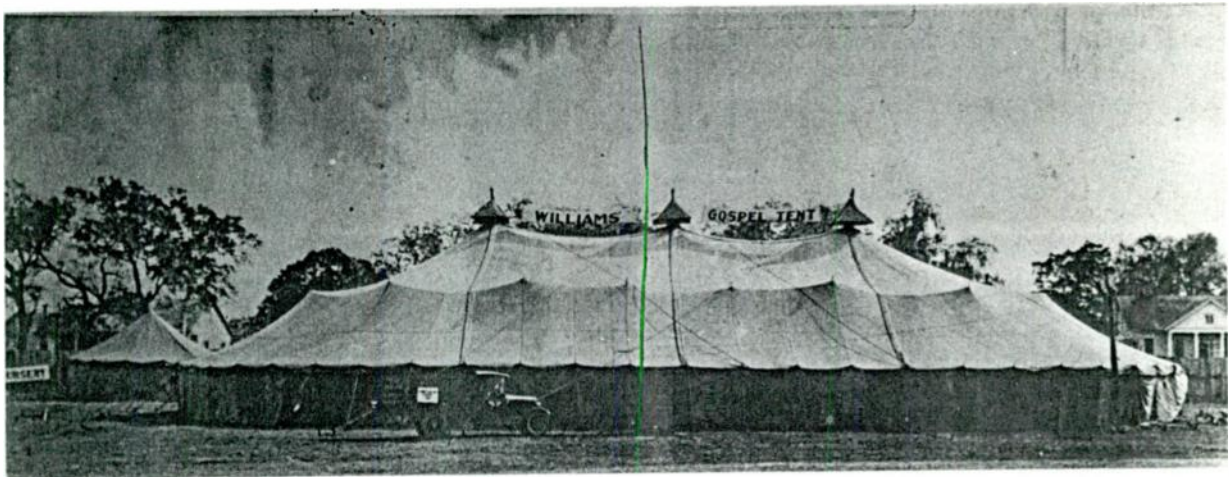
The application specified city power would be used in each town visited. The antenna system would consist of two wooden poles, thirty feet above the ground, 90 feet long, seven strand #22 copper wires to be used, with Electrose insulators, 2 inches in size. The fundamental wavelength was listed as approximately 200 meters. A counter-

poise system, ten feet above the ground, directly underneath the antenna was proposed. The first operation was in Pascagoula, Miss. until March 16, 1924.

A composite transmitter was used with inductive coupling and VT type of detector used in the receiving set. The receiver was capable of receiving from 150 to 800 meters. The generator for the transmitter was listed as 110 volts AC, 60 cycles, 500 V.D.C., using a Westinghouse ammeter to 2.5 range. The station was assigned 268 meters wavelength, frequency of 1120 KC. Call letters were WCBH. Deleted Dec. 8, 1925.

Hattiesburg, Mississippi's first radio station, WDBT, was licensed to J. C. Taylor, who operated Taylor's Book Store in Hattiesburg. The transmitter site was on the grounds of the Hattiesburg County Club, and a transmitting range of 25 miles, with ten watts power, was indicated in the original application. The type of license requested was for a Class "A" broadcasting station. It is not known if any commercials were ever used. The transmitter was a Westinghouse TF; the receiver used was a Westinghouse three tube, using a Radiotron type 200 tube as the detector.

The antenna was an inverted "L" type, with wooden poles, located 55 feet above the ground, consisting of two No. 22 copper wires, five feet apart, insulated with two Electro-seal insulators. The antenna was 40 feet long. A counterpoise of two wires, 90 feet long, was grounded. The station operated on 236 meters, 1.5 amps antenna current. The frequency assigned was 1270 kilocycles. One second grade operator was proposed. Mr. L.J.N. Du Treil of New Orleans, La., did the first inspection of the station. The station was licensed to operate "unlimited time". The station was deleted on April 10, 1925. It was first licensed on June 3, 1924.



WCBG—Pascagoula, Miss., licensed to Howard S. Williams, evangelist, was one of only five "portable stations" in 1924. The license was renewed every time the station moved. Note antenna between poles in foreground. The transmitter was a composite type—operating with 10 watts.



Interior of the tent where Revival services were broadcast. Note open horn used as part of mike, at pulpit in center. Howard S. Williams of Hattiesburg was the preacher. Otis Perry was song leader and responsible for equipment of WCBG.



This 1924 Chevrolet Truck with Mack McKimmon, driver, standing alongside, was used to transport the Gospel Tent and equipment of Radio Station WCBG to various towns in South Mississippi from March 6, 1924 to Dec. 8, 1925.

1925-1926

The first Presbyterian Church at 10th Street and 23rd Avenue, Meridian, Mississippi, was the next station to operate in Mississippi. It was the first station to be granted in Meridian. It operated as a five watt station, with call letters WIBP. It was used to broadcast the Sunday services and other church-related activities until September 30, 1925, when it was deleted. It was first licensed on June 17, 1925. It operated on 1430 KC. A.A. Little represented the First Presbyterian Church.

It is interesting to note that most stations in the early twenties were of low power, usually ten watts, had limited coverage and for the most part were considered amateur operations, with little or no commercial activity. It is also noteworthy to consider the short-lived operation. WIBP operated only from June 19, 1925; therefore its life span was about four months. There is no record of what happened to the equipment. A composite transmitter was made and operated by H. F. Williams, of Meridian, Miss.

There appears to be a dearth of information on radio activity within Mississippi during the two years, 1925-1926. The records of the Federal Radio Commission do not show any grants for new stations.

Among those stations which were operating in 1924, KFNG in Coldwater, continued its commercial operation, with regular renewals shown on a regular basis. Amateurs were continuing their operations across the nation. The others quietly left the air and turned in licenses.

It was during this period set manufacturers began to improve their products, and the first all-electric sets began to hit the market. These included a full line of Atwater Kent radios; Crosley; De Forest; Federal; Freed-Eisemann; Freshmen; Gilfillan Neutrodyne; Grebe; Colin B. Kennedy; Magnavox; Paragon; Marconi; Radio Corporation of America (RCA); Zenith; Clapp-Eastman; Tuska; Fada; Mu-Rad; Echophone; David Grimes; Erla; Arbophone; Wurlitzer; Day-Fan; Radiodyne; Michigan; Acme; Browning-Drake; Harkness; Kodel; Bosch Amborola; Garod; Sentinel; Stromberg-Carlson; Howard; Kemper; Somerset; Parmak; Hales Californian; Pfanstiehl; Melco; Stewart-Warner; Sleeper Serenader; Kellogg Wavemaster; National; Kilster; King; Mohawk; Thordarson; and dozens of others.

Each receiver manufacturer made eloquent claims for clarity of tone, ease and simplicity of operation, sharper tuning; static eliminators; optional earphone or a variety of gooseneck, tapestry covered or cabinet type speakers. One might choose from a small crystal set, or a one to twelve tube set. Some were battery operated. The later 1925-26-27-28 models were all-electric. There were also a variety of battery eliminators and vibrators offered, and a multitude of accessories, special loop antennas, elegant, carved consoles, to enhance the finest of living rooms, and even some early model portables, which could be taken to the barn where some said the music charmed and relaxed the cows, thereby providing more milk.

There were fantastic claims of long distance or "DX" reception and DX Clubs sprang up all over the world. Radio Stations had "DX" verification cards printed which were sent to listeners to verify certain hours, programs and even tunes broadcast at certain times listed on the fan cards.

Listeners would vie for the honor of having received the largest number of "DX" verification cards, from the greatest number of stations from the longest distance. It became the "great American game".

On Feb. 3, 1926, President Calvin Coolidge signed the Dill-White Radio Bill, creating the Federal Radio Commission, which brought stabilization and control of the chaotic system and interference caused by the industry's rapid growth. On November 1, 1926, the National Broadcasting Company was organized.

Among those appointed to the first Federal Radio Commission was Judge Eugene O. Sykes of Aberdeen, Mississippi.

1927

With the sale and distribution of sets increasing a thousandfold, interest in the radio industry began to perk up in 1927.

On Feb. 4, 1927, the Federal Radio Commission in Washington, D.C., received an application for a new Radio station from Columbus, Mississippi. The application was signed by H. B. Holmes and H. B. Holmes, Jr., partners in Crystal Oil Company.

The particulars, as follows, were taken from a photostatic copy of the original from the files of the Federal Radio Commission.

In part, the application states: The station would be located at 5th Street and 9th Avenue North. It would be a phone station (operation with a phone type microphone, capable of reproducing voice, music and recordings). The station would use four electron tubes, with a composite V.T. telephone. The application requested unlimited hours of operation. A wave length of 230.6 meters or a frequency of 1300 kilocycles, with maximum power of 100 watts. The question in the application inquired if time would be sold, and by whom. The answer was "problematical, and if so "by owners". In answer to the question of why the station would be operated in the public interest, convenience and necessity, the reply was "This station is sponsored by The Mississippi State College for Women and the A & M College (Starkville, Miss.). It will be the Official City organ for police reports. Is the only station within a radius of over 100 miles".

Apparently construction began immediately after the filing of the application, as the application for a license to cover the Construction permit was filed. Operating hours specified were: 8:00 to 10:00 PM, Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. The original application had specified 1300 KC, but the application for license specified 1130 kilocycles. The application stated the station would broadcast "popular programs."

As part of the service proposed to be supplied to listeners, the applicants stated, "This station warns inhabitants of impending flood disasters, is incorporating a market report of special interest to the farmers and dairymen who surround the station and are within the range of its power. It is the means of broadcasting the police reports and is the only broadcast station in this immediate part of the country."

In describing the studios, the applicant states, "Special studio with velvet drapes, built on top of the Crystal Oil Company building."

The applicant also stated that the sale of time was problematical and had not been done so to that time.

Asked how the station would be supported, the applicant replied, "This service is the outcome of a personal hobby and receives free the wonderful talent from the 1,200 students of the Mississippi State College for Women and the A & M College."

Applicant also stated that 38 programs or 72 hours would be the minimum broadcasting service. The application was signed by Hubert Bascom Holmes, Jr., Partner. It was subscribed and sworn to by Marietta Bishop.

One of the first announcers for WCOC was T. C. Billups, a member of a pioneer family of settlers in Lowndes County. He was later connected with the Commercial Dispatch Newspaper and was killed in a plane crash near Lake Village, Ark. many years later.

On November 29, 1927, the Columbus Commercial Dispatch reported that Radio Station WCOC, the local station, would set a precedent when "the first football game in the State would be broadcast direct from the field, play-by-play, from Mississippi A & M College in Starkville, Miss., when The Lee High Generals will meet the Philadelphia Tornado".

No reference was made as to who would be the announcer, or how the game would be picked up. The article did state it would also be announced at the offices of the Commercial Dispatch at the same time it was being broadcast simultaneously over WCOC. This information was taken from a scrapbook of newspaper clippings provided by Mrs. Frank Drake of Columbus, Miss.

On August 18, 1927, the Federal Radio Commission authorized the increase of power of WCOC-Columbus, Miss., from 100 watts to 250 watts.

Apparently WCOC operated in Columbus without interruption during the years from Feb. 4, 1927, until the owners decided to move the station to Meridian, Miss.

On April 17, 1929, the records of the Federal Radio Commission show that a letter of transmittal and application was filed by H. B. Holmes, Jr., for permission to move WCOC to Meridian, increase the power to 1,000 watts, (500 watts night), utilizing 880 KC and retaining the call letters, WCOC.

File Number for the Construction permit was Number 3-P-B-631.

Applicant Holmes stated that the transmitter would be located at a distance of not less than two miles, and not more than six miles from the residential area. The studio would be located not more than six miles from the transmitter.

The applicant proposed to use a composite transmitter, controlled by a quartz crystal with six electron tubes, with a plate voltage of 4000 in the power amplifier. The transmitter would be capable of operations of approximately 75% modulation.

Antenna current was estimated at 8 amperes. Applicant also proposed to affiliate the station with either The National Broadcasting Company or The Columbia Broadcasting System. It was estimated the station would operate not less than 85 hours per month in the Summer, and probably more in the winter.

Reasons for the proposed move from Columbus to Meridian, were: "Meridian is one of the largest towns in the State. Offers greater program possibilities, larger state-wide interest and a field for advancement. WCOC is the largest and oldest station in the State and has rendered service in every way possible to cooperate for the advancement of the State, serving public convenience, interest and welfare, with the idea to grow with the radio industry. Also, Meridian offers possibilities of a chain hookup which is necessary for stations advancement."

Cost of the proposed new transmitter would be \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 and \$3,000 for studio equipment and furnishings.

As to financial qualifications, the applicant stated The Crystal Oil Company was rated at \$250,000.00.

The Federal Radio Commission granted the application on March 6, 1930. Studio location was specified at The Great Southern Hotel in Meridian, Miss. The transmitter site was given as 2½ miles Southeast of the City Limits in Meridian. The station was licensed to operate with 1,000 watts until sunset and 500 watts after sunset, with unlimited hours.

Names of the operators in charge of the station were Laws Meador and John B. Rogers. Total number of employees listed, three. Total weekly payroll \$200.00. The operational schedule proposed was 55 hours weekly, 9 to 12 A.M., 4 to 6 P.M. and 8 to 10 P.M. On Sundays the station signed on at 10 A.M. Population within a radius of 3 miles was listed as 40,000.

In an interview with Laws Meador, who still lives in Columbus, Miss. (1979), and operates a printing shop, he recalled that he moved the equipment and installed it for WCOC in Meridian. He served as Chief Engineer. He remembered operating the transmitter with a 5 KW water cooled output tube, with a rated output of about 3 KW, until the Federal Radio Commission required that a 1 KW tube be installed as the final tube, which brought the station back to licensed power of 1,000 watts. Meadors also recalled that T. C. Billups went with the station to Meridian and served as both announcer and manager. He did not recall any other personalities connected with WCOC. Afterwards Meadors served for eight years as an engineer with a radio station in Savannah, Ga. and later served with the Federal Communications Commission as FCC Inspector in Kansas City, Mo. during the years 1944-1945.

D. W. Gavin replaced T. C. Billups as Manager and later bought the station from Crystal Oil Company. WCOC affiliated with The Columbia Broadcasting System and for many years was the only CBS outlet in the State. Power was later increased to 5,000 watts daytime, 1,000 watts night, and remained one of the few stations in Mississippi with 5 KW power, which operated non-directional. It remained as the oldest station in point of continuous operation until it was purchased by Joe Carson and Eddie Holliday, and the call letters were changed to WOKK. CBS was dropped, but the transmitter location remained the same.

There was correspondence between I. R. Jones of Utica, Miss. and Judge E. O. Sykes, a member of the Federal Radio Commission, dating back to August 17, 1927.

