The First 40 Years: "Recorded--and Transcribed"

Maine Broadcasting System
THE FIRST 40 YEARS

"recorded... and transcribed"
WCSH-TV

for the dedicated effort and interpretive skill exemplified in the program, "Close to the Heart", telecast February 21, 1960. This film, describing local heart research and demonstrating the accomplishments of medical research, is an inspiring example of what an independent station can achieve in fulfilling its public service responsibilities. It is judged to be the outstanding television program of public interest in the cardiovascular field during the past year.
"This Is The Maine Broadcasting System"

The Maine Broadcasting System presents in these few pages an abbreviated story of its lifeline — the five stations that comprise it. If WCSH Radio seems to be favored, it is because that was the beginning, and WCSH now is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

This is not all that could be told about WCSH nor of the other four stations, all of which merit more consideration and affectionate treatment. No pretense is made that this is more than a light scanning of the people and events of the passing years. Present and past employes whose names appear are not deemed more valuable to the operations than those omitted, but they may have fitted into the composite structure more uniquely because of the time they arrived on scene or of the niche they occupied.

The Maine Broadcasting System stations have separate corporate identifications, but are owned and operated by the same interests, based in the Maine Radio and Television Company, Portland, of which William H. Rines is president; Jack S. Atwood, vice president and general manager; Kenneth M. Peterson, treasurer.

The stations came on the Maine scene in this order — WCSH, Portland; WLBZ, Bangor; WRDO, Augusta; WCSH-TV, Portland; and WLBZ-TV (then W-TWO) Bangor.

Atwood has general supervision of all five. Charles R. Brown is chief engineer and technical advisor and Benjamin A. Hubley is assistant general manager for radio. The three radio stations are represented for national sales by Robert E. Eastman & Co., while Katz and Company represent the two television stations. All five are NBC or NBC-TV affiliates.

Emphasis upon personal achievement is purposely muted in this chronicle. But it is worthy of passing notice that several executives and staff members of the MeBS stations have a score or more years of service within the organization. At least eight employes have company service records of 30 or more years.

Corporation executives, each station manager and numerous staff members in all stations have participated energetically in state and community organizations and projects. Together the MeBS stations have played an important role in the development of state and community services for the betterment of Maine and for the enlightenment and welfare of its citizens and visitors.

One deserved tribute must be paid to the man who shepherded station management of the MeBS stations during their maturing years. He stepped down to well-earned retirement at the end of 1961. He is George F. Kelley, Jr., former vice president and general manager of the Congress Square Hotel Company in Portland, whose service dated back to 1921.
William H. Rines
President
Maine Broadcasting System

Jack S. Atwood
Vice President-General Manager
Maine Broadcasting System

Kenneth M. Peterson
Treasurer
Maine Broadcasting System
Benjamin A. Hubley
Asst. to General Manager for MeBS Radio
and Manager WCSH, Portland

Leslie R. Hubley
Manager WRDO, Augusta

Edward E. Guernsey
Manager WLBZ, Bangor

Donald K. Powers
Manager WSCH-TV, Portland

Rudolph O. Marcoux
Manager WLBZ-TV, Bangor
Commercial Radio Comes To Maine

This is the WCSH story. It is incomplete because parts of it must be omitted in order to include narration of more important facets.

WCSH Radio reaches its 40th anniversary July 13 in this year of 1965. It was Maine’s first commercial radio station. Until early summer of 1925 Portland and southern Maine were without primary radio coverage.

Henry P. Rines, president of the Congress Square Hotel Company, was the man whose vision and faith in his native state prompted him to pioneer commercial radio in Portland. Briefly, this is how it came about.

Bill Foss — (his birth record would read William L.) — was restless in that Spring of 1925. In his mid-thirties, Bill was selling and servicing home radio receivers. After studies in electrical engineering and a dozen years with the Maine Central Railroad and the local power utility, he had switched to radio as a promising field. Now he wanted a sponsor for a broadcasting station he could erect and operate. He was not alone in this desire — at least three others were working toward the same goal.

Foss’ own account, as recalled, is that he kept plugging until, of the Portland business firms seemingly the most likely prospects, the Congress Square Hotel Company first came to the decision. By late Spring Mr. Rines had made pertinent inquiries of Joseph Groce of WEEI, Boston, and decided that a radio voice to promote his hotel interests would be a good investment. He had other reasons. In his mind he had plans for a new hotel, the future Eastland. Also Mr. Rines had learned that Boston broadcasters were developing a promising market in radio advertising, and he had faith that similar success could be achieved in southern Maine.

Soon Mr. Rines and Bill Foss were scouting for a serviceable transmitter and associated equipment and found it at the seaside estate in South Dartmouth, Mass. of the late Col. Edward Green, son of the legendary and wealthy Hetty Green. Thus began WCSH.

Elsewhere in Portland, Spring of 1925, James H. (Jimmy) Nicholson, Jr. was back in his native city after several years of Navy duty both before and during World War I as a wireless operator, succeeded by similar service on merchant ships. Since boyhood Jimmy had been an amateur radio operator. In his shop on Federal Street where he sold and serviced home receivers, he also had entered partnership with Manley Haskell to operate a 20-watt station which earlier had been on the air from Haskell’s home on North Street. It was Portland’s first station and when moved to Federal Street used the call letters WTAJ, licensed August 17, 1923.

Bill Foss needed help in setting up the 500 watt transmitter and induced
Nicholson to join him in the work, and to remain as the new station’s chief operator. Most of Col. Green’s equipment was brought to Portland in hotel company automobiles. Two 70-foot steel towers were erected on the Congress Square Hotel roof to support a flat-top antenna.

Beside the easterly tower was the hotel “sun parlor,” much prized by hotel guests, especially winter residents. Though many of them grumbled at the invasion, both transmitter and studio controls were erected in one half of the parlor, a neat brass rail separating these from the guest area.

One floor below the sun parlor, a studio was created from a private dining room. It was draped, walls and ceiling, with monks cloth and the floor was heavily carpeted. Designed to prevent echoes and mute harsh sound, the treatment proved to be too dampening and much of the covering was later removed. Until then, the studio in summer weather served as a good substitute for a steam bath for performers within.
Early Programming

Newspapers, generally speaking, were somewhat uneasy over the advent of commercial radio broadcasting. The WCSH inaugural broadcast received but little advance notice other than during its testing period, especially a few days before July 13th.

But by 7.30 that evening over much of Maine crystal sets and battery-powered receivers were tuned to 256 meters. Testing in the previous days had produced enough mail response to hearten the crew working long hours to put WCSH officially on the air. The monks cloth-draped studio was warm before the Governor and the program talent arrived. When all were assembled in the relatively small room, and the studio door closed, breathing space was at a minimum. There were Governor Ralph O. Brewster, the full complement of the Fifth U.S. Infantry Band from Fort Williams, several soloists and announcer Linwood T. Pitman, a newspaper man who was handling the assignment as a friend of Manager Bill Foss.

The band, conducted by Warrant Officer Kurt M. Freier, burst into a march and WCSH was launched on its lengthy career. Gov. Brewster delivered an address of welcome and congratulated the Rines hotel interests for the enterprise, and paid tribute to the growing communications industry. Others participating in the inaugural program included Florence Coolidge Seaford, mezzo
soprano, P. Byron McCord, baritone, J. Daniel McDonald, pianist, Myer Connor, violinist, and David Rubinoff, trombonist.

WCOSH management received dozens of congratulatory telephone calls and telegrams from many parts of Maine, the Canadian maritime provinces, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Mail reports of the inaugural broadcast poured in for several days and surprised even the most optimistic of the staff. Evening of the second day, July 14, was programmed with two hours of live talent representing members of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, then holding one of their earliest national conventions in Portland.

For weeks thereafter, programming became a matter of available live talent — WCOSH doors were open to all comers to audition — who might play an instrument, sing a song, read original poetry, do imitations or even whistle. From miles around talent arrived and much of it was acceptable. Broadcasting for the first few months was largely confined to evening hours. Few would have supposed at the time that the average housewife had leisure time for radio in daytime hours.

In the late Fall of the year Archie W. Legro was added to the payroll, as an announcer and program director. He helped put the station on a program planning basis and included such daytime service as noonday weather forecasts, stock market quotations and notice of local events to come. Before long listeners learned to telephone WCOSH to report lost dogs, cats and even wandering children. Police quickly took advantage of the availability to report missing persons. Up to this point all talent used on programs was unpaid, the station having earned no income.

