

# WPAY

OUR 50TH  
1935-

## Paul F. Braden

President  
Owner  
WPAY Radio Inc.



## LEE HAMMOND

WPAY RADIO INC.  
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT  
GENERAL MANAGER



### WELCOME.

It is a real privilege for us to have you take part in our 50th birthday celebration. WPAY and all of its staff hope that this day is as enjoyable for you as it is for us. Fifty years is certainly a long time for one station to serve an area, however, it has been a tremendous responsibility and blessing for us to have had the opportunity to serve you all these years.

We feel like the greatest days of radio broadcasting and particularly of WPAY still lie ahead. We trust that as we have provided a service to the community in all these past years, that our service in the future will be adequate to meet the needs of the people in the Portsmouth area.

Mr. Braden as owner, I as general manager, and the entire staff of WPAY are delighted to have a part in the further growth of the Portsmouth area. We feel that as we had the opportunity of serving the area, that the area including all you great people have been a real service to us.

Thanks for making this day so wonderful in our celebration. We are looking forward to 50 more great years of service to the tri-state area. I hop our get-together today has brought back to some of you some fond memories of times past, and for you that are new to the area, I hope today will be a part of a long friendship between yourself and all of us here at WPAY.

Thanks again for coming and making WPAY the number one radio station in the Portsmouth area.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lee Hammond". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Lee Hammond

## WPAY...FIRST IN PORTSMOUTH

The first manager of WPAY Radio, Marie W. Vandegrift commented on the celebration of the radio station's 35th anniversary that the operation of a radio station in those days was quite trying but amazing in most respects, since television had not yet appeared.

The matter of mentioning our first assistant manager was first on the agenda of Ms. Vandegrift. Mr. Fields was manager of the station WHBD at Mt. Orab, which was brought over into Portsmouth. Ms. Vandegrift called him a delightful fellow who merged well with the Portsmouth area, and was exceptionally well known to all around Mt. Orab, Georgetown, and Hillsboro areas. The first program director of WPAY was Ms. Vandegrift's sister, whose knowledge of Portsmouth personalities and performers was important in the early days of radio. Engineers at WPAY were preceded by Mr. P. J. Eubanks who had built the original station at Mt. Orab. He was WPAY's first engineer, then Mr. Maurice Meyers succeeded him until the mid-1970's. Two Portsmouth personalities, who later made their way in radio, Bill Pepper and Joe Graham were not connected with the radio station at first. They were eager teenage hangers-on who thirsted for experience on radio and eventually went on the WPAY staff and then on to higher fame. One of the early engineers, Bill Nungesser now owns a radio station in northern Ohio (as of 1970). Ann Smith, who has risen high in TV and radio circles has begun her own advertising firm. She was first a private secretary and gradually added continuity writing while at WPAY. She was also an accomplished pianist of high repute and frequently was used as station accompanist.

When WPAY celebrated its 35th anniversary, the station's first manager Marie Vandegrift gave the following recollection of what it was like coming into a new city with a new radio station, in fact an altogether new medium. She wrote:

"Coming into Portsmouth to locate studio space in 1935 was a somewhat friendless venture. As the local newspaper had firm hold on advertising revenue and preferred space in its columns and WPAY found out early, it was to have a difficult time to convince local advertisers that radio advertising would actually pay.

The Greystone was a large sprawling building formerly located where Southern Hills Hospital now stands. The Greystone had a large auditorium which had a dance floor and a balcony. The front of the building contained four small storerooms with a long apartment on the second floor. The floor consisted of a long hall with seven individual rooms opening off it and a bath at the end. One room was finished as a kitchen. This area was at first used to offer clean and pleasant rooming for persons who were being added to our staff and who had to search for suitable living quarters.

We later added a restaurant and the two rooms at the corner of Ninth and Chilli and served meals with doors opening into the auditorium and tables along the north side. We established the studios on the south side under the long balcony and we added studios facilities to the large band shell at the front of this auditorium. We offered live shows on the stage each noon majoring in hillbilly music and ballads. We had local stars who would go immediately to the top today when folk music is of the essence. And it is true that Roy Rogers, who lived over on Duck Run, originally, and who was then presenting his Sons of the Pioneers the original band here and there throughout Ohio and Kentucky came to WPAY many times. Roy and Sky Fields knew each other well, and Roy was a regular and welcomed friend to the WPAY studios.

