



SMALL MARKET RADIO: A CASE STUDY

A Thesis

By

John Harvey Carr

December 1975

The University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, Tennessee

SMALL MARKET RADIO: A CASE STUDY

A Thesis  
Presented for the  
Master of Science  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee

John Harvey Carr  
December 1975

## ABSTRACT

The first commercial radio station licensed in the United States was KDKA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in October 1920. Major metropolitan areas began receiving licenses for stations throughout the 1920's. However, few stations appeared in the rural areas of the nation until the late 1930's.

One of those stations was WHUB, Cookeville, Tennessee, which began broadcasting service to the Upper Cumberland Plateau on July 20, 1940. M. L. "Luke" Medley, whose entry into the broadcasting industry almost proved disastrous, managed to survive the economic problems which confronted him during his first three years of operation.

WHUB gained such a following throughout its coverage area that even though stations were licensed in all the adjoining counties except one, the station has enjoyed continued success in listenership and revenue.

This study chronicles the development and subsequent success of WHUB from its earliest envisionment by Medley through application, hearings, early difficulties both with revenues and personnel, and to the ultimate success of the operation.

Coincidental to the chronicling of the station's development is a lesser study of the movement of economic growth in the market area.

The conclusions reached are that WHUB and M. L. Medley have contributed substantially to the growth of the small market broadcasting industry by furnishing others interested in the medium with a viable pattern on which to build their stations.

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE PAGE

1. Certificate for Patriotic Service—1940 .....	128
2. Buy War Bonds Booth—1942 .....	129
3. On-the-Air Wedding—1942 .....	130
4. Esso Amateur Hour—1942/1943 .....	131
5. Children's Gospel Hour—1944 .....	132
6. CBS Affiliation Announcement—1944 .....	133
7. Mustard and Gravy Unique—1944 .....	134
8. Our Pledge/Greatest Show—1944 .....	135
9. Biggest Show in Town—CBS Week—1945 .....	136
10. WHUB Program Log Mailer—1945 .....	137
11. Name the CBS Stars Contest—1945 .....	138
12. Radio Manufacturers Association Award—1945 ....	139
13. Fifth Anniversary Issue, <u>Putnam County Herald</u>	139
14. United Press Award—1955 .....	141
15. CBS Thirty-Year Golden Mike Award—1974 .....	142
16. WHUB Rate Card Number 10 .....	143
17. M. L. "Luke" Medley—1975 .....	144

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Radio broadcasting officially began in the United States in 1920 when station KDKA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, commenced broadcasting. After the initial success of KDKA, several hundred radio stations commenced broadcasting throughout the country. Most of these stations were located in metropolitan areas, although a relatively small number were licensed to small towns. Most of the small town stations, however, were educational outlets, licensed mainly to colleges and universities. Small market commercial radio stations began to appear in significant numbers during the late 1930's; however, not until after World War II did local radio broadcasting come to be a widespread phenomenon. Today, local radio broadcasting has diffused to practically every town and village in the nation.

This is a case study of one of those early small market radio stations which has remained an active part of its community through its broadcast history.

#### I. DEVELOPMENT OF BROADCASTING

Radio Station KDKA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, became the first licensed commercial broadcasting station in the United

States on October 27, 1920. The Secretary-of Commerce issued a license on that date to the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Corporation. The station's first regular broadcasts commenced six days later, Tuesday, November 2, 1920, when, at eight o'clock in the evening, KDKA started broadcasting election returns from the presidential race between Warren G. Harding and James M. Cox.

Other stations, licensed for experimental broadcasting, had carried news, music, and other forms of oral communication prior to the beginning of KDKA; however, the first official commercial radio station license was awarded to the Pittsburgh station.

In its first year of operation, KDKA set the pattern for what later came to be the standard radio fare: orchestra music, church services, public service announcements, political addresses, sports events, dramas, and market reports. The one element missing which was in evidence later was the commercial. Westinghouse felt that the publicity which it was receiving from the station should not be shared with others; hence it bore the full expense of operating the station.

---

<sup>1</sup>Sydney W. Head, *Broadcasting in America, A Survey of Television and Radio*. Second Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972), p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Head, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Head, p. 136.

KDKA's license was issued under the authority granted to the Secretary of Labor and Commerce by the Radio Act of 1912. (According to Sydney Head, the two departments were separated in 1913, each having its own secretary.)<sup>4</sup> This Act was the first comprehensive legislation enacted in the United States to deal with the growing wireless industry. It remained in effect for 15 years, through the period of technical and economic evolution of the radio industry.<sup>5</sup>

The Act of 1912 was enacted following the Titanic disaster. Although a ship was only 15 miles away from the sinking Titanic, no standard for radio watches had been established. The operator on the second shift had gone off duty 15 minutes prior to the time that the message, "We've struck an iceberg. Sinking fast," was sent.<sup>6</sup> More than 1500 persons died, largely because 24-hour radio watches were not required.

The Radio Act of 1912 empowered the Secretary to issue I licenses to any United States citizen who might apply, and to assign wavelengths to be used. The Act gave the Secretary only the power to issue licenses. No regulatory power was granted by the Act. In the first year of its existence,

---

<sup>4</sup>Head, p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>Head, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup>Head, p. 155.

U.S. Attorney General J. C. McReynolds, a Tennessean, acting upon the first challenge given the Act, ruled that "the Secretary of Commerce and Labor is only authorized to deal with the matter as provided in the Act and is given no general regulative power."<sup>7,8</sup> Therefore, then Secretary of Commerce and Labor, William C. Redfield, had no option in either the awarding of a license nor in the regulation of the licensee after the award.

As the broadcasting industry started to grow in the early 1920"s, it soon became evident that more regulative power must be incorporated into existing law. The Act of 1912 allowed anyone of United States citizenship to request a license. While it did not allow the Secretary to be selective in his registration of such an outlet nor to regulate its operation once it began transmitting, some means of controlling the operators had to be found. In 1921, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover assigned two frequencies for use by the operators of that time. These were 360 meters (833.3 Kilohertz) and 485 meters (618.6 Kilohertz). The first frequency was assigned to news and entertainment stations, and the second channel was allocated to crop and weather report stations. Assignments were made in meters,

---

<sup>7</sup>The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1975 (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Assn., 1974) , pp. 748-752.

<sup>8</sup>Head, p. 156.

rather than frequency, since antenna lengths were the specified parameters at that time.<sup>9</sup>

A great deal of interference resulted because of the number of stations operating on common frequencies. Obviously the number and the technical operations of stations required regulation to eliminate such interference. Engineering crudity and portability of stations also contributed to the problem.<sup>10</sup>

Secretary Hoover called a series of National Radio Conferences with the station operators in 1922, 1923, 1924, and 1925. Twenty-two broadcasters attended the first conference. By the 1925 conference, attendance had increased to 400. The purpose of the conferences was to develop a self-regulatory solution to the problem. Hoover's hopes that the broadcasters themselves would form some self-policing action were ill-founded. In 1924, he said, "I think this is probably the only industry of the United States that is unanimously in favor of having itself regulated."<sup>11</sup> These four conferences led to the drafting of legislation which would bring the industry under regulative as well as licensing authority.

---

<sup>9</sup>Head, p. 156.

<sup>10</sup>Head, p. 157.

<sup>11</sup>Head, p. 154.

Secretary Hoover found that his regulatory power over the industry was zero when, in 1926, a court ruled against the government in the historic Zenith Radio case.<sup>12</sup>

WJAZ, Chicago, owned by the Zenith Radio Corporation, had been licensed to share time with a Denver, Colorado, station. WJAZ did not always adhere to its assigned frequency; instead, it chose to broadcast on different frequencies than the one which had been assigned. Secretary Hoover brought suit under the Radio Act of 1912. But the court found in favor of WJAZ, stating:

If Section 2 (of the Radio Act of 1912) is construed to give the Secretary of Commerce power to restrict the operation of a station as (the Secretary) contends is done by this license, what is the test or standard established by Congress, by which the discretion of the Secretary is to be controlled? . . . Administrative rulings cannot add to the terms of an Act of Congress and make conduct criminal which such laws leave untouched.<sup>13</sup>

The Attorney General added his opinion that there would be no point in the Secretary's pursuit of the case because, under the Constitution, he was without regulatory power. This historic decision has been cited as proof that in a

---

Head, p. 157.

Head, p. 158.

government based on laws, no man can exceed the authority which he is specifically delegated by law.<sup>14</sup>

The fourth radio conference (1925) furnished recommendations which formed the basis for House Resolution 5589, which subsequently became the Radio Act of 1927. Some of these recommendations called for specific governmental actions, including: ascertainment of proper governmental supervision of the industry through licensing and regulation; clarification of the existence of interference between stations; legalization of the status of radio broadcasting; assurance of technical improvements to eliminate "floating" transmitters which seemed to appear anywhere their portability could carry them; and regulation of the industry in the public interest. This last item led to an additional provision which was incorporated into the Radio Act of 1927. A five-person commission was created to license and regulate the radio broadcasting industry. Under the new Act, all forms of wireless communications services were subject to the regulatory power of the Federal Radio Commission (PRC).

An amendment to the original resolution is of particular significance to this study. Representative E. W. Davis, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Tullahoma,

---

<sup>14</sup>More recently, in American history, the aftermath of judicial decisions in the Watergate case has reaffirmed this concept that man is subject to the laws under, which he serves, no matter at what level of government he may be serving.

Tennessee, introduced an amendment (which was commonly called the "Davis Amendment") calling for the United States to be divided into five zones for the purpose of licensing radio broadcasting stations. The Davis Amendment was approved and was later instrumental in delaying the application for the radio station which is the basis for this case study. Davis intended that his amendment should insure licensing of radio stations to rural areas, thus precluding all radio station licenses from being assigned to large metropolitan areas.

#### Philosophy of the Radio Act of 1927

Senator Wallace E. White of Maine, who probably contributed more than any other legislator to the Radio Act of 1927, said of the Act:

We have reached the definite conclusion that the right of our people to enjoy this means of communication can be preserved only by the repudiation of the idea underlying the 1912 law that anyone who may transmit and by the assertion in its stead of the doctrine that the right of the public to service is superior to the right of any individual to use the ether.<sup>15</sup>

Sydney Head summarized the underlying principles of the Act:

1. The radio waves or channels belong to the people.
2. Broadcasting is a unique service.
3. Service must be equitably distributed.

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p. 160.

4. Not everyone is eligible to use a channel.
5. Broadcasting is a form of expression protected by the First Amendment.
6. The government has discretionary regulatory powers.
7. The government's powers are not absolute.<sup>16</sup>

While the Act appeared to place most of the regulatory power in the hands of the Secretary of Commerce, this consequence did not occur. Instead, the five-man FRC assumed more and more of the actions of regulation. It was also assumed that the FRC would eventually be phased out after its initial formulation of rules and regulations for the industry. Again, this assumption was in error. Each year the Commission's original powers were extended for another year. Finally, it became evident that the growing industry was destined to create administrative problems which only a full-time agency could handle. The FRC became a permanent body on December 18, 1929.<sup>17</sup>

#### The FRC Begins Operations

During the first 12 months of its existence, the FRC began regulating the industry. It set broadcast license periods at 60 days, established the broadcast band as 500 to 1,500 Kilohertz, thus changing the assignment of channels from wavelengths to frequencies, and eliminated the use of

---

<sup>16</sup>Head, pp. 160-161.

<sup>17</sup>Head, p. 161.

portable radio transmitters in the broadcast band. However, it did not immediately address itself to the most pressing problem, reduction of the number of outlets on the air. There were, in fact, 732 radio broadcasting stations on the air in the country in March 1927, when the FRC assumed office.<sup>18</sup> Reducing the number was essential to solving the interference created by the cacophony of overlapping stations on the same or adjacent frequencies.