Station operation satisfactory, Manager Foss turned his attention to soliciting advertising and sold the station's first client, the John J. Nissen Baking Co., who launched a series of half hour programs featuring the Knickerbocker Quartet — William V. Bradley, Ernest F. Hill, P. Byron McCord and Harold Furlong. Pianist was Miss Zilphaetta Butterfield. At the turn of the year 1926 volunteer announcer Linwood Pitman left the newspaper field to join WCOSH as a regular announcer and advertising salesman, assisting Manager Foss in this field. Before long new clients were overcoming their early skepticism and buying programs. No one at this stage of radio thought of buying or selling announcements only. In fact, early advertisers used institutional copy rather than detailed description of product and price mention was taboo.

Interesting new program developments multiplied early in 1926. Portland people interested in the Kotzschmar Memorial Organ in City Hall prompted the city's music commission to permit organ broadcasts by municipal organist Charles R. Cronham. With widespread approval by business and civic leaders, plus newspaper editorial support, a series of late evening broadcasts was instituted. For these WCOSH received enthusiastic mail response from listeners near and far, even from California. Mr. Rines provided station facilities and staff for these broadcasts without charge to the City.

New programming pleasure for serious music lovers came also when on January 23 WCOSH joined WEEI, Boston, and WTAG, Worcester to bring Maine listeners its first programs originating outside the state, the first series
presented on radio by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The broadcasts, from Symphony Hall, were financed for the Boston area by W. S. Quinby, coffee processor, and for Maine listeners by the original Rines Brothers Company department store in Portland. In both areas advertising was limited strictly to sponsor identification and nature of business.

The next and most significant change in WCSH programming, bringing network talent, is covered in the succeeding chapter.

Children's programming was a sure-fire formula for many early stations and WCSH followed the pattern. Manager Bill Foss rounded up local talent likely to have child appeal and immediately became Uncle Billy. Soon afterward Foss was glad to enlist the aid of Jimmy Nicholson, a natural “uncle” who later took over the program and conducted it until he left Portland a couple of years later.

Two highlights of the Kids Klub involved a railroad locomotive ride by the two “uncles” and a Casco Bay cruise for scores of Klub fans and their parents. Bill Foss, son of a Maine Central engineer, talked railroad management into allowing Nicholson and himself to ride 453, hauling the railroad’s best daytime train between Portland and Bangor, and return. They arrived back in time to describe the ride in detail that same early evening. Uncle Jimmy handled the Casco Bay cruise, with the cooperation of the Casco Bay Lines, then owned by Winslow and Co. interests. Four of their cruise steamers were used in the all-day outing which was promoted by Nicholson for days ahead on his program.

Another first-year program series much applauded was that presented by the Strand Theatre Symphonic Orchestra, Arthur F. Kendall conducting, from the theater stage. The same orchestra later broadcast Sunday concerts for CRESSEY & ALLEN from the WCSH studio and, several years later, a series from the former Keith’s Theatre stage, with live audience, for New England Coke. This series also used numerous leading vocalists from Portland and vicinity.

A special broadcast, when “remotes” still were a novelty to WCSH audiences, was made the evening of March 24, 1926 from the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow home in Monument Square on the 44th anniversary of the poet’s death. The program featured piano solos by Maurice Dumesnil, visiting French pianist, using the old Chickering in the Longfellow livingroom.

Radio listeners in 1925 and 1926 still were eager to find new stations on their dials and to report those they discovered. WCSH had its share of these reports and Manager Foss claimed some 5,000 postcards and letters within the first few months of operation.

Volunteer talent often heard on the station within the first weeks of evening programming included, besides the Fifth U.S. Infantry Band, the 240th Coast Artillery Band, Frank J. Rigby, conductor; Horace Perry’s Gem Ballroom Orchestra, Peaks Island; Dick Lewis and his Society Players; Paul Forrestall and the Children of the Sunrise; Johnny Grindle and the Colonial Orchestra of Bath; Murray Hochburg and the Palace Ballroom Orchestra, Old Orchard Beach; Mal Hallett’s Victorians, Hampton Beach, N.H.
Enter The Network

On Sunday, March 28, 1926 WCSH reached for the stars when it joined WEAF, New York, for the first program inaugurating its long-time and continuous network affiliation. It was the weekly broadcast from the Brooklyn YMCA by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, widely known clergyman and theologian. Advance reports of the network affiliation noted that additional programs to be heard on WCSH would include The Eurekas, Vincent Lopez and his Orchestra, the Gold Dust Twins, the Eveready Hour and the Shinola Merrymakers.

WCSH was designated an NBC Red network basic station when the National Broadcasting Company was incorporated in the fall of 1926 with WEAF as its Red network flagship station. WCSH was one of the 26 basic Red outlets. It is today one of the only two NBC radio stations still operating under original ownership.

Evening programming was the early concern of the network and the schedule grew apace with increasing public response to big-time radio. Daytime radio was slower to develop, but before 1930 had made a promising start. Many can recall the early morning appeal of "Cheerio." Next the soap opera was born and for years it was profitable. By 1940 WCSH listeners could hear on any weekday a dozen or more of the quarter-hour dramas and comedies. Small wonder a housewife could scarcely get her work done. With the "soaps" successful, NBC later pioneered similar drama for early evening hours with One Man's Family.

Before 1940 the network developed what it called a magazine concept with music, drama, comedy, news, information and public interest programs "departmentalized" for various daytime and evening segments. NBC engaged Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians for full hour morning programs five days weekly. Betty Crocker brought kitchen hints and food recipes into the home. News and sports broadcasts were developed.

NBC recognized early that entertainment alone could not serve the public interest, and began interlacing its show business fare with public forums, quiz programs, interviews and public events offerings. Remember — Information Please, Meet the Press, Quiz Kids, FDR's fireside chats and H. V. Kaltenborn's commentaries? NBC and rival networks began broadcasting such events as Presidential inaugurals and the Lindbergh receptions, championship boxing matches and World Series games. In time, the networks used affiliates such as WCSH to relay news or events of public interest from their respective areas.

Of the radio stars of yesterday, many are gone, a few still face microphone or camera, or both. But remembered by listeners of the late 20's and the 30's are such NBC programs and stars as Maxwell House Showboat with Marie Wilson, Lanny Ross, Annette Henshaw, Charles Winninger and "Molasses and January;" Jack Benny, Ed Wynn as the Texaco Fire Chief, Fibber McGee and Molly, Ben Bernie and his orchestra (yowza); B. A. Rolfe and his Lucky Strike Band; comics Olson and Johnson, tenor Frank Munn, storyteller Irvin S. Cobb, Gertrude Berg, Eddie Cantor, the Pickens Sisters, Fred Allen and Portland Hoffa, Rudy Vallee, the Chase & Sanborn Hour with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, the Cities Service Hour and many more. Remembered too are such announcers as Graham MacNamee, Phillips Carlin, Ben Grauer and opera authority Milton Cross, also sports narrator Bill Stern.
The REV. HOWARD O. HOUGH, D.D., minister of the First Radio Parish Church of America in photo taken shortly after he established his radio pulpit in 1926.

Religion On The Air

WCSH created a “first” when on April 18, 1926 the inaugural service of the First Radio Parish Church of America was broadcast from its studio with the Rev. Howard O. Hough as minister. It is the longest continuing program service on the station’s schedule.

The Rev. Hough, later awarded a D.D. degree, already had begun a series of Sunday afternoon services on WCSH following his supply work each Sunday morning at the Park Avenue Advent Christian Church, while he still was studying at Boston University. He was encouraged by the response he received from listeners and soon envisioned a radio pastorate that would minister largely to the unchurched, the aged and housebound in small towns and rural areas where church attendance was difficult or impractical.

The Radio Parish Church had an auspicious beginning. Representatives from nine Protestant denominations attended the inaugural, either as participants or
as delegates and well-wishers. Some clergymen and some writers feared this new unorthodox method of preaching the Gospel might result in reduced church attendance and interest, but the Radio Parish Church earned widespread attention and, for the most part, editorial acclaim. Howard Hough noted the skeptics' doubts, but he believed in his mission and in the course he had set.

In this venture Dr. Hough had the backing of a group of Portland business and professional men. During the more than 35 years of his active service his board of directors included many of the city's and state's best known figures.

In later years, with the Congress Square Company's erection of WRDO in Augusta and the acquisition of WLBZ in Bangor, the First Radio Parish Church horizon was greatly broadened, and still further with the addition of WAGM, Presque Isle.

While Dr. Hough's personal services were confined largely to the Portland area, he visited many other communities, originated broadcasts from churches in several and participated in numerous other functions. He brought to his radio pulpit other Maine religious leaders, including representatives of all three faiths.