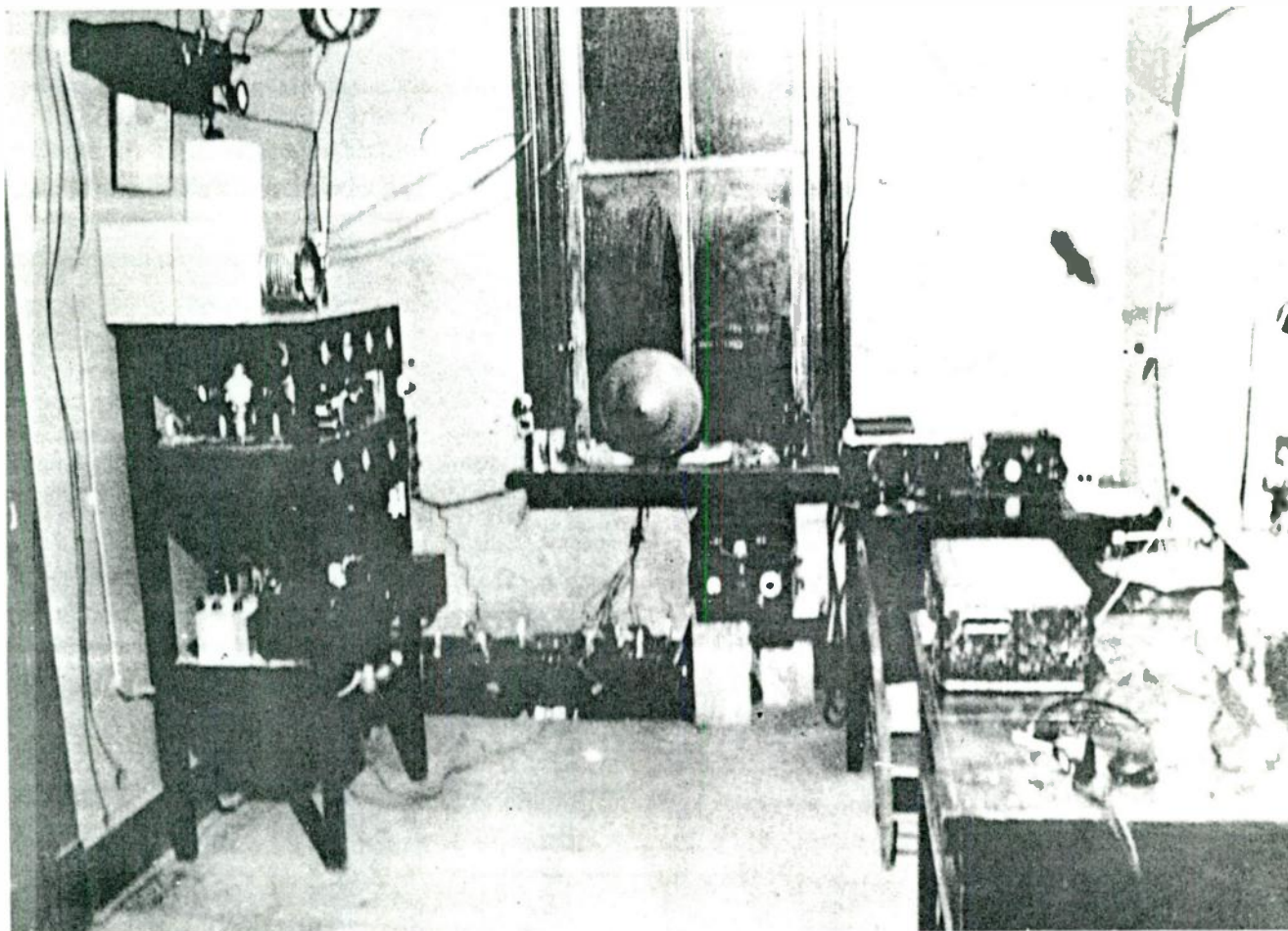
Apparently, from the records and correspondence, there was a great need to broadcast market reports both for cotton and produce in the highly productive area around Brookhaven and Utica. Both towns desired a local radio station and much pressure was brought to bear on I. R. Jones as to where the proposed station he planned would be located.

In a letter to Judge Eugene O. Sykes, Mr. I. R. Jones wrote that he had been to New Orleans and made arrangements to purchase a crystal Controlled transmitter. He said that he had decided to locate the

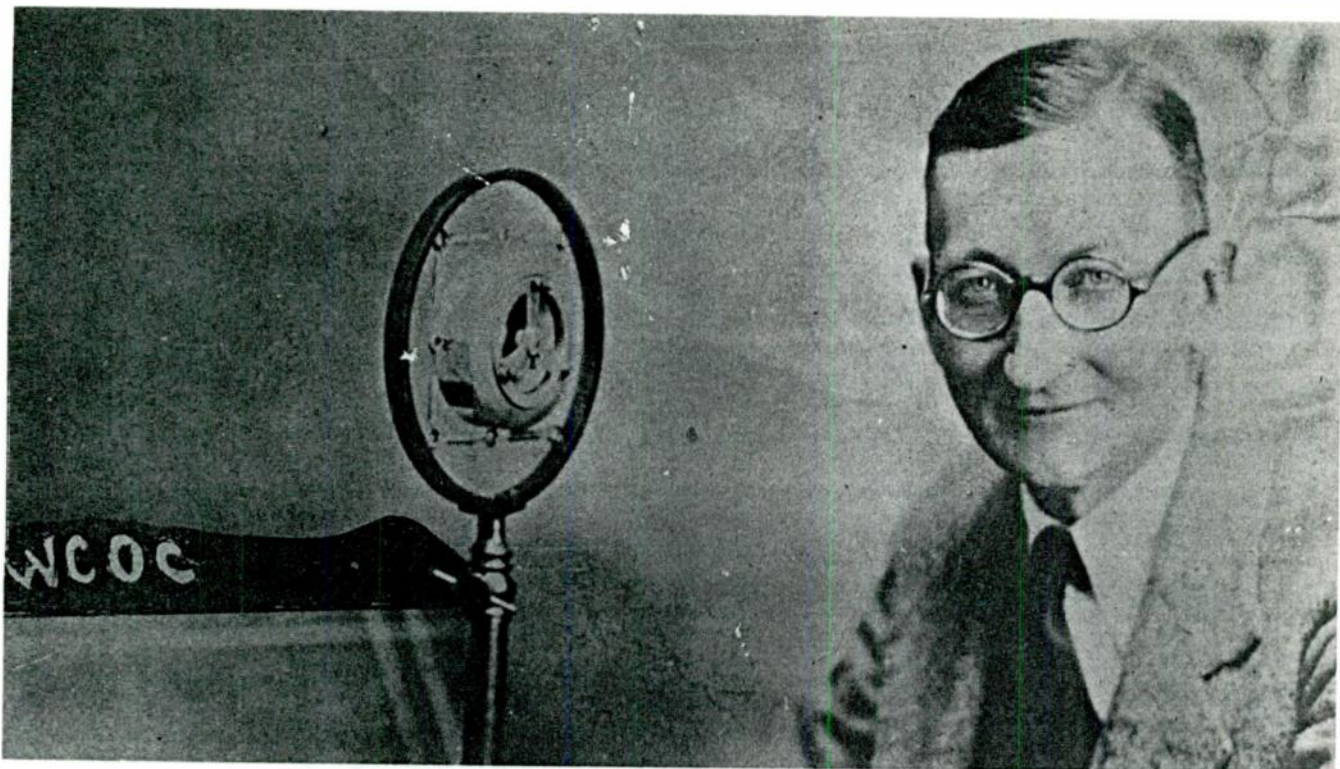
station in Utica, Miss., instead of Brookhaven, primarily because Mr. D. C. Simmons, the largest shipper of vegetables from the area desired to buy receivers and install them in certain areas so his truck customers might hear up-to-the-minute weather forecasts, so important to the truck farmers. Also the daily market reports would be received by the same sets.

An application was made by I. R. Jones on August 26, 1927. It requested a power of 100 watts, on 1390 KC. A RCA transmitter, Type U.V. 203 A. was proposed. The applicant proposed to operate 8 AM, until 2:10 pm, Monday through Friday, and 8 AM to 11:10 AM on Saturday. There would be no broadcasts on Sundays or at night. The primary intent of the station operation was to provide weather forecasts and cotton information and market reports for the farmers and shippers in the area.

The Federal Radio Commission granted a construction permit, dated October 24, 1927. It specified a frequency of 1390 kilocycles and a power of 100 watts. On February 18, 1928, a license, signed by Judge Eugene Sykes, Acting Chairman, was granted.



Only known photo of WQBC—Utica, Miss. built and operated by I. R. Jones. The station was created primarily to give MARKET AND WEATHER REPORTS TO FARMERS. WQBC, now in Vicksburg, Miss., is the oldest station still operating in Mississippi. Owned by Frank Holifield, Sr. [Photo taken in 1927]



T. C. Billups, first radio announcer, WCOC-Columbus, Miss. [1927]. Station later moved to Meridian in 1930. Owned by Crystal Oil Co. Mr. Billups, a member of a pioneer Lowndes County family, was killed in a plane crash near Lake Village, Ark.

1928

By sheer coincidence, an application for a new commercial radio station in Gulfport, Mississippi was being prepared about the same time the application for a station in Utica, Miss.

The Gulf Coast Music Company, Inc., Twenty-Sixth Avenue, in Gulfport, was the applicant. The principal owner was listed as John L. Porter, Jr. The application was dated December 7, 1927.

In the application Mr. Porter made the following representations to the Federal Radio Commission. A frequency of 1350 kilocycles, with a power of 15 watts, was requested. The applicant stated the transmitter would be a Hartley type, constructed personally as a composite.

The applicant stated the programs would feature the latest phonograph records, local news through the cooperation of the local newspaper, local musical talent, sporting events and frost warnings. The schedule proposed included the hours of 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM, every day except Sunday. At night the station would operate from 7:00 to 8 PM on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, with an occasional broadcast from 9 to 10 PM.

Mr. Porter gave as reasons for the need of a station was to serve a local area, where the nearest station was WSMB in New Orleans, La., which was 70 miles away. He pointed out that at that time there were only two stations active in Mississippi. He proposed to offer good entertainment, storm warnings along the Coast, news of the immediate vicinity and frost warnings to fruit and vegetable growers.

A construction permit was issued on January 5, 1928, authorizing unlimited time operation on 1380 KC, with a power of 15 watts.

The application for a license, covering the construction permit, was issued on February 18, 1928, exactly the same date the station in Utica, Miss., was granted.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Theodore G. Deiler, Inspector for The Federal Radio Commission, Custom House in New Orleans, dated Jan. 24, 1928, Mr. Porter asked that call letters WGCM were requested, meaning "Wonderful Gulf Coast of Mississippi". Previously the Commission had assigned the call letters WQBO. Mr. Porter also stated the station would sell time commercially, at the request of several merchants, who were willing to pay for time to reimburse Mr. Porter for the expense of applying for and operating the station.

Very little could be learned about the early day operations of WGCM. Only one photograph was turned up during research on the station.

Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was without a local radio station, inasmuch as the pioneer station WDBT, operated by J. C. Taylor, went off the air and was deleted by The Federal Radio Commission on April 10, 1925.

In 1927 the introduction of "plug-in", A-C operated radios made them a truly household convenience. Dozens of different makes and models were flooding the market. Interest in radio broadcasting hit a new high.

One of the first stores in Hattiesburg to recognize the possibilities of selling large numbers of radios was The Woodruff Furniture Company. They also realized the need for a trained radio engineer, who could both install and repair sets. They also recognized the value of a local station, especially since it could be tied in with their set sales.

Jerry Harbour, a former Navy man, who had been knocking around the world, decided to have a fling at radio and took a course in New Orleans and obtained an operators license. He was selected to head the radio department at Woodruff Furniture Company and opened a repair shop and installation service for the store. Mr. Harbour discussed the idea of applying for a commercial station with Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Harbour was authorized to make application for a station. He was named manager of the radio department and put in charge of building and operating the station if and when it was granted.

On April 9, 1928, an application for a new station was prepared and signed by J. H. Harbour, Manager of the Radio Department on behalf of Woodruff Furniture Company, Inc. Mr. Harbour was a partner in the firm.

A frequency of 1200 kilocycles, with a power of ten watts was requested. Hours of operation were specified as: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 to 10 PM. An hour on weekdays from 12:30 to 1:30 PM was listed and on Tuesdays and Thursdays the station would broadcast from 3:30 to 5 PM. It was proposed to operate the transmitter and studio from the Woodruff Furniture store second floor.

Programs would consist of local talent, civic organizations, a local theatre origination, Victrola records, Associated Press news reports and market news.

Mr. Harbor pointed out in the application that the needs of the public interest would be served because atmospheric conditions, especially in the Summer months, made it virtually impossible to pick up outside stations. He stated the nearest station was over 100 miles away. He gave the population of Hattiesburg as 18,000 at the time. He stated, quote, "if the station application was granted, good, clean, newsy and interesting programs would be broadcast regularly". Mr. Harbour explained that the station would sell time, but if necessary, the Woodruff Furniture Company would bear the additional cost of operation and charge it to advertising. He specified that a Westinghouse Type TF transmitter would be used. The furniture store was the agent for Atwater-Kent radios and others.

On March 27, 1928, a license was granted, signed by Acting Chairman of The Federal Radio Commission, Judge Eugene Sykes.

Construction of the station and a long series of tests were conducted from March, 1928, until June 11, 1928, with a great buildup of pre-inaugural publicity.

The author was able to uncover a wealth of material, photos and background information on the station, whose call letters WRBJ had been assigned and the motto "Woodruff Radios Bring Joy" was used.

Much of the material was supplied through the diligent efforts of Mrs. Mildred H. Harbour, widow of the original operator-Manager, Jerry Harbour. (Mr. Harbour passed away on Feb. 20, 1960).

Permission to use newspaper accounts of the opening of WRBJ was granted by Mr. Leonard Lowery, Executive Editor of The Hattiesburg American, thus providing much valuable information in this book.

Mrs. Harbour also dug through the files of the Forrest County Chancery Clerk's office and provided some of the photos.

Mrs. Mary Ann Martin of Hattiesburg was helpful in providing information and photographs for use in recounting the early days of WRBJ.

The author made his first radio broadcast from the studios of WRBJ in 1928, in company with Horward Vance Collum, vocalist and Ernestine Pack, pianist and violinist.

Detailed accounts of events leading up to the Formal Opening of WRBJ were taken from articles written by The Hattiesburg American.

The Formal Opening occurred on the night of June 11, 1928.

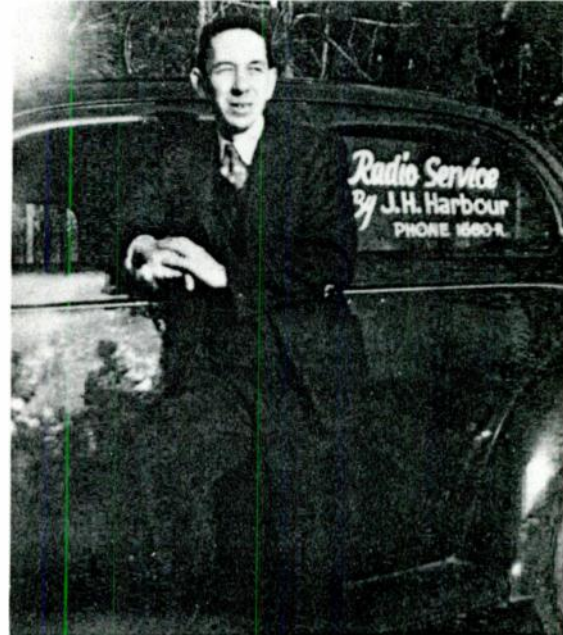
About 1929, the studio and transmitter were moved to the newly built Forrest Hotel, across the street from the Woodruff Furniture Company, inasmuch as the Woodruff building was sold to make way for the new U.S. Post Office.

On November 1, 1928, the frequency was changed to 1500 kilocycles. The frequency of 1150 KC had been requested.

In 1931 the station was purchased by the Barclift brothers, William, Paul and Frank, doing business as Hattiesburg Broadcasting Co. J. H. Harbour was also made a partner of the new firm. Voluntary assignment was made on July 7, 1931.



