

Some of the nation's largest and best-known radio stations have call letters which recall a former slogan once used on the air or which preserve the initials of the station founder.

It has been the general rule among the nation's older stations to preserve the original call letters as they pass through changes of ownership, for each new owner recognizes the value of the original call.

Thus, WLS, founded by Sears Roebuck and Co. in the early 1920's, has remained WLS, though the ownership changed first to "The Prairie Farmer," a magazine, and later to ABC. But the call letters still carry a reminder that they once meant "World's Largest Store," as intended by the station founder.

And the radio listener of forty years ago and more may recall the Deep South accents of Lambdin Kay on WSB giving the station slogan, "Welcome South, Brother." He also would use another slogan, "The Atlanta Journal covers Dixie like the dew."

And WOW began life in Omaha as WOAW in the middle Twenties, but the A was dropped out of the call just a few years later when the Army (or was it the Navy?) surrendered its use of WO:V as a working call someplace in the world. In any event, WOW signified Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Co., the station founder.

Some additional calls with hidden meanings:

- WCCO Washburn-Crosby Corp., a flour miller
- WEEL Edison Electric Illuminating Co.
- WKRC Kodak Radio Corp., now extinct
- WGN "World's Greatest Newspaper" - maybe it still means that
- KWKH W. K. Henderson, probably the most picturesque station owner in radio history. He used to go on the air daily and nightly beginning "Hello World," and then he'd spend 15 or 30 minutes denouncing the "Dad-blasted Federal Radio Commission."
- KPRC "Kotton Port-Rail Center"
- KFH "Kansas' Finest Hotel," the Lassen
- WCSH Congress Square Hotel
- KMBC Midland Broadcasting Co. (has become KLBZ now)
- WRC Radio Corporation (of America) (RCA)
- KTRH Rice Hotel
- WAFI Alabama Polytechnic Institute, was located at Auburn, Ala. in 1926
- WMAL M. A. Leese
- WSMB Saenger Theatre & Maison Blanche Co.
- WREN Jenny Wren Flour Co.
- WICD "Wonderful Isle of Dreams"
- WLAC Life and Casualty Insurance Co.
- WWSW William S. Walker
- WINS International News Service (from its Hearst days)
- KTHS "Kum to Hot Springs." This call now assigned to Berryville, Ark., was assigned to Hot Springs for more than 30 years. The old KTHS is the ancestor of Little Rock's KAAY.
- WTIC "The Insurance City"

Certain other slogans managed to reach print but represented obvious examples of trying to come up with something to fit an assigned call. Most of those were probably laughed off the air the first time they were ever actually used:

- WEBR "We Extend Buffalo's Regards"
- WDBO "Way Down by Orlando"
- WDCD "Wonderful Dynamo of Dixie"
- WHBF "Where Historic Blackhawk Fought"
- WGAL "World's Gardens at Lancaster"
- KRLD "Keep Radio Leading Dallas"
- WFAA "Working For All Alike"

There is even hidden meaning in the NBC station break chimes, now rarely used, although I have heard them recently on KINBR. (They're still used at station-break time on weekend "Monitor" and a few other NBC radio features, and the G E C theme is expanded in Monitor jingles. -od.) NBC was founded by General Electric but was soon sold to RCA. But the chimes had already been introduced on the network and RCA kept them through the years. In musical terms, the chimes are G E C and they mean General Electric Company.