Dr. Hough retired from active service early in 1963. The First Radio Parish Church has been continued by WCSH with the Rev. Franklin P. Cole, D.D. succeeding to the pastorate. He had previously served other churches, including Williston Congregational in Portland, and had been a Navy chaplain during World War II.

Next to the Radio Parish Church, the longest continuous religious series on WCSH is the Sunday morning worship service at 11:30 from the State Street Congregational Church, Portland. Begun Feb. 19, 1928, these broadcasts have been continued weekly almost without interruption throughout the pastorates of five ministers, including the Rev. W. Harper Welch, currently serving. His predecessors were Dr. James S. Lenhart, Dr. Wallace W. Anderson, Dr. John C. Schroeder and Dr. Henry S. Bradley, in whose ministry the broadcasts were begun.

The outstanding church-affiliated broadcast series in terms of phenomenal growth, due to radio coverage, and in terms of mail response was that of the Thirteen Class which began before radio use, as a church school class of 13 young men at the St. Lawrence Congregational Church under leadership of the late Henry F. Merrill. During the few years WCSH broadcast these Sunday afternoon sessions, the class membership ballooned from an ordinary men's Bible class to a group of several hundred, including honorary members from all parts of Maine and the adjacent Canadian provinces.

Attendance at the Thirteen Class broadcasts soon forced removal from the church to the Strand Theatre in Portland. On occasions when special passenger trains were operated to Portland from upstate and the Maritimes, or from Massachusetts and New Hampshire to bring recruits to Mr. Merrill's class, theatre capacity was taxed. Had Mr. Merrill been a younger man when his radio venture began, it might have continued for years longer than it did.
In The Public Service

Like other stations of its class that have demonstrated consciousness of public needs, WCSH has responded from the first to calls for service. Its first notable duty call dates back to its earliest years.

In the Winter of 1926-27 a severe ice storm swept southern Maine, crippling power and telephone service. WCSH was able to remain on the air but many power lines serving suburbs and rural areas were felled by ice accumulation or otherwise disabled. Because telephone circuits also were damaged, communication between the power company's generating stations and its distributing center was badly disrupted.

As a former switchman, Bill Foss knew the power company's problem. He offered to keep WCSH on the air on a 24-hour basis until the emergency had ended, serving as a communications relay between the stations and headquarters, enabling operators to kill circuits on which linemen must work.

Again, during the 1936 river floods in southern Maine, WCSH devoted many hours to reporting changing conditions throughout its coverage area from the earlier signs of rising waters, and to issuing warnings to residents of the valleys. This was handled in cooperation with local authorities and State Police. Also the station cooperated with relief services in asking for funds and materials
to aid flood victims who had been made homeless, or whose household belongings had been lost or destroyed.

By the time of the 1947 forest fires that caused millions of dollars in community and family losses, WCSH was well equipped to cover the emergency. Regular programming was put on a standby basis for several days while WCSH personnel devoted long hours to reporting the raging fires that leveled large areas around Bar Harbor and in Cumberland, York and Oxford counties. Lines for fast cutovers to stations WRDO, Augusta and WLBZ, Bangor were kept at the ready, permitting three-way coverage of the fire story, for appeals by the Red Cross, reports from the state's Fire Emergency Committee and State Police, as well as the Forestry Department and the Governor’s office.

WCSH newsmen and announcers equipped with portable transmitters or tape recorders ranged the fire fronts and reported progress of the fire-fighting, sometimes at the risk of personal danger.

Less exciting but essential public service always has been a continuing WCSH concern. This covers such long-established programming as regular reports or special broadcasts of the State's public health, agriculture, education, highway, development, police and other departments. Many hours are devoted yearly to fund-raising campaigns of Community Chests, United Funds, health organizations, YMCA’s, boys’ clubs and other worthy groups, with special appeals for polio clinics and Christmas gifts for the underprivileged.

During World War II many more hours were spent in armed services and civilian manpower recruiting, selling war bonds and related efforts to serve the nation's needs.

Radio Broadcasting Matures

Before WCSH reached its fifth year, having survived several changes in wavelength ordered by Federal licensing authority, its management, in common with most broadcasters of that period, wanted greater and more dependable coverage. This they considered essential both to satisfy audience and to assure commercial growth.

Early in 1930 permission was granted by the former Federal Radio Commission, and WCSH and RCA engineers placed a new 5 kilowatt transmitter with high towers in service on Plummer’s Hill in nearby Scarboro. A second studio was equipped for newscasting and the broadcasting of records.

The dedicatory broadcast of the new equipment began at 7:30 Sunday, May 25, 1930, with an address by Governor William Tudor Gardiner who was later to perform distinguished service in Italy during World War II. The Governor paid tribute to WCSH for past service and the potential of radio in aiding Maine industry, recreation and commerce. Additional messages were broadcast by City Council Chairman Ralph D. Brooks and William B. Jack, superintendent of Portland public schools. The program included music by Charles R. Cronham at the Municipal Organ in City Hall; the Portland Men’s Singing Club and the Portland Polyphonic Society, both conducted by Alfred Brinkler; a 25-piece symphonic orchestra directed by Arthur F. Kendall and several vocalists.
Once again, public response was gratifying. The new transmitter, operating on 1000 watts for the first two years, reached an importantly wider listening area and the new equipment provided improved fidelity of sound transmission.

By this time, a few staff changes had occurred. Jimmy Nicholson had left Portland for technical work with the airways division, Department of Commerce, forerunner to the FAA of today, where he remained until called back to duty in World War II with the Navy. He covered both Atlantic and Pacific theaters supervising Naval air installations and retired a captain. Bill Foss still was station engineer in 1930 when the new transmitter was inaugurated, but he had been spending much time in Washington seeking not only this power increase, but also licenses for stations in Augusta and Manchester, N.H. He left the company before these stations were operative, and was succeeded as chief engineer by Fred Crandon, who had joined WCSH as an operator in 1926, switched to WLBZ, Bangor for a year, then returned to Portland. By 1930 Albert W. Moser had joined the technical staff and is now the man longest employed by the Rines stations. T. Arthur Leavitt and Floyd Barnett were others joining the ranks about 1930, and they assisted Crandon with erection of WFEA, Manchester and WRDO, Augusta. Barnett left after a few years to establish the Portland Police Department’s communications system, and returned to WCSH again. Sydney Mead, an English operator, who later returned to his native country, and George H. Rodick, Ralph Buckley, Elmer Chambers and Roy Morris were others on Crandon’s list back in the 30’s.

With the rapid expansion of commercial radio and the licensing of local stations of low wattage, regional stations such as WCSH needed and were granted increased power. In February 1932 WCSH was granted 2500 watts output days and 1000 nights. In May 1941 full-time capacity of 5 kilowatts was authorized and the station has continued on this power allocation since.

With its wider and improved transmission, WCSH was ready for new business. Early in 1930 Harry A. Belyea was added to the local sales staff and soon proved his ability. Belyea also assisted Pitman with announcing duties before and after his daily rounds of selling. With both men selling, more announcing help was needed and Charles G. H. (Chick) Evans in 1931 left the newspaper field to try radio. He earned quick promotion and was sent in 1932 to Manchester to manage WFEA.

About this time Arthur E. Bucknam signed on, serving for several years as program director and announcer, then joined the sales staff. In 1932 and 1933 two more newcomers came aboard — Albert Williard Smith who started as announcer, then remained for more than 25 years in national sales both for radio and television; and Stanton H. Woodman who was a valued salesman for 25 years before retiring.

New studios to replace the old were started shortly before the death of Henry P. Rines late in 1939. For about a year starting in 1932 Warren Wilson, a long-time hotel company employee, had been given general supervision of the Portland, Augusta, and Manchester stations. He died suddenly and George F. Kelley, Jr., Mr. Rines’ auditor and closest business associate, took on the supervisory assignment.

William H. Rines, son of the founder, came to direct management of the three stations early in 1941 after preparation at Harvard and RCA Institute. He had worked two summers at WCSH learning various phases of operation while still
a student. He is now president of the corporations operating the three radio stations and the two television affiliates. He was chosen as first president of the Maine Broadcasters Association when the radio stations of Maine met to organize in 1927.

Upon assuming management, Bill Rines had helpful assistance from George Kelley, by then vice president and general manager of the hotel interests, who had accumulated considerable knowledge of the communications industry from close observation and participation in business affairs of the Rines stations.

Two valuable additions to the WCSH staff in the 1940's were Agnes Gibbs, known state-wide as a home economist, and Linwood H. (Jake) Brofee, a professional agriculturist and teacher. Each broadcast in the field of their specialities for some 10 years until television arrived to share their efforts.

For the first few years of the 1940 decade, WCSH employed a "house band" of some eight or nine musicians, directed by Arthur F. Kendall, later by Wally Harwood and then by Norman Ayres, who still is in the company employ, in television.