*Mrs. B. D. Moore, soprano-pianist, Hattiesburg, Miss.
One of the artists appearing on the grand opening of
WRBJ June 11, 1928.*



*Jerry Harbour
Chief Engineer—WRBJ
Hattiesburg, Miss. [1928]
[Died Sept. 20, 1960]*

LOCAL RADIO STATION TO CELEBRATE MONDAY

WRBJ Will Hold Formal Opening, With Galaxy of Hub City Musical Headliners in Program of Extravaganza.

Formal opening of WRBJ, Hattiesburg's radio station, will be held next Monday evening from 8 to 10 o'clock, according to an announcement today by J. H. Harbour, manager of the radio department and broadcasting station director at the Woodruff Furniture Company, owners of the station.

The opening has been delayed until some new equipment was received, including the very latest model in microphones. This equipment is now being installed and Mr. Harbour is arranging a program which will properly celebrate the event next Monday evening.

Since the Hattiesburg station started test broadcasting, messages have been received from all points in the South from members of the radio audience. The long distance record so far has been set by a person in Centerville, Iowa, more than 1,000 miles from Hattiesburg. All points along the Gulf coast report good reception and compliment the station on its programs. Another long distance point heard from recently is Terre Haute, Indiana.

The broadcasting hours at present are from noon to 1 p.m. every day except Sundays, and from 8 to 10 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday evening. Later, the station may broadcast each evening, Mr. Harbour said.

The staff at the broadcasting station, which occupies two large rooms on the second floor of the furniture store, is composed of the following:

A. T. Woodruff, president; Mr. Harbour, director; J. C. Taylor, studio manager; J. G. Landrum, chief announcer; Edward B. Smith, special announcer; C. B. Anderson, musical director; Allen T. Woodruff, Jr., in charge of record department; J. B. Ellis, electrola operator; and Charlotte and Bessie Mae Stroud, in charge of reception room.

Radio Station To Make Bow Here Tonight

*Fans May Tune in on Program to Be Broadcast From Woodruff
Furniture Company Studio.*

Radio fans in Hattiesburg may tune in on their home city station for the first time tonight.

The last Federal requirement has been met. The last bit of red tape has been unwound and the Woodruff Furniture Company, owner of the broadcasting station, is now privileged to "go on the air." Announcement was made today by A. T. Woodruff, president of the furniture concern, that the operator's and the station license were received today.

The station, with the call letters WRBJ, will broadcast on a wave length of 249.9 meters or 1200 kilocycles. The first program will start at 8 o'clock tonight, according to J. H. Harbour, manager of the station, and will continue each night at the same hour for the next few days.

For the time being the program will be confined to the broadcasting of phonograph music and will be in the nature of test programs. Mr. Harbour is now working on his studio staff and getting equipment in shape, and says that within a few days the program will be strengthened with offerings by a number of popular Hattiesburg artists.

Mr. Woodruff has been working on the radio broadcasting station for a year, and until a few weeks ago, when the Federal Radio Commission granted him a license, he had become so discouraged that he came near abandoning the idea, he said today. Since the license was granted a number of requirements had to be met and approved, and the last detail was finished today.

[From Hattiesburg American—June 11, 1928]

Popular Hattiesburg Artists In WRBJ's Celebration Tonight

Radios will resound tonight to the strains of music offered by an array of Hattiesburg's favorite artists. No stone has been left unturned in the attempt to make the opening program of WRBJ one that will long be remembered by fans who tune in tonight between the hours of 8 and 10 o'clock.

J. H. Harbour, broadcasting station director at the Woodruff Furniture Company, stated today that the station is ready for the formal opening, when the delightful and versatile program is to be put on the air.

Almost everyone who has been asked to appear on tonight's program has responded with enthusiasm. They have taken their assignments seriously and have assured those in charge they will perform to the very best of their abilities, which, to those who know, means that tonight's performance will be a stellar attraction.

In addition to the musical program the officials have been fortunate in securing G. W. Currie, who has promised to make a short address in front of the "mike."

The complete program for tonight is as follows:

Vocal solos by Mrs. Charles Santana, Mrs. Joseph A. Smith, Thomas Barbour, Mrs. Alexander Currie, Mrs. Leo H. Martin, Mrs. John Stemme, Mrs. J. W. Davenport, Mrs. Lester Cochran, Miss Allyce Blanche Trigg, Misses Talmadge and Metcalf, both of S. T. C. music faculty; Miss Catherine Bilbo, D. W. Hutchins, Robert Campbell, Mrs. B. D. Moore, Mrs. Eugene Fleming and Mrs. Herbert Owens.

C. B. Anderson and D. W. Hutchins, and Mrs. Leo H. Martin and Mrs. Jim Stemme will offer duet numbers.

Main Street Methodist Choir, under the direction of Miss Ethel Powe, and the Rotary Club men's chorus, under the direction of Mrs. P. G. Jones, will offer selections.

Piano solos are to be given by Miss Ethel Powe, Mrs. J. C. Tompkins, Miss Amelia Massengale, Miss Kathleen King, Mrs. L. A. Connally and Miss Mary Stuart Harmon.

Violin solo by Miss Sara Lou Smith.

Selections by a quartette, from "La Traviata," composed of Mrs. B. D. Moore, Mrs. Joseph A. Smith, C. B. Anderson, and D. W. Hutchins.

The Dixie Cotton Pickers will render jazz selections.

Comic readings are to be given by Mrs. Andrew Mac Jones, Mrs. William Griffin, Miss Helen Harris, Miss Dorothy Thames, and Mrs. Curran Sullivan.

[From Hattiesburg American—June 11, 1928]

Hub City Music Lovers Now Prefer Classics, Not Jazz

Appreciation for good music is gradually becoming more prevalent in Hattiesburg. While fondness for the popular dance numbers still is apparent, there has been a change in the ratio between classical and the jazzical. Requests for more sombre numbers over Hattiesburg's radio station, WRBJ, predominate at the expense of the so-called popular selections, according to J. H. Harbour, manager of the radio station.

"While the trend toward better taste on the average is coming about very slowly, still it is observed and the average buyer of phonograph records hesitates longer today before rejecting a Tchaikovsky 'Concerto' or the '1812 Overture,' than was the case even a year ago," says Mr. Harbour. "Education of the music-loving public is being brought about in various ways. A notable influence has been exerted by interestingly written folders issued with records of famous composers and telling something of the background and significance of the music. Particularly is this true of the operatic records and the albums of master composers. Then, too, many record salesmen, lovers of good music themselves, exert every ounce of influence, unobtrusively of course, to foster the desire for genuine music in the home."

"Evolution of the general taste from the lower forms is taking place in a natural way, the first step being from the guitar and banjo abominations to a better type of orchestra music and then to popular semi-classical music, such as Paul Whiteman produces."

Rough and ready dance numbers of the "Mama's Gettin' Hot, Papa's Gettin' Cold, Mama's Getting Young and Papa's Gettin' Old" type, not to speak of others somewhat suggestive, still have their element among the younger crowd, he says, but fewer adults give a second thought to this form of music. There has been a constant decline of the old talking records, sermons, orations, and even the comedy dialogues.

The fanciful, gay, irresistible music of Victor Herbert, whose light operas of 20 years ago captivated the American public and attained popularity in Europe, has been immensely popular in recent weeks, according to Hattiesburg music store clerks. "Kiss Me Again," the selection from "Babes in Toyland," "Sweethearts," "The Red Mill" and others are again whistled on the streets and the appeal of this type of music is more intense than has been the case for several years. Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin of the immortal waltzes and preludes, Wagner, McDowell and other great musicians heretofore familiar only to teachers and pupils of piano or other music are loved acquaintances of hard-boiled business man and grocery-buying housewives.

[From Hattiesburg American—June 11, 1928]

Jersey Radio Fan Picks Up Hub Program

Hattiesburg's fame is being broadcast to an ever-widening circle, according to word received here from a New Jersey radio fan.

J. H. Harbour, studio manager for WRBJ, radio station owned and operated by the Woodruff Furniture Company, received a letter today from David Burgin, 288 Eleventh Avenue, Newark, N.J., who wrote that he had recently tuned in on this station and enjoyed the program.

Mr. Burgin wins the prize so far as the long distance radio fan, Mr. Harbour said.

[From Hattiesburg American—June 11, 1928]

The depression was on the horizon as construction began on the remodeled station, which obtained new call letters, WPFB (using the first letters of all three brothers, William, Paul and Frank).

Jack Temple, son-in-law of the well-known Shreveport broadcaster, "Hello World!" W. K. Henderson, was employed to build a new composite transmitter to increase the power "ten times" to 100 watts. Space for the new studios and transmitter would occupy four rooms on the fourth floor of the Hattiesburg Hotel. Two self-supporting towers were erected and a counterpoise system installed, grounded to the G & S I railroad track, which was located at the entrance to the hotel. The transmitter used two De Forest fifty watt final tubes, which blew out every time the elevator was operated with a full load in the hotel. It seems the direct current power was being

used with a motor-generator supplying current to the transmitter, lowering the voltage to such an extent the tubes would burn out. After a half dozen tubes failed during tests, it was decided to run electrical service from the City supply.

The author, in company with Frank "Slim" Suttle, had been on tour of the Paramount Publix (Saenger) theatre chain, and had appeared as guest pipe organist and vocalist on broadcasts from several theatres.

A chance meeting with William Barclift at the WRBJ studio in the Forrest Hotel resulted in our employment as the first announcers for the newly planned station. Henry Smith of Memphis, Tenn., was employed as the first Program Director. William Barclift was the Manager and Jerry Harbour and O. S. "Ossie" Droke of Jackson, were engineer-operators.

An account of the grand opening of WPFB, taken from The Hub Breeze, another local newspaper, is included in this narrative of the early days of WPFB.

Among the staff members were announcers Jones Herrin, Otis Perry, and Ted Smith. Other personalities and groups which appeared on programs from 1931-32 were: Max Williams; Col. Ernest Love; Audie Lee Sills; Ethel Powe; Jack Griffith; Richard Joseph; Inez Perry; "Fats" Taylor; Buck Turner and his Buckaroos; Eddie Hinnant; Earle Kalushe; Winifred Hegwood; Bobby McInnis; Rudolph Dossett; Emma Rogers; Bill and Bob, the original Shell Twins of network fame; Buddy Linthicum; Brack Phillips and the Pineknot Pioneers; The Richton Trio; The Hattiesburg High Sextette; The Hawaiians; Lamar Cooper; Jack Stewart; Evelyn Arledge, Phillip Joseph and Homer T. Sudduth.

Sunday services, mornings and evenings, were broadcast from the First Baptist Church, and Bob McRaney and "Hank" Smith, originated a daily program from the Saenger Theatre, featuring the Robert Morton Pipe organ and guests. "The Southern Collegians", directed by Bert Massengale, was designated the staff orchestra.

Many guest artists and groups from nearby towns appeared weekly on programs, as well as talent from Mississippi Southern College and Mississippi Woman's College and the various local schools.

The depression came and in 1932 the bank foreclosed on a small loan made by the Barclift Brothers and the station closed down, by special permission of the Federal Radio Commission.

On November 3, 1933, a college professor, Otis P. Eure, arranged with the bank to take over the past due note and pay \$25.00 monthly. Engineer O. S. Droke and the author were recalled and the station license was assigned to Otis Eure. The station went back on the air. Radio did not appeal to Mr. Eure and he sold the station to George T. Bishop, who had purchased WAML in Laurel shortly before. Within a short period of time, Mr. Bishop defaulted on payments to Mr. Eure, and eventually the station was sold to C. J. "Chuck" Wright and wife, Bert Wright, from Birmingham, Ala. This was in 1935.

The station was moved to the Sarphie Building on Main Street.

The complete station, piano and all, was moved in one night. All new audio equipment was built by John Bell of WBRC in Birmingham, and a new control room, offices and studios built by Mr. Bill McRaney, gave Hattiesburg a first class radio station. Earl Kalusche of McComb, Miss., was added to the announcing staff. (He later became nationally known as a network announcer for CBS, under the air name of John Cornell). A. A. Touchstone was made Chief Engineer when O. S. Droke took a position with KWKH in Shreveport. In 1935 the author accepted the position as announcer-Program Director for Radio Station WSGN-Birmingham, Ala.

On Oct. 4, 1935, a permit was granted to move the transmitter site to the corner of West 7th Street and North 25th Avenue. The studios were moved to 109 Walnut Street in 1936.

A fine studio and office complex was built in the Clark Building at the corner of Pine and Hemphill Streets. This was in 1939.

WFOR-FM was added in 1949.

Both WFOR AM-FM were sold to Sheridian, Inc., then to Newforte, Inc. in 1962, and in 1965 the stations were acquired by J. W. Furr of Columbus, Miss.

Verification of the date when WQBC moved from Utica, Miss., to Vicksburg, Miss., has been difficult to come by. It must have happened sometime in 1928 or 1929. The station was probably moved for the same reasons others were shifting around, to locate in larger markets where the prospects for commercial operations were better. It was probably felt the station in Vicksburg, with more power, would continue to serve the needs of the cotton and produce farmers further south in the delta area.

Perhaps the history of WQBC can best be related by Ralph (Kelly) Maddox, who served as the first announcer at WQBC, and later at WJDX in Jackson. During the course of research and study for the material for this book, the author was able to trace Maddox to Dallas, Texas, and through correspondence and an interview in person, he relates the background of both WQBC and WJDX, as he remembers it, as follows:

"When WQBC went on the air in Vicksburg, Miss., about 1928 or 1929, the chief officer was L. P. Cashman, who was associated with The Vicksburg Evening Post newspaper. The station Manager was Allen Lacy. The Chief Engineer was Eugene Drake. Ted Stanton, a local boy, was the control engineer. I was the first announcer. I was later replaced by the head of the Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce, as it was felt he could both announce and sell time. Later Bill Jones replaced Allen Lacy, who went to WJDX as Sales Manager."



The "ENTERTAINING ENTERTAINERS"

*At Piano—Clarence B. Stone—pianist, organist-composer-writer [deceased].
 Standing—Edgar Davidson-singer-composer-writer-leader.
 Sitting—Hermes "Red" Foster-banjoist-concert, etc.
 [Holcombe Kears-piano accordion—Absent]*

*Quartet-musical-vocal
 Radio-Church-Concert-Musical*

*WGCM—Gulfport, Miss.
 in 1928*

1929

On the 24th of April, 1929, Mr. C. W. Welty, Vice President of The Lamar Life Insurance Company of Jackson, Miss., signed an application for a construction permit with the Federal Radio Commission, for a new commercial broadcast station for Jackson.

Prior to the filing, Mr. Welty and others had discussed the possibility of a station for Jackson, with Judge Eugene Sykes, then a member of the Federal Radio Commission, who advised the group how to proceed.

Specifications and proposals regarding the station are taken from the photostatic copy of the application, and reveal the following items: The studios would be located in the tower of The Lamar Life Insurance Company. The station would be owned by the Lamar Life Company, but would be operated by a group of prominent local citizens. It was proposed to operate with a power of 1,000 watts, using a type 1001 A RCA transmitter, crystal controlled, with the capability of 80% modulation.

The tower proposed was listed as 200 feet above ground. The transmitter site would be near Tougaloo College, Northeast of Jackson.

It was pointed out that the only stations with similar power were located in Shreveport, La.; Memphis, Tenn.; and Birmingham, Ala.