The Commission used various means to reduce the number of stations. First, those stations which were operating with marginal technical capability had to become more stable in their transmissions or leave the air. Second, because skywave interference increases at night due to the reduction of ionospheric layers from four to one (the "F1" layer), the Commission reduced those stations authorized to operate after

---

<sup>18</sup>Erik Barnouw, A Tower in Babel—A History of Broadcasting in the United States. Vol. I (hereafter Barnouw I) . (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), p. 209.

local sunset from 565 to 397.<sup>19,20</sup> The second year of its operation, the FRC began classifying stations as to clear, regional, and local channels.

By 1930, the Commission had issued a detailed set of guidelines for engineers. The "Standards of Good Engineering Practice" remain today as the criteria for broadcast engineers.

Initially, the FRC had issued General Orders in a sequentially numbered series. These General Orders were replaced by a less wieldy set of Rules and Regulations which became effective February 1, 1932.<sup>21</sup> Those Rules and Regulations have been changed through the years to meet changing emphasis in the industry, but their basic applications still are the guidelines for the industry.

---

<sup>19</sup>The ionosphere is formed into four distinct layers of upper atmosphere during sunlight hours. The layers are caused by ultraviolet ionization of the atmosphere by the sun. During the nighttime, only one layer (F1) is ionized. This phenomenon creates propagation peculiarities, not only between day and night, but also during various seasons of the year. Sun spots are a type of ionospheric disturbance which severely affects radio wave propagation. Therefore, ionospheric waves, or skywaves, tend to reach farther at night than during the day when the four layers absorb more radio wave energy than does the single nighttime layer.

<sup>20</sup>Head, p. 162.

<sup>21</sup>Head, p. 162.

The Communications Act of 1934

When the Radio Act of 1927 was being considered by the Congress, some members wanted to go a step further with the legislation to include under one agency all wire as well as wireless communications services. Two years after the passage of the Act of 1927, a bill was introduced to transfer to the FRC all wire communications and those remaining wireless functions still outside the Commission's jurisdiction. The debate continued without action during subsequent years.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States in March 1933, he expressed interest in the consolidation of authority. In 1934, Roosevelt forwarded the following Interdepartmental Committee recommendation to Congress:

I have long felt that for the sake of clarity and effectiveness, the relationship of the Federal Government to certain services known as utilities should be divided into three fields: Transportation, power, and communications. The problems, of transportation are vested in the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the problems of power . . . in the Federal Power Commission. In the field of communication, however, there is today no single Government agency charged with broad authority.<sup>22</sup>

This simple recommendation by the President spurred the Congress to enact the Communications Act of-1934. The new Act placed all wire/wireless communications- services under a

---

<sup>22</sup>Head, p. 163.

single independent agency, renamed the agency as the Federal Communications Commission, and expanded the agency from five to seven members. The Act of 1934 also retained the Davis Amendment from the Radio Act of 1927.

Today, the Communications Act of 1934, with amendments, governs the operations of all wire and wireless communications services in the United States.

As the new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) took office in 1934, it found itself overseeing 593 broadcasting stations plus 722 assorted experimental stations involved in television and facsimile transmission experimentation.<sup>23</sup>

#### Development of Broadcasting Stations

Following initial assignment of a license to KDKA in 1920, stations sprang up across the country. The major licensing year was 1922, when more than 500 additional grants were made. By December 31, 1922, 670 stations had been granted a license to operate. Five hundred and seventy-six stations were actually broadcasting on that date.<sup>24</sup> Most of the applications came from large cities. This was to be expected since major marketplaces offered the advantage of audience (potential consumers for advertisers' products and

---

<sup>23</sup>Erik Barnouw. The Golden Web – A History of Broadcasting in the United States. Vol. II (hereafter Barnouw II). (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>Barnouw I, p. 104.

services), more diversification of goods and services among advertisers, and the concentration of financial institutions. Few applicants for facilities came from the smaller marketplaces.<sup>25</sup>

During the first five years of licensing of stations (1921-1925), 10 commercial and five educational radio stations went on the air in towns of less than 10,000 population.<sup>26</sup> During the next five years only nine licenses were granted to commercial outlets in this population range. Even during the depression years from 1931 through 1935, 11 small market radio stations became operational. But the largest group of small market operators prior to World War II came between 1936 and 1940, when 31 licenses were granted.<sup>27</sup>

As the broadcast industry spread from coast to coast, some small market businessmen began to think of applying for licenses. A number of relatively small cities did obtain stations in the late 1920's and early 1930's. Bristol, Virginia/Tennessee, became the home of WOPI in 1929. WTJS, Jackson, Tennessee, went on the air in 1931. Each city had

---

<sup>25</sup>Educators, too, had discovered the worthiness of broadcasting. Seventy-two educational radio stations were licensed in 1923.

<sup>26</sup>Barnouw I, p. 91.

<sup>27</sup>Broadcasting. Vol. 17, No. 1, July 1, 1939 (hereafter Broadcasting). (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Publications, Inc., 1939), pp. 100-166.

populations of about 20,000 at that time. "Other cities of similar size scattered throughout the nation began radio station operations during the same period.

Two factors prevented many would-be broadcasters from applying for a license. First, the great depression of the late twenties and early thirties left the economy in a very unstable condition. And, there was still the Davis Amendment.

Under this amendment, the nation was divided into five zones for the purposes of radio station allocation. If an operator desired a station in his marketplace, and the zone allocations were all filled, he could only buy an- existing station and move it to his city. For example, WFBC, first established by the First Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, during the 1920's, was purchased and moved to Greenville, South Carolina, in 1933. WCKY, a bridge away from Cincinnati, Ohio listed its home town as Covington, Kentucky, since the zone which contained Ohio was filled and Kentucky's zone was not.

Small market stations which began operations in the 1920's and 1930's have met with mixed success. Some of them continue to operate in their original locations under their original owners; others have moved to larger markets; a few

have been sold to other individuals or groups; and some have gone silent after a short period of operation.<sup>28</sup>

#### Repeal of the Davis Amendment

Public Law 652, approved on June 5, 1936, repealed the Davis Amendment. With that repeal, all reference to zones for consideration of assignment of licenses was removed. New language in PL 652 placed the allocation of radio facilities under Section 2, Subsection (b) of Section 307 of the Communications Act of 1934.<sup>27</sup> The criterion for application for a broadcast station now became "technical availability" of a location and noninterference with existing stations.

#### Diffusion of Radio into Small Markets

With the removal of grouping of allocations according to zones, both large and small market applicants increased. One such applicant and his struggle to establish what became

---

<sup>28</sup>Of the 74 commercial and five educational, licenses granted to small markets from 1921 to 1940, all five educational and 59 or 80 percent of the commercial stations are still on the air. Twenty-seven percent of the original licensees still operate their stations (computed by the author from Broadcasting Yearbook, 1975; data contained on pp. C-8 through C-214).

<sup>29</sup>Statutes at Large of the United States of America from January 1935 to June 1936, 74th Congress. Vol. 49, Part I, Public Laws. Chap. 511. (hereafter Statutes). (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), p. 1475.

a classic example of small market radio operation forms the basis for this thesis.

M. L. "Luke" Medley, Buffalo Valley, Tennessee, became interested in radio station operation in 1933. Medley, after repeal of the Davis Amendment, applied for and was granted a permit for a small radio station in Cookeville, Tennessee.

WHUB Radio, Cookeville, Tennessee began operations July 20, 1940, some 18 months before World War II. This fact, coupled with the extremely small market (Cookeville's 1940 population was 4,364),<sup>30</sup> caused severe financial problems during the first few years of operation. The problems were so acute that Medley considered closing the doors of the station several times. Financial and personnel shortages which appeared insurmountable at the time brought Medley, as the station's owner, to the brink of capitulation on more than one occasion. It is with these early years as a base that this thesis will show how Luke Medley became a successful entrepreneur in broadcasting.

---

<sup>30</sup>Fifteenth U.S. Census, 1930. Table 15, pp. 40-46.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Because small market radio operations were rather limited prior to 1940,<sup>31</sup> the primary problem which this study will consider is the chronicling of the history of one of the nation's first small town radio stations. In mid-1940, no Tennessee town of less than 20,000 population had a licensed radio station. It was not until July 14, 1940 that WKPT, Kingsport (population 14,000) began broadcasting. In the examination of the problem of a lack of small market stations, it will be shown that Luke Medley's proposed venture had few parallels in the nation and none in Tennessee.; Key questions to be answered in this study include:

A. What prompted the owner to consider an application for this radio station?

B. How did he accumulate sufficient acumen and knowledge of broadcasting to prosecute such an application?

C. What problems were encountered before the granting of a construction permit? Financial? Technical? Other?

D. What problems were encountered as the station began operations? Financial? Technical? Other?

E. How did the small town of Cookeville react to "hometown radio?" Audience? Advertisers?

---

<sup>31</sup>Broadcasting, pp. 100-166.

F. How did the station owner respond to early difficulties?

G. How did the station obtain a network affiliation?

H. When did the station begin to break even financially? What factor(s) influenced the upturn?

I. How effective has the station been in fulfillment of service "in the public interest, convenience, and necessity?"

In addition to chronicling the station's history, an effort will be made to analyze the actions of the owner to meet problems he encountered as they developed.

While WHUB may not have been typical of all small market operations of the pre-World War II era, it did serve as a model for many small market stations which began operations in the post-war period. Being the first station on the air in a Tennessee town of less than 10,000 population, WHUB was studied by Robert McKay, WKRM, Columbia, Tennessee, prior to his application for that station.<sup>32</sup>

### III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature review has been conducted in two forms: first, the review of material specifically published about

---

<sup>32</sup>One other Tennessee town slightly larger than Cookeville - Kingsport - with a 1940 population of 14,000, had WKPT on the air just days before WHUB.

WHUB; and second, a review of material published in primary form regarding small market radio stations, their development, and their survival rate. Special attention has been paid to historical documents detailing broadcasting operations during the 1930's when first thoughts were being given to establishment of WHUB.

An extensive search of material was made in the files of the FCC in Washington, D.C. for specific information regarding WHUB's existence. Copies of the Putnam County Herald published with special pages or editions regarding WHUB also were perused. Other documents maintained by M. L. Medley in the historical files of the station in Cookeville were reviewed for information relative to the operation. Several photographs of live broadcasts made during the early years of WHUB have been copied and are included as figures following the narrative of this study. Awards and certificates of appreciation also have been copied for inclusion here.

A search of Dissertation Abstracts did not disclose any studies which appeared directly relevant to this work. A few histories of large prominent radio stations are contained in these abstracts, but none of small market radio operations.

Four works which were germane to this study were found in Journalism Abstracts.

Order out of chaos: The formative years of American Broadcasting, 1920-1927, is the title of Dr. Lewis E. Weeks' dissertation at Michigan State University in 1962. Weeks' dissertation does not engage in evaluation, according to the abstract. Rather, he chronicles the development of the industry through the times from licensing of KDKA until the enactment of the Radio Act of 1927.<sup>33</sup>

Gaylon H. Watson, a candidate for the Master of Arts degree at the University of Missouri in 1964, wrote A History of KWTO, Springfield, Missouri, as his thesis. Development of the station from its inception in 1924, through the next 30 years of operation, forms a part of the thesis. The second purpose, according to the author, was to emphasize the importance of creating a good image by a radio station.<sup>34</sup>

The study most closely aligned with WHUB's case study appears in a thesis written in 1964 by Charles Forrest Hunter, a Master's candidate at Brigham Young University. Mr. Hunter's thesis is entitled A Historical Study of Radio Station KSUB and its cultural and economic implications as they affect Iron County, Utah. KSUB is located in Cedar City, Utah. The station began broadcasting on July 3, 1937, three years before the beginning of operations by WHUB.

---

<sup>33</sup>Journalism Abstracts, Vol. II (1964), p. 36.

<sup>34</sup>Journalism Abstracts, Vol. II (1964), p. 139.

\*

During interviews conducted by the author with M. L. Medley, owner of WHUB, he stated that in his comparison studies of similar markets to Cookeville, one of the communities which he found closely paralleling his own was that of Iron County (Cedar City), Utah, and KSUB. However, one major difference exists between the two stations. Since 1937, KSUB has had six owners; WHUB began operations in 1940 under owner M. L. Medley, who still owns the station in 1975.