The Congress Square Hotel Company sold WFEA, Manchester, less than a year after acquiring WLBZ, Bangor, in 1944 from Thompson E. Guernsey of Dover-Foxcroft, its founder.

Engineer Fred Crandon remained in charge until the early 1950's when he was succeeded by Daniel H. Smith who set up WCSH-TV late in 1953. After supervising operations for another year or more, he resigned to go to Florida. His successor is Charles R. Brown, who had assisted Smith, and who currently is engineering supervisor for all Maine Broadcasting System stations, based in Portland.

Radio Reports The News

WCSH first undertook newscasting on a regular schedule through affiliation for a short term in 1927 with the Portland Evening News. The paper survived about two years and its greatest distinction lay in the fact that its editorial director afterward became Governor of the Alaska Territory and later one of its first U.S. Senators. He is the Hon. Ernest Gruening. WCSH broadcast news bulletins twice daily from the newroom of the Evening News.

Later, in 1928, at the invitation of publisher Guy P. Gannett, WCSH placed remote control equipment in the news department of the Portland Press Herald and Evening Express, and three newscasts daily except Sundays were scheduled on WCSH for several years. Gannett newsmen handled the news; the voices most often heard were those of George T. Davis for the Press Herald and Chic Evans for the Evening Express until he joined the WCSH staff.

During this period WCSH benefited from the output of the newspapers' state-wide staff of correspondents and the AP wire service. This was especially valuable to WCSH during state and national elections when all these news sources were working at full tilt.

Prior to 1934 or 1935 WCSH had originated few local newscasts. Once dependence upon newspaper sources ended, regional, national and world reports
were well supplied to WCSH listeners when the station affiliated Sept. 27, 1936 with the Yankee Network. WCSH also was ready for NBC’s news service when the network entered that important phase of broadcasting in earnest.

The next significant news development at WCSH came in January 1939 with a four-times daily series of newscasts for the Esso Reporter. For this United Press wire service was installed. Later Associated Press service was added for a time, so that WCSH could supply improved local news as well as outside coverage. John Cooper, a former news and editorial writer, was employed to serve as the “Esso Reporter.” After some two years he transferred to Boston, later to network service in New York.

John F. Hogan, just out of the maritime service during the second World War, was the second newscaster to join the staff, in 1945. He had organizing capabilities as well as news sense, and established for the station and its Maine Broadcasting System news service a competent staff of “stringers” in cities and towns served by the station. Hogan was a founder and first president of the National Radio News Directors Association, later expanded to include television newsmen. Hogan was WCSH news director at the time of the October 1947 forest fires, regarded as Maine’s worst. By then he had with him Victor Best, who after a couple of years migrated to Boston to teach newscasting, and later to join the WBZ news staff for both radio and television. Assisting also in the fire coverage was Phil Johnson, now WCSH news director and coordinator of

LOWELL THOMAS, then an NBC news commenator, fed network from WCSH studio in 1944.
the Channel 6 Weekday show, also moderator of WCSH Radio's morning program, Speak for Yourself.

John Hogan had a ready-made network with which to work in the news field, since WCSH had for some time previously been linked with WRDO, Augusta and WLBZ, Bangor. WLBZ affiliated with WRDO almost as soon as the Augusta station became operative, and news exchange between the two dated back to January 1933 when WLBZ inaugurated the Maine News Service. WCSH had no tie with this service until its owners acquired the Bangor station. For a time the three stations used Western Union wire service for transmission of local and regional news items between them. WLBZ's Waterville studio, in use for several years after affiliating with WRDO, also was a factor in news-gathering for the early news service. This, however, pre-dated institution of the Maine Radio News Service which came to full effectiveness when Hogan lined up western and southern Maine correspondents.

This service constituted the first regular program schedule of the Maine Broadcasting System. Later, in the early 1950's, WLAM, Lewiston, independently owned by Frank S. Hoy and his family, joined the group for a time. The Maine Radio News Service reached noteworthy status thereafter. The advent of WCSH Television made inroads upon the time and efforts of the radio news staff, and gradually a new concept of news handling was worked out to the benefit of all three basic Maine Broadcasting System radio stations.

Present procedure has been developed in recognition that more radio stations now serve the state. Each is newscasting throughout the daily operating period, providing local news service to its own area listeners.

To continue in the MeBS tradition, WCSH, WRDO and WLBZ now maintain line service between them for the exchange of items from their respective news sources, but broadcast all news locally, not as a connected network. Using a "hot line," available at all times, the three stations can provide fast service each to the other, as well as to their own audiences. Each station of the trio employs competent local reporters whose job it is to cover every local or regional source constantly.

People And Places

Through the years as outstanding personalities visited Maine or events of public interest occurred or were created, WCSH sought opportunities to report first-hand accounts. Thus many notables have spoken before its microphones and numerous gala events have been described by staff men.

Undoubtedly the most newsworthy personality of his time to appear before a WCSH "mike" was the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who spoke in Portland City Hall auditorium during his 1932 campaign. Thirty-two years later, last Fall, President Lyndon B. Johnson's speech in Portland City Hall plaza was aired live on both WCSH and WCSH-TV. WCSH was among Maine stations carrying John F. Kennedy's political address from Portland in 1962. The late President's policy speech broadcast from the University of Maine at Orono, only days before his death in Texas, was on WCSH, MeBS and NBC.
Radio comedian EDDIE CANTOR reads copy of the first issue of THE MAINE BROADCASTER.

"Sweethearts of the Air" — TONY AND JUANITA broadcast hundreds of programs on WCSH and WLBZ in the 1940's.

DICK LEWIS accompanies PAUL GILL on UNCLE HEZZIE'S DOWN EAST SWAP SHOP.
Former Vice President Richard M. Nixon was a WCSH visitor during the 1954 Eisenhower campaign and a guest speaker later during the Cumberland County bicentennial of 1960.

For years WCSH together with WRDO and WLBZ covered the inaugurations of Maine governors from Barrows to Reed, over a period of nearly 30 years. WRDO had reported Governor Brann's inaugural previously.

WCSH enjoyed several hours of glory during its initial experience of feeding a network, June 13, 1929. After Lindbergh and Admiral Byrd had flown the Atlantic, NBC requested the Portland station to pick up from Old Orchard Beach the take-off of two groups of trans-ocean fliers and feed the story to its Blue network. WCSH announcers fed the story of the Yellow Bird, with its French crew, and the Green Flash, manned by two Americans, to the network with the help of station and telephone company engineers.

Another opportunity to report to a national audience came in the early 30's on the evening of a fall state election, Maine then holding its gubernatorial and Congressional elections before other states. NBC News evidently wanted to prove the validity of the old saw "As Maine goes, so goes the Nation." NBC sent news production chief Abe Schechter to Portland to line up the network feed. WCSH helped him to obtain cooperation of the Gannett Portland newspapers, and supplied WCSH announcers for the broadcast direct from the Press Herald newsroom.

When Col. Charles A. Lindbergh toured America with his Spirit of St. Louis, after returning from Paris, he made a Portland stop for a gala reception in The Eastland Hotel. WCSH broadcast the entire program from the ballroom. Prior to the speeches, a guest requested the announcer to move a microphone that obscured Lindbergh's face from her view. As he complied the announcer told the flier, "some guests complain that they can't see you." Lindy replied: "That's all right with me." But when he arose to respond to his welcome, his boyish smile was ready.

Earlier, in the Fall of 1927, the dedication of The Eastland itself was broadcast by WCSH from the same ballroom. Several local business and civic leaders addressed invited guests and the radio audience, in praise of Henry P. Rines' forward-looking policy and initiative. The principal speaker was Graham MacNamee, then NBC's outstanding radio personality.

Leading figures of the entertainment world and noteworthy personalities who appeared on WCSH during early years included: Rudy Vallee, Larry Brooks, another Westbrook product, James Melton, Reinald Werrenrath, boxing greats Jack Dempsey, Gene Tunney and Primo Carnera, newscaster Lowell Thomas, who, on a skiing trip to Mt. Washington in June of 1943 or '44, stopped over night in Portland and fed his nightly newscast, then on NBC, from WCSH. Other newscasters who visited WCSH include W. W. Chaplin, during the 1947 forest fires, and H. V. Kaltenborn, dean of America's radio commentators.

Other public figures recalled are Amelia Earhart, Tommy Dorsey and his band, Marjorie Mills, New England food specialist, and the late Bill Cunningham, Boston sports columnist.
Out Of The Past

This chapter, perhaps more than the others, will be incomplete because there is no detailed record nor diary. But the story needs a few reminiscences.