The cost of the proposed transmitter was \$35,000.00. The studio equipment was estimated at \$5,000.00, and the transmitter building and land at \$10,000.00. It was proposed that a daily operating schedule of ten hours would be maintained. The application also stated the station would probably be affiliated with The National Broadcasting Company chain. The frequency of 1270 was requested, and hours of operations would be 1,000 watts daytime and 500 watts at night.

The construction permit was granted and WJDX went on the air on December 3, 1929. The first license, covering the construction permit, was dated January 8, 1930.

The first Manager of WJDX was Leigh Parker, who later became a top executive with Delta Airlines, operating out of Monroe, La.

Percy Root was the Chief Engineer and Harold Davis was the control room operator. Mac Howell was probably the first combination announcer and time salesman.

Wiley Harris, the owner-operator of a haberdashery (Harris' Store for Men), and later a member of the State Legislature, was named to succeed Leigh Parker as Manager when Parker went with Delta Airlines. Ralph (Kelly) Maddox remembers he came to work for WJDX when Wiley Harris became Manager, but under rather peculiar circumstances. Maddox was paid directly by Manager Harris and was not officially listed on the payroll. He later was added as a member of the staff and put on the regular payroll. It was Maddox who first coined the station break, "WJDX, Jackson, The Voice of Mississippi". Maddox recalls that Mrs. Rena Foster was Secretary to Mr. Harris and in addition to those staff members listed above, there was a fellow named George who worked at the transmitter. Weldon Shows was added to the control room operator staff, and Miss Estelle Miller, who worked for Lamar Life Company, became the parttime bookkeeper. Later Claudia Brewer, daughter of a former Governor of Mississippi, was added to the staff to handle publicity. A short time later, Miss Eudora Welty, now a celebrated Mississippi authoress, worked for WJDX handling writing chores and publicity.

Ted Stanton, a control engineer, who worked with Maddox at WQBC-Vicksburg, came aboard the WJDX staff, as control engineer.

Mrs. Beatrice Boyett, known as "Honey Bee", provided much young talent on WJDX, including her son, Ben Boyett, who is now a journalist in Texas.

Maddox recalls that he had a stack of phonograph records about four feet high. He played them all the way through and then turned them over.

Once in a while new records would be added, but the process was repeated continuously until all records had been played and started all over with the records turned over.

During the early days of WJDX, there were many local programs with talented local artists performing. An orchestra had been organized as a WPA project, later to become the nucleus of the Jackson Symphony, directed by a skilled French violinist named Armand Gilbert Coulett.

Mr. Coulett was named Musical Director of WJDX and directed the first staff orchestra. Mr. Coulett recalls a few names of musicians who played in the orchestra. They included Pacito Bucciacano, who also conducted. Rob Robinson, saxaphonist; M. Sutter, trumpet; and Lee Hardcastle, drums. Mr. Coulett, a gifted violinist, is still active (1978), in musical circles in Jackson and has been responsible for bringing outstanding musical groups, concerts, plays and other events to the stages and auditoriums of the City.

Sara McLean, for many years organist at the Majestic theatre and others, was a featured artist on WJDX.

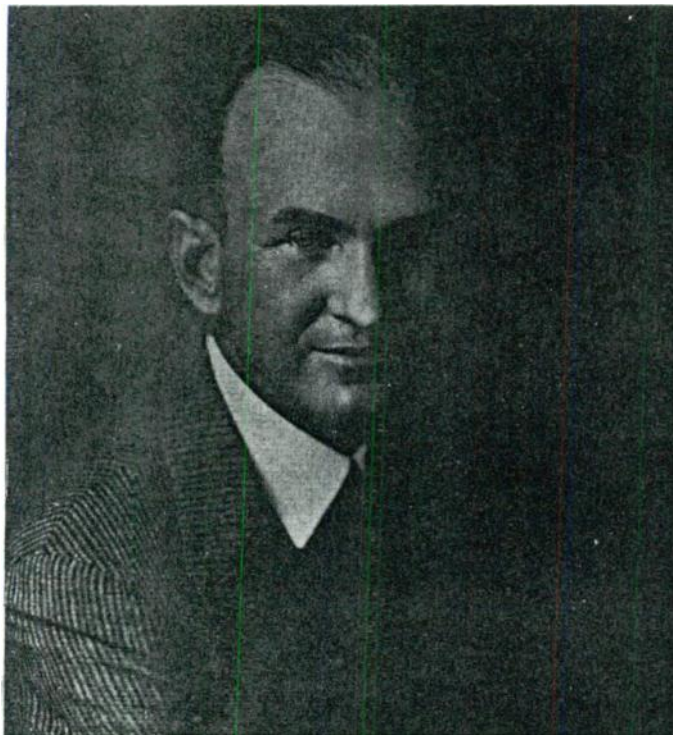
Other locally produced programs, was a serial entitled, "Married Life". Claudia Brewer played the wife and Ralph (Kelly) Maddox, played the husband. "Married Life" was written by Allen Lacy.

Another popular singer on WJDX was Mabel Batson.

1929 was a banner year for the Atwater-Kent Radio Auditions. WJDX was a key regional station and broadcast the finals for Mississippi. John Paul King of Hattiesburg, Miss., a talented baritone, was an outstanding contestant. He was a protege of Miss Ethel Powe, teacher and organist of the Methodist Church of Hattiesburg. Others from around the State were also heard on the Atwater-Kent Radio Auditions.

WJDX later switched to 1310 KC and increased power to 5,000 watts. Fred Beard succeeded Wiley Harris as Manager. Maurice Thompson, a great artist, musical director and director of talent, became Program Manager and developed many artists and singing groups prior to his retirement.

Many of Mississippi's early radio personalities, salesmen, managers and program and news personnel got their early training during the early years at WJDX. These included Alon Bee, Woody Assaf, Forrest Cox, and others.



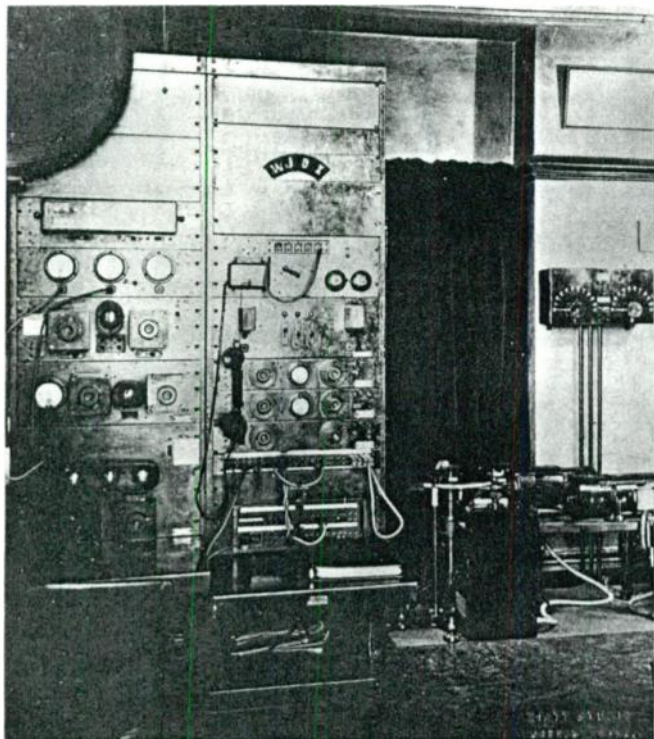
WILEY P. HARRIS, DIRECTOR WJDX

Graduate High School and University of Mississippi, amateur and college dramatics; six years musical training and band experience and two years with Broadcasting Station WJDX-Jackson.



EUDORA WELTY

Editor Lamar Life Radio News and Continuity Writer-WJDX-College Education; Mississippi State College for Women; B.A. Degree from University of Wisconsin; 1931 Columbia University, School of Business work on M.S.; Newspaper experience with Jackson Daily News and Lewiston, Montana Democratic News and 1 year with WJDX.



CONTROL ROOM

Standard RCA Speech Input. Western Electric 33 1/3 and 78 r.p.m. Double Turntables, vertical and lateral pick-ups for 33 1/3.



GLORIA CHAPMAN, "MISS WJDX"

RALPH KELLY MADDOX, eldest son of the late Ralph Angus and Lurline Kelly Maddox, was born on July 18, 1909 in Mendenhall, Mississippi, where his father was Superintendent of Education for Simpson County. Ralph Maddox, as he was known to Mississippi radio listeners, was educated in various public schools throughout Mississippi due to the fact that his father was a School Superintendent after leaving Simpson County. He graduated from the Forest Hill High School just outside of Jackson. His father was with the Mississippi State Department of Agriculture until his retirement in 1953. Ralph Maddox received his BA degree from Bush Conservatory of Music and Dramatic Art in Chicago and was a professional stage actor in Chicago during his schooling and afterward. He did radio acting during 1929 and 1930. He was an actor on one of the first radio dramatic transcriptions made. The depression forced him to return to his native Mississippi and he taught dramatic Art at the Jones County Junior College. Returning to Jackson in early 1931 he worked part time at WJDX as an announcer and then became the first and only announcer when WQBC went on the air in Vicksburg. He then returned to WJDX where he remained until early 1937 and he became a Producer-Director for the Central Division of the National Broadcasting Company in Chicago where he directed and produced many of the popular soap operas of the late 30's. He returned to WJDX in late 1938 when the station opened new studios in the Heidelberg Hotel. Maddox remained with WJDX until May of 1941 when he became Production Manager of Radio Stations WFAA & KGKO in Dallas, Texas. He was later promoted to Program Manager of the stations and the Texas Quality Network. In 1946 Maddox became Manager of Station KRIC in Beaumont, Texas and returned to his former position at WFAA in 1947. He remained with WFAA until 1952 when he became an Account Executive of the Couchman Advertising Agency in Dallas. In 1953 he left Dallas to become Program Manager of KGNC-TV, Amarillo, Texas, and put that station on the air. In 1954 Ralph Kelly Maddox went to Lake Charles, Louisiana, with KPLC and set up the plans for the KPLC-TV Studios. He then became Manager of WJBO in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1954 and in 1958 he retired from Radio-TV returning to Jackson, Mississippi, to manage the estate of his late father. In 1960 Maddox left Jackson to return to Dallas, Texas, to become Public Relations Director of the Dallas Citizens' Traffic Commission and became that organizations Executive Vice President in 1961 until his retirement in 1972. The past few years he has spent in traveling throughout the world and at present resides in Dallas, doing Volunteer Work at the Baylor University Medical Center.





LOIS McCORMICK

Staff Pianist and Accompanist

Musical education, Baylor College and Belhaven College; post graduate work Chicago Musical College, Columbia University, Walter Damrosch Musical Art, New York City; Organ work under Pietro Yon, New York; taught piano and school music in public schools of Mississippi and private studio; broadcast experience over Stations WCOC, WQBC and 2 years with WJDX as pianist; vocalist and actress.



MARTHA LOUISE HOLLIDAY

Telephone Operator and Assistant Hostess WJDX



"Night Court" Radio Program WJDX, Jackson. [L-R] Allen Rimmer [Bailiff] saxaphonist; Wiley P. Harris—Judge. Gen. Mgr. WJDX; Max Howell [Sheriff] announcer; WJDX Ralph [Kelly] Maddox [culprit] announcer.



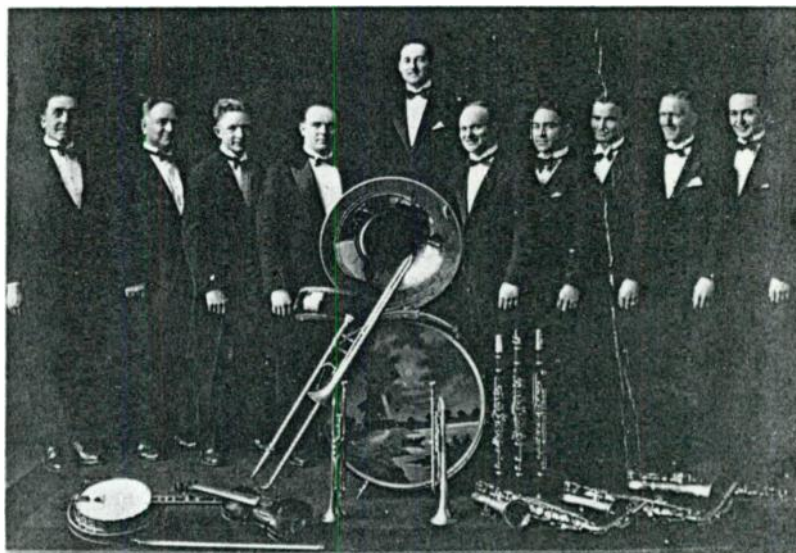
ARMAND GILBERT COULET.
MUSICAL DIRECTOR WJDX

Graduate Ecole Nationale de Music [Beaux Arts] Paris, France, June 1914; first violin Orchestra Algiers, 1914-1915; North Africa Symphony Orchestra under direction of Camille Saint Saeens; 3 years Opera Comique, paris; Concert Master and Orchestra Conductor in United States 1921-1929; Musical Director Broadcasting Station WJDX since February, 1929.

Armand Coulet [top center] and staff orchestra—WJDX-Jackson.

Left to right: Pacito Buccicano - conductor, Rob Robinson-saxophone, M. Sutter-trumpet, Allen Rimmer - saxophone, Armand Coulet-violin, concert master, Lee Hardcastle-drums. [Others unidentified].

The Orchestra was the forerunner of The Jackson Symphony.



Ben and Nancy Boyett, two of the many talented youngsters appearing on WJDX-Jackson, during the early years. They began at ages of 3 and 5 years, doing dramatics, recitations and skits. Along with dozens of others, they were students of Beatrice Boyett, who was director of Speech, Charm and Drama in Jackson for many years.

[1929]

CHAPTER IV

"The Depression Years"

(1930-1935)

The stock market crash of 1929 practically brought the nation to its knees. Radio, being a struggling industry, was one of the hardest hit. There was very little capital for investment. Businesses by the thousands went bankrupt. Banks were forced to close.

In Mississippi, development of radio practically came to a standstill. Few, if any, dared to even dream of building or planning new stations, making improvements, increasing power or changing locations. It was tough going for everyone. Although applications were filed, few were acted upon.

1930

In April, 1930, there came into existence Radio Station WDIX in Tupelo, Miss. There is very little known about this operation. Information on file at the Broadcast Pioneers Library in Washington, D.C. reports the principals were W. A. Blair and John A. Anderson. The station operated on 1500 KC. It was licensed to the North Mississippi Broadcasting Co. It was apparently the first station to operate in Tupelo. The records show an application was filed to operate with a new transmitter on 1500 KC and to increase power from 100 watts to 250 watts daytime. There is no record of authorization for this increase.

On July 11, 1931, an application was filed to change the frequency to 1310 KC and move the station to Greenville, S. Carolina. Obviously the station was not successful in Tupelo, Miss. The plans of the operators must have changed, inasmuch as on Dec. 23, 1931, an application was filed to change the frequency from 1500 KC to 1420 KC and move the station to Texarkana, Arkansas, which the Commission granted.

1931

Despite the growing financial crisis, there were some changes in radio in Mississippi during 1931. The full impact of the depression was yet to come. From the records of The Broadcast Pioneers Library, Radio Advertising and the Federal Radio Commission, the following information was obtained:

KGGG, a Radio station first licensed on August 15, 1927, in Shreveport, La., was granted permission to change call letters to KTSL, and moved to Laurel, Miss. Thus on October 9, 1931, the station set up shop in Laurel as WTSL, and became the first station to broadcast from Laurel. The station was licensed to G. A. Houseman. It was located at 429 Magnolia Street in Laurel. The photostatic copy of the license indicated permission was granted for 1320 KC, with a power of 100 watts. The daytime station shared time equally with KRMD-Shreveport, La.

