

MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SINCE OPENING

A. Citizen Times
**Pioneer Voice Of W.N.C.
Serves Mountain
Area**

2-22-42

"The Pioneer Voice of Western North Carolina," Radio Station WWNC, is 15 years old today.

Asheville's chamber of commerce established the station here in 1927, following nearly four years of experimental development of another station in Asheville operating with the call letters, WABC, now the key station of the CBS network in New York.

The original WWNC transmitter was purchased in 1927 from station WSM, Nashville, Tenn. At this time broadcasting had more or less graduated from the "cat-whisker" era into the full grown whistles and heterodynes of vacuum tube transmission and reception. The inaugural program in 1927 makes an interesting commentary today, as evidenced by reference to The Asheville Citizen of February 22, 1927:

Opening Program Recalled

"The voice of WWNC, hurtling down out of the Land of the Sky in its inaugural program Monday night, paid Western North Carolina's respects to North America."

WWNC's christening program began at 7 o'clock when a dinner program and concert by Spencer's orchestra was broadcast from the ballroom of the George Vanderbilt hotel.

The Asheville Times of February 23 reported: "Promptly at 8 o'clock the new station stepped forward shyly and began its career amid the kilocycles."

At the time of the station's inauguration here, it broadcast four nights a week, full programs being given on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, with a slightly different program on Sunday nights. The first remote control broadcasts were from the George Vanderbilt hotel and Kenilworth inn, with the Langren hotel joining the group early in the station's existence. J. Dale Stentz was director of the station for the chamber of commerce.

Local Artists Assisted

Artists on the air during this first year of the station were:

Dr. and Mrs. Crosby Adams, Charles E. Burnham, C. H. Crawford, Arnold Dann, Joseph DeNardo, Mrs. William Ray Griffin, Dorothy Hancock Josephson, Frank Jackson, Martin Perry Jones, Maude Kilgore, Alvah H. Lowe, Bascom Lamar Lunsford, Mrs. Frank LaBar, Mrs. Lucille McInturff, Horace I. Seeley, Marguerite Smathers Jones and Harry Snodgrass, pianist.

When WWNC opened, four telephones and one telegraph wire were kept busy most all night. More than 500 persons visited the studio on top of the Flatiron building during the evening, and more than 1,000 messages and telephone calls were received. Telegrams came from more than 100 cities and at least 25 states. Three telegrams came from provinces of Canada. Wires came in from as far south as Brownsville, Texas, on the Mexican border, and as far north as Quebec, Canada. They came from Orlando, Florida, and Denver, Colorado.

During those early years, WWNC was operated as a local unit, only giving out weather reports, road information, and a limited number of local programs.

Leased To Shepherd

In August, 1928, WWNC was leased by the chamber of commerce to G. O. Shepherd, Asheville advertising man, and in December of the same year, the facilities were purchased by the Citizen Broadcasting company, Mr. Shepherd remaining as director. During this administration the first network program was carried—the Majestic

hour, between 9 and 10 o'clock on Sunday evenings, beginning on January 6th, 1929. In March 4th, 1929, WWNC carried the inauguration of President Herbert Hoover from the CBS network.

On October 10th, 1931, WWNC joined the NBC network at the end of four and a half years of growth and development.

Late in 1933, Don S. Elias, vice-president of the Asheville Citizen-Times company, became general manager of the station. Through his foresight and vision, the station made rapid progress in the art of salesmanship, program production and operation in what is best known in the trade as "serving the public interest, convenience and necessity." Mr. Elias remains today more active than ever in the administration of the station's affairs, and he now serves as a member of the Board of the National Association of Broadcasters, and a member of that body's executive committee. He has been active for the industry in numerous other agencies organized for the betterment of broadcasting.

The two latest forward steps left to report in this brief sketch include the construction of new studios in 1939 simultaneously with the building of the new Citizen-Times headquarters. Coincident with this forward step came re-affiliation with the Columbia Broadcasting System.

So, WWNC has grown from a few hours on the air a few times a week, to a full-time business and entertainment medium, not alone for Asheville, but for all of Western North Carolina.

Though the transmitter remains on the roof of the Flatiron building, WWNC has a construction permit from the Federal Communications Commission for increase in power to 5,000 watts and the erection of a new transmitter and antennae outside the city limits. However, the war effort has forced the priorities and allocations board in Washington to forego granting construction ratings to broadcast stations until after the war.

WWNC still enjoys by federal grant a choice spot on the dial, 570 kilocycles, comparatively free from interference.

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