Ironically, only Sky hailed Roy and his band as super, most of the local listeners thought of him as just another performer and often held other bands and performers with a higher regard. Several people who appeared later on WPAY went to Louisville and Nashville for spot programs and some were caught up in various organizations and bands there.

Eventually WPAY did get turntables, but at first we merely had a group of numbers that performers presented live and we had to present continuity in between to make up each program. Most of the time 15 to 30 minutes at length. We were ingenious in those days. We had to be. We made up many programs. Painstakingly getting them ready with the agony of timing.





The WPAY News Team, Director Jim Hufferd, Robin Griesman and Ardena Truman.



"WPAY At The Fair" has grown to be a very popular attraction, moving from our old area...



To much larger space where we broadcast under the tent at the Scioto County Fair.



WPAY also broadcasts live coverage from The River Days Festival, as well as the Sternwheel Regatta and other community events.



WPAY at our 45th Anniversary, its now been 50 years since we first went on the air, and although some of the people change, the spirit and dedication of WPAY people to the community they serve never changes.



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NE SALYERS

Y

YEAR  
1985



45  
Drive



LEE HAMMOND  
General Manager



TAMRA STUMP  
Office-Traffic  
JOAN HAMMOND



FOSTER "PONCHO" WILLIS  
Building Maintenance



ELISABETH BELL  
Bookkeeping



DON HILES  
"Love DJ" - Afternoon Drive



ROBIN GRIESMAN



ARDENA TRUMAN



JIM HUFFERD



MICKEY NEAL



CHARLIE ADAMS



J.B.  
World Radio History



DORIS BROWN



MARK MALONE

# Zeke & Doris Mullins

## A WPAY Tradition

Since 1959, this popular duo has delighted audiences with "down-home" country music. Besides first meeting at WPAY's studios, Zeke and Doris have called WPAY a "second home" for over three decades.

LISTEN FOR ZEKE MULLINS  
EVERY MORNING ON WPAY-FM

As most radio stations did in "the early years", WPAY featured 'live' music and entertainment. Sometimes one person and a guitar, sometimes a couple, sometimes a band.

The 'Zeke & Doris Show' is believed to be one of, if not the only show of it's kind in existence. It has been a regularly sponsored program every Saturday for the past 26 years - starting in 1959, the program began airing at 7:30 in the evening, being later changed to 7:30 in the morning. The couple would come in about an hour before to tape, the Mullins children, being small then, would play in the studio during the taping sessions. People didn't mind, so the kids became "part of the show".

Nowadays, Doris joins Zeke on Saturday mornings and the two just talk and play previously recorded tapes. The 'Zeke & Doris Show' still gets a lot of mail, mostly from older folks that still enjoy 'old fashioned radio'.

MUSIC BY MUSIPLEX is another of the many services from WPAY Inc. Director Joan Sullens with a machine (shown left) and serviceman Jim Benner (below)



WPAY listeners helped raise money for cancer victim Nathan Rucker (center) Scioto County Health Department workers presented the money from a benefit to Nathan.





FM 104s Charlie Adams gets ready to "star" in a TV commercial for our 50th Anniversary.

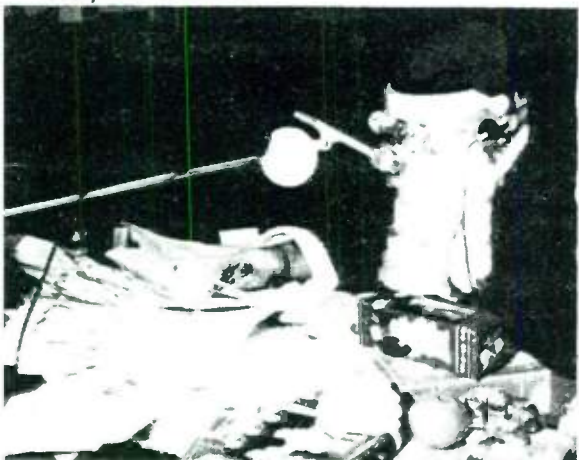


Country music fans are treated year-round through benefit concerts like 'Jerry Reed'! WPAY has helped raise thousands of dollars for non-profit groups who need help. Proof that WPAY is totally committed to the area.



