

STATION GROWTH SINCE BEGINNING IN 1927 TRACED

Spirit of Service Has Marked
Policy of Radio
Unit.

DEVELOPMENT OUTLINED

Constant Work to Make
WWNC of Greater
Service Seen.

The affiliation of radio station WWNC with the National Broadcasting company, climaxes four and a half years of growth and development of this station toward its goal of service to Asheville and western North Carolina.

On Washington's birthday, February 22, 1927, station WWNC officially came into being through the efforts of the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, and the cooperation of the Asheville Battery company, which relinquished its license to operate a smaller station in order that a more powerful broadcasting unit to serve the community and this section of the south could be achieved.

Local Beginning

The station, in its beginning was under the direction of J. Dale Stentz, widely known as a musician and choir director. During that period the station was operated purely as a local outfit, giving weather reports, road information and a limited amount of musical programs.

Gradually however, the popularity of the station began to grow, but the task of maintaining it involved difficulties that appeared to be insurmountable to the directors of the Chamber of Commerce. Then it was in August, 1928, that G. O. Shepherd, well known Asheville advertising man and pioneer in the field of radio columns in the south, proposed that he

The chamber of commerce accepted Mr. Shepherd's proposition and turned the operation of the station over to him after a year and a half of effort to serve the community as a local station.

One of the first steps taken by Mr. Shepherd, after he leased the station, was to investigate the possibility of chain programs with a view to bringing a greater measure of service to the community through the station. As a result of this investigation, the Young Men's Democratic club of Buncombe county was induced to sponsor the first chain program, heard in Asheville.

On the evening of August 22, 1928, the acceptance speech of Governor Alfred E. Smith, candidate for the presidency of the United States, was broadcast through the National Broadcasting hookup.

Commercial Programs

Mr. Shepherd, then devoted his time to developing local commercial programs, something that was badly needed in the continuous and successful operation of the station. The beginning in this field was small because the business people of the com-

munity were not familiar with the possibilities of the new field.

Then in December, 1928, the next step in the development of the station occurred, when it was purchased by the Citizen Broadcasting company from the Asheville Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Shepherd remained as director and immediately set about the task of increasing the scope of service for the station.

The work of getting the station linked up with national commercial programs required a great deal of attention but it was finally accomplished, bit by bit. The first commercial program was the Majestic hour, which was presented between 9 and 10 o'clock on Sunday evenings. This program started on January 6, 1929, and marked a new departure for station WWNC.

The development of other programs through the Columbia chain took weeks, and then on March 4, 1929, the full broadcast of the inauguration of President Herbert Hoover was heard over the network.

Full Programs

The next big step occurred several months later when on October 8, 1929, the station began its full program of musical and informational periods as well as the Columbia Broadcasting system programs. This part of the station's schedule was financed by the inauguration of the Columbia club composed of individuals and firms in the community who were interested in the national hookup programs.

During the next few months the station continued to grow in popularity until it ceased to be recognized as a local station and became one of the key stations of the country, reaching an important territory and serving a vast audience of loyal fans.

It was the loyalty of these fans, their willingness to write letters proving their interest in the station and the service it was rendering that enabled the management of the company to form the connection with the National Broadcasting company which is inaugurated Saturday with a special network program.