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HISTORY *of* RADIO

TO 1926



By GLEASON L. ARCHER, LL.D.
President of Suffolk University

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and WJAR. He was making a goodwill tour of the United States. Enterprising radio men found him a willing participant in a broadcast that was staged November 2, 1923. On the eve of Armistice Day, at 8:30 P.M., November 10th, the stricken chieftain of our own War Administration, Woodrow Wilson, broke his long silence to broadcast a ten-minute message to his fellow countrymen—the last important act of his life. His topic, appropriately enough, was "The Significance of Armistice Day."

The annual Army-Navy football game was broadcast on November 24th with Graham McNamee at the microphone. Again the popular announcer acquitted himself with distinction and radio broadcasting of sporting events reaped corresponding advantage.

The next important radio event was the ambitious attempt to exchange radio broadcasts with England on the night of November 25, 1923. The contest had originated with a suggestion of F. N. Doubleday, President of Doubleday, Page & Company, the publisher of *Radio Broadcast*. He had proposed a two-way telephone conversation—by radio—between the two great English-speaking countries. The idea found eager response on both sides of the Atlantic. No less than eight English broadcasting stations were to participate, while on this side of the ocean a large number of stations made ready for the tests. The week of November 25th was to be devoted to the great trans-Atlantic experiment.

Owen D. Young was chosen as the first American speaker. His speech was broadcast through Station WGY at 10 P.M. Sunday, November 25th. Other American speakers during the week were Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes through WDAR; Governor Hyde of Missouri through KSD; Dr. Frank Conrad at KDKA; Henry Ford at WWI; Major General James G. Harbord, President of RCA, spoke in the concluding program from WGY, while Burton J. Hendrick, Associate Editor of *World's Work* spoke from WOR. It is interesting to note that nearly every English listener who reported having heard American stations listed Station WGY. Other stations that were heard in England were WOR, WHAZ, WMAF, KDKA, WNAV, WOO, WDAF, WJZ, WSY, WJAZ, WBAH, KSD, WFAA and WCAE.

On December 4, 1923, President Calvin Coolidge delivered his first message to the Congress. For the first time the people of the nation had an opportunity to take the measure of the remarkable man whom fate had so suddenly and unexpectedly elevated to the Presidency. His clear, incisive New England accent and the shrewd wisdom of his message created a profound impression upon the radio audience. Here was a man who for two and a half years had been hidden under the bushel of the Vice-Presidency suddenly emerging from obscurity and stepping into the national spotlight, with characteristic modesty, it is

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And if there is anything this corporation does not want to start it is a popular demand for government ownership of the American Telephone system. . . . But the fact that WHN, by signing the agreement with the A. T. & T. Company, is not allowed to do any advertising for money, cannot well be classed as an oppressive measure, as the manager of WHN seems to regard it. We think that the interests of the radio public are being conserved when such stations are prohibited from broadcasting for direct monetary profit. Direct advertising by radio is highly questionable even when tried by so excellent a station as WEAF." [3]

Sec. 172. Station WEAF Gathers a Radio Network.

Station WJZ was the focal point in one of the greatest radio experiments ever attempted up to that time—a trans-Atlantic and transcontinental broadcast on March 7, 1924. The occasion was a banquet held in the ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City by the Alumni of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The program was broadcast by WJZ with tap-off wires from the amplifier panel in the control room and carried by special lines to WGY. The program was there rebroadcast both by long and short wave transmission—short wave having trans-Atlantic coverage. KDKA picked up the program by short wave and relayed it to Station KFKX in Hastings, Nebraska. The latter station relayed the program to Station KGO in Oakland, California. Listeners in England and California were thus enabled to hear the program at virtually the same instant of time, so amazing was the speed of radio transmission.[4]

Opposition to advertising by radio was still deep-seated, even among those who occupied high positions in the industry. Station WJZ, now owned and operated by the Radio Corporation of America, was WEAF's chief rival for leadership among radio stations. David Sarnoff, then Vice-President and General Manager of RCA, in an address delivered in Chicago, stated the creed of the owners of WJZ. He believed that the multiplicity of radio stations was an unhealthy condition that would soon cure itself through lack of financial support. Broadcasting in the future, he predicted, would be carried on by a few super-stations supported by the industry itself "from returns on sales of radio apparatus." He then declared: "A fair method of determining the amount to be paid by each member, or portion of the industry, will be worked out and this will be based on a percentage of the sale price of the radio devices."

In reporting Mr. Sarnoff's speech the editor of *Radio Broadcast* added the following comment:

[3] *Radio Broadcast*, June 1924, p. 152.
[4] *World Wide Wireless*, April 1924, pp. 15, 16.

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