The Annual Homemaker's School draws one thousand plus everytime we hold it.

# OUR 50TH YEAR 1935-1985



Santa Claus reads letters every year from his secret workshop on WPAY radio.



WPAY's resources give us the unique position of covering events better than even "big city" stations could.



**AUTOGRAPHS AND MEMORIES**  
**APRIL 15, 1985**



**JERRY EVES**  
Chief Engineer



**AL MANN**  
Sales  
**RICK SWEINSBURG**



**PHIL MALONE**  
Operations Manager



Recep  
**ANGIE BENNER**  
BETH



**FRANK LEWIS**  
Morning Drive - Program Director



**DAVE LEMON**  
Sales

**WE**

**OUR 50**  
**193**



**STEVE WILLIAMS**



**JIM "SNUFFY" SMITH**



**KEVIN JOHNSON**



**JIM MUSICK**



**TIM SHEPARD**



**SKIP HICKMAN**



**JOHN HILL**  
World Radio History



**RAY BRADEN**





Chief Engineer Jerry Eves with STL Microwave Antenna on rooftop



General Manager Lee Hammond with State-Of-The-Art Satellite Receiver Dish (CBS)

# CBS RAD



City and County Officials Are Regular Guests On WPAY News Programs (R)

Lee Hammond and Phil Malone go over the list of invitations being sent out for the 50th Anniversary. Those invited included President Ronald Reagan, Government officials, clients, civic leaders and the entire community. (R)

# AP



WPAY has hosted the Earl Thomas Conley Homecoming, helping to raise thousands of dollars for Scholarship Funds in ETC's name. Earl also made his mark in music history by being the first artist to record four No. 1 singles from one album! Earl is with RCA VP Gallante and Rosanne Cash.



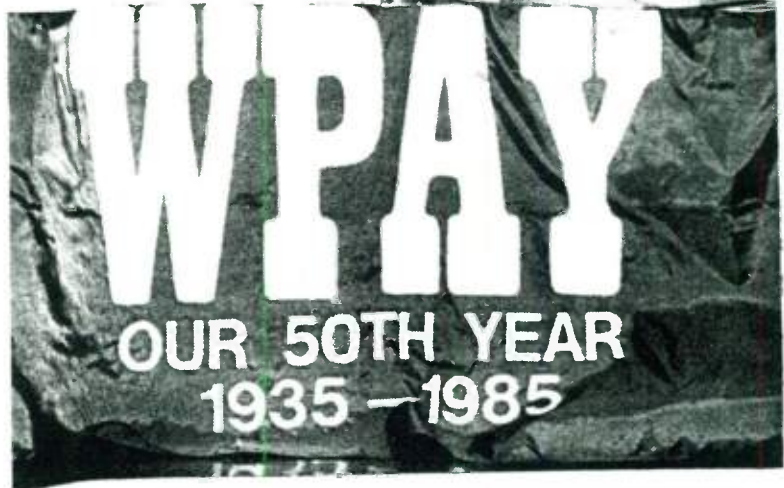
**JIM HUFFERD** - Dean of area newscasters, is the most-listened-to newsman around. Jim is also known as "The Voice of The Trojans" following PHS for 25 plus years. Jims news is always tops.



From Cincinnati Reds baseball to area high school sports, WPAY takes a firm lead in complete sports coverage.



**REDS**  
GETTIN' BACK TO  
FUN AGAIN.







**SOME OLD WPAY  
FACES  
RECOGNIZE ANY?**



We had no news supply. The local newspaper was not interested in allowing us to use news from their columns. (In those days we had not known the importance of a news person to go out to collect and gather news). However using my connections in the newspaper world in Columbus, we made arrangements with the Ohio State Journal and they sent down on the morning N&W Train the early addition of the Journal. Then the local distributor went to the railway station and delivered that newspaper to Ms. Vandegrift's door from whence it came to the station, and then the staff would read any news items it wanted to from the paper's columns.

