

## O and O Stations

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the Declaration of Independence, and the "Star Spangled Banner." Other public service efforts included programs on such varied topics as civil defense, Police Athletic League activities, the United Nations, mental health, racial and religious discrimination.

As an example of unique and highly successful promotion, WNBC-WNBT has recently completed the first year of a cooperative venture with Rockaways Playland. This mutually beneficial arrangement brought the stations unlimited opportunities to utilize the amusement park's facilities for audience promotion.

Placing more and more emphasis on merchandising, Mr. Cott inaugurated "Chain Lightning," giving advertisers an extra bonus for sponsorship of WNBC programs through a cooperative arrangement with over 1,400 chain stores throughout the metropolitan area. Under the plan, WNBC gives free promotion time to the participating stores and in return the stores promote WNBC talent and shows and also give preferential display and point-of-sale promotion to products designated by the station.

On June 11, 1951, WNBT began transmission from the new multi-use antenna atop the Empire State Bldg. and on Aug. 9 inaugurated a 360% increase in effective radiated power.

### NBC Silver Jubilee

**WMAQ and WNBQ Chicago**  
NBC's Chicago properties, WMAQ and WNBQ(TV), have contributed largely to the fame of both their network and their city. Long known as the birthplace of radio's daytime serial drama, the NBC Chicago set-up has more recently gained laurels as fountain head of the "Chicago school of television."

Antedating the formation of the network, WMAQ began operations April 12, 1922, with the call WGU, becoming WMAQ that fall to get away from the confusion between WGU and WBU, a city-owned station. WMAQ's transmitter was located on the roof of the Fair, State St. department store which was co-owner of the station with the *Chicago Daily News*. On May 27, 1923, the *News* took full title and moved WMAQ to the top floor of the LaSalle Hotel, highest structure in the Loop at that time. At the same time WMAQ received a new frequency, 670 kc, on which it still broadcasts. On March 1, 1927, WMAQ bought out WQJ, with which it had shared time, and early the next year was granted exclusive use of 670 kc.

Inevitably, the history of WMAQ is tied up with the history of Judith Waller. Today Miss Waller is director of NBC's department of public service and education in

Chicago. But back in 1922 she was manager, announcer, talent scout, program director and boss of the station. With a head that was long for the cultural and entertainment aspects of radio, she helped establish WMAQ's lasting reputation with a fistfull of "firsts." There were the first music appreciation program, the first broadcast by Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, the first regular broadcasts of a big league baseball game, the first microphone appearances of George Arliss, Ben Hecht, and *Amos 'n' Andy*, the first overseas news program, the first educational series and the list could go on and on.

### First Major Hookup

On July 31, 1923, WMAQ joined WEAQ New York and other stations in the first major network hookup to broadcast President Harding's speech from San Francisco. In March 1925, it was one of 22 stations linked into a "toss-up" network for the first commercial broadcast sponsored by the Victor Phonograph Co. In January 1927 the station affiliated with the newly-formed NBC, which later that year opened Chicago headquarters at 180 N. Michigan Ave. From an improvised studio in that building, NBC on Jan. 23, 1928, launched its first Chicago program series, *The Riverside Hour*, sponsored by Montgomery Ward.

The event inspired Albert Ford of the *Washington* (D. C.) *Herald* to predict: "One of these days people writing radio and musical history may mark this date as epoch making, because NBC then opened its first Middle West studio for the origination of chain programs in Chicago."

In March 1928 Niles Trammell went to Chicago to head up NBC operations there—ten employees, two studios and two sponsors. With no Chicago station of its own, NBC programs were broadcast over WGN, KYW, WEBH and, for a time, WMAQ. Space in the Capitol Bldg. tower was acquired for NBC's "Cathedral Studio" from which the Chicago Symphony Orchestra was broadcast. With the erection of the Merchandise Mart, the network decided to consolidate its Chicago operations there and on Sept. 15, 1930, it moved into what was then the world's largest studio setup on the Mart's 19th and 20th floors.

1931 saw NBC expanding all over the Chicago scene. WENR was purchased from Great Lakes Broadcasting Co. March 1; on Nov. 1 WMAQ came under NBC ownership, with studios and offices later integrated at the Mart. WMAQ's 5 kw transmitter, set up at Elmhurst, Ill., in 1929 when it was the first to install complete crystal control with 100% modulation, in 1935 was moved to a new site near Bloomingdale and its power increased to 50 kw.