Among the earlier WCSH radio voices old-timers remember was that of Charles H. Ross, a long-time Portland grocer. Charlie Ross was happy to comply when invited in 1926 to inaugurate a noonday series of talks prepared for practical farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He was about 70 at the time and his voice conveyed kindly manner, if not conviction.

Few men ever employed by WCSH had the versatility and wide appeal of Gil Snow. Gil, who called himself Paul Gill, was a fine announcer and a competent master of ceremonies. But he was happiest when on the air as Uncle Hezzie Q. Snow. He broke into radio at WLBZ, near his home town, and came to Portland a couple of years before he was called into Army service in World War II. Gil also greatly enjoyed playing Santa Claus each pre-Christmas season.

Charles G. H. (Chick) Evans, public relations chief of Maine's Department of Economic Development, recalls a couple of instances as a WCSH announcer before he left in 1932 to be the first manager of WFEA, Manchester, N.H.

"I can not forget the red letter day when a Publicity Bureau public relations man, returning from a fall foliage trip, broadcast his weekly report of places visited. As he heard the announcer's closing remarks, he leaned toward the microphone and stage-whispered: 'And if you don't like that, you can all go to . . .'. Thus ended his series of travelogues.

"Most of all I remember the wonderful esprit de corps at WCSH in the late 20's. Not the least of their problems in the relatively new and magic medium was working in the monks cloth-draped studio in humid summer weather. Such as the evening we were doing a broadcast of Longellow's The Children's Hour when, in the midst of the show Laughing Allegra was taken violently ill. She never missed a cue, but we scrubbed up later."

Jimmy Nicholson, now retired in Sarasota, Florida, treasures newspaper clippings relating to his own little 20-watter, and to his "Kids Klub" activity on WCSH later. One is a story by the late Sam E. Conner about the children's program, written for the Lewiston Journal.

Perhaps the best remembered WCSH children's programs were the stories of the Three A Safety Man, Arlyn E. Barnard. He began these soon after coming to Portland some 30 years ago to become executive manager of the Maine Automobile Association — AAA affiliate. Barnard continued story telling on WCSH at least eight years, during which time he visited many schools in the area and helped inaugurate the schoolboy patrol at street crossings.

A Look At Present And Future

WCSH was born when radio broadcasting was young enough to be accepted by its audience as a promising new dimension in entertainment and information
resources. It has survived depressions, wars and changing political and economic stresses, not to mention the impact of television.

Responsibly operated radio has not pretended to be something it was not, has not professed to be all things to all people. Like mo.t radio, WCSH today is a personal communications medium. It is a friend, so easily accepted by its listeners that they give it little individual attention, but without it would feel as if something were missing in the day’s routine.

Live programming today boils down to news, discussions and special events. At WCSH, news gets top production attention. Four staff men prepare, edit and voice hourly broadcasts throughout the entire broadcast span.

High on the list of continuing information programs in the public interest are the bi-weekly Portland City Council general sessions broadcast the first and third Monday evenings, of each month. Other Mondays WCSH provides a different type of public interest show titled Project 97 with Phil Johnson interviewing a guest who represents a particular segment of the community’s enterprise. After the interview the public is invited to telephone to ask questions of the guest, and both questions and answers are aired.

On Tuesday and Thursday evenings the University of Maine in Portland presents programs titled, respectively, Opportunities Unlimited, and U. of M. Profiles. Both are 15 minute broadcasts with representatives of the faculty and student body participating.

The Portland School Department cooperates weekly with WCSH in broadcasting taped five-minute talks by Frederick A. Halla, assistant superintendent, on various phases of the department’s program and plans.

For several years, Phil Johnson has conducted a popular morning program, Speak for Yourself, five days weekly at 9.05. Listeners are invited to telephone and express their opinions on almost any subject within the limits of good taste.

During most of each weekday, WCSH provides entertainment and companionship through music, interspersed with the latest news, weather reports, sports news and time checks. On weekends, the NBC service Monitor is supplemented with local news and several hours of religious programming.

Like other broadcasters WCSH is flexible, ready to change when enough listeners desire change, and ready to pioneer in change when new challenges are discovered.

The operating personnel of the station: Manager, Benjamin A. Hubley; Chief Engineer, Charles R. Brown; sales manager, Herbert W. Crosby; production director, Robert G. Shaw; chief announcer-farm director, Wilfred W. Whitten; news director, Philip N. Johnson; sports director, J. Donald MacWilliams; sales secretary-continuity director, Nancy Bailey; receptionist, Mrs. Elinore McGrum; traffic director, Diana Ritchie; assistant, Mrs. Marion Barnes; announcers, Whitten, Shaw, Ken Whitmore (sports and news); Doug LaVallee, Al Russell; news staff, Johnson, William E. Maclver, Ken Whitmore; sales, Crosby, Stanley S. Milton, Richard G. Hayden; engineering, Brown, T. Arthur Leavitt (studio supervisor), Thomas F. Johnston (transmitter); business office, Mrs. Beatrice Kendall, Mrs. Arline Barjam, Elizabeth Kearney, Everett Spear; messenger, Robert St. Jernquist.
Augusta, Maine's capital city, was selected as the site of Maine Broadcasting System's second radio outlet. Portland and Bangor were served by local or regional stations, but the Kennebec Valley needed local facilities for improved reception.

WRDO began operations Feb. 22, 1932 with 100 watts power on 1370 kilocycles. Studio space was in the Augusta House and the first transmitter was installed in a business block on Water Street. Corporate ownership was vested in the Capitol Broadcasting Co.

Conrad E. Kennison was WRDO's first manager and remained there until 1938. During this period the station affiliated with WLBZ, Bangor for combined service in program and news, and with the Yankee Network, April 7, 1935. The Yankee affiliation was terminated 11 years later but the WLBZ tie has been continuous. During most of Kennison's stewardship a fair amount of WRDO's programming was supplied by WLBZ, but Augusta and neighboring cities: Hallowell and Gardiner contributed talent as well as news and special events. In 1936 studios and office were moved to Commercial Street for enlarged space.

Jack S. Atwood took over WRDO management in 1938. He had 11 years' previous experience in announcing and programming at WLBZ and at WNAC, Boston, starting with his student days at the University of Maine. About this time corporate ownership of WRDO was assumed by WRDO, Inc. A Bangor native, Atwood began his radio career while WLBZ was located at Dover-Foxcroft before that station was transferred to Bangor in 1928.

He was promotion-minded and group activity afforded him opportunity to
develop WRDO interests while working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Augusta post of the American Legion, of which he became commander. He left WRDO in 1943 for service as a Marine Corps Reserve lieutenant, returning at war's end with a captaincy. In 1947 he was general chairman of Augusta's sesqui-centennial celebration.

WRDO joined NBC for both Red and Blue network service Dec. 11, 1938. With this broadening of the program structure, the station's fortunes brightened proportionately. Local and national spot sales grew apace.

In 1939 studios and offices were moved to 175 Water Street, corner of Bridge. Operating frequency was shifted to 1400 kilocycles in 1942 and in 1945 power increase to 250 watts was authorized. An improved transmitter was set up in a new building in nearby Chelsea.

Memorable WRDO events of that era include feeding the NBC network live coverage of Maine's official reception for Donn Fendler, young Boy Scout who had been lost in the Mt. Katahdin area for eight days before finding his way out of the wilderness, in 1938. The next year Ted Malone, network personality, had WRDO assistance when he broadcast a program honoring Edward Arlington Robinson, Maine poet and three-time Pulitzer prize winner, from his birthplace in Gardiner. In 1947 WRDO men gave many hours of praise-worthy service to Maine and NBC listeners while covering the fall forest fires.

During Atwood's term WRDO initiated affiliation with Cony High School that has been valuable to both, and from which the station has drawn competent staff members. The Cony Revue was formulated by Benjamin A. Hubley, then a student, as a weekly program, faculty and students cooperating. Over the

Scanning returns in NBC Eddie Cantor 1947 station promotion contest that won WRDO $500 award are: LES HUBLEY, JACK ATWOOD and DAN KELLY.
years it brought many students into close relationship with the radio medium and several of them later became WRDO employes, including Ben Hubley, his brother Leslie, now WRDO manager; Donald K. Powers, now managing WCSH-TV; George E. Curtis, also of Portland, and Danny Kelly, WRDO chief announcer.

Late in 1953 Jack Atwood moved to Portland to become manager and help plan building and development of WCSH Television. He was succeeded at WRDO by Don Powers, who remained until 1957 when he was appointed manager of the Maine Broadcasting System radio stations, with headquarters at WCSH. Thereupon Leslie Hubley was promoted to WRDO management, and has continued in this capacity.