From this routine grew something that seems unreal and far out now, but which was actually a five-day schedule. The morning paper was delivered, one item was selected to dramatize and with some dramatic preparation, a 15-minute segment was written and programmed. It usually required four or five sometimes even six different people to read from the one selected story. Each story was written early in the morning. Practiced during the day. The program director would assemble sound effects and then the production would happen later. About 2:30 in the afternoon the cast which included some on staff and some local persons interested in dramatics rehearsed. The program was called WPAY News Drama. It was presented five days a week at six in the evening. There was a program with a man and a woman doing a husband and wife reading of the morning news, especially dealing with the purely domestic items: the cooking recipes, the lovelorn columns, and any random items regarding women and their peculiarities. We rattled coffee cups and pretended it was Home Sweet Home.

When the flood of 1937 occurred, we were marooned in this building, and cut our transmitter loose from its moorings and established it first on the balcony and then took it up to the attic of this building from which we continued to operate and went on this way for a total of 21 days before it came back down to earth. Thirteen of the staff of about 24 then stayed over and we were over 22 feet of water in the building, but day and night our broadcasts went on. With the aid of outlining ham station operators, we broadcasted information of every nature and united all kinds of rescue operations and even the Red Cross was dependent upon us to expedite the movement of their supplies. Three-fifths of Portsmouth was under water. The newspaper plant was also under water. Before the flood receded we were broadcasting the local paper's news items. And from the time on the gulf between the radio station and newspaper was erased. Eventually the newspaper purchased WPAY. Chief engineer Maurice Myers along with help from local WPAY workers moved the transmitter and equipment and manned the equipment 24 hours a day keeping it running and operational. The power that was necessary to operate the equipment that had to be maintained was all dependent on Mr. Myers. His thankless job went on under great pressure. "Chief" Myers actually saved WPAY and kept the station running much to the advantage of the people of Portsmouth.

One of the handicaps of early radio was the attitude of the phone companies toward our leasing of the lines for remote broadcasts. It was costly for us to lease the lines, and it kept our income and our performances down on many occasions. And during the first five years, which was the length of the management of Marie Vandegrift, we could never broadcast the Kentucky election results from Fullerton, Kentucky, just across the river because the phone company said it involved interstate commerce. So we had a staff member stationed in the election office in Kentucky. That staffer would put in a phone call and tell us the results at intervals. On our first broadcast from Kentucky, when we had fought to broadcast all night if necessary to bring the results to our audience, the election officials closed their books and their desks, locked up and went home, not for lunch but for the weekend. So we had to wait two days for more results from Kentucky. From elections to ballgames in the old days WPAY did what WPAY is doing now. Only it was a little more difficult, as the fields were just then beginning to be perfected. By the way, during the flood of 1937, WPAY lost its studios, most of its equipment, and three concert grand pianos among other things. But the broadcast continued without much of anything in assistance for the next year or two. It was then when WPAY began its search for new quarters.



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# The History Of WPAY

## The Early Years

WPAY had an earlier origin dating back to the late 1920's in Mt. Orab, Ohio. That's the town where the radio station used to be. Mt. Orabins sometimes are asked even today when they meet an out of town stranger who knows about radio in the early days. In 1929 Mt. Orab became known far and wide as a little village that had its own radio station. Floyd P. (Doc) Moler purchased the radio station from the Presbyterian Church in Bellefontaine and moved it to his store building on East Main Street. Radio station WHBD first went on the air in Bellefontaine using a WWI Surplus 20 Watt submarine transmitter under private ownership. It was then under the sponsorship of the Bellefontaine Chamber of Commerce. In 1927 it was sold to the First Presbyterian Church of Bellefontaine and the original war surplus transmitter was replaced by a new homemade 100-watt transmitter, very modern in those days. The work was done from scratch by engineer Nelson Detrick with parts and supplies obtained from various catalogs. But the station was used only for broadcasting church services on Sunday morning and evenings. Mr. Moler purchased the station with the understanding that Mr. Detrick would have continued employment as the government licensed operator in charge of technical operations and maintenance. The transmitter was then completely rebuilt by Mr. Moler and a radio operator/technician from Cincinnati. There were two towers with horizontal antennas. A ground tower being 60 feet high and the other a slender water pipe pole atop the building.