Meanwhile, NBC's Chicago studios were hatching producers, writers, signers and actors at a rapid rate. Such teams as *Fibber*

*McGee and Molly*, *Amos 'n' Andy*, *Vic and Sade*, *Clara, Lou and Em* and *Gene and Glenn*; such artists as *Tyrone Power*, *Don Ameche*, *Bill Thompson*, *Anne Seymour*, *Ransom Sherman*, *Garry Moore*, *Irene Wicker*, *Jane Froman*, *Pat Barnes* and *Don McNeill*; such conductors as *Josef Kestner*, *Roy Shield*, *Morgan Eastman*, *Wayne King*, *Rex Maupin*, *Percy Faith*; such writers as *Wyllis Cooper*, *Arch Oboler*, *Fayette Krum* and *Paul Rhymer* made radio history at NBC Chicago.

Daytime serials by the score, from *Affairs of Anthony* to *Woman in White*, weekly dramas like *Empire Builders* and *First Nighter*, variety shows like *Breakfast Club* and *Plantation Party*, were part and parcel of the station's life. Then, of course, there were the *Quiz Kids*.

### WNBQ Followed Tradition

In television, WNBQ has started off in the WMAQ tradition. Under the general management of Harry Kopf, Jules Herbuveaux, manager of TV operations, has surrounded himself with a staff of bell-ringing and uninhibited youngsters who have turned out a parade of award winning shows headed by *Garro-way at Large* and including *Stud's Place*, *Zoo Parade*, *Cactus Jim*, *Quiz Kids*, *Wayne King Show* and many others.

On a purely local basis, WNBQ's *Five Star* hour from 10 to 11 p.m. is one of the most successful TV program parlays in the nation. Starting with *Weatherman* *Clint Youle*, followed by *Dorsey Connors'* homemaker chat, *Clifton Utley's* news commentary, *Tom Duggan* on sports and a quarter-hour of piano nostalgia by *Herbie Mintz*, the Sunday-through-Friday hour adds more than \$1 million a year to WNBQ's revenue.

Historically, WNBQ can trace its ancestry way back to Aug. 27, 1930, when WMAQ made its first 45-line telecast via the flying spot scanner method. The foresight of NBC engineers in installing high voltage wiring and outlets for future TV lighting use at the time the network's radio studios were being built in the Mart has paid off a thousand fold in the past few years. The TV transmitter was built in 1948 atop the Civic Opera Bldg. and regular programming was started on Jan. 9, 1949, with a schedule of 15 hours a week which has now grown to more than 120 hours.

Chicago has made management as well as program history for NBC. Niles Trammell, Sid Strotz, Harry Kopf, C. L. Menser, Frank Mullen, Chick Showerman and Bill Hedges are among the radio elite who got their start at WMAQ and NBC Chicago.

## WRC-WNBW WASHINGTON

AUG. 1, 1923, is remembered in Washington as the date WRC went on the air for the first time. The station had but one studio, in the Riggs Bank Bldg. at 14th St. and Park Road N.W., in uptown Washington, where visitors remarked on the fine location "so far out in the country." The transmitter was located in the same building and the transmitter tower sat on the roof.

The original WRC staff consisted of eight people, including the porter. Today WRC employs more than 150 staffers, headed by General Manager Eugene Juster.

WRC's first broadcast consisted of a three-hour program. No sooner was it underway than Fred Guthrie, first director of WRC and now district manager of RCA Communications, was called to the transmitter. The first speaker was talking into the microphone, but he could hardly be heard! The whole speech went out on the air feebly while engineers strained to uncover the trouble. Then the second speaker stepped up to the mike, and came in clear as a bell. The first guest had been talking into the BACK of the mike!

WRC during its first year shared time with WCAP, owned by the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. Use of the same frequency by both stations caused occasional difficulty, as on one night when both stations were on the air simultaneously, sending different programs on the same wave length.

Starting in 1923, WRC began racking up an impressive list of "firsts" in radio. In August, WRC carried special memorial services for the late President Harding. In December, one of radio's first political speeches was heard, with Sen. Magnus Johnson delivering an oration listed in an early WRC record as being "entirely harmless and inoffensive."

### First Political Commentator

In 1924, WRC presented the first political commentator ever heard on the air, the noted newspaper correspondent Frederick William Wile. In September that year, WRC was at the receiving end of one of the first radio hookups, with a direct telephone line from WJZ New York bringing an air account of the Wills-Firpo fight to WRC's transmitter.

In December 1924 WRC presented the first broadcast from the Capitol of the United States, the Woodrow Wilson Memorial exercises. Remote broadcasts were frequent in 1924, with WRC carrying play-by-play wire descriptions of baseball games from the offices of a local newspaper. Direct wires were used for broadcasts of the 1924 Democratic and Republican National Conventions. A debate on the Volsted Prohibition Act featuring senators and congressmen brought a flood of 7,000 letters from all over the nation to WRC. In its first year of operation, the station had been heard by radio

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