Hunter's thesis appears to be that while KSUB has been less than a financial success, the public service and cultural contributions provided to the city and county have been significant.

Zachary S. Fowler, University of Georgia, developed his thesis on A Study of the Chronological Development of the Radio Broadcasting Stations in Athens, Georgia. This 1972 study traces the development of radio stations in that university community from the first station, WGAU, to the newest one, WDOL. Fowler examines the philosophies and the successes of the station operators.

Literature reviews concerning broadcasting operations must include both the individual editions and the yearbooks of Broadcasting magazine. A search of the repository at the

---

<sup>35</sup>Journalism Abstracts, Vol. III (1965), p. 89.

<sup>36</sup>Journalism Abstracts, Vol. II (1973), p. 106.

publication's offices in Washington, B.C. furnished valuable information regarding the status of the industry in the 1930's prior to the sign-on date of WHUB. Data found in Broadcasting were checked against official documents such as the FCC Annual Reports to assure authenticity of these data. The Broadcasting Yearbooks have furnished information regarding ownership changes, station location changes, and whether or not the earlier stations continue to operate.

Invaluable background information regarding the industry has been obtained from the three historical volumes by Erik Barnouw,<sup>37</sup> and Sydney W. Head's Broadcasting in America; A Survey of Television and Radio.

#### IV. PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY

Detailed examination of FCC files in Washington, D.C., WHUB's historical files in Cookeville, and personal interviews and letters from the principals involved comprise the research methods used for gaining material for the study. M. L. "Luke" Medley, WHUB's initiator and sole owner, and Stacey J. Mott, vice-president of WHUB, Incorporated, and the general manager

---

<sup>37</sup>A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States to 1933; The Golden Web: A History of Broadcasting in the United States from 1933 to 1953; The Image Empire: A History of Broadcasting in the United States from 1953.

of the station were interviewed personally. Letters from the first chief engineer, Charles Duke, and from Jesse Beasley, the man whom Medley credits with planting the idea for WHUB, supply further background information about the study.

While the basic industry legislation and evolution have come from material and sources cited in the preceding section of this chapter, subsequent chapters will have primary source augmentation from material gathered through the interview method.

Verification of statements made by the four individuals has been made through comparison of each other's replies to questions, and through examination of the FCC files in Washington, D.C., or other written records maintained in Cookeville by Medley. While some statements cannot be corroborated, either that fact is noted in the narrative, or the material has been deleted.

Station documents in Cookeville have been, examined for matters relevant to the study. Those which added authority to the study have been copied and are included, in the figures section (Appendix) following the narrative portion.

Research for this project was started in November 1973. Interviews with Medley and Mott were conducted through January 1974. Letters from Beasley and Duke replying to written questions were received in the same time frame.

The data have been collated and assigned to the narrative according to subject matter and time of occurrence. Where more than one viewpoint of a happening is expressed, divergent views are so noted.

An analysis of the occurrences and actions taken by the principals of this study is made alongside the narrative of the study. Since an evaluation of such actions is not pertinent to this work, analysis will only be in the context of comparison of each action within the framework of the state of the industry, or within the confines of the economic picture of the Upper Cumberland area at the time of the action. Such analysis must be restricted to the inherent knowledge of the author regarding personal insight and experience within the industry, the Upper Cumberland market, and the men involved in the decision-making processes at WHUB.

#### V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the extensive time frame covered, by this study (35 years), some limitation in primary source material may exist. Whereas statements have been made largely from memory by the principals involved, Medley has used extensive records from his files in refreshing his memory of events. The FCC station files in Washington, D.C. were used as a primary source, with corroboration of dates and events through Medley and Mott interviews. No major discrepancies were found

between Medley's testimony and the FCC files, which speaks well for WHUB's historical files.

The WHUB study will focus on general development of a very successful radio operation in a small market from a very inauspicious beginning. While the general economic health of the station will be indicated, in accordance with Mr. Medley's wishes, no specific financial data will be discussed.

## VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This introductory chapter of the study has given a brief overview of the status of wireless communications in the Radio Act of 1912, which gave the Secretary of Commerce and Labor. (separated in 1913 into two secretariats) the authority to "register" applicants, but gave no regulatory power over these operators to the Secretary.

The 1927 Radio Act covered the operation of wireless or radio broadcasters. It did not place regulation of other means of communication under the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) which the Act had created.

The Communications Act of 1934 brought telegraph and other wire communications services under the new seven-man Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which replaced the five-man FRC. Wireless regulations remained basically the same as those of the Radio Act of 1927. Those same rules

and regulations, with some amendments, cover the operations of all electronic communications services in this country today.

Ensuing chapters of this study closely follow the sequence of events and actions by which Medley moved from the idea of building a radio station in Cookeville, Tennessee through the tangles of an application and hearing, early financial struggles, the acquisition of the CBS Radio Network, the post-World War II era, and finally, the culmination of one man's dream and how he fought to attain that dream. The steps taken will be carefully examined and analyzed.

Finally, an overall evaluation of WHUB's operation, and its impact on the entire Upper Cumberland area of Tennessee during the 35 years of service will be made.

Conclusions to this study will examine WHUB's success in a small market; about the results of 35 years of service to the Upper Cumberland area in "the public interest, convenience and necessity;" the advantages brought to the owner and the station; and the station's implication to others.

## VII. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Following is a set of definitions of terms which are used in this study. The reader should be better prepared to

follow the train of narrative description once he has acquainted himself with these definitions.<sup>38</sup>

Alternating Current (AC): A flow of electricity which reaches a maximum in one direction, decreases to zero, then reverses itself and reaches a maximum in the opposite direction.

Amplitude Modulation (AM): Modulation in which the amplitude (loudness) of the wave is the characteristic subject to variation.

Anode: The positive electrode.

Audio Frequency (AF): Any frequency corresponding to a normally audible sound wave, mostly between 15 hertz and 20,000 hertz.

Broadcast: Radio or television transmissions intended for public reception, for which receiving stations make no receipt.

Broadcasting: The transmitting of speech, music, or visual programs for commercial or public-service motives to a relatively large audience (as opposed to two-way radio, for example, which is utilitarian and is directed toward a limited audience.)

Carrier Wave: The basic, continuous, transmission of energy by a radio station, with or without modulation, at the frequencies to which it is assigned. These frequencies contain the carrier frequency plus side bands both above and below the carrier frequency.

Cathode: The negative electrode.

Clear Channel Station: Divided into Classes I-A, I-B, and II. Class I-A stations are high-power AM dominant stations protected from all interference by other stations. Class I-B stations include more than one dominant station and a number of secondary stations assigned to the same frequency. Class II stations are

---

<sup>38</sup>All unmarked definitions are taken- from the Radio Shack Dictionary of Electronics/ Rudolf F. Graf (ed.), Fourth Edition. (Fort Worth, Tx., 1974).

usually low-power stations assigned to frequencies occupied by Classes I-A and I-B stations, but which offer no interference to these stations. Class II stations usually are daytime only stations.<sup>39</sup>

Communications Act of 1934: Added all wire services to the Radio Act of 1927. Increased the size of the commission from five members to seven members. Changed the name of the commission from the Federal Radio Commission to the Federal Communications Commission.<sup>40</sup>

Continuous Waves (CW): Electromagnetic waves generated as a continuous train of identical oscillations. They can be interrupted according to a code (usually Morse International Code), or modulated in amplitude, frequency, or phase in order to convey information.

Daytime Station (LS) [Local Sunrise to Local Sunset]: Stations authorized to operate from designated sunrise to designated sunset in each locality. The FCC assigns the hours of operation according to average sunrise and sunset each month of the year.<sup>41</sup>

Direct Current (DC): An essentially constant-value current that flows in only one direction, normally to the anode.

Directional Antenna Array [DA—Directional antenna, usually a directional pattern during the entire broadcast day. DA-N—Directional antenna pattern at night only. DA-2—Directional pattern at all times but a different pattern for daytime and nighttime operation.]<sup>42</sup>

Federal Communications Commission (FCC): Seven member body authorized by the Communications Act of 1934 to license and regulate all wire and wireless

<sup>39</sup>Head, pp. 46-47.

<sup>40</sup>Head, p. 163.

<sup>41</sup>Head, pp. 46-47,

<sup>42</sup>Head, pp. 46-47

communications services in the United States and its territories.<sup>43</sup>

Frequency Modulation (FM): Modulation of the sine wave carrier so that its instantaneous frequency differs from the carrier frequency by an amount proportionate to the instantaneous amplitude of the modulation wave.

Federal Radio Communication (FRC): Five-member body authorized by the Radio Act of 1927 to license and regulate wireless communications services in ' the United States.<sup>44</sup>

Hertz (Hz): A unit of frequency equal to one cycle per second.

Kilohertz (KHz): A unit of frequency equal to one thousand cycles per second. [Power of 10 to the 3rd]

Megahertz (MHz): A unit of frequency equal to one million cycles per second. [Power of 10 to the 6th]

Gigahertz (GHz): A unit of frequency equal to one billion cycles per second. [Power of 10 to the 9th]

Local Channel Station (Class IV): Low-power station designed to serve a small community of a segment of a metropolitan area.<sup>45</sup>

Modulation: The process of modifying some characteristic of a wave (called a carrier) so that it varies in step with the instantaneous value of another wave (called a modulation wave or signal).

Propagation: Radiation of electromagnetic waves through a medium, usually space in radio propagation.

Radio: Communication by electromagnetic waves transmitting through space.

---

<sup>43</sup>Head, p. 163.

<sup>44</sup>Head, p. 161.

<sup>45</sup>Head, pp. 46-47.

Radio Act of 1912: Authorized the Secretary of Commerce and Labor (changed to Commerce only in 1913 when a separate Department of Labor was formed) to issue licenses to United States citizens who applied for wireless operations.<sup>46</sup>

Radio Act of 1927: Brought all wireless (radio) services under one licensing and regulatory agency, the Federal Radio Commission.<sup>47</sup>

Radio Frequency (RF): Any frequency at which coherent electromagnetic radiation of energy is possible.

Regional Channel Station (Class III): Stations designed to serve more limited areas than clear channel stations, but more extensive service than local channel stations.<sup>48</sup>

Sine Wave: A wave which can be expressed as the sine of a linear function of time, space, or both.

Television (TV): A telecommunication system for transmission of transient images of fixed or moving objects.

Tennessee Technological University (TTU, Tennessee Tech): Four-year university located at Cookeville, Tennessee. Originally Dixie College until 1915; Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (TPI) until 1964.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup>Head, p. 156.

<sup>47</sup>Head, p. 161.

<sup>48</sup>Head, pp. 46-47.

<sup>49</sup>Tennessee Technological University assumed that title in 1964 following a legislative act which established university status for several higher education institutions across the state. Tennessee Tech first was established as Dixie College in 1915. The name was changed to Tennessee Polytechnic Institute in the late 1920's.

United Press (International) [UP(I)]: News service established in 1907 by Elwood Wyllis Scripps [Scripps-Howard Newspapers/Radio/Television] to compete with Associated Press. United Press merged with the Hearst International News Service in 1958 to form United Press International.<sup>50</sup>

Wavelength: In a periodic wave, the distance between points of corresponding phase of two consecutive cycles. The wavelength [signified by the Greek letter  $\lambda$  Lambda] is related to the phase velocity [v] and frequency [f] by the formula  $\lambda = v/f$ .

Wireless: Used in the United States in the sense of the British term for radio, when "radio" might be misinterpreted (e.g., wireless microphone). Also, the term generally used prior to 1920 to denote radio.

---

<sup>50</sup>Edwin Emery, Phillip H. Ault, and Warren K. Agee. Introduction to Mass Communications. Third Edition (hereafter Emery). (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1971), p. 75.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY YEARS—1931 TO 1938

Twenty miles west of Cookeville, Tennessee, lies the village of Buffalo Valley, where during the early years of the Twentieth Century, Z. A. Medley and Company was a very active center of merchandising. A diversity of products was available for purchase there, including farm implements, general supplies, groceries, staples, even men's clothing. The Buffalo Valley Post Office was also located in the store.

