

FREQUENCIES BEFORE 1941
by Ron Schatz

In March, 1941, most stations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Cuba changed their frequencies to comply with the new NARBA treaty recently signed in Habana. Before that eventful day in radio history, a somewhat different system of allocations existed. The CBC then consisted of 96 channels, from 550 to 1500 kcs; of which 46 were clear, 6 local, 4 high-powered regional, and 40 regional. Of the clear channels, 40 were American and 6 Canadian. The United States was divided into five zones with 8 clear channels assigned to each:

ZONE ONE: New England, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and D.C.

660	WEAF	New York	now WNBC
710	WOR	Newark	now New York City
760	WJZ	New York	now WABC
860	WABC	New York	now WCBS
990	WBZ	Boston	relayed by WBZA-990-Springfield
1060	WBAL	Baltimore	760 kcs. // WJZ late evenings
1060	WTIC	Hartford	special authorization for 1040 kcs.
1100	WSIL	New York	now WHEW
1100	WPG	Atlantic City	deleted
1150	WHAN	Rochester	

ZONE TWO: Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia

700	WLW	Cincinnati	special authorization for 500 kw.
750	WJR	Detroit	
820	WHAS	Louisville	
960	WDKA	Pittsburgh	
1020	KYW	Philadelphia	
1070	WTAM	Cleveland	now WKYC
1110	WRVA	Richmond	
1170	WCAU	Philadelphia	

ZONE THREE: Carolinas, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas

650	WSM	Nashville	
740	WSB	Atlanta	
800	WFAA	Dallas	
800	WBAF	Fort Worth	
850	WOL	New Orleans	
850	KMKH	Shreveport	special authorization for 1100 kcs.
1040	KRLD	Dallas	
1040	KTHS	Hot Springs	sp. auth. for 1060 kc.; now KAAY-Little Rock
1080	WBT	Charlotte	
1140	KVOO	Tulsa	
1140	WAFI	Birmingham	
1190	WOAI	San Antonio	

ZONE FOUR: Dakotas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Wisconsin

670	WTAQ	Chicago	
720	WGN	Chicago	
770	WBBM	Chicago	
770	KFAB	Lincoln	now Omaha (was // WBBM nights)
810	WCPC	Minneapolis	
870	WENR	Chicago	deleted
870	WLS	Chicago	
1000	WHO	Des Moines	
1090	KHOX	St. Louis	
1160	WDID	Fort Wayne	shared time nights with WWA-1160-Whooling

ZONE FIVE: Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

640	KFI	Los Angeles	
680	KFO	San Francisco	now KNBR
750	KGO	San Francisco	shared frequency with KGY-Schenectady
830	KOA	Denver	
570	KJR	Seattle	now KOAO; shared freq. with WCFL-Chicago
1050	KNX	Los Angeles	
1130	KSL	Salt Lake City	
1180	KOB	Albuquerque	
1180	KEX	Portland	special authorization for 1160 kc.

(In the above lists, stations on 800, 870, 1100 and 1140 kc. shared time.)

CANADA: (excludes Newfoundland)

690	CFRD	Toronto	
730	CLAC	Montreal	
840	CBL	Toronto	now CJB
910	CBF	Montreal	now CBI
960	CKY	Winnipeg	now CBW
1030	CFCM	Calgary	
1030	CKLW	Windsor	

Four high-powered regional channels are now I-B clears under NARBA:

1460	WJSV	Washington	now WTOP
1460	KSTP	St. Paul	
1470	WLAC	Nashville	
1470	KGA	Spokane	
1480	WKBW	Buffalo	
1480	KCIA	Oklahoma City	
1490	WCKY	Covington, Ky.	now Cincinnati
1490	KPEK	Sacramento	

The "graveyard" frequencies were 1200, 1210, 1310, 1370, 1420, and 1500 kcs. Maximum power was 250 watts day and 100 watts night. Regional frequencies were 550-650, 760, 880-900, 920-950, 1010, 1120, 1220-1300, 1320-1360, 1380-1410, 1430-1450 kcs. Maximum power was 5 kw day and 1 kw night. Stations on 1010 kcs. were moved to clear channels in 1941. Four experimental stations operated beyond 1500 kcs.:

1530	WXXB	Waterbury, Conn.	now WTB
1530	WXXB	Kansas City	deleted (later KPRS)
1550	WXXR	Long Island City	now WXXR
1550	WXXAI	Bakersfield, Cal.	now KFBC

On 26 March 1941, stations changed their frequencies as follows:

No change	550-720 kcs.
Up 10 kcs.	740-780 and 1190 kcs.
Up 20 kcs.	790-870 and 1050 kcs.
Up 30 kcs.	880-970, 1060-1160, 1200-1450 kcs.
Up 40 kcs.	980-1040, 1170, 1460-1490 kcs.
Down 10 kcs.	1500 kcs.
To various clear channels	1010 and 1180 kcs.
Other changes	1530 to 1590, 1550 to 1560 kcs.

And that's how radio was back in the 30's, almost every city having a station sharing time with another. Brooklyn had 6 stations of its own, of which 5 shared time on 2 frequencies, 4 on one of them! Present FCC policy seems to be to have all stations operate on the same frequency at the same time, hi.