The station operated with a composite transmitter, with low level modulation and a maximum carrier output of 100 watts. The license was dated November 10, 1931.

Apparently the station continued operation until January 21, 1933, when the call letters were changed to WAML. Remote lines were maintained for broadcast to Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist Churches, the Arabian Theatre and remote studios in Waynesboro, Miss. The antenna was listed as 100 feet above ground. The applications listed population within three miles of the transmitter as being 21,621. It was estimated the cost of moving from Shreveport, La., and setting up operation in Laurel would amount to no more than \$1,000.00, since all equipment needed was already owned. Reuben DeGruy was manager for a while.

Other items from the records of the Federal Radio Commission reveals the following:

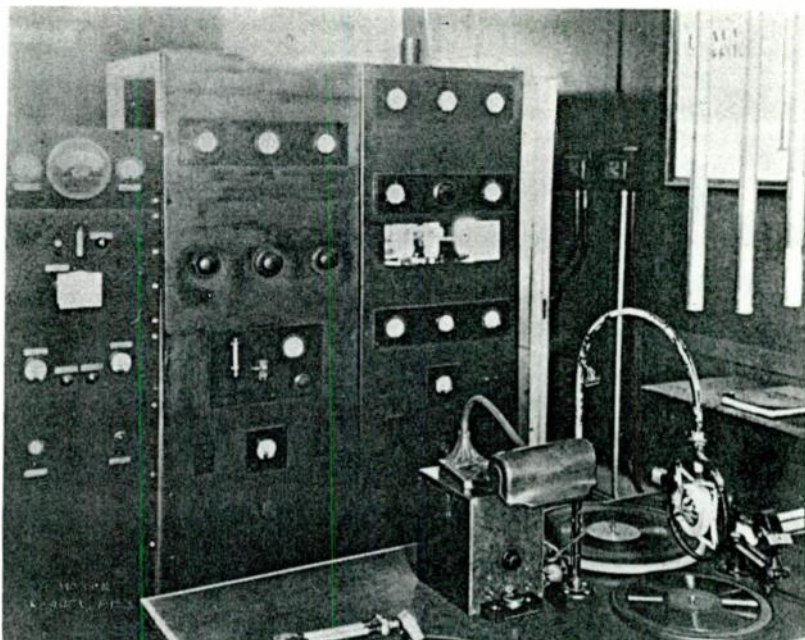
On January 21, 1931, The Great Southern Land Company (WGCM), asked to change from 1210 KC, 100 watts, to 970 KC, 1 KW.

Herbert A. Morris requested a CP for 1420 KC, 100 watts, for Clarksdale, Miss. He proposed to use a portable transmitter to locate the best site for the transmitter-tower.

A previously filed application for a CP for 550 KC, 100 watts, for Vicksburg, Miss. was dismissed.

Also in January the Commission announced it was "cracking down" on stations which failed to properly identify recordings. The Vestal Copyright revision bill was before the U.S. Senate.

This is the composite transmitting equipment originally moved from Shreveport, La. and used with WTSL-Laurel [later WAML]. Note early type frequency meter [at left] with thermometer and also crystal control unit in center. Transmitter is at right.



The networks grossed \$27 million in 1930.

E. A. Fitzgerald, 612 Main Street, Natchez, Miss., filed for a CP on 1500 KC, 100 watts unlimited for Natchez, Miss.

On Feb. 2, 1931, WGCM filed for a CP to change from 1210 KC to 1470 KC, 5 KW day, and share time with WLAC-Nashville, Tenn. at night.

WQBC in Vicksburg, Miss. asked permission to change transmitter site. (Mar. 7-31). The U.S. Senate adjourned without taking action on the Vestal Copyright Bill.

The average cost of a radio set in 1930 was \$87.00, less tubes.

On March 14, 1931, WRBQ in Greenville, Miss. requested permission to make changes in equipment. On March 28, 1931, WRBJ in Hattiesburg, Miss. requested assignment of license to Hattiesburg Broadcasting Company.

On March 3, 1931 the FCC stated Mississippi was entitled to 5.60 percent of the Zone III quota of stations. The state had 2.90 in 1931. On April 18, 1931, Alfred L. Setaro sought a CP for 1420 KC, 100 watts, unlimited, for Vicksburg, Miss.

Penn Broadcasting Company of Greenwood, Miss. sought CP for 1310 KC, 100 watts unlimited for Greenwood, Miss.

Neely and Franks Radio Company, asked for 1220 KC, 15 watts unlimited, for Charleston, Miss. No record is shown of the disposition. On May 9, 1931, L. D. Cleveland, asked for a CP for 1200 KC, 100 watts daytime, for Corinth, Miss. It apparently was later dismissed.

On May 16, 1931, WJDX-Jackson, Miss. asked permission to switch from 1270 KC to 600 KC, 1 KW day, 500 watts night.

On May 23, 1931, it was reported out of 472,354 families in Mississippi, 25,475, or 5.4% had radios. The report stated the average family consisted of 5.3 persons.

May 29, 1931 WCOC-Meridian, Miss. was granted authority to reduce power and complete construction under way.

Radio Advertising publication showed the following stations in operation in Mississippi in 1931: WRBQ-Greenville, Miss., owned and operated by J. Pat Scully, 250 watts day, 100 watts night on 1210 KC. Chad Bridges was an announcer-vocalist. WGCM-Gulfport, Miss., owned and operated by the Great Southern Land Company, studios Mississippi City, 100 watts power on 1210 KC. Business Manager was Charles H. Stewart. Announcers were H. A. Genung, Jr., and Jack Shoemaker. WJDX-Jackson, Miss. Owned and operated by The Lamar Life Insurance Co. Studios in The Lamar Life Building. Power was 1,000 watts on 1270 KC. Wiley Harris was listed as Director. John S. Howell was Commercial Manager.

WCOC-Meridian, Miss., owned and operated by Mississippi Broadcasting Company, with studios in the Great Southern Hotel. Power was 1000 watts day, 500 night. Transmitter was located on Barton Mountain, three miles from the city limits. D. W. Gavin was listed as President, Secretary-Treasurer and Manager of operations.

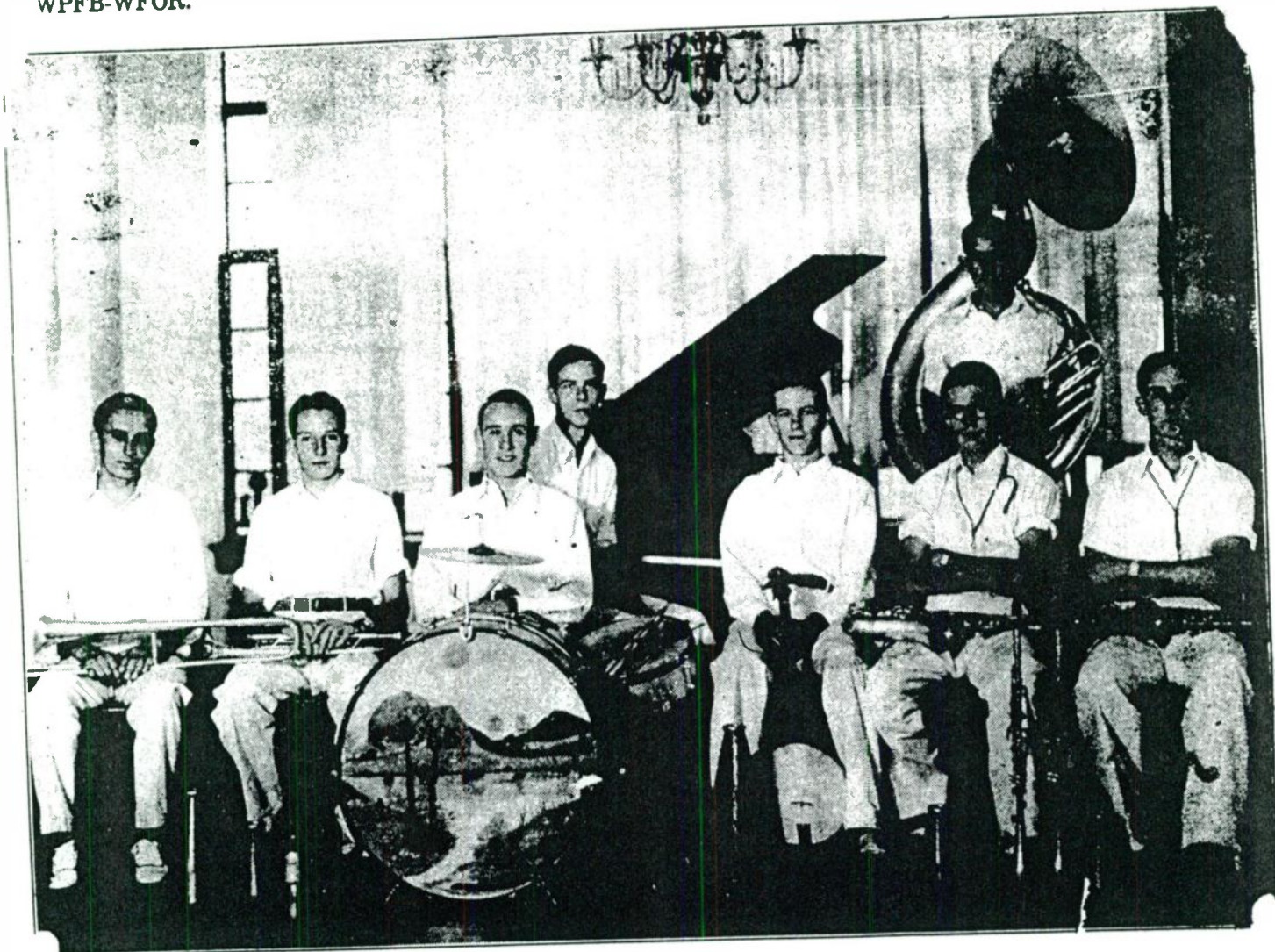
WQBC-Vicksburg, Miss., owned and operated by Delta Broadcasting Company. Studios in Hotel Vicksburg. Power of 500 watts on 1360 KC. Personnel listed: President, L. P. Cashman. Station Director C. A. Lacy.

(Note) The above information was taken from the December 1931 issue of Radio Advertising magazine. WPFB went on the air in December of 1931, but is not listed in the above.)

Louisa Williams of the staff of Hattiesburg High School, Hattiesburg, Miss. recalls that Grace McCann Koen of the class of 1930, played the piano accompaniment for a quartette, which sang hymns and gospel music over WPFB-WFOR, Hattiesburg from 1930-1934. The station, at that time was located in the Hotel Hattiesburg and later on the studios were located over a drug store on the corner of Hemphill and West Pine Streets.

Members of the quartette were: A.L. Gilmore; James H. Gilmore; B. A. Burch and Johnny Cubley.

Ms. Grace McCann Koen also accompanied Philip Joseph, tenor, who had a regular quarter hour on WPFB-WFOR.



SOUTHERN COLLEGIANS

The Southern Collegians were organized in 1931 and have been playing in Hattiesburg entertainments since that time. These boys are all high school students and are composed of the following: L. N. Rockett, Tenor Saxophone; L. E. Massengale, Drums; M. L. Dickson, First Trumpet; A. V. Hays, Alto Saxophone; R. R. Springer, Piano; B. F. Ogletree, Second Trumpet; C. Addison, Trombone; B. F. Massengale, Banjo, also Vocalist for the orchestra; T. W. Wright, Bass. The Southern Collegians specialize in dance arrangements and are now the staff orchestra for W.P.F.B. This orchestra will be another feature in the New Year's Eve Party at the Saenger Theatre.

[From The HUB BREEZE]

[1931]

Hattiesburg's New Radio Station WPFB Formally Launched At Luncheon

Inauguration of radio station WPFB, "the Voice of the Pines," was accomplished at 1 o'clock this afternoon when the new broadcasting unit, operated by the Hattiesburg Broadcasting company, went on the air from its studios in Hotel Hattiesburg. Introduction of the station followed a luncheon at which a number of city officials, businessmen and others were present, on the mezzanine floor dining room of the hotel.

The station, operating on 1370 kilocycles by authority of the Federal Radio Commission, was completed this morning after two months of construction. It is modernly equipped and will be on the air 12 hours daily, it was announced. Heading the operating company are the four Barclift brothers, Paul of Vicksburg, Frank of Birmingham, Bob and William E. of Hattiesburg. W. E. Barclift is general manager; Bob Barclift is advertising director, H. H. Smith is program director and the Southern Collegians is station orchestra.

The station was constructed under the supervision of J. L. Temple III, well-known radio engineer who has built a number of the largest southern stations.

The dedicatory program, which was put on the air shortly after 1 o'clock, and over which George Sturm, managing director of Hotel Hattiesburg, presided as master of ceremonies, was preceded by luncheon over which the Rev. W. H. McIntosh said grace. The station went on the air with the following program: a statement by Dr. Thomas F. Harvey, pastor of First Baptist Church; brief talks by W. E., R. H. and P. L. Barclift and H. H. Smith; a welcome address by President W. O. Tatum of the Chamber of Commerce, and brief talks by Dr. H. E. Green, president of the Board of Supervisors and L. E. Faulkner.

—(From the Hattiesburg American—December 31, 1931)

WPFB STAFF ARTISTS

Many Local Favorites on Staff of Hattiesburg Broadcasting Station.

The Blues Doctors—Dr. Mack, Dr. Sarah and Dr. Strut

The Blues Doctors are all native Mississippians, graduates of Forrest County Agricultural High School at Brooklyn, Mississippi, about nineteen miles from our own city. The Blues Doctors, a regular noon day feature from the Voice of the Pines, ready to doctor all ills and ailments in popular blue rhythm and song. Doctor Mack, the accompanist of the group, interspersing these programs with novel piano arrangements of new and old favorites. Doctors Sarah and Strut (Suttle) will provide the vocal atmosphere both in solo and harmony. Hear these artists each noonday and see them in person at the big Whoopee Party New Year's Eve at the Saenger Theatre.

Kimball Mack [Bob McRaney]

Kimball Mack's first musical venture was a leader of a high school dance orchestra while attending the Forrest County Agricultural High School. After finishing high school, was featured organist at the Anderson Theatre for a period of one year. Later, Kimball Mack joined the Publix Theatres, Inc., as first chief of staff at Saenger Theatre, also serving in capacity of artist. After working there for a year, he went to Jackson, where he was featured organist at the Majestic Theatre. While working there, the Publix Pals Team was originated. With his Publix Pals he was sent on an extensive tour covering a majority of Southern States. Later, Kimball Mack took a Radio tour visiting all major Southern cities. After this tour, he returned home and became a featured artist at our own local station, W.P.F.B., and also will perform at the gala New Year's Eve Party at the Saenger Theatre.

Limited of Joy each week day morning beginning at 6:30 a.m. Hear them over the Voice of the Pines station and see them at the Saenger Theatre Jubilee Frolic New Year's eve.



MRS. EMMA ROGERS



KIMBALL MACK

Old Scattergood

Fifteen minutes of quiet and tranquility three times weekly over the Voice of the Pines Station, spreading good cheer and inspirational thoughts. Join Scattergood and help him to scatter good. An exclusive artist of the Voice of the Pines.