Z. A. Medley and his sons prospered with the family business during the first three decades of the 1900's. But as highways improved in the mid-twenties, better cars and trucks appeared on them. The general merchandise business started to decline. It appeared that country stores, which had been the backbone of the rural American scene, were on their way out as the thirties began.

In late 1929, the stock market took that deep plunge on "Black Tuesday," October 29, when 16 million shares changed hands on the New York Stock Exchange alone. Between 1929 and 1931, over 50 billion dollars were lost in stocks. It was the beginning of America's worst depression.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>World Almanac and Book of Facts, The, 1975 (hereafter World Almanac). (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Assn., 1974), p. 797.

The nation was deep in the throes of this depression when, in the summer of 1932, the Democratic Convention nominated charismatic Franklin D. Roosevelt to head its ticket against incumbent Republican Herbert Hoover in the fall campaign. Hoover was being blamed by the nation for leading it into the depression, and the Democrats hoped to gain the White House through this dissatisfaction with the incumbent administration.

Franklin D. Roosevelt won 472 of the 531 electoral votes and the election in November 1932.<sup>2</sup> President Roosevelt's inaugural admonition to the nation, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself," was very real to Z. A. Medley. The storekeeper's fear that the end of his prosperous business venture was near prompted one of his sons to contemplate other ventures than the family store for his own future.

M. L. "Luke" Medley, second son of Z. A. Medley, and the operator of the post office in the general store, began to search about for some future means of support for his family, a wife and daughter as well as himself.

Coincidentally with Medley's concerns for his own future, his close friend, Jesse Beasley, a rural mail carrier from the Buffalo Valley Post Office, had become interested

---

<sup>2</sup>World Almanac, p. 735.

in radio. Beasley, in fact, had become so interested that he took a correspondence course in radio technology. He had a battery-powered receiver set in his home and another installed in his car. He liked the radio programs which he heard from Nashville as he made the daily mail runs in his car,

Through their daily contacts, Beasley happened to mention that it seemed only a matter of time until someone would build a radio station in Cookeville. Neither of them had any idea what would be required to accomplish such a feat, but Beasley and Medley became progressively more interested in the possibility that they might be the ones to do this.

In late 1933 or early 1934, Medley is unsure of the exact date, he wrote to the Federal Radio Commission (FRC), requesting information regarding filing an application for a station in Cookeville. The FRC answered Medley that there were no more allocations to be made in Tennessee, since the number of stations for the zone in which Tennessee was located already was subscribed. Medley said that the FRC included a lot of other material which "looked like a bunch of red tape." After looking it over carefully, he threw it into the wastebasket. Still the idea of a radio station in Cookeville kept popping up in Medley's mind every few months, and he and Beasley discussed the possibility frequently.

As the months passed, Medley's interest in building a Cookeville radio station increased. As one who did not follow legislative actions in Washington, however, he did not realize that Congress had removed the main barrier to his dream. The Davis Amendment, which had been included in the Communications Act of 1934, had been repealed on June 5, 1936.<sup>3</sup>

In 1937, when Medley again wrote to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) , he had little hope of receiving more than the same story which he had gotten in the early thirties. To his surprise, the FCC sent him the necessary forms to file an application for a radio station. With technical assistance from Jesse Beasley and legal advice from his brother, Beverly Medley, an attorney, Luke Medley began the laborious process of assembling the application.

Medley admits that the actual filing was delayed for several months; what is not explained is that perhaps he still had some reservation about entering such an alien field of endeavor. The application was finally filed in December 1938. At that time, local channel (Class IV) frequencies were limited. The frequency for which Medley applied was 1370 Kilohertz (KHz). He requested 250 watts daytime operating power and 100 watts nighttime operating power.

---

<sup>3</sup>Statutes, p. 1475.

In early January 1939, the PCC notified Medley that his application had been accepted for a hearing in May 1939. The purpose of that hearing was to determine if all aspects of the applicant's filing material were in order. The hearing would determine if the licensing of a radio station in Cookeville, Tennessee, on 1370 KHz would interfere technically with other radio stations on that frequency. Also to be determined was whether Medley was financially capable of building and supporting a radio station.

The announcement of the filing of an application was carried in the trade papers. Having practically no knowledge of the broadcasting industry at that time, Medley claims that he had never even heard of trade papers such as Broadcasting magazine, much less read any of them. Within days of the notification to Medley that the FCC had accepted his application, he began receiving mail from all over the nation. Applicants for sales, programming, engineering, and management positions sent their resumes to the new applicant.

At this point, Medley felt that what had been his and Jesse Beasley's dream of a radio station in Cookeville might well turn into a nightmare. He still claims that the excitement which the two of them generated during those long, frequently all-night, sessions, never really ebbed. But he did have many unanswered questions about the new venture.

He was not prepared for the deluge of mail from the applicants for jobs, and as he tells it now, he really did not have any idea how to respond to the applicants at that time. All he had was a written notice from the FCC in Washington, D.C., stating that his application for a new radio station had been accepted and that a hearing would be held in Washington in May 1939.

## CHAPTER III

### THE APPLICATION AND THE HEARINGS—1939 TO 1940

In 1938, at the time Medley filed an application for his proposed station, Cookeville had a population of only 3,738.<sup>1</sup> It was very unusual for such a small town to have its own radio station during the 1930"s. However, there were a few communities of comparable or smaller size to which radio stations were licensed. In its 1939 compilation of FCC actions, Broadcasting indicates that seven U.S. cities smaller than Cookeville (1930 Census) had commercial radio stations. No Tennessee city of less than 20,000 population had a radio station on the air before July 1, 1939, or even before July 14, 1940, when WKPT, Kingsport, began operations. Thus, the proposed venture by Luke Medley had few parallels in the entire United States, and none in Tennessee.

Upon receipt of the notice of the hearings scheduled in Washington for May 1939, Medley found that there were several items which would have to be proven to the FGC during the hearings.

---

<sup>1</sup>Fifteenth U.S. Census, 1930. Table 15, pp. 40-46.

One was the proof of availability of economic support for the proposed station by the business community of Cookeville. This point was one which Medley subsequently found had different connotations to him and the Commissioners.

A second point which had to be proved was that the granting of a license in Cookeville would not technically interfere with other stations on the proposed frequency. At that time, the required transmitter-to-transmitter mileage separation between stations on the same frequency was 165 air miles. In the Commission's order to Medley, stations at New Albany and Evansville, Indiana, and Decatur, Alabama were identified as co-channel stations with borderline distances.

Each time Medley filed new data with the FCC, he either sent copies or notified these other stations of his actions by registered mail. An offer to each of the other stations to intervene in Medley's application if the new data did offer interference was included each time. None of these stations ever responded to his letters or intervened in any action on the application.

Another required item of proof was that adequate and suitable program material be available. Later in this study, a reflection of programming material will be discussed.

One other requirement was that Medley have sufficient assets to establish and maintain the station in operation

until income revenues were adequate for its support. As will be shown later, this was one of the first major setbacks after the station started broadcasting.

With the FCC hearing scheduled for May 1939, Medley decided that he needed a preliminary trip to Washington to learn what would be involved in the hearing. When he arrived in the capital in March 1939, the first person Medley met at the Commission's office was the FCC's chief engineer. Medley recalls that the man was very abrupt, telling him that he could not have a radio station in Cookeville. Medley told the chief engineer that he was not certain whether he wanted one or not, that he was just inquiring about the matter. The engineer then became more cordial, Medley said.

Following his meeting with the FCC chief engineer, Medley was introduced to a Commission-examiner named Hill. : Medley discussed the application with the examiner, who asked who Medley's attorney would be for the hearings. Upon learning that Medley did not have an attorney, Hill told him that this hearing would be basically like a lawsuit. Medley would need legal advice to prove to the Commission that he was fully capable of being a successful radio station operator,

When Hill suggested that the applicant hire an attorney to represent him at the hearing in May, Medley told Hill he did not know any lawyers who were approved for FCC practice. Thereupon, Hill named two or three men who were qualified.

Medley chose George Sutton, a native of Tullahoma, Tennessee, whose father had been a Tennessee district attorney general for a number of years.

In his first meeting with Sutton, Medley asked the attorney to state his fee for representing him at the hearing. Told that it would be one thousand dollars, Medley replied he would think about the matter and let Sutton know later. Medley knew that one thousand dollars represented about 10 percent of his total assets; assets which included very little cash.

After contemplating the situation for a while, Medley returned to the Commission again to talk with examiner Hill. During that discussion, Medley asked Hill if he could not represent himself at the hearings in May. Hill replied that of course he could if he wanted to do so. The examiner added that if Medley was not prepared to return to Washington in May with witnesses and other documentation in behalf of his application, he (Hill) would suggest that while in Washington Medley should file a motion to the Commission requesting a deposition hearing to be held in Cookeville. The FCC granted the petition and notified Medley, as well as the other stations concerned. They were advised that they could be represented, if they desired to do so.

Medley returned to Cookeville and set about preparing for the hearings. He acquired the services of the United

States Marshal to subpoena all people required as deponents. The Marshal issued subpoenas to some 30 to 35 people. The deponents were requested to report to the United States Post Office/Federal Courthouse in Cookeville at the appointed times and dates.

One of the chief deponents subpoenaed was John H. "Jack" DeWitt, then chief engineer of WSM Radio, Nashville.<sup>2</sup> DeWitt was subpoenaed to testify as to the technical availabilities of the frequency, whether the frequency would work in Cookeville, and whether or not the frequency would offer technical interference to other stations. DeWitt had prepared maps and drawings necessary, to demonstrate to the FCC that no technical interference would result against the other three stations mentioned.

Several business people appeared to pledge financial support through advertising when the station became a reality.

---

<sup>2</sup>John H. "Jack" DeWitt was widely recognized in the broadcasting industry as an electronics engineer of high competence. When he served as a consultant and adviser to Luke Medley in 1939, he had already served the FCC on several committees, including allocation of frequencies, and on a committee on international agreements of frequency allocation. In 1946, while serving as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Signal Corps at Camp Evans, New Jersey, a sub-post of Fort Monmouth, DeWitt led technicians and engineers in the first radar contact with the moon. A little known aspect of that endeavor was that it was not an officially authorized project. Officials in Washington drew up papers against DeWitt for this unauthorized use of government equipment. When the officer arrived at the Little Silver, New Jersey, railroad station to serve the papers, he discovered that the

These included Sam McMurray, a local department store owner; I. C. Marchbanks, a pharmacist and proprietor of a local drug store; and J. W. DuBois, Cookeville's Texaco distributor. The minister of the First (United) Methodist Church, Reverend A. J. Morgan, testified that the community needed a radio station which could carry local religious broadcasts. The Superintendent of Putnam County Schools, Frank R. Adams, testified that the area's schools would benefit through access to the station's programming. The superintendent foresaw the use of radio as a means of communicating school information to the public, as well as receiving programs of an educational nature in the schools.

The County and Home Demonstration Agents of Putnam County told how their offices would be benefited by a radio station. Cookeville's mayor, Gid Lowe, and its city clerk, J. E. Owen, both testified in behalf of the service which a radio station would bring to the community.

Other educators who testified regarding the need for service, and who offered program material, were J. M. Smith,

---

moon shot had been successful. Upon calling Washington for further instructions, he was told to destroy the papers. He is said to have flushed them in the toilet at Scriven Hall, the Fort Monmouth Officers Club and Transient Quarters. DeWitt returned from military service to assume the presidency of WSM, Incorporated. He led the station through its embryonic television years as well as increased the stature of the radio outlet. DeWitt is now retired from WSM but still serves as a consultant throughout the nation for broadcasters.

president of Tennessee Polytechnic Institute (Tennessee Tech), and A. W. Smith, dean at Tech. Dr. Harry L. Upperman, president of Baxter Seminary at Baxter, Tennessee, 10 miles west of Cookeville, offered both program sources and facilities for broadcasts from Baxter, if desired.

Hugh Hargis, president of the Citizens Bank of Cookeville, and L. M. Bullington, a local attorney, testified about Medley's financial ability and financial status.