The exciting day of first broadcast came in June of 1929 when for the first time Mt. Orab sent a program over the air waves. At first air time was 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., but later was extended from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

It is sure that the little station spent a lot of time playing phonograph records during the day, but there were a lot of live programs too with singles and duos and some orchestras.

People came from far and wide to investigate the wonders of the radio broadcast station. Television hadn't emerged yet, and the idea of people being able to really participate in a real radio program was the ambition of almost everyone, young and old. WHBD gave everyone that chance because it never barred anyone from performing, provided they had a number or program to present.

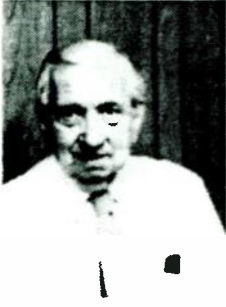
Those who did not have any talent to exhibit at least wanted to watch those who did and the studio would often be packed to overflowing. Ralph Jordan of Williamsburg, who came on as an announcer at a later date said, "A radio station was like a glass ball. A regular side show. People came and stood by the hour to watch. Sometimes ropes had to be put up to keep people away from the transmitting equipment. Times were hard then and money was scarce. People came for entertainment. The work wasn't easy for us employees. I worked for 18 months, seven days a week with no days off. My pay then was \$15 a week. Yes, those were hard times, but somehow we managed. Most Sunday afternoons featured Old Time Fiddlin and the town was so full you couldn't find a place to park."

But in 1931 Mr. Moler became bored with the operation and sold the station to the Southern Ohio Broadcasting Corporation, a Cleveland based organization under personal management of P. J. Eubanks.

The Southern Ohio Broadcasting Corporation went bankrupt and Floyd Moler repurchased the station at a sheriff sale for \$3200. He again sold the station in 1934 after two years of operation and it was moved to Portsmouth, and the call letters were to be changed to WPAY.

Nelson Detrick wrote, "I recall reading in some publication within the last few years that WPAY in Portsmouth is now affiliated with one of the major radio networks. A huge step from the humble beginnings as a 20 watter in Bellefontaine." Mr. Detrick could be no more than right. In 1935 WPAY went on the air to become the Portsmouth areas most listened to radio station.





## We Dedicate This Celebration To The Lasting Memory Of **Maurice L. "Chief" Myers**

### **Engineer Maurice L. Myers**

The longest service record with WPAY Broadcasting was by Maurice L. Myers, who came to the station in March 1936 and was still associated in an advisory capacity at his demise in December 1982, a period of forty six years and nine months.

In his later capacity, he was responsible for engineering planning for both Paul Braden stations WPAY and WPFB of Middletown, Ohio. He also served as technical advisor for several other radio stations during this time.

During the 1937 flood, Engineer Myers kept the station on the air, enabling area residents to be informed as to emergency conditions and area agency information going to residents concerning safety, food sources, rescue operations and street and road conditions, a no mean feat for the only local broadcast station during this major disruption.

Engineer Myers built the earliest transmitters and the associated control boards, updating them from time to time keeping up with changes in technology. WPAY was provided with remote broadcast units in the late thirties, putting the station on the scene of important local events.

Chief Myers designed the building and equipped the first local FM station, locating it on a bluff overlooking Portsmouth and the surrounding area. From the first, the WPAY-FM signal was carried to cities within a hundred miles with a usable signal. Stereo FM radio broadcasting soon followed. No local stereo stations were available at that time.

Maurice Myers took a lead in developing the concept of what is now known as "vertical and horizontal polarization", a method that enabled FM stations to provide more complete coverage for "difficult areas", a method now in wide use by FM stations everywhere.

Another "first" at WPAY was a remote control system whereby transmitting equipment located at remote hilltop sites could be controlled and meters read from the downtown studios. His design was built and used at WPAY-FM before the Federal Communications Commission generally permitted such remote control; special authorization from FCC was required. This control system was being used up to recently when the station replaced the FM transmitters, increasing power to one hundred thousand watts, and increased the antenna height from one hundred seventy feet to five hundred feet. This modernization program was carried out by Jerry Eves, present Chief Engineer and a protege of former Chief Maurice Myers.