Musical Gypsies

A fifteen-minute melange of musical masterpieces and song featuring Richard Joseph, vocalist, and Mrs. Emma Rogers, pianist. Both talented and exclusive artists of the Voice of the Pines station. The vocalist, Richard Joseph, possessing one of the most beautiful dramatic tenor voices in the Southland. Has appeared on several radio broadcasts. The musical gypsies is a daily feature of the Voice of the Pines station.

Local Artist Feature

Phillip Joseph, young male vocalist from Hattiesburg, sometimes referred to as the boy Jolson, will be heard over the Voice of the Pines station in very delightful fifteen minute programs of old and new song hits. Phillip Joseph will be accompanied by Cecile Doherty.

Who's Who in Hattiesburg

A fast moving, nightly feature of hot tunes, novelty song hits and what not sponsored by outstanding Hattiesburg merchants, Who's Who in Hattiesburg, a regular nightly feature, at 7:30 p.m. over the Voice of the Pines station.

W P The Voice of the Pines F B



SUNDAY, MAY 22, 1932

9:00—Morning Service	1:00—Four Club Men
9:15—Around the Turntable	1:30—Musical Scrapbook
9:30—Watchtower Program	2:00—Church in the Wildwood
10:00—Old Hymn Hour	2:30—Collins Hill Billies
10:30—Audylee Sills (Piano)	3:00—Saenger Theatre
11:00—Your Requests (Recordings)	3:30—Richton Half Hour
12:00—Music Box	4:00—Feature
12:30—Nehi Program	4:15—Feature
12:45—Mrs. J. W. Davenport	4:30—Sign Off



MONDAY MAY 23, 1932

7:00—Mack's Organlogue
8:00—Early Bird
8:15—Phoenix Laundry
8:30—Cecil and Sally
8:45—Hill Favorites
9:00—Chapel Time
9:15—Women's Club Noets
9:30—Why Worry?
10:00—Housekeeper's Chart
10:15—World Bookman
10:30—Helpful Hints
11:00—Kimball Mack
11:15—Art Kahn's Recordings
11:30—Tribute
12:10—Fly Rid
12:25—Heidelberg Painters
12:30—Audyla Sills
12:45—Ed Lloyd's Melodies
1:00—Weldmech's Dave and Roy
1:15—Farm Flashes
1:30—Your Requests (Recordings)
2:00—Travel Talk
2:30—Feature
3:00—Music Box
3:30—Staff Frolic
6:00—Musical Scrap Book
6:30—Hoot Gibson and His Guitar
6:45—Studio Singer
7:15—Cecil and Sally
7:30—Little Joe
7:45—The Mississippi Joy Boys
8:00—Phanton Pianist
8:15—Little Girl in Blue
8:30—The Petal Four

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 1932

7:00—Mack's Organlogue
8:00—Early Bird
8:15—Gilster's Southern Housewife.
8:30—Cecil and Sally
8:45—Nellie Byrd's Old Melodies
9:00—Chapel Time
9:15—Women's Club Notes
9:30—Why Worry?
10:00—Housekeeper's Chart
10:15—World Bookman
11:00—Kimball Mack
11:15—Sleepy Hall's Recordings
11:30—Tribute
12:10—Audyla Sills
12:25—Heidelberg Painters
12:45—Frigidaire
12:45—Elizabeth French
1:00—Colt Bros. Recordings
1:15—Farm Flashes
1:30—Your Request Recordings
2:00—Furniture Fashions
2:15—Feature
2:30—Rose Room Trio
3:30—Staff Frolic
6:00—Musical Scrap Book
6:15—Whiteman Melodies
6:30—Hoot Gibson and His Guitar
6:45—Studio Singer
7:15—Cecil and Sally
7:30—Caroline and Geranium
7:45—The Nitte Witts
8:15—Personality Girl
8:30—Nehi Program
9:00—Sign Off.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 1932

7:00—Mack's Organlogue
8:00—Early Bird
8:15—Phoenix Laundry
8:30—Cecil and Sally
8:45—Hill Favorites
9:00—Chapel Time
9:15—Women's Club Notes
9:30—Why Worry?
10:00—Housekeeper's Chart
10:15—World Bookman
10:30—Helpful Hints
11:00—Kimball Mack
11:15—Ed Lloyd's Recordings
11:30—Tribute
12:10—Fly Rid
12:25—Heidelberg Painters
12:30—Nehi Program
12:45—Audyla Sills
1:00—Weldmech's Dave and Roy
1:15—Farm Flashes
1:30—Your Request Recordings
2:00—Beauticians
2:30—Music of Romance
3:00—Mic Box
3:30—Staff Frolic
6:00—Musical Scrap Book
6:15—Arnheim Recordings
6:30—Hoot Gibson and His Guitar
6:45—Studio Singer
7:15—Cecil and Sally
7:30—Mack and Hank
7:45—The Mississippi Joy Boys
8:00—Mrs. J. W. Davenport
8:30—Mystery of Harlow Manor
9:00—Sign Off.

THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1932

7:00—Mack's Organlogue
8:00—Early Bird
8:15—Gilster's Southern Housewife.
8:30—Cecil and Sally
8:45—Hill Favorites
9:00—Chapel Time
9:15—Women's Club Notes
9:30—Why Worry?
10:00—Housekeeper's Chart
10:15—Mutual Life
10:20—World Bookman
10:30—Helpful Hints
11:00—Kimball Mack
11:15—Dick Robertson Recordings
11:30—Tribute
12:25—Heidelberg Painters
12:30—Audyla Sills
12:45—Frigidaire
1:00—The Texas Drifter's Recordings
1:15—Farm Flashes
1:30—Your Request Recordings
2:00—Furniture Fashions
2:15—Feature
2:30—The Dream Melodies
3:30—Staff Frolic
6:00—Musical Scrap Book
6:15—Bert Lown's Recordings
6:30—Hoot Gibson and His Guitar
6:45—Studio Singer
7:15—Cecil and Sally
7:30—Caroline and Geranium
7:45—The Mississippi Joy Boys
8:00—Dorothy Mays
8:15—Southland Syncopators
8:45—Sweet Southern Singer

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1932

7:00—Mack's Organlogue
8:00—Early Bird
8:15—Phoenix Laundry
8:30—Cecil and Sally
8:45—Nelly Byrd's Old Melodies
9:00—Chapel Time
9:15—Women's Club Notes
9:30—Why Worry?
10:00—Housekeeper's Chart
10:15—World Bookman
10:30—Helpful Hints
11:00—Kimball Mack
11:15—Downey Serenade
11:30—Tribute
12:00—Dance Interlude
12:10—Fly Rid
12:25—Heidelberg Painters
12:30—Dick Robinson's Music
12:45—Audyla Sills
1:00—Weldmech's Dave and Roy
1:15—Farm Flashes
1:30—Your Request Recordings
2:15—Miss Sunshine
2:30—Rose Room Trio
3:00—Muis Box
3:00—Women's College
6:00—Musical Scrap Book
6:30—Hoot Gibson and His Guitar
6:45—Studio Singer
7:00—Will Osborne Recordings
7:15—Cecil and Sally
7:30—Nehi Program
7:45—The Mississippi Joy Boys
8:00—W. O. W. Hour
9:00—Sign Off.

SATURDAY, MAY 28, 1932

7:00—Mack's Organlogue
8:00—Early Bird
8:15—Gilster's Southern Housewife.
8:30—Cecil and Sally
8:45—Hill Favorites
9:00—Chapel Time
9:15—Women's Club Notes
9:30—Why Worry?
10:00—Hyde School
10:15—World Bookman
10:30—Helpful Hints
11:00—Kimball Mack
11:15—Ruth Etting Recordings
11:30—Organ Melodies
12:00—Dance Interlude
12:30—Audyla Sills
12:25—Heidelberg Painters
12:30—Art Kahn's Music
12:45—Frigidaire
1:00—Dalhart Recordings
1:15—Farm Flashes
1:30—Furniture Fashions
1:45—Matty Hogan, Pianist
6:00—Musical Scrap Book
6:15—Shilkrets Tunes
6:30—Hoot Gibson and His Guitar
6:45—Studio Singer
7:00—Ed Lloyd's Music
7:10—Mutual Life
7:15—Cecil and Sally
7:30—Dr. Harvey
7:15—Phanton Pianist
7:15—Nitte Wittes
8:00—Saturday Night Frolic

1932

Although there were a number of applications filed with the FCC in 1931, it will be noted that few, if any, actuated new stations in Mississippi. Neither were the requests for frequency and power changes granted. This was a sure sign of the effects of the Depression which was settling over the nation.

Although Radio Station WRBJ in Hattiesburg was transferred to The Hattiesburg Broadcasting Company, there was a period of time when WRBJ was granted permission to leave the air and remain silent while a new transmitter and tower system, as well as studios and offices, were constructed on the fourth floor of the Hotel Hattiesburg. The station had its greatest period of activity in 1932, after the opening in December, 1931. Two self-supporting towers were erected on top of Hotel Hattiesburg, by W. L. McRaney-Engineer.

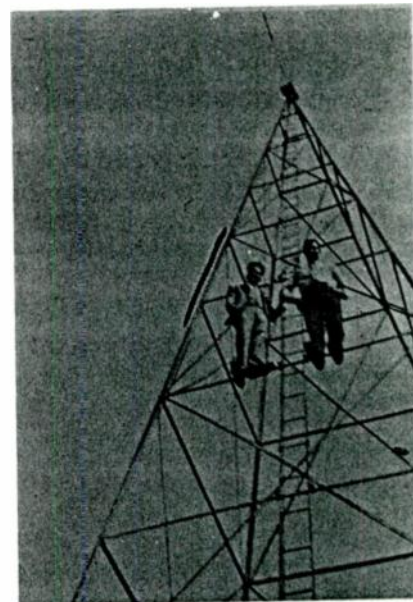
The August issue of Radio Advertising publication listed the following stations in operation in Mississippi at the time:

WRBQ-Greenville, Miss. WGCM-Gulfport, with H. H. Harper shown as Sales Manager. The rest of the staff remained unchanged from the previous year. WPFB-Hattiesburg, owned and operated by the Hattiesburg Broadcasting Company. Studios and transmitter in Hotel Hattiesburg. Power of 100 watts on 1370 KC. Personnel consisted of W. E. "Bill" Barclift, Manager; H. H. "Hank" Smith, Program Director; O. S. Droke and Jerry Harbour, engineers; Bob McRaney, Jones Herring, and Otis Perry as announcers. Commercial rate for one hour was \$30.00. WJDX-Jackson, Miss., owned and operated by Lamar Life Insurance Co., studios in Lamar Life Building. 1,000 watts, 1270 KC. Affiliated with The National Broadcasting Company. Wiley Harris, Director. John S. Howell, Sales Manager.

WTSL-Laurel, owned and operated by Laurel Broadcasting Co., studios and transmitter in the Carter Building. Power 100 watts, on 1310 KC. Program Director was Hardis Saunders. R. A. Young was listed as Manager.

WCOC-Meridian, Miss., 1000 watts on 880 KC, with studios in the Great Southern Hotel, R. S. Gavin listed as President and D. W. Gavin as General Manager, Secretary and Treasurer.

WQBC-Vicksburg, Miss. Affiliated with the Vicksburg Post and Herald, with studios in the Hotel Vicksburg, 500 watts on 1360 KC. L. P. Cashman, President and C. A. Lacy, Jr., Station Director.



WPFB Tower atop Hotel Hattiesburg. Kendall McNair [L], Max Williams [R].

**LAMAR LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
OFFICE BUILDING**
Located Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi, erected in 1924 at the cost of \$700,000.00. Home of WJDX.



L-R, Richard Joseph, Kendall McNair, O. S. Droke, and Max Williams. [WPFB]



Bob McRaney [L], first announcer-organist for WPFB-Hattiesburg, Miss., and Hank Smith, Program Director, broadcast remote from The Saenger Theatre, 1932. Note early Western Electric carbon microphone, and Robert Morton Theatre pipe organ.

1933

The FCC records do not show any increased activity or changes in radio operations in Mississippi in 1933. The Depression had reached its lowest ebb. Business was motionless and stagnant. Many stations remained in business on a "barter" basis. Merchants were willing to exchange goods and services for advertising. There was very little cash operations. Station personnel were lucky to get even a part of their income in cash and the rest in "trade".

The records do show that the call letters for the station in Greenville, Miss. were changed from WRBQ to WKFI. There were no changes at WGCM-Gulfport nor at WJDX in Jackson, Miss.

One change worth noting was the fact WAML (formerly owned and operated by W. A. Miller), showed George T. Bishop as Executive Vice President and David Wilson as Commercial Manager. The name of the operating company was listed as Southland Radio Corporation. Mont Hurst was Continuity Director.

Hugh M. Smith was the announcer and A. A. Touchstone was Chief Engineer. There were no changes listed for WCOC-Meridian nor WQBC-Vicksburg, Miss. This information was listed in the December issue of Radio Advertising publication.

1934 - 1935

The December 1934 issue of Radio Advertising showed only slight changes in the radio operations in Mississippi. There were still only seven stations operating, namely: WKFI-Greenville; WGCM-Gulfport; WPFB-Hattiesburg, which had been reopened by Otis P. Eure, after it failed in 1933, and went into receivership of a local bank. Operating personnel were listed as follows: Homer T. Sudduth, Manager; Program Director Bob McRaney; Chief Engineer O. S. Droke.

There were no changes in the listings for WJDX-Jackson; WAML in Laurel; WCOC-Meridian.

O. W. Jones was listed as Station Director and C. W. Drake, Chief Engineer for WQBC-Vicksburg, Miss.

Although WHEF in Kosciusko, Miss., was granted on Oct. 10, 1934, it was not carried in the listing of the December issue of Radio Advertising.

Mississippi was still not free from the entanglement brought on by the "hard times" of the Depression. However, two new call letters and stations are listed for 1934-35, a sign "as sure as Spring" that conditions were changing.

On October 10, 1934, a grant was made to W. E. Wharton for a new station to be operated in Kosciusko, Miss., 250 watts day, 100 watts night, on 1500 KC. It was owned and operated by The Attala Broadcasting Corp. Business offices and studios were located in the Radio Building. Rate was \$20.00 for one hour. One time spot rate was \$1.50 for "brief announcements", \$2.00 each for 100 words.

Also on June 4, 1935, WMFN, Clarksdale, Miss., was granted. It operated with 100 watts power on 1210 KC. Operating hours were 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. No other information was shown.

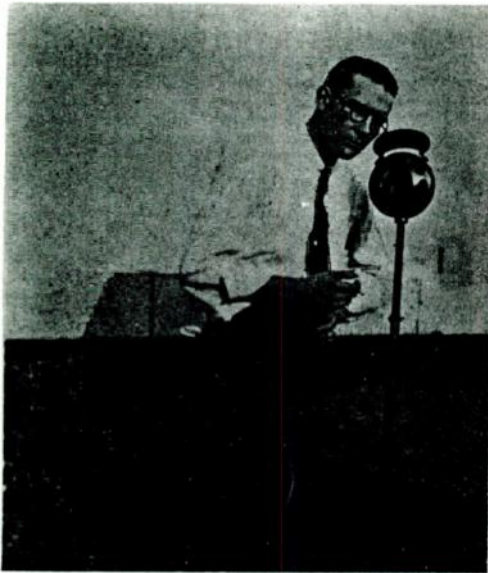
At WGCM in Gulfport, Ralph Duncan was listed as Commercial Manager, and W. H. Hardy, Jr., the General Manager.

C. J. Wright, Sr. purchased WPFB-Hattiesburg, Miss., from Otis P. Eure, and began an extensive renovation program, including new studios and offices at 512 Main St. in Hattiesburg.