The deposition hearing was conducted in April 1939, before United States Commissioner John Dow. Two court reporters, Miss Dailey Starnes and Alfred Kuykendall, transcribed the proceedings. After its certification by Commissioner Dow, the transcript was transmitted to the FCC in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, Medley had been officially notified that the FCC hearing in Washington would be held May 25, 1939. He and his brother, Beverly, an attorney, went to Washington a few days earlier in order to get their material ready for the hearing.

One of the first people contacted in Washington was a radio consultant named Carl Buttman. Buttman assisted Beverly Medley in preparing questions for his brother at the hearing.

The Medleys had a friend who was a captain on the District of Columbia Police Force. The captain, whose name

was Archie Winfrey, invited the Medleys to his home upon learning of their visit to Washington. When Medley explained that he was in the capital to plead his case for a radio station in Cookeville, Captain Winfrey told him that he made a point of trying to know someone at each Federal agency or bureau. Unfortunately, however, he did not have such a contact at the FCC. Medley recalls that Winfrey called a friend of his, a man named Givens, who was originally from Smithville, Tennessee, 25 miles from Cookeville. Givens was then serving as secretary to Congressman Bland of Virginia. In turn, Givens advised that he knew an FCC examiner named Bramhall. Givens subsequently arranged a meeting between Medley and Bramhall.

When the two men met, Bramhall told Medley that he was no longer with the Commission, but was moving over to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), as an examiner. However, Bramhall agreed to hear Medley's presentation in order to evaluate the case in advance of the actual FCC hearing. The three men (both Medleys and Bramhall) conducted the test hearing in a Raleigh Hotel room in Washington.

Upon completion of the presentation, Bramhall asked Medley if he could strengthen his financial statement. Medley responded that he really did not know whether it would be possible or not. Bramhall suggested that Medley return to Cookeville and attempt to buttress his financial statement,

after petitioning the Commission to continue the case for a later date and hearing.

Medley was reluctant to do this because it would have involved his father financially and this he did not want to do. Medley thought that he should not involve his father in something which he, Luke Medley, really did not know a lot about, and his father knew even less.

Bramhall agreed to call a friend of his who was an examiner for the FCC. An appointment was made for the Medley brothers to meet with the examiner, Tyler Berry, at eight o'clock the next morning, May 25, two hours prior-to the official hearing. Bramhall advised the Medleys to abide by Berry's decision after he heard their case. If Berry recommended trying it that day, go ahead. But if Berry said the case should be continued, then by all means, continue it.

The next morning the Medley brothers started wending their way through the maze of corridors in the FCC Building seeking Berry's office. By the time they found the office, there was less than an hour to discuss the case before the scheduled hearing. After listening for a short while, Berry said, "I believe I would go ahead and try the case."

The three men entered the hearing room. Examiner Hutchison, a Virginian, heard the case.

Only two witnesses testified in behalf of the application. These were Luke Medley, himself, and Congressman Albert Gore,

then a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for only about five months. Medley previously had asked Gore to testify in behalf of the application since Cookeville was in the Representative's district.

Congressman Gore made an excellent witness, considering that he knew little about the radio business or about the specifics of the case.

Representative Gore emphatically endorsed the idea of establishing a radio station in his district and expressed confidence to the examiner that Medley was fully qualified to construct and operate such a station.

During the three-and-a-half hour hearing, the FCC's engineer, a man named Owen, disagreed with the deposition of John H. DeWitt regarding location of the transmitter site. The hearing was adjourned at 1:30 p.m., and the Medleys returned to Cookeville to await the decision.

Luke Medley had to wait two months for that decision. In the interim, he corresponded with the Commission regarding the status of the application, inquiring as to the possible date of decision. Finally, Examiner Hutchison filed his recommendation that the application be approved. Approval was granted by the Commission on July 27, 1939. However, the grant was made subject to the selection of a more suitable site for the station's transmitter and antenna.

The FCC allowed 60 to 90 days in which to file a modification of the application and to find a new transmitter and tower site.

Medley went to work immediately searching for a more suitable site. Using a Putnam County map, he went east of Cookeville seeking property which might be both suitable and available for sale. Another site was selected west of Cookeville on U.S. Highway 70N. Medley then took the maps back to DeWitt to get his opinion and recommendation on the two sites.

DeWitt looked at the two alternate sites. He asked Medley if the original site was still available. When told that it was, and that Medley had an option on it, DeWitt picked up the telephone and called the Commission's chief engineer for broadcasting, Andrew Ring.<sup>3</sup> DeWitt told Ring that he had personally inspected the proposed site and he knew it to be the most suitable one.

Ring, a native of Franklin, Tennessee and a personal friend of DeWitt, told him to have Medley file the modification application and he, Ring, would take care of it. The modified application was filed in November 1939.

In January 1940, the site was approved by the FCC and a construction permit was issued. Following that approval,

---

<sup>3</sup>Andrew Ring is now an engineering consultant in communications.

Medley had 60 days in which to commence construction and an additional six months to complete the construction. As the 60 days' deadline neared, Medley brought workmen from his father's farm to the proposed transmitter and tower site and dug a hole in the ground for the tower base. An extremely bad Winter prevented further work on the site until Spring.

## CHAPTER IV

### ON THE AIR (BARELY)—1940 TO 1943

Construction of a transmitter building was started as soon as weather conditions in Middle Tennessee brightened. Medley began to have some doubt that he would ever be able to meet the deadline for completion of the radio station within the allotted time. To protect himself against this possibility, he filed an application on June 20, 1940, for an extension of time to complete the construction.

The Commission held this application pending the disposition of an earlier one by Medley which requested a change to corporate status for the licensee. The original application was filed in the name of M. L. Medley. On January 22, 1940, Medley had asked the FCC to change the assignment of his construction permit (CP) from M. L. Medley as an individual to WHUB, Incorporated. During the period of construction, Medley concluded that it would be prudent to incorporate the station and obtain an amendment of the transfer to the corporation.

He proceeded to obtain a Tennessee charter in the name of WHUB, Incorporated, and established its by-laws. Upon

completion of the state requirements, Medley filed the application with the FCC to transfer the station grant to WHUB, Inc.

The Commission, apparently concerned as to Medley's intentions, questioned whether a corporation would be as strong as individual ownership. Medley convinced the FCC that, in his case, the corporation offered the better choice.

The approval of the change in assignment to WHUB, Inc. was made on June 25, 1940, to be effective at 12:40 p.m. July 11, 1940. Following the resubmission of the request for extension of construction completion time in 'the name of WHUB, Inc., the Commission granted both applications.

#### I. STAFFING BEGINS

As Medley began to visualize the final days of construction, he also began to realize that with the advent of broadcasting from all the equipment, he would have to hire personnel to announce, sell and write commercials, and to operate the equipment. He turned to newly made friends in this industry which he was entering to assist in staffing the station.

At WSIX in Nashville, Medley hired a station manager, William "Bill" Reeves, and a chief engineer, Charles Duke. Reeves was to oversee the day-by-day operations of the studio, located on the main square of Cookeville on Spring

Street. Duke was in charge of the technical plant at 807 Hickory Street, some one mile away from the studio location.<sup>1</sup> Among the early staff members hired by Bill Reeves were Joe Mabry, Lawrence Peery, and John M. Rose. Mabry was an employee of the Princess Theater in Cookeville. His resonant voice soon became a trademark of WHUB. Peery, a minister, became station manager three years later when Reeves moved to Memphis. Rose, a Cookeville youngster, stayed for two years, then moved to Knoxville, then to High Point, North Carolina. He eventually returned to Tennessee to establish his own advertising agency.<sup>2</sup>

Charles Duke had another fulltime engineer and a parttime engineer working for him at the transmitter on Hickory Street near the Tennessee Tech campus. Claud Haston, one of the first licensed engineers in Tennessee, went to see Luke Medley in Buffalo Valley before WHUB began operations. Medley had already hired Duke and a second fulltime man. Haston did

---

<sup>1</sup>Duke is now the vice-president and general manager of all three outlets for General Electric's WNGE-TV and WSIX-AM/FM Radio in Nashville. Reeves is retired from broadcasting and lives in Alabama.

<sup>2</sup>Joe Mabry replaced Lawrence Peery as station manager in 1946. Peery and his wife, who had been a copywriter and traffic director during Peery's tenure left, the station just after World War II. Peery was a minister, and did not continue in broadcasting. John Rose was an announcer in Knoxville prior to becoming program director of a High Point radio station. Upon his return to Knoxville, he entered commercial broadcast sales for a short time. Eventually, he

work weekends and some vacation relief for WHUB after the station began broadcasting.<sup>3</sup>

## II. ON THE AIR

Medley's application for an extension of construction time was not needed. The first test programs were conducted on July 10, 1940. At 10 o'clock on Saturday morning, July 20, 1940, WHUB officially began its radio broadcast service. Anyone throughout the Upper Cumberland plateau who might have had his radio dial set to 1370 Kilohertz would have been entertained by a song entitled "The Johnson 'Rag.'" That song inaugurated the culmination of a dream for a couple of country boys—Luke Medley and Jesse Beasley.

Music programming at first was varied. Medley had signed a contract with Standard Radio Transcription Company for its complete library. In addition, the station had

---

joined Joe Hogan in formation of Hogan-Rose Agency in Knoxville. In 1973, Rose left the Hogan-Rose Agency to form his own firm, John M. Rose and Co., also in Knoxville.

<sup>3</sup>Claud Haston worked for a few months as a parttime engineer for WHUB. He went to Bowling Green, Kentucky for a short time, then to WROL, Knoxville. Eventually, he returned to the Upper Cumberland to become a part owner of a station in McMinnville. He later sold his interest in the McMinnville station and returned to WHUB as the chief engineer, a position he had to leave in 1973 after 20 continuous years of active service there. Bad health forced his full time efforts to be reduced to a consultation service for the station.

several hundred 78-revolutions per minute (78RPM) records. Also, since the station was one of the first affiliates of the Keystone Broadcasting System, having joined in 1940, there were musical transcriptions included with that service.<sup>4</sup> So, initially, music was not a problem in programming.

News service came from United Press (now United Press International since the merger in 1958 of the Hearst International News Service and United Press)

The station was on the air from six o'clock each morning until 10 at night. No network affiliation originally was acquired by, Medley. More discussion of his thoughts about that topic will be made later in this chapter.

---

<sup>4</sup>Keystone Broadcasting System was established in 1940, shortly before WHUB became operational. Its purpose in the beginning was to furnish, two services to small stations. First, the network served as a broker for radio time. KBS would contract with a large advertiser' such as Carnation Milk Company, for an across-the-country flight of spot announcements. Then KBS affiliates would be paid at a noncommissioned rate for their time. The usual rate for which Keystone paid was the one-minute, maximum 52-week local rate. Second, the affiliates received thirty-three and one-third RPM discs (Electrical Transcriptions or ETs), which contained some six or seven songs per side, usually music in the Public Domain (PD) or music by an unknown group or singer. In WHUB's case, these discs were helpful in the first years of operation. In 1975, Keystone continues to furnish brokerage service to its affiliates. It no longer has a library service nor programs for use by the stations.

### III. NEW OWNER TAKES STOCK OF HIS VENTURE

Having surmounted the obstacles of getting the station on the air, WHUB's owner took stock of himself, and his new venture within a day or so after the station's opening. Medley found mixed reactions about WHUB among the townspeople of Cookeville. Many felt that the station was a business or institution which had come to stay. Others felt that the innovation was much like a carnival—it would play in Cookeville for a few days, then move on to another town. All seemed to welcome the new station, no matter what their feelings were about the tomorrows of WHUB.

Within days of commencement of operation, Medley discovered that his assets were down to about \$800. Faced with an impending payroll and other operating expenses, he discovered that he would have to get out of the station and increase business or he would find himself in real trouble in just a few days.

