



THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF DX - L. FLEGLE

THE WRR STORY. It seems that no one really knows when WRR went on the air. There is evidence of the Commerce department renewing its license in July, 1921. As of '72 WRR was owned by the city of Dallas, Texas. Dallas owned WRR before there was any commercial broadcasting in the country. In fact, the city of Dallas established WRR so long ago that it was the first radio broadcast station in Dallas, in Texas, the south and one of the last few stations in the United States. Through the years the City of Dallas has kept WRR and taken advantage of owning it. WRR uses no tax money and therefore is not a burden to taxpayers. The Dallas Municipal Radio Dept. operates under a special ordinance, and has a board with five members. WRR was established primarily for the purpose of supplying communications to the Fire Dept. Experiments were carried on with a transmitter and receiver designed and built by Fire Dept. employees. The fireman first started broadcasting by just simply ad-libbing. This became a wearisome task, so they started reading news and weather information from the newspapers. This continuous talking got to be pretty tiring, so again the firemen cast around for some easier means of putting on tests without having to talk continuously, so they acquired a mechanically operated phonograph and placed the microphone in front of the speaker, which rebroadcasts, after a fashion the music that was coming out of the speaker. This information leaked to the public and was given prominent play by the newspapers. This fired the imagination of the citizens of Dallas, who in turn joined the ranks of the city experimenters. They built their own receivers, which consisted mainly of a pair of headphones, many feet of wire closely wound on a round oatmeal cardboard box and a sensitive piece of galena with a "cat whisker." From this meager beginning, the city of Dallas has continued to operate WRR as a broadcast station until today it is one of the leading and prominent stations in the nation. (ref. the Horn Speaker, Oct., 1972)

THE KDKA STORY. Radio station KDKA has grown from the feeble, hesitant, 100-watt transmitter that undertook the task of sending news to a few eager listeners on that momentous evening of the Harding presidential election. Since that occasion, November 2, 1920, the station has not missed a single day of broadcasting. Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company did considerable work in radio during World War I, first for Great Britain and later for the United States. At the end of the war, H. P. Davis, vice president, who had been directing war activities of the company, found a large staff of men and considerable equipment on hand. Mr. Davis decided to make use of this personnel and equipment. Experimental stations ZWE and ZWM were set up, one at the East Pittsburgh plant and the other at the Wilkesburg home of Dr. Frank Conrad, Asst. Chief Engineer of the company. Step followed step until it became possible for Dr. Conrad to broadcast entertainment programs from his home each Saturday night. These became so popular with the radio amateurs that one of the Pittsburgh department stores advertised receiving sets that would bring in the Conrad programs. Seeing this ad convinced Mr. Davis that the proper field of radio was unlimited, that it could be a medium of mass communication as well as a means of secret and confidential messages. So plans were made to broadcast regular programs from the Westinghouse plant, instead of from the Conrad home, and to begin this service with the returns of the national election, November 2, 1920. The company's first broadcasting was from a rough "box" affair on the roof of one of the taller buildings of the plant. Church services, sports events, public addresses, concerts, operas, conventions and scores of other broadcasts followed as new pick-up stations were established. Sometime in 1931, KDKA built a 400,000 watt transmitter at Saxonburg, Pa. This transmitter operated experimentally between 1 am and 6 am. This writer, however, is not sure the frequency of this signal. One article read refers to KDKA'S station WQYK, a shortwave outlet. If anyone has more on this, please write.

Imagine, I've talked to one DXer who used to look forward to hearing any Cubans. At that time there were only two. Thanks to Mike Hardester for his letter of support for this column. 73's LARRY

ATTIC NOSTALGIA
by Pete Kemp

While rummaging through an attic some weeks ago, I came across an old December 15, 1934 edition of Radio Guide. Flipping through the pages brought to mind visions of what broadcasting was like forty years ago. Columns about Will Rogers, Ed Wynn, and references to the WLS Barn Dance, broadcast by 33 NBC stations every Saturday night featuring Lulu Belle, filled its pages. In one article, "Studio News and Notes," Murray Arnold recalls the story of a big-wig executive who called Washington to receive his call letter assignment. Upon being told it would be KYW, the chief complained that he didn't understand. Back came the phonetic reply "K-Y-W, Kiss Your Wife."

Advertisements for radio antennas certainly would not meet today's standard. Imagine:

"A scientific aerial, with dual connections, a feature exclusively our own, gives much better distance and more positive performance on all electric radios. Its new principle completely eliminates noises and also prevents lightning hazards, unsightly poles and guy wires. Many satisfied users report reception over 3,000 miles. This antenna will also triple the volume of regular indoor antennas."

All this for only a dollar. I really don't believe it's any threat to the box loop or SM-2 antennas, however.

Probably the most interesting column was a regional log of stations, listing power, frequency, location and network affiliation. Take a close look. How many changes do you see? If you ever have the opportunity to visit Grandma Smith's attic, Aunt Tilly's basement, or a garage/tag sale, do so, for with luck you'll find a bundle of old magazines that will make a DX trivia nut out of you and provide an added dimension to DXing.

As of December, 1934

Call	Freq.	Power	Location	Network
WAAB	1410	500	Boston	c
WABC	860	50,000	New York	c
WBEN	900	1,000	Buffalo	n
WBZ	990	50,000	Boston	n
WCSH	940	2,500	Portland	n
WDRG	1330	1,000	Hartford	c
WEAF	660	50,000	New York	n
WEAN	780	500	Providence	c
WEEL	590	1,000	Boston	n
WFBL	1360	2,500	Syracuse	c
WFEA	1430	1,000	Manchester	c
WGR	550	1,000	Buffalo	c
NGY	790	50,000	Schenectady	n
WHAM	1150	50,000	Rochester	n
WHEC	1430	1,000	Rochester	c
WICC	600	500	Bridgeport	c
WJAR	890	500	Providence	c
WJZ	760	50,000	New York	n
WKBW	1480	5,000	Buffalo	c
WLBZ	620	500	Bangor	c
WNAC	1230	1,000	Boston	c
WOKO	1430	1,000	Albany	c
WORC	1280	500	Worcester	c
WTIC	1040	50,000	Hartford	n

-Pete Kemp, 13-B Fleetwood Avenue, Bethel, CT, 06801

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