On July 1, 1935, at 6:35 P.M. local time, Bob McRaney was at the microphone of WPFB, broadcasting baseball scores from a ticker tape. A flash bulletin came on the tape as follows: "Flash. . . Key Brothers ended their successful endurance flight at 6:05 P.M. Official number flight hours 653 hours and 35 minutes."

Listeners to WFOR thus heard the news of one of the most exciting moments in Mississippi history. Al and Fred Key of Meridian had established a new world's endurance record for sustained flight in a single-engined plane. Of course, the flight record, as far as light planes go, still stands. Sustained flight in space has far exceeded the number of hours, but this is in another category.

McRaney retained the original tape and it is now on display in the lobby of the Key Field Air Terminal Building in Meridian, Miss., along with other mementoes of the record flight. The tape, clippings and photos made by McRaney during later years, were presented to Col. Al Key in special ceremonies held in Meridian honoring Col. Al Key. The event was held July 1, 1975, marking the 45th Anniversary of the flight, and was broadcast over WDAL AM-FM, with Don Partridge, WDAL, AM-FM, Manager, as Master of Ceremonies.



Ralph "Kelly" Maddox-1934. Taken on roof of Lamar Life Building outside WJDX Studios.

EUGENE OCTAVE SYKES

By EDWIN E. MEEK*

A soft-spoken Mississippian, Eugene Octave Sykes, helped bring promise out of the chaos of early radio and set the stage for regulation of American broadcasting "in the public interest." A native of Aberdeen, Mississippi, and a former justice on the Mississippi Supreme Court, Judge Sykes was an original member of the Federal Radio Commission, later its chairman, and the first chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. Of his twelve years of service on the two agencies which have fostered the development of the multi-million dollar communications industry, the *New York Times* wrote that Judge Sykes "more than anyone else straightened out most of the early tangles" of radio.¹

Radio grew unchecked until 1927, and continued to expand fast and furiously throughout the decade. "Wave piracy, offensive advertising, monopoly and other disturbing conditions brought demands from the public that the government do something to correct the situation generally thought to be a 'conglomerate mess.' " ² The Congress passed the Radio Act on February 23, 1927, and President Calvin Coolidge called on the former Mississippi jurist to serve on the new agency—The Federal Radio Commission—which would oversee development of one of the most powerful influences on mankind.³

"A slim, small, unusually quiet man, who could, however, on occasion bang a desk," Judge Sykes began his career with the Federal Radio Commission with no knowledge of radio. When the President called, Judge Sykes explained that he had no background in broadcasting. The President replied, however, that the other members of the five-man commission were radio men and that it would be Judge Sykes's duty "to see that the Commission just organized kept within the law."⁴

Judge Sykes was appointed to a second term on the Commission by President Herbert Hoover on February 24, 1930.⁵ He served as chairman during the Commission's last year and a half of existence and was the first chairman of the newly formed Federal Communications Commission which replaced the Federal Radio Commission in 1934.⁶

According to the *New York Times*, "the Radio Commission issued from 1927 to 1933 more than 35,000 licenses, including 608 for broadcasting stations, and practically every license at the beginning, as well as many issued later, represented legal knots to be untwisted. That was where the former Mississippi Judge was extraordinarily valuable."⁷

One writer described Judge Sykes as "poised, deliberate, sympathetic and courageous. . . he always held the interests of the listener above all other considerations. He befriended education, stood for rights of independent broadcasting and valiantly defended America's rights in the international scramble for wave lengths."⁸

Judge Sykes was born at Aberdeen, Mississippi, on July 16, 1867. He was the son of Eugene Octavious Sykes, a judge, legislator, former captain in the Confederate Army, and a member of the state Constitutional Convention of 1890.⁹ His father was a native of Alabama and his mother was the daughter of F. M. Rogers, a circuit judge and once candidate for governor of Mississippi on the Whig ticket. "The Sykes were of Virginia ancestry, the family having come from that state to North Mississippi along with the tide of emigration from the older Southern States after the country was purchased from the Indians."¹⁰

Judge Sykes attended the public schools of Aberdeen and studied at Bell Buckle College, Tennessee, St. John's College, the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, and the University of Mississippi. After graduation from Ole Miss in 1897 he began a private law practice at Aberdeen. In 1903 he married Malvina May Scott, daughter of Charles Scott of Rosedale, a "prominent figure in the legal history of the state. . . was one of the wealthiest cotton planters in the South." For two years Sykes was a partner in Scott's Rosedale, Mississippi, law firm and later returned to Aberdeen to form a successful partnership with his brother J. A. Sykes.¹¹

The father of three children, Charles Scott, Octavia, and Malvina Yerger, Sykes was a Democratic Presidential Elector for the State at Large in 1904. In 1916 Governor Theodore G. Bilbo appointed him to the Mississippi Supreme Court. The following November he was elected to a term on the Court. Judge Sykes voluntarily retired from the bench in 1924 and resumed his law practice.¹² He served on the State Democratic Executive Committee, was a member of the Episcopal Church, a Mason, an Elk, and a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon social fraternity.¹³

President Calvin Coolidge, "ignored the importunities of politics" in appointing Judge Sykes to the Federal Radio Commission.¹⁴ Other members of the Commission were Admiral W. H. G. Bullard, head of Naval Communications; Colonel John Dillon, a Commerce Department radio inspector; Henry Bellows, a Minnesota radio station manager, and Orestes Caldwell, an engineer and editor of radio publications. Admiral Bullard, tapped for the chairmanship of the new agency, Colonel Dillon and Judge Sykes were confirmed by the Senate on March 4, 1927. The 69th Congress adjourned, however, before confirming the other appointees. Admiral Bullard was in China at the time and died soon after his return to this country. And, within a few months, Colonel Dillon also died. As a result, Judge Sykes was the only confirmed member of the Federal Radio Commission until the following spring.¹⁵ He performed the duties of chairman of the Commission for several weeks during the absence of Admiral Bullard.

On March 26, 1927, speaking over a hook-up of 29 radio stations originating from the studio of WRC in Washington, D.C., Judge Sykes told the American radio public that the most significant feature of the new radio law was the dominant influence of the "public interest" in the determination of every radio question.¹⁶ Judge Sykes outlined a premise that in the decades to follow would be interpreted and re-interpreted by the Congress, the Federal Communications Commission, broadcasters and the courts, and today remains the foundation of American broadcasting:

Judge Sykes declared that neither he nor any of his associates was under any obligation, political or otherwise, except to the radio public and that it was in that spirit that the commission proposed to administer the new radio control law. . . . This doctrine (the public interest), that broadcasting exists only for the purpose of properly serving the listening public, is the constitutional basis for every action the commission will take.

It is the principle which dominates the radio law as it stands today, and it is the principle which must guide the Federal Radio Commission in every phase of its new work.

You must remember, however, that we face a situation involving many conflicting interests and rights. You, for example, may dislike the programs of a station which your neighbor finds a particular value. You may urge that some particular station should even be denied the right to broadcast, forgetful alike that its service may be highly regarded by many listeners, and that the refusal of a license may mean loss and perhaps financial ruin to people who have invested their time and money in that station, all in the best of good faith. If you will think of these things, I am sure you will see the dangers in anything like ruthless, arbitrary or hastily considered action.¹⁷

Citing the more than 18,000 radio transmitting stations in the country, only 700 of which were actually engaged in broadcasting, Judge Sykes compared the situation of radio with that of a busy and crowded street without any rules or policemen "in which there are frequent traffic jams and occasional disastrous collisions.

Our hope is to interfere with the legitimate traffic just as little as we can and still eliminate the danger of accident. We are counting on the drivers, which means the broadcasters, to help us because it is they who in the long run are the worst sufferers from the accidents. We believe they will recognize that even though they cannot all have everything they want, they will achieve better results for themselves by serving a satisfied radio public than by attempting to run counter to the spirit of the new radio law—the spirit of public service.¹⁸

Judge Sykes told his listeners that the situation would not be resolved overnight. The *New York Times* commended Judge Sykes for his approach to and interpretation of the duties of the Federal Radio Commission, adding "he is under no illusions about the difficulty in deciding which side the public bears in some control of radio."¹⁹

"Our first step is going to be to find out exactly how many broadcasting stations operate or want to operate in the United States, and what service they can give to the listening public. . . . With this information in hand we can deal with each individual case, not only on the basis of its special claims, but also on that of its relation to the national situation as a whole."²⁰ Judge Sykes concluded his broadcast by inviting the public and broadcasters to help the Commission in formulating broadcast guidelines.

As Vice-Chairman of the FRC in 1929, Judge Sykes testified in support of congressional efforts which later resulted in the establishment of the Federal Communications Commission.²¹ When the Communications Act of 1934 became law, the 58-year-old Mississippian was appointed the first chairman of the Federal Communications Commission by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.²²

Judge Sykes, appointed to a seven-year term on the Federal Communications Commission,²³ served as Chairman of the Commission for only eight months.²⁴ He retired from the chairmanship on March 9, 1935, but continued to serve as a commissioner until his retirement from the Commission in April of 1939. For a time he headed a body within the Commission that was devoted entirely to radio although he took part also in other Commission activities.²⁵ As chairman and commissioner, the man who had no knowledge of radio when appointed to the Federal Radio Commission in 1927, won the respect of the public, broadcasters and President Roosevelt.²⁶

In 1936 Judge Sykes called on the National Association of Broadcasters to improve broadcast services to rural America.²⁷ The following year he addressed the NAB's national convention in Chicago and again reminded broadcasters of their responsibility to the public. The broadcasting business is clothed with public interest, he warned, because of the very nature of radio.

The Commission, having determined that you are a proper party to serve the public in your community and having granted you this gracious privilege in the form of a license, this duty then devolves upon you to render the best public service to your community that you can. You assume by the acceptance of this license, a great responsibility of public service.

You are thereby accorded a wonderful opportunity for service which necessarily carries with it a grave responsibility. You are invited to enter the homes and firesides of your listening public for practically sixteen hours a day. These programs reach the men, women and children of the entire nation. They reach those who are now steering the destinies of our communities, State and nation, and those who are being trained to assume these reins of government when the present actors pass from the stage.

These thoughts should ever be present with you and your programs should be so built that our younger generations who have the privilege of listening to the radio should be improved and be better equipped for their responsibilities to be so assumed by them.²⁸

Judge Sykes cited the tremendous growth in regulation and public service of radio during the previous decade and concluded that, "like all young industries, there is room for greater improvement not only in our regulation of this art and industry but in the nature and character of the programs of the stations."²⁹

The first five years of the FCC were "difficult and turbulent ones. The Commission had to be organized and the vast broadcasting and tele-communications industries had to be brought under regulatory controls."³⁰ The FCC issued orders requiring licensees to file information regarding ownership of stations, investigated and subsequently lowered long-distance telephone charges, established new engineering standards for AM stations, completed hearings of radio frequency allocations and negotiated with other North American countries regarding the use of the radio spectrum in an effort to avoid interference across national boundaries.³¹ Judge Sykes played a major role in these developments, particularly in aspects of radio and international radio. President Coolidge sent him to represent the United States at the North American Radio Conference held in Ottawa in 1929, and President Hoover appointed him chairman of the American delegation to the International Radio Conference in Madrid in 1932.³² At the Madrid meeting, which lasted four months, Judge Sykes was elected chairman of the important technical committee. He also persuaded delegates to institute English along with French as the official languages of the Conferences.³³ In 1933 President Roosevelt appointed Judge Sykes chairman of the U.S. delegation to the North and Central American regional radio conference held in Mexico City.³⁴

Judge Sykes resigned from the FCC on April 6, 1939. President Roosevelt responded to his resignation with this comment in a letter to Judge Sykes. "I want to assure you of my appreciation of your long service on the Commission and to extend to you my best wishes for your future success."³⁵ Judge Sykes joined the law firm of Spearman, Sykes and Roberson in the nation's capital. He died of a heart attack on June 21, 1945.³⁶

Eliot C. Lovett, 1945 president of the Federal Communications Bar Association of which Judge Sykes once served as president, called Judge Sykes the Association's most illustrious member. Rosel H. Hyde, Federal

Communication Commission general counsel and the man who later would serve the longest tenure on the Federal Communications Commission, said "Judge Sykes exemplified dignity and ability in public service which induced respect and confidence." J. Harold Ryan, president of the National Association of Broadcasters in 1945, praised Judge Sykes as "a man of great understanding of the needs of broadcasting and of its operation in public service." Lt. Col. James W. Baldwin, former secretary of the Federal Radio Commission said "I believe the history of radio should record that Judge Sykes by his intellect, vision, wisdom and perseverance contributed more than any one man to the building of a competitive system of radio broadcasting in the United States." ³⁷

Horace L. Lohnes, a past president of the Federal Communications Bar, concluded the tribute to Judge Sykes published in the Association's official journal: "*Judge Sykes knew nothing about radio or its problems—but he found out, and in his quiet, effective way proceeded to lay the cornerstone of a great industry.*" ³⁸

*Dr. Meek is Director of Public Relations for the University of Mississippi.

¹"Eugene O. Sykes, 68, Mississippi Jurist," *New York Times*, June 22, 1945, p. 15.

²Walter B. Emery, *Broadcasting and Government: Responsibility and Regulation* (Ann Harbor, Mich., 1961), 16.

³"Coolidge Appoints Radio Commission," *New York Times*, March 2, 1927, p. 27.

⁴"Eugene O. Sykes," *New York Times*, June 22, 1945, p. 15.

⁵"Seven Rulers of the Air," *New York Times*, July 15, 1934, II, p. 5.

⁶"Roosevelt Sets Record," *New York Times*, July 2, 1934, p. 8.

⁷"Eugene O. Sykes," *New York Times*, June 22, 1945, p. 15.

⁸Typed research notes in biographical file on Judge Eugene O. Sykes, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, taken from "Mother Monroe" by Evans.

⁹*The Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi*, 1917, p. 538.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴"Coolidge Appoints Radio Commission," *New York Times*, March 2, 1927, p. 27.

¹⁵Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel* (New York, 1966), 211.

¹⁶"Declares Service Radio Board's Aim," *New York Times*, March 18, 1927, p. 27.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹"Clearing the Air," *New York Times*, March 18, 1927, p. 20.

²⁰"Declares Service Aim," *New York Times*, March 18, 1927, p. 27.

²¹"Couzen's Radio Bill Supported By Sykes," *New York Times*, May 30, 1929, p. 22.

²²"Roosevelt Sets Record," *New York Times*, July 2, 1934, p. 8.

²³*First Annual Report of the Federal Communications Commission* (Washington, 1935), 1.

²⁴Emery, *Broadcasting*, 355-356.

²⁵"Eugene O. Sykes," *New York Times*, June 22, 1945, p. 15.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷"Aims of FCC," *New York Times*, July 12, 1935, p. 14.

²⁸"Radio Warned of Obligation," *New York Times*, June 27, 1937, X, p. 10.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Emery, *Broadcasting*, 355-356.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²"Brief Sketch of Chairman E. O. Sykes," Federal Communications Commission 10671.

³³Letter from Judge Sykes' wife among personal papers in Eugene O. Sykes file, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi.

³⁴"Brief Sketch of Chairman E. O. Sykes," FCC 10671.

³⁵"Thompson is Nominated As Member of FCC," *New York Times*, March 27, 1939, p. 6.

³⁶"Eugene O. Sykes," *New York Times*, June 22, 1945, p. 15.

³⁷"Eugene O. Sykes," *Federal Communications Bar Journal*, VIII, No. 2 (June 1945), pp. 25-30.