Medley started considering more seriously the impact of his new station on the Cookeville market during the first weeks of its operation. His thoughts now revealed that he had no idea how complicated and extensive would be the operation of such a station. Thus, his thoughts of the market and its revenue capability did not come until after the station was already broadcasting. In attempting to

determine for himself whether a station in Cookeville could succeed financially, he began comparing his market with towns of similar demographics across the nation which were supporting a radio station. Looking around the country, he found that a station in Cedar City (Iron County), Utah, faced a similar situation. Another station that he located in a similar market to Cookeville was at Grenada, Mississippi. Cedar City had a population in 1930 of 3,615. That was 123 fewer people than Cookeville had that year. Grenada's size exceeded Cookeville's by 611 persons in 1930.<sup>5,6</sup>

Using information from both the United States Department of Commerce and the United States Bureau of the Census, Medley concluded that if stations could exist in those two towns, there was a good chance that WHUB also could succeed. Medley wrote to the station managers in both Cedar City and Grenada, but never received an answer from either of them. He now feels that he should have talked with the Chambers of Commerce or other business organizations in the cities to gain economic information about them.

Medley used retail sales figures, along with wholesale distribution and population figures to assess his chances in comparison to the other two cities. Retail sales in Putnam

---

<sup>5</sup>Fifteenth U.S. Census, 1930. Table 15, pp. 40-46.

<sup>6</sup>Broadcasting Yearbook, 1975, p. C-104.

County in 1938 totaled just over two-and-a-half million dollars. Radio sets in homes totaled 760 urban and 2,690 rural. Medley does not have in his records the figures he found for the other two markets, but he said that he found the three markets were very similar in their comparison.

Using similar data for two towns—one in the Far West, the other in the Deep South—Medley decided that he could move into the broadcasting business with a bit of confidence. At the least, an opportunity appeared to be present for such a venture to succeed.

Medley says that he rode out the last six months of 1940 by managing to meet the payrolls. The minimum wage then was 30 cents an hour, with time-and-a-half for overtime,

Medley reminisced about an early sales experience he had. While in Knoxville in August 1940, a month after WHUB went on the air, he took advantage of the opportunity to call on Mr. J. Floyd Goodson at the JFG Coffee Company on Jackson Avenue. As Medley recalls, the office was quite large, but sparsely furnished. After meeting Mr. Goodson and explaining that he represented WHUB, a new station in Cookeville, Medley told Goodson that he wanted to sell him on a 30-day trial run of advertising on WHUB. Goodson listened to the pitch and agreed to the plan. Medley returned to Cookeville and started the campaign by running a spot announcement in the seven a.m. newscast.

After 30 days, Medley contacted Goodson by phone. Goodson asked that WHUB continue the advertising for JFG. Since 1940, with the exception of a few months out of the 35 years, JFG Coffee and other JFG products have been advertised consistently. Although that was the only face-to-face meeting the two men ever had, the relationship has been an excellent one.

During the first six months of operation, summer and fall-1940, total income just about kept current operating expenses in balance, but it was not enough to pay the obligations which Medley had incurred. However, despite the bleakness of the situation, the station was still-broadcasting on December 31, 1940.

#### IV. 1941-1942

With the new year came a slight increase- in business over the first six months of operation\* Medley provided no specific figures for the increase, but he estimates that it may have been somewhere between 10 and 12 percent.

With the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the active entry of the United States into World War II, the economic picture at WHUB began to darken.

During 1942, according to Medley, the bottom dropped out of broadcasting revenue. He lost 25 percent of the business the station had done in 1941. Even, by the middle

of 1942, the situation became more discouraging. At times, Medley admits today, he felt like locking up the station's doors and going back to clerking at his father's store in Buffalo Valley. For a while, it appeared as if Tennessee's sixteenth radio station was not going to make it through the storm.

#### Problems Caused by Market Size and World War II

It was coincidental that the period under discussion was just months after the United States became embroiled in World War II. In addition to the difficulties of beginning operation of a broadcast station in the market the size of Cookeville, less than 4,000 people, those merchants and businessmen who could have contributed the largest amount of commercial revenue to WHUB were also the hardest hit by shortages of merchandise to sell.

For example, automobile manufacturers had retooled their plants for war production. Rubber, which 18 months prior to this period (mid-1942), was destined for private automobile and truck tires, now was being rushed into parts and tires for airplanes, jeeps, and military trucks. Luxuries of life had taken a back seat to the war effort. Necessities joined the scarce items as sugar, coffee, meat, and other food products became procurable only if one had enough red or green ration stamps. Steel which had been used for

refrigerator and stove manufacturing now went into guns, tanks, airplanes, and other implements of war. Even manpower for sales forces was becoming more difficult to find—or to keep, once found.

So, Medley found that those merchants who wanted to offer revenue to him had nothing to advertise. Some of the old-line merchants who had connections and years of trade experience with distributors, and who had been established in their lines for many years, managed to get some of the scarce items. But they put these away or hid them under the counter for their preferred customers. They could not advertise that they had the items, even if they had wanted to do so.

Medley recalls the attitude of one merchant in particular:

I'd call on him, and he would say, "Well, I will take a hundred dollars worth of advertising just to help the station out." I did not appreciate his saying this at all, but I did not complain about it then. This continued on until February 1943. By then I began to see some hope. Our business started to pick up, and I felt that the merchants in the community felt like we had become a fixture in the community and that we had come to stay.

Sometime in late 1943 or early 1944, I had to tell this fellow that I could no longer accept his money on the basis of helping the radio station out. I had to tell him that if he did not feel like he was getting value received or a return on his expenditure, for advertising, he did not need to give us his money. It seemed to dash him a bit, and then he became a much better advertiser after that.

Medley's philosophy, which was apparent during the station's early days and continues today, is that an advertiser who buys a dollar's worth of advertising from WHUB should receive a dollar-and-ten-cents return on that money.

In 1942 and early 1943, when business at WHUB was still slow, Medley tried to create as much goodwill as possible. This was the period when he addressed the above remarks to the advertiser who was "helping the station out" by buying advertising with WHUB. Medley and his salesmen have told advertisers when they think a client was spending more money for advertising than he should in terms, of a likely return.

#### Creditors are Patient

During those first three critical years, suppliers of services to WHUB remained patient and helpful. Medley particularly remembers the kindness extended by the United Press news service which continued to supply WHUB with its daily news material even though the station was in arrears for a substantial amount of money and was unable to meet its obligations on a weekly or monthly basis. Because of the helpfulness of United Press during the station's crisis period, it is doubtful if any other news organization could even donate its services to Luke Medley today.

Another supplier which carried a substantial indebtedness from WHUB during the same period was Standard Radio Transcription Company. This company, which had provided transcription services to WHUB, allowed the station to retain its library during the time of indebtedness; however, the station was not permitted to use any of the library of music until its obligations were current.

Even though suppliers had to wait for their compensation until times got better, Medley never missed paying his staff. Albeit, sometimes the payroll was a limited one, the personnel of WHUB always got some pay. Medley did not take any salary or other pay during the first three years of the station's operation. His only compensation from station revenue was the use of an automobile.

One early employee, who desires to remain anonymous, remembers that he usually waited for a day or so after payday before cashing his check. Collections apparently had to be made expeditiously in order to cover the payroll.

#### Professional Association

Upon commencement of operation of the radio station in 1940, Medley joined the National Association of Broadcasters. He wanted to educate himself about the business into which he had blindly walked. He claims to have attended more than 80 percent of the NAB's annual meetings, and has been

a fervent adherent to the NAB Radio programming code. Medley attended his first NAB annual meeting in St. Louis in 1941.

### Music Format of the Early Years

People referred to WHUB as WPRO:—We Play Records Only—since the station had no network affiliation during its first four years. There were relatively few independent radio stations during the early forties. Stations in Nashville, which had given Cookeville its main radio service prior to 1940, always were affiliated with the networks. Although WHUB was programming mainly recorded music, this procedure was not as easy as broadcasting a network schedule.

Broadcasters had rebelled against what they considered to be prohibitive fees charged them by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). In 1937, after years of having ASCAP increase the fees charged for playing that organization's licensed music, the broadcasters finally refused to renew their contracts. In 1939, Carl Haviland, a longtime network official, headed a campaign which culminated in the formation of Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI).<sup>7</sup> Both ASCAP and BMI collect fees from broadcasters today, but the BMI formula of computation is still less demanding than that imposed by ASCAP.

---

<sup>7</sup>Head, pp. 168-169.

The ASCAP licensing fees assessed-against WHUB could not have been very high in the early forties since station revenue was low. The fees still, may have been high in comparison to the outlay, required for payroll and operating expenses in 1942 and 1943.

As previously stated, WHUB depended heavily on recorded music in its first years. With no ASCAP-licenses music available to the announcers, and with the temporary ban of use of the Standard Transcription, library, WHUB found itself playing the same songs day after day. The station only owned between 600 and 800 discs by 1943. Diversity of the music was limited—a few classical records, many popular artists, some country, even polka, yodeling, and Hawaiian music. If the station had as many as six sides by one artist, then that artist received special attention: a 15-minute program daily devoted solely to his/her records.

In addition to the 78-revolutions-per-minute (RPM) discs, WHUB did have some Keystone Broadcasting. System (KBS) Electrical Transcriptions (ETS). These thirty-three-and-one-third RPM discs usually contained six songs on each side. The unfortunate part, according to some of the announcers who used them, was that the artists and songs were usually unknown. Some announcers of that era say that it was just as well that the songs were unknown; they would not have been heard again anyway.

If any record did gain a bit of popularity, it soon became almost unplayable due to the rapid deterioration of the record's surface. However, high fidelity was of little concern to the programmers of music at WHUB then; it was more important that they could find enough records to play. Even the war contributed to the lack of recordings. Shellac, used as a base for pressing discs prior to the discovery of vinyl in 1949 as a suitable base, was vitally needed for the war effort. All lacquer products were in short supply to the civilian market during the war.

#### V. PERSONNEL CHANGES DURING THE WAR

During the deepest period of financial difficulties for WHUB, a high school senior from Cookeville Central High started working at the station. Stacey James Mott, a Cookeville youngster who was nearing graduation, attended an assembly program at the school. He remembers that only male members of the class were present for this meeting during which an announcement was made that WHUB was looking for personnel. The war effort had depleted their ranks considerably, and help was needed. The original staff had either been drafted, or had gone to another, usually larger, station to replace a draftee there.

Now the general manager of WHUB, Mott feels that the reason he got the job as an announcer was that he was the

youngest applicant. Medley probably figured that he would have Mott around longer before the draft got him than some of the other boys.

Stacey Mott reminisced about the early training which Bill Reeves, the first station manager, gave him:

Bill Reeves was a fine radio announcer, and he wanted to help those of us who were not to at least sound more professional. He had a book by a man named Frank Colby which included pronunciation of words. It was especially good for a trained announcer or newscaster. We didn't do a lot of local news then, but the weekly newspaper probably would not have revealed a lot more than we did. But we did have news about the war. The book by Colby was very important to us with the way we said names, especially in the Pacific area. My recollection that, say a place like Corregidor, that people came to call Corregidor, well, Bill (Reeves) had some Spanish pronunciation from the Colby book which he passed off to us. While it was probably very authentic, when we got to trying to pronounce it that way, it only compounded the problem of our being rank amateurs.

Nine months after he started work at WHUB, the Navy recruiter in Cookeville approached Mott about a new Naval Aviation Program for 17-year-olds. Mott completed the necessary paperwork for the program, but was told by the medical examiner that he could not enter the aviation program due to poor eyesight. However, Mott could see well enough to get into the Navy itself, so he joined then and there. This meant that Medley had to start the search all over again for another youngster who was too young for the draft, or find someone who was draft-exempt to fill Mott's place in March 1943.

Medley and Mott both emphasize that their operation was way ahead of the present Women's Liberation Movement. During the male-shortage years of World War II, WHUB employed several female announcers. While none of them is apparently active in broadcasting today, Medley recalls that they were all well accepted by WHUB's listeners back in the early forties. WHUB has had female announcers since the war, but not to a great extent. One female announcer is on the staff at WHUB in 1975.

Throughout its existence, WHUB has utilized the students at Tennessee Technological University (Tech) as parttime, and in some cases, fulltime staff members. Even some of Tech's faculty members have served on the WHUB staff as announcers. Many graduates of Tech have gained their college degrees while employed at the station. As Medley has said, he had helped put many "sons and daughters" through Tennessee Tech by giving them a job during their academic years. The author is among these.