Powers and the Hubley brothers saw service in World War II and Powers was recalled to duty for a time in the Korean outbreak. He was an Army captain of infantry who survived the Battle of the Bulge. Les Hubley served as an Army surgical technician in Pacific campaigns. Ben Hubley, an Army Signal Corps technical sergeant, went the long route through the European campaigns from North Africa to Germany.

Public service has been outstanding in WRDO achievement from its early days. Legislative proceedings and news of State House activity were followed closely. During 1935 local floods and the 1938 hurricane, the station performed notably for Red Cross, city and state. Besides contributing most of its manpower to the nation’s armed forces during the war years, the station went all out to serve the national needs at home. A portion of one NBC Army Hour was originated at WRDO, telling of the vigilance of Maine coastal aircraft spotters.

WRDO has long cooperated with religious denominations of the area, broadcasting for years a daily service under auspices of the Kennebec Valley Ministers Association.

State and local sports events have rated highly at WRDO. Many schoolboy football and basketball games have been handled by staff men and WRDO has regularly been in the Maine Broadcasting System lineup for State Series college football and high school state championship basketball tournaments.

Management’s attention to promotion has paid off nicely. As an example, during Jack Atwood’s term, Leslie Hubley supervised local station promotion that captured second prize in a 1946 nation-wide Eddie Cantor contest for NBC stations.

The station’s most recent physical move occurred in 1960 when new studios and offices were occupied at 251 Water Street in Augusta. Increased power to 1000 watts was approved by the FCC in 1962, making increased coverage possible.

Almost as old as the station is the news service WRDO has shared since 1935 with WLBZ, Bangor, and in later years with WCSH, Portland. The news was supplied by correspondents in the WLBZ area and by WRDO coverage of the State House and other central Maine sources. Three-station newscasting developed soon after WLBZ was taken over by WCSH and WRDO ownership. Robert B. Hawkins, WRDO news editor, now covers the important State House sources as well as Kennebec Valley and central Maine general news contacts.

WRDO maintained a schedule of live shows of home area interest after some stations had begun to turn more to recorded entertainment. Among those with long service records were Meet the Mike, an opportunity program featuring youthful talent, prize contests and audience participation; the Little Show,
The REV. H. A. CLARK broadcasts weekly program of inspiration from his bed, with daughter MRS. HAROLD DINSMORE at organ and Engineer HAROLD DINSMORE at controls.

which featured talent from the central Maine area, either as individuals or as groups; the Cony Revue series, and a long-term series of women’s daytime programs titled Going Places with Jean Murray.

Many contests with listener awards have been conducted, one of which provided a two weeks’ vacation in Florida for the winner. In 1948 a traffic safety campaign carrying the theme Save a Child’s Life, was carried out with cooperation of Augusta, Hallowell and Gardiner merchants and community groups.

One program featured for years that earlier WRDO listeners never will forget was the weekly message of inspiration broadcast by the Rev. Herman A. Clark from his Gardiner home. The minister, almost completely paralyzed and confined to his bed for some 20 years by arthritis, later lost his vision. His courage and desire to help others brought the decision to try reaching them by radio. Through the years of his weekly broadcasts he attracted hundreds of loyal listeners with his cheerful philosophy and his admonition to “keep on keeping on.” Beside his bed was a radio receiver so rigged that he could tune it with his only good arm. The Rev. Mr. Clark talked from his bed and voiced messages of hope and courage. Scores of listeners wrote to him for counsel and to restore faith. A small home-style organ in his bedroom was played during the broadcasts by his daughter Ruth, who later became Mrs. Harold Dinsmore. Harold operated the remote weekly from the Clark home to WRDO.

Manager Leslie R. Hubley’s service with WRDO dates back to May 1948. Even longer is the service record of Engineer Harold Dinsmore who joined the staff in April 1935. Dan Kelly’s employment began in December 1942 and Secretary Agnes D. Evans’ in July 1943. Other staff members are: Program manager, Donald A. Roberts; sales manager, Lawrence J. Cloutier; news director, Robert B. Hawkins; women’s program director, Catherine Perry; announcers, Roberts, Hawkins, Kelly, Gregory G. Evans and Bruce Fielding; sales assistant, C. Eugene Cote.
Some 10 years before he became WRDO manager, DON POWERS was a personable announcer.

JEAN MURRAY broadcasts official opening of Campus Shop at Sisters Shop, Augusta over WRDO.

WLBZ—Pioneer Of Northeastern Maine

Maine Broadcasting System interests acquired WLBZ, Bangor, their third station, in 1944. Operation of WLBZ’s forerunner pre-dates all other MeBS station origins. In 1921 Thompson L. Guernsey of Dover-Foxcroft founded amateur station IEE, operating in his home. In 1926 he was granted license to use the same equipment with 250 watts power for a standard broadcast station with call letters WLBZ.

The next year transmitter and equipment were moved to a bank building in Dover-Foxcroft, and Guernsey leased a studio in Bangor, at 100 Main Street. This was operated several times a week — for special programs arranged and handled by Jack S. Atwood, then a U. of M. student. He also arranged pickups once weekly from the Chateau Ballroom in Bangor. Other live programs emanated from the Dover-Foxcroft studio.

Late in 1928 WLBZ was transferred to Bangor, studios and offices at the Main Street location already affiliated, and transmitter housed on outer Broadway. Soon thereafter, Guernsey was granted increase in power to 500 watts. Fred Crandon, who had been an operator at WCSH for a short time, went to Bangor to help establish WLBZ in its new location. He remained about a year, then returned to WCSH.

By 1930 necessary expansion forced moving studios and offices to the second and third floors of the Main Street building. The station’s auditorium studio could seat 250 persons and often did.
The station until 1930 was without network affiliation. In that year it joined the Columbia Broadcasting System and the Yankee Network, bringing to Bangor and eastern Maine listeners their first big-time radio programs.

WLBZ was the first of the MeBS stations to institute news reporting on a local and regional basis, inaugurating the Maine News Service in January 1933. This was extended to WRDO, Augusta the following year. Other programs originating in Bangor or in WLBZ's Waterville studio were also fed to WRDO.

Even before moving to Bangor, WLBZ instituted valuable contributions to its audience through affiliation with the state university and the Maine Extension Service, at Orono. This tie was strengthened after the switch to Bangor. Many programs were fashioned with students and faculty members participating, some broadcast from the studios, others from facilities established on campus. The station was long a training center for college men and women interested in communications. Later the university acquired its own campus radio station, and more recently its educational television outlet.

WLBZ changed networks Dec. 11, 1938, joining NBC and becoming its northeastern terminus. The station upped its power output tenfold Sept. 26, 1943 when the FCC sanctioned increase to 5 kilowatts, using the same frequency of 620 kilocycles.

With the transfer to Bangor earlier, station operation was discontinued under Thompson Guernsey's private control and assumed by the Maine Broadcasting Co. with Guernsey as president and principal stockholder. On Feb. 17, 1944 he sold WLBZ to WCSH-WRDO interests, whereupon the station became the third link in the Maine Broadcasting System.

Outstanding in the early '40's were two opportunities to feed programs to the NBC network. On Aug. 2, 1940 the station, in a joint venture with the Bangor Daily News, originated a two-way broadcast between Admiral Richard E. Byrd, in Bangor, and the men of his expedition still at the South Pole. This is believed to have been the first broadcast from any Maine station involving overseas transmission.

A year and a half later, January 1942, with the nation at war, Jack Benny and members of his radio troupe visited Bangor to entertain service men at Dow Air Force Base, and originated their weekly NBC program from the base via WLBZ. Benny's cast included Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Rochester and announcer Don Wilson.

The first program originated by WLBZ for any network, however, was one fed to CBS Radio in May 1930 by the University of Maine Band, praised on numerous occasions by Rudy Vallee, who made the Stein Song famous. Jack S. Atwood, then student drum major of the band, and Thompson L. Guernsey of WLBZ, a 1926 Maine graduate, set up the broadcast with CBS Radio. A special feature was the appearance on the Stein Song's 25th anniversary of Lincoln Colcord, lyricist, and Adelbert W. Sprague, composer, who wrote it as students. Atwood prepared much of the script and directed the broadcast for the network. The production received excellent publicity near and far.

During the era of live programming, WLBZ originated many quality shows, not the least of which was Nissen's Blue Ribbon Minstrels, sponsored by the
Bangor branch of the baking company that had first sponsored any program on WCSH in Portland. The Maine Central Railroad was another WLBZ sponsor with a long-term series of broadcasts, including stanzas featuring Norman Lambert on piano and organ.