³⁸*Ibid.*

CHAPTER V

“The Developing Years”

(1936-1940)

1936

Eight radio stations were in operation in Mississippi by December 1936.

WMFN in Clarksdale, Miss., which had been licensed June 4, 1935, was granted permission to move to Grenada, Miss., and was in operation during December 1936, located in the Music Room of the Grenada College for Women. The transmitter was located one mile south of Grenada. The station operated with 100 watts power on 1210 KC. It was licensed to Attala Broadcasting Company and listed J. E. Wharton as President and C. W. Wharton, Treasurer. A discount of 10% in rates was allowed when used in conjunction with WHEF-Kosciusko, Miss., which was also licensed and operated by the same family.

WGCM-Gulfport, Miss., was under the management of J. K. Milner. Program Manager was Harry Genung. Chief Engineer was Stokes Gresham.

Information on WJDX-Jackson, showed their national advertising representative was the firm of Craig and Hollingberry of New York.

General Manager at WAML-Laurel, Miss., was R. V. deGruy. Station Director was Hugh M. Smith.

There were no changes listed at WCOC-Meridian, Miss. There were no changes indicated at WQBC-Vicksburg, Miss.

WPFB-Hattiesburg, Miss., was under the General Management of C. J. Wright, Sr. with C. J. Wright, Jr. as Assistant Manager. E. J. Kalusche was Program Manager and C. H. Dyess, Chief Engineer.

1936 was the year the American Newspaper Publishers Association adopted a cooperative attitude towards radio, declaring both mediums were closely allied and should continue as “free institutions”.

On December 29, 1936, the Mutual Network expanded into a transcontinental operation by adding the Don Lee Broadcasting System in California and other stations.

1937

Only minor changes occurred in radio in Mississippi during 1937.

WGCM was listed as Biloxi-Gulfport, inasmuch as the transmitter was located equal distance from both cities. Mississippi City, where the transmitter was located, was six miles from both Biloxi and Gulfport. The station had been purchased by the Ewing family of New Orleans and listed F. C. Ewing as General Manager; Robert Johnson as Program Manager; C. W. Davison, Chief Engineer; and George Blumenstock as Director of Production. Offices were located in Gulfport as well as The Buena Vista Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. The station was licensed to WGCM, Inc.

WPFB in Hattiesburg listed C. J. Wright, Sr., Manager, and Mrs. C. J. Wright, Secretary. National representative was J. J. Devine Associates. W. G. Rohmer was Program Director.

WHEF-Kosciusko, Miss., listed J. J. Devine as national representative. Roy Heidelberg was Chief Executive-Owner. There were no changes at WCOC-Meridian nor WQBC-Vicksburg.

Only July 20, 1937, Guglielmo Marconi, pioneer radio inventor and first person to span the ocean with a radio signal, died of a heart attack at age 63.

The American Federation of Radio Artists formed a union, including all talent, except musicians.

On December 6, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia wrote a law which stated economic considerations should be taken into account by the FCC in making grants for stations.

Maurice Thompson was added at WJDX-Jackson, as Program Director.

WQBC-Vicksburg, added Loren Miller as Program Manager.

1938

Mississippi had a new station added in Jackson, Miss., in 1938. WSLI became the second station in the Capitol City. September 1938 was the date when the station went on the air from studios located in the Robert E. Lee Hotel. The transmitter was located on High Street, near the Pearl River. It was affiliated with The Blue Network, a division of The National Broadcasting Company. National representative was Weed and Company. The station had been granted to The Standard Life Insurance Company, and the call letters "WSLI", represented the name of the licensee.

L. M. Sepaugh, who had been associated with T. B. Lanford in stations in Louisiana, was named the first Manager. Mr. Sepaugh, an outstanding broadcaster and businessman, later became Vice Chairman of The Capitol Broadcasting Corporation. WSLI enjoyed a phenomenal growth and acceptance in the expanding Jackson market. In 1941 Mr. Sepaugh, in company with representatives of radio stations WCBI-Columbus; WAML-Laurel; WFOR-Hattiesburg; WGRM-Greenwood; WGCM-Gulfport; WJDX-Jackson and perhaps others, met in the Robert E. Lee Hotel and organized The Mississippi Broadcasters Association. In 1952 Sepaugh was elected President of MBA and is a Lifetime Member and still active in MBA affairs, as well as being a civic leader in Jackson, WSLI had the distinction of employing Mississippi's first women announcers. They were Miss Nancy Chambers and Miss Virginia Metz.

In later years WSLI became affiliated with the Entertainment Network of the American Broadcasting Company. It also became affiliated with The Katz Agency.

Also in later years WSLI-FM was added. Owens Alexander became Executive Vice President in charge of all the Jackson operations. Richard Voorhis was named manager of WSLI.

Ed Wilkerson was the first Sales Manager; Paul Goldman was Program Director and Vassar Dubard was one of the first announcers during the early operations of WSLI. C. A. Perkins was the Chief Engineer.

P. K. Ewing purchased WHEF in Kosciusko, changed the call letters to WGRM and moved the station to Grenada, Miss. The business address was The McCaslin Building. The transmitter was located on the Fairgrounds 1½ miles south of Grenada. Vernon Smith was Chief Announcer. P. K. Ewing, Jr. was station manager. Fred James was Chief Engineer. P. K. Ewing, Sr. was listed as President. WGRM retained the power of 100 watts on 1210 KC. W. E. Williams was Manager in Dec. 1938.

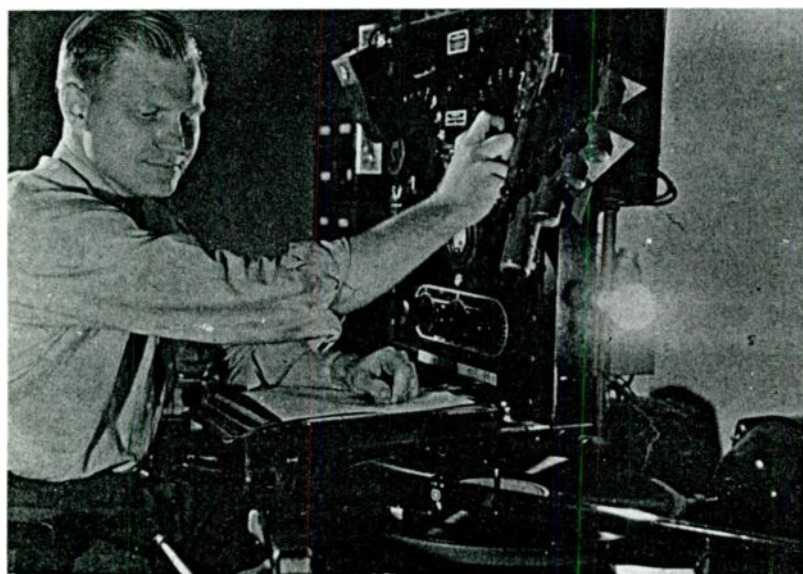
The following personnel listing for WJDX-Jackson, showed P. K. Lutken, President; Wiley P. Harris, Station Manager; C. A. Lacy, Jr., as Commercial Manager; Maurice Thompson as Chief Announcer and Musical Director; Jack Simpson, Publicity Director; Frank Gentry as Sales Manager; and P. G. Root, Chief Engineer. Power had been increased to 5,000 watts daytime, 1,000 watts night.

WGCM-Gulfport listed Harry Becker as Program Manager and C. H. Dyess as the Chief Engineer.

In December, 1938, WFOR in Hattiesburg listed Miles A. Metzger as Manager; G. V. Land as Commercial Manager and George Wilson, Jr., Chief Engineer.

WAML-Laurel, Miss. listed D. A. Matison as President; R. V. deGruy as General Manager and Hugh M. Smith as Commercial Manager.

There were no changes at WCOC-Meridian nor WQBC in Vicksburg, Miss.



Hugh M. Smith shown at the controls of WAML-Laurel, Miss. Studios were located in the Carter Bldg. Note chimes at upper right—used during station breaks.

World transcription service was used with "vertical" pickup—shown on turntable at lower right.

1939

President Franklin Roosevelt declared in a speech, "Radio is as free as the press", except for such controls as are necessary to prevent complete confusion on the air.

Publications such as Broadcasting Magazine, Radio Advertising and Radio Annual Yearbook, for the month of December, 1939, printed the information on the ten stations operating in the State, as follows:

WJPR-Greenville, Miss., licensed Nov. 14, 1939. Owned by John R. Pepper. Frequency of 1310 KC, with a power of 250 watts, unlimited. Paul Thompson was listed as the Manager.

WGRM-Greenwood, Miss., owned by P. K. Ewing, with offices located 222 Howard Street, 250 watts day, 100 watts night. General and Promotion Manager was W. E. Williams. Program Director was C. H. Walters and Chief Engineer, C. A. Perkins. The station had been moved from Grenada to Greenwood, but no record was found to indicate the date of the move.

Les Carmichael was listed as Promotion Manager of WFOR-Hattiesburg.

WJDX-Jackson, Miss., showed a number of artists, groups and combinations available for sponsorship in their listing in Radio Advertising, including Concert and Dance orchestra, Hawaiian ensemble, male and mixed quartet, string quartet, instrumental trios, instrumental soloists, vocal soloists, pianists and dramatic players. Rates ran from \$30.00 an hour for the concert orchestra to \$5.00 each for dramatic players.

WSLI-Jackson showed L. M. Sepaugh as Manager; T. H. Lathrop, Commercial Manager; F. E. Wilkerson, Jr., merchandising manager; Roy Pickett, Chief Announcer, Paul Goldman; Production Manager; George Phillip, Program Director and Gail Benson, engineer.

WAML-Laurel showed Paul Wilson as Program Director. M. M. Ewing was listed as Secretary-Treasurer for WGCM-Gulfport. WCOC-Meridian stated that liquor advertising was "illegal in Mississippi, but beer advertising was acceptable to the station."

WSKB-McComb, Miss., was licensed on Sept. 18, 1939, and the following details were obtained through research: Owned and operated by McComb Broadcasting Corporation. Studios and Offices in the McColgan Hotel. Operating power of 100 watts, unlimited time on 1200 KC. George Blumenstock was listed as Manager. Robert Louis Sanders was Chief Engineer.

1940

World War II was well underway in 1940, with England and the RAF beginning to return bombing raids on Nazi Germany, in retaliation for great damages done by the German Air Force in the early part of the war.

Sampling of public opinion as to the role the United States should play was being made. National Guard units were on standby alert and defenses of the nation were being shored up.

The U.S. Supreme Court held that the FCC had the power to grant licenses for new stations, without regard to economic injury to existing stations, thereby establishing the "survival of the fittest" policy. The Court also held that the FCC had no authority, control or supervision of programs, business management or policy of stations.

Radio Station, WCBI-Columbus, Miss., went on the air on October 2, 1940. A formal license was issued on Oct. 24.

The inaugural program was broadcast from the new studios in the historic Gilmer Hotel.

The station was licensed to Birney Imes, Sr., Editor and Publisher of the Commercial Dispatch. Birney Imes, Jr., was station Manager, W. E. "Bill" Williams, was the first Program Director. W. G. "Gaines" Allen of Birmingham, Ala., was named Sales Manager. Robert Montgomery was the first Chief Engineer.

Among the employees on the staff at the beginning of operations were: Paul Cresap, announcer; Houston Cox, Jr., News Editor and announcer; Gene Edwards, announcer; Billie Fogarty was the first receptionist-secretary. The Virginia Drifters was the first staff band. The Vernon Trio of Vernon, Ala. was a featured group.

The Commercial Dispatch ran a special 2 section (16 pages), outlining the history of WCBI from the beginning. It showed pictures of the RCA equipment, Wincharger 192 foot tower, RCA studio equipment. Complete photos of staff members, remote studios of MSCW, and gave plans for programming the station, which featured the Mutual Network coverage of the 1940 World Series as a highlight of the grand opening. The station was assigned a frequency of 1370 with a power of 250 watts, unlimited time.

WGRM-Greenwood joined the NBC Blue Network. WSLI-Jackson, joined the NBC Blue Network. WFOR-Hattiesburg and WJDX-Jackson, operated with The NBC Red Network. WAML-Laurel was also affiliated with the NBC Red Network. WCOC-Meridian was affiliated with the Columbia Broadcasting System.

WGRM-Greenwood, Miss., listed P. K. Ewing, Jr., as General and Promotional Manager. Ross Nelson was

serving as Program Director. George Wilson was Chief Engineer. Sears and Ayer was the national representative.

Ed Wilkerson was named Commercial Manager of WSLI-Jackson, Miss.

WGCM-Gulfport, Miss. moved studios and offices into the Markham Hotel.

Billy Tracy was named Promotion Manager at WAML-Laurel, Miss.

Jeff Hester was the new promotion Director at WQBC-Vicksburg, Miss.

WCOC-Meridian, Miss. was operating from the Strand Theatre Building.

Bob McRaney, formerly with WPFB-Hattiesburg (1932-35), resigned as Program Director at WSGN-Birmingham, Ala., and was named General Manager of WCBI-Columbus, Miss., replacing Birney Imes, Jr., who was called into service in December of 1940.

James W. Eatherton was named Sales Manager, replacing W. E. "Bill" Williams. P. C. Melone was named Chief Engineer, replacing James Arendale. Chief Announcer and Musical Director was Phil Gulley. Mrs. Madge Moore was named manager and announcer for the remote studios located in the Henry Clay Hotel in West Point, Miss. Mrs. John Q. Hays was director of Children's programs. WCBI switched to 1400 KC, 250 watts. Charles W. Holt was added to the announcing staff. Joel Byars was a newcomer to the announcing corps, as well as Bob Loflin.

WCBI FORMAL OPENING IS ALL SET FOR TONIGHT

Program Arranged From 7:25 to 10 O'clock

--Public Is Invited

Final plans have been completed for the formal opening program of radio station WCBI tonight at the Gilmer Hotel from 7:15 to 10 o'clock.

The nation's newest station, which went on the air only yesterday, already has been acclaimed by listeners in scores of towns in East Mississippi and West Alabama, but tonight it receives the best wishes of home folks.

WCBI already has scored one notable achievement of public service, having joined the nation-wide Mutual network to bring fans the World Series.

People from over the Columbus territory have expressed their appreciation for this service and for all the other interesting programs.

In connection with tonight's formal opening, scores of messages broke into print by medium of this edition of The Commercial Dispatch, which is dedicated to WCBI.

The program opens at 7:15 with invocation by the Rev. J. D. Wroten, pastor of the First Methodist Church. After quartet music, Mayor T. W. Harris will speak at 7:30, extending the city's congratulations to the new station.

Soloists will follow Mayor Harris, and at 7:45 C. N. Brandon, superintendent of the city schools, will speak. Brief talks will be made also by civic club presidents, including Dr. George T. Buckley, Exchange; Rayburn Fraser, Rotary; and W. H. McClanahan, Kiwanis.

J. O. Slaughter, manager of the Gilmer Hotel, will be heard at 8:15 o'clock, after music by quartets and bands. Also at this time will be the message of Birney Imes, editor and publisher of The Commercial Dispatch, owner of WCBI; and Police Captain John A. Morton.

From 8:30 to 9 the program will come from the M.S.C.W. studio featuring President B. L. Parkinson and his staff. From 9 to 10 the station will interview guests and visitors in the hotel lobby and dining room, and show them through the station.

Scores of visitors are expected; all are invited; those who cannot attend should tune to WCBI, 1370 kilocycles, for the program.

[From the front page of *The Columbus Commercial Dispatch*]