#### VI. A LEGEND IN HIS TIME

One other announcer deserves a special place in the history of WHUB. Thomas Wetherston Harris—Tom Harris to his thousands of devoted fans throughout the Upper Cumberland—was one of the station's longest tenured announcers. In 1969, Harris completed more than 26 years

before the microphone at WHUB, primarily featured on country and western shows. His booming baritone voice awoke rural residents with the latest "hillbilly" hits by their favorite artists for 26 plus years.

Then, following the conclusion of the Arthur Godfrey 90-minute show each morning from CBS Radio, Harris continued his daily stint with "The Farm Parade," a program of country hits, news, farm and market reports, interviews with the Putnam County agent, home demonstration agent, and the Soil Conservation Committee chairman. Harris held the audience throughout all the talk portions by interjecting his own brand of humor, keeping the interviewees alert to his questions. On more than one occasion, Harris led the local home demonstration agent into a reply which had a double meaning. His listeners always knew that he was "baiting" the interviewee in hopes of getting her to say something which could be interpreted differently.

From about 10-thirty each morning until "Ma Perkins" started at one-thirty, Harris held the audience together with country music and his special "gift of gab!" His voice became the most recognized among the staff of announcers who worked at WHUB.

His following is best exemplified by an incident which occurred in 1950. Luke Medley is immaculate in his attire. Always the well-dressed, coat and tie executive, Medley

would hardly be mistaken for anyone other than a business man by most people. However, one Saturday afternoon, during one of Tom Harris' live country and western talent shows on WHUB, several station staff members were gathered in one of the front offices with Medley. An individual who was quite evidently a man of the soil came into the office, looked around, and said to Medley, offering his hand, "So you are Tom Harris?" Medley replied in his dry wit, "Hell no, but I sign his check!"

## CHAPTER V

### LOOKING UPWARD—1944 TO 1948

As 1943 closed, Medley began to see more progress in his efforts. Revenue gains, while modest, still reflected a change for the better. He attributed the increase to three factors.

First, World War II was beginning to turn around in favor of the Allies, both in Europe and the Pacific. Second, merchandise was becoming more available to the retail stores even if only slightly more so. While rationing of priority goods still was very much in effect, less vital items became more plentiful. The third factor which undoubtedly brought about an increase in station revenue was the availability of more money to residents of the Upper Cumberland area. Most of the populace was gainfully employed, and the prevailing salaries were higher than ever before in the region. The long drought of money was past, and the depression was over. Paychecks from wartime jobs in Nashville and Oak Ridge brought more dollars to the Cookeville merchants than they had probably seen since the mid-1920's.

The availability of goods and money combined to aid not only Luke Medley and WHUB, but also revived what was considered a deeply depressed economy throughout the area.

Skilled and semi-skilled workers flocked from the Upper Cumberland to the new Manhattan Project at the Clinton Engineering Works (Oak Ridge). No one knew specifically what was being done there, but the Federal Government had bought thousands of acres of farmland in Roane and Anderson Counties to construct some type of plant or plants. There were all kinds of jobs for all kinds of people there, and those in the Upper Cumberland who could make the trip daily (about a 200 hundred mile round trip), were returning with larger paychecks.

Most of the able-bodied of the Upper Cumberland emptied into East Tennessee, Detroit, Dayton, Ohio, and other cities which had massive employment rolls connected with the war effort. Even if the employment was out of the area, those paychecks collected made their way back to the Upper Cumberland homes from which the workers had gone. Much of the money earned was spent in Cookeville, Livingston, Gainesboro, Sparta, Crossville, and Carthage. Therein lies the start of the comeback of WHUB.

Since merchandise was becoming more plentiful, and merchants had something to advertise, they looked for a medium to carry their message to the consumer. WHUB was readily available, presented a more frequent exposure source (most area newspapers were published weekly), and had considerable coverage throughout the Upper Cumberland section

of Tennessee. These factors worked to the advantage of WHUB in its effort to attract more advertising dollars, thus becoming a more solvent operation.

#### I. SEEKING A NETWORK AFFILIATION

From the beginning, even before going on the air with WHUB, Medley had believed that it would be a matter of selection on his part as to network affiliation. His impression was that as soon as the networks realized there was a new radio station on the air in Cookeville, Tennessee the National Broadcasting Company's Red and Blue Networks, Columbia Broadcasting System representatives, and even the Mutual Broadcasting System would come knocking on his door, offering large and attractive premiums for being the successful bidder. Again Medley was naive. No one came to see him. No network people called about an affiliation. Medley now says that at the time he was not even aware that the networks were wired systems. His impression back then was that each station relayed the signal of its network to the next station and so on throughout the country.

Medley also found out that it was an expensive matter for a network to take on a new affiliate. He corresponded with both NBC and CBS in the early days. The answers from both could have been written by the same person, Medley says. Neither network felt that it needed additional affiliation

at that time. They explained that their present alignments provided coverage of 98 percent of the nation's population. Medley says that the correspondence was quite cold in nature.

Medley attended the NEC Blue Network affiliates' meeting in Chicago in the Fall of 1943. His goal was to see a man named Kiggins, who was a top executive of the network. Medley does not remember Kiggins' title, but assumes that he must have been an affiliate relations director. Medley journeyed to Nashville to make the trip to Chicago, and he remembers that trains were so crowded during those wartime years that he had to stand during the entire train ride.

Upon arrival at the Chicago hotel in which the meeting was being held, Medley was met by Joe Engel, who had just begun operation of WDEF, Chattanooga. Medley had never met Engel prior to that time, but Engel knew him. Furthermore, Engel knew Kiggins and introduced Medley to the network executive. Kiggins advised Medley that if WHUB would pay the line charges and carry all network commercial programs without compensation, an affiliation could be worked out between the station and the NEC Blue Network.

Medley felt that he could not agree to that plan, but he did not tell Kiggins at the time. WHUB should at least be able to break even in any such arrangement, he thought, even if the station could not make any money on the deal. Discouraged, Medley returned to Cookeville.

In May 1944, Medley decided to take his first trip to New York to talk with the networks. He had already made arrangements to see Kiggins again. By obtaining a letter of introduction from P. D. Houston, American National Bank, Nashville, to their corresponding bank in New York, The Chemical National, Medley was preparing to gain some influence with Kiggins. Houston addressed the letter of introduction to a Baxter Jackson.

Medley arrived in New York about two a.m. Not wanting to miss a golden opportunity, he arose early and went to the Wall Street address of Chemical National Bank. Upon his arrival at the bank, Medley learned that Jackson was ill that day. However, the banker's secretary referred Medley to a branch bank in Rockefeller Center, near Kiggins' office. Two bankers at the branch bank told Medley that they knew Kiggins personally, that he did business with them at the bank. They assisted Medley by setting up an appointment with Kiggins.

Medley again presented his case to Kiggins. Upon the conclusion of the presentation, Kiggins reiterated that the offer at Chicago still stood. That was the best that the Blue Network could do and that was that. Medley thanked Kiggins for his time, and said, "Mr. Kiggins, if I am going to give away my properties, I will do it with somebody a lot nearer to Cookeville than you are!"

Medley left the offices of the Blue Network and went to see Carl Haviland, then station relations manager for the Mutual Broadcasting System. Haviland had been one of the organizers and the first manager of BMI.

Correspondence with Mutual in the past had indicated that Medley might be able to establish an affiliateship with that network, possibly without too much cost to WHUB.

After meeting with Haviland, Medley was told that Mutual could take WHUB as an affiliate. The offer for affiliateship provided for an arrangement that if WHUB received enough commercial orders from the network shows, line charges would be borne by Mutual. If commercial time did not warrant it, then WHUB would be required to pay a portion of the line charges.

Terms were agreed upon and the Mutual attorney was called. Unfortunately (for Mutual, perhaps fortunate for Medley), the attorney was out of the office, on the golf course. Haviland invited Medley to return the following morning to finalize the contract. Medley left Mutual feeling that this contract was not what he wanted for WHUB.

As Medley left Mutual, it was about the middle of the afternoon. Since he was in New York to get a network, Medley thought he might as well visit CBS, too. He went to CBS. Entering the office of Bill Schudt, a network station relations executive, Medley explained to the receptionist

that, although he had no appointment, he would like to discuss an affiliation with Schudt. The receptionist talked with the network executive for a few minutes, then returned to tell Medley that Schudt would see him shortly.

In a few minutes, Schudt, in shirtsleeves, came into the reception room and invited Medley into his office. WHUB's owner remembers that Schudt, who was a large man, had on a pair of red suspenders. Upon entering the office to make his presentation, Medley noted a map of the United States on one wall. Observing that a pin-light marked the location of each CBS affiliate across the country, Medley walked over to the map, placed a finger on Cookeville, and said, "Mr. Schudt, I am in New York for the purpose of affiliating my radio station, WHUB, with one of the major radio networks. My preference is CBS. Here is Cookeville on your map. To the east of us is Knoxville; to the west is Nashville; and to the south is Chattanooga. With WHUB as an affiliate in Cookeville, you will have complete coverage of Middle Tennessee." Then Medley went into his presentation, brought to New York for use at NEC Blue.

Medley carried with him a publication entitled The March of Progress in the Upper Cumberland. This colorful red, white and blue covered pamphlet immediately attracted Schudt's eye. The patriotically-oriented cover displayed a picture of Secretary (of State) Cordell Hull, himself a native of

the Upper Cumberland at Carthage, Tennessee, about 35 miles west of Cookeville.

The brochure had been edited by Dr. W. B. Boyd, a former president of Dixie College, forerunner of Tennessee Tech.<sup>1</sup> Photographs and text had been prepared by the McQuiddy Printing Company in Nashville.

Schudt asked if he might have the publication, and Medley gave it to him. Then Schudt asked Medley to return the next day at 11:00 o'clock. When informed that he would, Schudt told Medley, "We are interested in your station but I cannot tell you what the decision will be."

Medley and Schudt met every morning at 11 and every afternoon at four for the rest of that week. Finally, Friday afternoon, Schudt told Medley that unless he had further business in New York, he might as well go back to his station in Cookeville. No further information would be needed, Schudt told Medley. Medley said that he would stay the next week if more reasons for affiliation might be required. After assurances that no more information would be needed, Medley flew back to Nashville, caught a cab into

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Boyd was employed as the executive secretary of what was then called the Upper Cumberland Chamber of Commerce. This organization was primarily involved in the development of the Cumberland River area, and its tributaries by the U.S. Corps of Engineers. This included Wolf Creek, Dale Hollow, and Center Hill in this particular area of reservoirs for power development and flood control.

the city and started looking for a ride to Cookeville, since he did not have his car in Nashville.

Having found a ride home with a friend, the two of them began discussing their business affairs. The friend, Bill Turner Ray, told Medley of some of his plans to be carried out in Monterey, a coal-producing town in Putnam County, about 15 miles east of Cookeville.

Both of the men were extremely despondent about the future of their businesses; Ray was contemplating moving from timber and logging into coal mining. Medley explained that his trip to New York had left him "blue as a fishhook!" (A reference to the color of fishhooks, which appear blue due to the tempering of the steel from which they are made. Medley implies that his spirits were low; his hope of getting a network affiliation was minimal.)

Medley returned to Buffalo Valley that night, not certain whether his trip to New York had been worth anything to WHUB. He spent Saturday at the store and post office, helping out there, but his mind was still back in the office of Bill Schudt in New York.

Sometime Sunday, an announcer at the station in Cookeville called Medley at home. The announcer told Medley that a Special Delivery letter had arrived from the Columbia Broadcasting System. Upon his arrival at the station, Medley opened the letter to find that a contract for full

affiliateship had been offered by the network. The affiliation became effective July 10, 1944 (see Figure 6 in the Appendix). WHUB has been a CBS affiliate continuously since that date, and Medley expressed the opinion that the 31-year relationship between WHUB and CBS has been a very pleasant one and has been mildly profitable to his station. Except for a few months during the first influx of television, WHUB has received payment every month from the network. While the amount of compensation has never been extensive, affiliation with CBS Radio has certainly added to the station's prestige.<sup>2</sup>

#### WHUB Wins CBS Money

A year following the beginning of affiliation, CBS held a station-affiliates promotional campaign. The station which did the best promotional campaign for network shows in its market during the 1945 campaign was to receive a grand prize of \$25,000. Lesser prizes also were offered for runners-up. The contest was divided into eight categories, with five agency executives comprising the panel of judges.