Among religious broadcasts produced through the years, "Chapel on the Hill" was perhaps most unique. It was programmed by students and faculty of Bangor Theological Seminary and was heard four mornings weekly. In April 1960 WLBZ's entire operation was transferred to modern studios and offices in the new WLBZ Radio building on outer Broadway, previously the site of transmitter only. Of contemporary design, the building was planned for modern broadcasting needs and maximum efficiency.

It is doubtful if any other station in Maine can boast the library of recorded and typed programs, especially news and special events, that WLBZ has prepared and maintained over many years past. According to Manager Edward E. Guernsey, the station has a file of recorded and taped excerpts from outstanding newscasts, special events and samples of radio programs, both local and network, broadcast by the station. This "program morgue" is virtually a complete history of broadcasting since the early 1930's. Guernsey, who has been at the WLBZ helm since the late '30's, estimates conservatively that to play all the material in the library would require more than 40 hours. In addition, the WLBZ news file contains 623 written biographical sketches.

During its long service WLBZ has had microphones at events occurring in each one of Maine's 16 counties. Among the unique and memorable broadcasts are: from a boat on opening day at Bangor's famous salmon pool; at Bar Harbor during the 1947 fires; aboard a tug in the Penobscot River carrying the pilot to bring in the first super tanker to unload at Bucksport; a log drive on the Machias River; a Pierre Monteux rehearsal at the Domaine school in Hancock; atop Mt. Cadillac at ceremonies raising a 49-star flag; a dive in the submarine USS Halfbeek; a flight in a B-52 bomber from Bangor to St. Louis and return by way of South Carolina; a hospital interview with Boy Scout Donn Fendler after his misadventure of eight days lost on Mt. Katahdin.

Among widely known personalities appearing before WLBZ microphones have been Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson, John F. Kennedy and Dwight D. Eisenhower; Vice President Hubert Humphrey, former Vice President Richard M. Nixon, Barry Goldwater, Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Senators Margaret Chase Smith and Edmund S. Muskie.


WLBZ originated in Maine the tandem basketball broadcast, covering two games simultaneously with Eddie Owen reporting the Beals-Rangeley game in Waterville, and John McKernan, long WLBZ's sports event reporter, doing the Stearns-Old Town game at Orono, during the 1952 tournaments. Other sports
firsts were a New England intercollegiate track meet at Orono, the Paul Bunyan golf matches at Penobscot Valley CC and the first broadcast of a state high school swim meet.

Besides Manager "Ed" Guernsey, two other men have had long service at WLBZ: Irving S. Hunter, coordinator of sales service and programming whose employment dates from 1930, and Edward J. Owen, present program director who joined early in 1941. John C. Wellington arrived in 1946 and now is news director. The staff also includes:


ADMIRAL RICHARD E. BYRD, left, in first trans-oceanic radio broadcast from a Maine station, August 1940, talks via WLBZ and NBC network to his men in Antarctic. DOC ROCKWELL provided laughs.
Modern and efficient is WLBZ operations room, occupied since April 1960. Building is on outer Broadway, Bangor, and is compatible with residential section in which it is located.

JACK BENNY radio cast visits WLBZ early in 1942 on visit to Dow Air Force Base, Bangor. Easily recognizable are DENNIS DAY, MARY LIVINGSTONE, BENNY, DON WILSON and ROCHESTER.

WLBZ office and production area. Standing are EDDIE OWEN and IRVING HUNTER. Seated: DELIGHT COLBY and DAN EVERETT.
WCSH-TV—Six For South Central Maine

Television plans and prospects for southern Maine were still in the talking stage when, about 1950, the FCC “freeze” on channel applications became effective. When the thaw was predictable, WCSH management applied for use of Channel 6 in June of 1952. Construction permit was granted July 29, 1953.

Bangor had beaten Portland into television by about a year with the erection of WABI-TV, and for about that length of time before WCSH-TV’s inaugural, Frank S. Hoy and his son F. Parker Hoy had been operating UHF station WPMT, with studios in the former Columbia Hotel in Portland. Its viewers received programs from NBC, CBS and Dumont television networks.

With permit issued in July, WCSH called Jack S. Atwood from Augusta to Portland to manage the new TV enterprise and to help Chief Engineer Daniel H. Smith plan facilities. Additional technical, program production and clerical staff workers were hired. Company engineers and RCA field men worked long schedules to get Channel 6 operative. Affiliation with NBC Television was already assured.

The Congress Square Hotel turned over to the station for its major studio the former Observation Dining Room, then idled, and the larger radio studio on the same floor, the latter largely for news and special programming. Transmission facilities included a new building and a 300-foot tower erected on Blackstrap Road in Falmouth. The FCC license authorized use of full power of 100 kilowatts for Channel 6. Sanction to transmit network programs in color was obtained within the next year.

The inaugural was telecast the afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 20, 1953. Dedication ceremonies were shared by Governor Burton M. Cross, city officials and station executives William H. Rines and Jack Atwood.

For approximately the first two years WCSH-TV was under the same corporate ownership as WCSH Radio. In 1955 the Maine Radio and Television Company was incorporated to take over radio and television operations and William H. Rines was elected president.

News telecasting was a major consideration at the outset. Phil Johnson and his news staff were hard pressed for a time to take on the demanding TV news assignment with their regular radio news, but they mastered the situation until, a few months later, the operations were separated. Johnson’s staff included Larry Geraghty, now television news chief. They developed the still continuing Channel 6 News Journal, aired five nights weekly at 6 o’clock, and the later 11 o’clock News. Nearly an all-new staff of correspondents was required to provide photos and news film, as well as written accounts, for television’s needs. In several cases these were men experienced in photographing or filming public interest events and they readily learned to combine news writing with their photography.

WCSH-TV’s first production manager was Burnell Poole, Jr., whose previous experience was gained at CBS-TV, New York. He hired cameramen and film technicians as well as commercial artists to set up his staff.

Chief Engineer Smith assigned Merle Towle to supervise transmitter operations and Charles R. Brown to handle studio and control room staff and equipment. For a time Manager Atwood supervised sales activity. Later Donald K. Powers, called to Portland from WRDO to manage operations of the three MeBS radio outlets, was named local sales manager for television, and Bruce C. McGorrill, previously an announcer, as national sales representative. With At-
wood's promotion to general manager a few years later, Powers was named station manager and McGorrill assumed local sales supervision additionally.

Murray Shepard, a former news cameraman, had his television baptism at WPMT but soon transferred to WCSH-TV and soon afterward took charge of photographic operations. At least two of the Channel 6 news cameramen had previous news experience and others in the department soon learned to handle both still photo and movie film cameras. The same can be said of Don MacWilliams, Channel 6 sports director, who held a similar title in radio for several years and still doubles for both media.

WCSH-TV's daytime network schedule was spotty, leaving ample time for local programming. Management created suitable features for those periods available early in the forenoon and following the noon hour. News periods of five minute duration were spotted during breakfast hours, at noon and in later intervals.

Romper Room, a syndicated television show, was added to the Channel 6 schedule during its first year, with Connie Roussin, a Lewiston native, as its teacher — Miss Connie. This has been continuous in operation and in viewer interest. Hundreds of pre-kindergarten age children of the greater Portland area and vicinity have participated.

Another early show on the schedule was Your Home and You, created and conducted by Roger Withington, an interior decorator. With his own aides and Channel 6 staff assistance he designed and built studio sets to accommodate the needs of his topics and sponsors. The program also featured other specialists in home making, beautification, renovating and the use of home accessories.

Agnes Gibbs, WCSH Radio's home economist, was equal to the occasion when Channel 6 needed her services to demonstrate use of the shiny new kitchen installed in its main studio. She prepared delectable dishes on camera and demonstrated various time-saving methods of caring not only for kitchen work, but other homemakers' chores. Agnes also brought in experts in the food field and from other areas of home interest.

Phil Johnson resigned from WCSH-TV nearly four years after its opening to join Nasson College as assistant to the president. After two years there, however, he returned to the station in a two-fold capacity. He became radio news director once more, but also producer-coordinator of a television program presented five days weekly, a full hour titled Weekday on 6. Patterned somewhat upon NBC-TV's Today show, it embodied news and weather reports, interviews with people of Maine engaged in official, civic, and interesting careers or pursuits, and musical offerings by guest artists. The format has changed somewhat but still adheres to its original concept, though the time has been reduced to a half hour.

WCSH-TV joined its radio namesake in public service from the beginning. Its cameras were on the scene for every event of major interest, covering all sections of the state. Various annual festivals, county or local celebrations, visits of notables and other events of popular appeal have been regularly telecast either live or on film and video tape. President Lyndon B. Johnson was among the leading personalities thus seen and heard, during his 1964 fall tour of New England.

Channel 6 News under director Larry Geraghty has created a number of public interest programs, largely pre-filmed or taped, treating of State government, institutions, medical and surgical advances, education, industry and commerce and other fields.
In point of company service, Treasurer Kenneth M. Peterson pre-dates all other employees, having started in 1926. Technician Al Moser is next, dating to 1929. General Manager Atwood’s combined company service goes back to 1934. President Bill Rines’ service record started in 1938. Two years earlier two business office workers, Beatrice Kendall and Elizabeth Kearney first worked for the company. Numerous other employees have records of 15, 20 and even more years. In addition to those just listed, the WCSH-TV staff currently includes:

Manager, Donald K. Powers; chief engineer, Charles R. Brown; sales manager, Bruce C. McGorrill; operations manager, Robert Black; news director, Larry Geraghty; production director, David Serette; film manager, George Bowler.

Accounting, Arlene Barjam, Selma Goddard, Esther Wescott, Everett Spear, Robert St. Jernquist; administration, Gloria Breton, Irene Lord, Elinore Mc-Crum; announcers, Ed Groome, Lee Quimby, Clifton Reynolds, Richard Sawyer; creative, Barbara Allen Cheney, Fritzi Cohen, Arthur Hahn (art director), Doris Johnson (photo); engineering, Thomas F. Johnston, transmitter, Arthur Leavitt, studio, Dana Davis, Gary King, Norman L’Heureux, John Lane, Russell Lowd, Philip McCrum, Joseph Payeur; film, Norman Ayres, Kenneth Gilman, David Ridlon; maintenance, Lucy Haines, Ernest Simard; news, James Brunell, Kinsey Fearon, John Low, William McIver, Don MacWilliams (sports), Howard Nielsen, Donald Sturtevant; production, Gary Curtis, Leo Daviau, Robert Hackett, Linwood Libby, Timothy McCann, Louis Peterson; Romper Room, Pat Chamard, (teacher) Aldana Lait; talent, Jake Brofee (farm director), Phil Johnson (Weekday), Anna Wingren; promotion, Lewis Colby, Janet Voorhis; sales, Elwood Hewett, Willis Sawyer, Robert Zalko, Sidney Zimmerman, Eleanor Parks, Sheila Stanley; traffic, Marguerite Maloney (manager), Barbara Wright.

Gorham High School students are guests on the Saturday afternoon DAVE ASTOR SHOW during the Christmas holiday season. The show has been on Channel 6 three years and rates tops in area.
WLBZ-TV—Two Becomes MeBS No. 5

In the Spring of 1954, a few months after WCSH-TV had begun operations in Portland, the Federal Communications Commission granted Murray Carpenter and Associates a license to operate a television station in Bangor. It was to use Channel 2 and the appropriate call designation W-TWO, which earlier had been relinquished by a Toledo station with a brief career.

W-TWO fought to gain firm footing in the eastern Maine television arena. WABI-TV already was on the air in Bangor and Carpenter had signed off his interest in it to former Gov. Horace Hildreth.

Channel 2 telecast its inaugural Sept. 12, 1954, and with it its first sponsored hour, for the Utterback Corporation, still a client. The corporate structure of W-TWO was Murray Carpenter, president; his wife as secretary-treasurer; William O. Clark and Rudolph O. Marcoux, vice presidents in charge of engineering and business-sales respectively.

Studios were and still are in the former WGUY building which Carpenter purchased when acquiring WGUY from the Guy P. Gannett interests a year or so before opening Channel 2. He sold the radio station shortly after taking it over. The building, originally designed for a compact radio operation, was too limited in space to house all of television’s needs. Consequently business offices were opened in downtown Bangor. The divided operation caused some hardship, confusion and not a little extra expense.

W-TWO had no network affiliation for its first year and found lack of network revenue a distinct handicap, to say nothing of programming problems. While the station was forced to rely principally on local business for income, this later proved to be a blessing in disguise. Necessity bred a way of life that has brought the station of today a distinct lead.

Carpenter retained from his former WGUY staff Philip Gildart, Jr., local sales manager, and Margo Ham, account executive. When the W-TWO staff was being organized, Marcoux, one-time national sales director for the Maine Broadcasting System, came back to Bangor from Harrisburg, Pa., where he had been general sales manager for an independent radio station. Marcoux’ first broadcasting experience was gained at WLBZ Radio before taking over MeBS national sales.

Affiliation with CBS Television put a new dimension into W-TWO’s operation and the general outlook improved markedly. It also brought the expected increase in audience and enabled management to acquire additional equipment, some of which was put to use to bring about some “firsts.” These included its inter-city relay, a remote studio operation in Waterville, basketball coverage from nearby courts, man-on-the-street telecasts and others.

WLBZ-TV’s AL and AILEEN RAWLEY are now in their ninth year with TV-2 and conducting the daily WOMAN’S HOUR 9:00-9:30 A.M.
MURRAY CARPENTER signing sales agreement by which he transferred ownership of W-TWO, Bangor to the Maine Broadcasting Company, WILLIAM H. RINES, president (seated). Station then became WLBZ-TV.

EDDIE DRISCOLL as "Dr. Split," SHARI JONES as "Nurse Qweeze" in Weird show.

WLBZ-TV's DARLENE SWEET as the late evening Weather Girl seen nightly on Channel 2.
Murray Carpenter had come to Maine in the mid-40's from a media director's chair in one of New York's larger advertising agencies, to open WPOR radio in Portland. He later joined forces with former Governor Hildreth to purchase WABI, Bangor. After nearly four years of operating W-TWO, he decided to seek other fields and opened negotiations with William H. Rines of Maine Radio and Television Co. early in the Spring of 1958.

Bill Rines was interested and on July 1 his operating company took over W-TWO and re-named it WLBZ-TV to conform with identification of WLBZ Radio. Channel 2 thus became the fifth link in the Maine Broadcasting System chain.

To announce the transfer, an inaugural dinner was held at the Bangor House June 30, and was attended by Governor Edmund S. Muskie, the mayors of Bangor and Brewer, and a guest list of more than 50 industry and civic leaders from various parts of Maine.

Soon after the transfer, WLBZ-TV changed network affiliation to tie in with its Portland counterpart, WCSH-TV, and the MeBS radio stations, all NBC outlets. New ownership also produced developments in the electronic complex of the station, which now came under general supervision of MeBS chief engineer Charles R. Brown. New projectors and antenna, modification of the transmitter and a company-owned micro-wave system between Portland and Bangor all followed in succeeding months.

Later an addition to the Mount Hope Avenue building was erected, with changes in the original structure, to accommodate not only studio and production facilities, but also the business offices and bring the total operation under one roof. The expansion, costing some $100,000, made possible new air-conditioned offices, expanded studios, new conference room, a lunch area, art department, workshop and other facilities.

The year 1964 was the station's best to date as network, national and local sales hit new highs. Of the total, one-third in dollar volume was locally produced by a sales staff of five.

Besides Manager Rudy Marcoux, WLBZ-TV has 45 employes, two of them besides Phil Gildart and Margo Ham serving since the former W-TWO was first operated. They are Paul L. Bunker, studio supervisor and George W. Levensalor, transmitter supervisor. James A. Robinson, Jr., production manager, signed on in 1955 and John H. Wibby, chief engineer, transferred from WLBZ Radio to Channel 2 in 1958. His total company service dates back to November 1937.


Bookkeeping and secretarial, Ruth A. Bean, Dorothy Frank, Beverly Hallett, Nancy A. Jones, Ruby O. Taylor; announcers, Edgar L. Driscoll, Jr., Gerald J. LeBlanc, Gerald W. McCarthy, Aileen M. Rawley, Elton M. Rawley; receptionist, Elizabeth M. Cooke; copywriting, Constance Ehrenfried; traffic, Kathryn M. Martin; film editor, Brigitte M. Fortier; photographer, Carroll F. Pinkham; maintenance, Eldred L. Smith.
When news breaks, Channel 6 cameras are there. Former WCSH-TV staffer Henry Magnuson gets President Lyndon B. Johnson on newfilm at Portland Airport during latter's campaign tour of 1964.

CLIF REYNOLDS, BARBARA ALLEN and PHIL JOHN-SON on the set of WEEKDAY ON 6 — aired weekdays from 1:00 to 1:30. Phil is coordinator; Barbara and Clif share host-hostess honors.
This is . . .

The MAINE BROADCASTING SYSTEM

WCSH 970 Portland
WRDO 1400 Augusta
WLBZ 620 Bangor

WCSH-TV 6 Portland
WLBZ-TV 2 Bangor