Medley decided to enter the competition and enlisted the assistance of Jesse Beasley, who was still working with and for him, to spearhead, the campaign. Beasley had moved

---

<sup>2</sup>In September 1974, Medley was presented with the CBS Golden Mike Award symbolizing 30 years' affiliation with the network (see Figure 15 in the Appendix).

from an engineering operator's position at the transmitter to some on-the-air work, and more importantly, to head promotional campaigns for the station. A campaign was conducted and the exhibits were submitted to New York.

The local station winner came from Kokomo, Indiana, but to everyone's surprise, WHUB was a winner in one of the categories. WHUB received \$1,000 as its prize, which seemed like quite an accomplishment for a small-town station which had only been an affiliate for about one year.

A few months later, Medley was in New York visiting an agency where Frank Silvernail was an executive. Upon being introduced to the agency man, Medley was told Silvernail had been one of the judges in the contest. Medley remembers that he felt very good when Silvernail explained how difficult it had been to judge the contest. It seems that WHUB had been at the top of those stations being considered for the \$25,000 prize. When asked if that money would not have been helpful back in 1939 when Medley was first starting WHUB, he replied that even the \$1,000 would have been helpful then.

#### Business Goes Regional on WHUB

From 1943, the business of WHUB began to move upward. With the acquisition of network affiliation in 1944, the end of World War II in 1945, and recognition by several

national agencies, things at WHUB looked considerably brighter. Regional agencies in Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville also added business to the station's accounts. Advertising began for retail sales of regional products such as Retonga, Scalf's Indian River Medicine Tonic, Black Draught, and other lines of patent medicines manufactured and sold primarily in the South. Business truly started climbing in late 1944–early 1945.

#### Personnel Movements Start

Bill Reeves left the station manager's job just prior to the start of the upward swing. Reeves, WHUB's first station manager, moved to Memphis' NEC affiliate, WMC, in late 1943. He remained there until the conclusion of the war. At that time many returning veterans came back to claim their old jobs. Reeves lost his slot at WMC to one of the returnees. However, he was fortunate enough to move across Memphis to WHBQ. That station, along with WKPT, Kingsport (which signed on six days before WHUB), WJZM, Clarksville, Tennessee, and WHUB were the only stations in the state on the air on 1370 Kilohertz. Reeves then moved to a station in Florida as manager. According to Medley, Reeves now lives in Florence, Alabama, where he retired after managing a station in that city.

### Class IV Stations Change Frequencies

In early 1942, the FCC made some adjustments in frequency allocations and services. Local channel (Class IV) stations which had been operating on 1200 KHz, moved to 1230 KHz; those on 1210 KHz moved to 1240 KHz; 1310 KHz stations moved to 1340 KHz; those stations like WHUB on 1370 KHz had the prerogative, based on interference contours, to move either up 30 Kilohertz to 1400 KHz, or back by the same amount to 1340 KHz. Two other local channels which were affected were 1420 KHz which moved up to 1450 KHz, and 1500 KHz which dropped back to 1490 KHz. Medley chose to move to 1400 KHz, the frequency which WHUB occupies today.

### Musicians Take First Steps to Fame at WHUB

During those formative years of WHUB, several musicians who later gained national fame in country and western music circles passed before the station's microphones. The majority of them started their careers at WHUB.

The Johnson Family Singers, who came from Gainesboro, in neighboring Jackson County, spent several months appearing on WHUB, and making personal appearances in the Upper Cumberland area. This talented group later moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where they had a five-day-a-week show with Grady Cole from WBT, which was carried on the CBS Radio Network. The Johnson's daughter, Betty, became a

popular music singer, breaking away from the country and gospel format which was followed by her family. She has appeared on national television shows hosted by Eddy Arnold and the late Ed Sullivan. For several years in the mid-1950's she appeared with Ted Steele and Tyree Glenn (Glenn was trombonist for Louis Armstrong), on a daily afternoon television show in New York.

Another famous name in today's country and western music top hits list is Dottie West. Dottie and her husband, Bill, played every Saturday afternoon on Tom Harris' live "Hillbilly Hayride" show on WHUB. The pair appeared during their entire academic career at Tennessee Tech.

Other musical personalities who started their careers at WHUB were Benny Martin, a fiddler who still plays with some of the Grand Ole Opry groups; Ward Beatty, a singer/guitar player, now believed to be working in country music in Florida; and Albert Brogdon, also now in Nashville.

Then there were local musicians who never moved too far away from Cookeville. There were Gene Bussell, Frazier Moss, Howard Bryant, and a young fiddler who has forsaken the bow and resin for a job as warden in a state prison. Harold Jones, now the warden at Only, Tennessee state prison, was one of the most promising fiddlers to ever play a hoedown in WHUB's studios, according to many knowledgeable people.

In addition to the Saturday afternoon live country music shows from WHUB's studios, Albert Brogdon was for many years the master of ceremonies for a Saturday night live show. The evening session started out at the Putnam County Court Room, but moved to larger quarters after the war. The performances were held in what had been a city school building's auditorium. Stacey Mott remembered how the overflow crowds many times would go to the nearby Princess Theater for a movie, then return to the auditorium afterward, when some of the musical show crowd had decided to see the movie.

The change in crowds appeared to have been similar to the pattern of changes at the Old Opry House (Ryman Auditorium) in Nashville. Many fans would stay only for their favorite artist(s) to perform, then leave, making room for others who had waited in line until a seat was available inside the Opry House.

#### The Children's Gospel Hour Begins

Another success story of the radio station's early personalities is that associated with the Reverend Henry C. Geiger. "Brother Geiger" as he is known on his broadcasts, was pastor of a church in Livingston, Tennessee, in Overton County. In late 1943 and early 1944, he came to the studios of WHUB to conduct what became "The Children's Gospel Hour." This program featured youngsters who answered Bible

questions posed by Geiger. Also, there were prayers and some songs, usually religious songs which children perform in Sunday School and church. While the program featured younger people, it attracted an audience of all ages.

As the program gained popularity in the Upper Cumberland through WHUB broadcasts, Geiger received requests to present it in other markets. Magnetic tape had not yet become the medium for transcribing sound material, so Geiger traveled to Chattanooga to record the programs on discs. Popularity continued to grow and the program "went on the road." Geiger traveled throughout the South, initially, and eventually across the nation, to record sessions with youngsters. The format of the program never changed from its inception at WHUB.

When magnetic tape became the medium for recording, Geiger established a tape network heard throughout the United States and in several foreign countries; Later, Geiger took the program to television, while continuing to supply a radio version for those small markets which had been the original network, and where television had not yet arrived on the local level.

The program continues today, although age has prevented "Brother Geiger" from making the national tours he formerly made. Most of today's programs are reruns which still

appeal to a large audience, an audience which had not previously seen or heard the shows.

### The WHUB Veterans Return

Following cessation of hostilities in both Europe and the Pacific, those who had departed WHUB for military service started to return. Stacey Mott and Joe Mabry were two of the returnees.

Mott tells the story of his return:

When I came back from the Navy in late 1945, I decided to take advantage of the G.I. Bill. Most of us who had gone into service from high school were ready, we felt, to get an education now after seeing the world. If all those who had left WHUB to go into the service had come back to their jobs, we would have had enough people to start a network.

I did not meet with a warm reception, actually I figured that the reason it did not appear too warm was that when you have a full staff and your revenue is not too large, you really don't need anybody else. But it happened that a couple of the people kindly got called out of town somehow, and the staff got short. That is always a good time for a man to be around a radio station, when the staff becomes short. Anyway, they called me and I started working part time while attending Tennessee Tech. When I finished at Tech, I went to the University of Kentucky to work on my Master's degree. I came home one summer, intending to return to Kentucky that fall, but I just enjoyed working so much more than going to school I stayed in Cookeville. That was the Summer of 1949, and I've been here ever since.

Joe Mabry was also a returnee, but with a slightly different story. He had been the manager of the Princess Theater when WHUB went on the air. Mabry, who was married

when he entered the Navy, left the Princess to become a staff announcer at WHUB. Mabry's formal education had stopped before he received a college degree.

When Mabry returned, he again became a full-time announcer with some additional sales duties. Meanwhile, Lawrence Peery, a minister who had replaced Bill Reeves as station manager in 1943, decided to leave WHUB in mid-1946. Peery and his wife had both worked at the station during the war. When the Peery's left, Mabry moved up to the station manager's position.

Under Mabry's guidance, the station continued to program what the people seemed to want--mostly country in the early morning and around noon--with popular music played during most other periods of the day. The students at Tennessee Tech influenced evening programming a great deal.

With Arthur Godfrey holding forth from nine until 10 thirty each morning, and soap operas from 1:30 until about three p.m., Mabry's programming filled the slots capably.

Extended (15-minute) newscasts were conducted four times daily (7:00 a.m., Noon, 6:30 p.m., and 10:00 p.m.). In those early days, due to lack of other local radio stations in the surrounding counties, listeners depended on WHUB for daily news. Area listeners also depended upon WHUB for funeral notices since the Upper Cumberland had only weekly newspapers. The station still maintains a large and

avid listenership to its newscasts and continues to announce funerals. Naturally, the coverage area was greater then, due to an absence of other frequencies which would interfere with 1400 KHz. Surveys conducted in recent years show that the early-day loyalty to WHUB still exists in most of the surrounding counties, even though most of them now have at least one radio station in their county seat towns.

#### Promotions Form Backbone of Public Service Effort

WHUB has consistently conducted promotions in behalf of many and diverse efforts. From its earliest days of operation, when World War II was just starting, the station heavily promoted the sale of War Bonds (Savings Bonds). The first award received by WHUB was presented in October 1940 by then Governor Prentice Cooper, who signed a certificate of appreciation for the efforts of the station on behalf of the Selective Service System's draft registration (see Figure 1 in the Appendix). Local affairs also have been promoted by the station throughout its history. The annual Putnam County Fair attracts guests from all over the Upper Cumberland. WHUB has been conducting remote broadcasts from the fairgrounds since the early 1940's. One time, a wedding was conducted from the fairgrounds during a remote broadcast (see Figure 3, Appendix).

So, when 1948 came, Luke Medley decided that his radio station was going to be a success, and he moved his family to Cookeville, having commuted 40 miles round-trip daily since 1940. Medley had decided then that it would be much cheaper to live near the farm and store in Buffalo Valley, especially since he continued to clerk some in his father's store while he managed the radio station.

Now Medley moved the family nearer the station. The benefits of endurance and perseverance were paid a hundred-fold.

## CHAPTER VI

### VOICE OF THE UPPER CUMBERLAND—1948 TO 1975

Following the mass separation of members of the Armed forces at the conclusion of World War II, men and women who had been involved in broadcasting prior to their entry into military service started dreaming of their return home. Most of these dreams were similar to the ones which had occupied Luke Medley and Jesse Beasley years before. The economic picture had changed considerably from the lows of the depression years to an almost frantic high plain of prosperity. Money needed for entering business in the mid-to-late forties was almost flowing from financial institutions.

The Federal Communications Commission, too, had taken a much more liberal view regarding station construction and operation. Whereas Medley had been required to go into a hearing before he could gain access to a broadcast frequency, the Commission now was virtually passing out assignments of grants carte blanche. Medley reflected on the seemingly "application only" requirement by stating that if his station license had been that easy to obtain, he would have been on the air and on easy street long before 1940. He expressed

amazement when one of the first assignments was made in an adjoining county.

Medley said, "I wondered why there would be stations in communities smaller than Cookeville when I had had such a hard time producing enough revenue to sustain an open door at WHUB. I could not imagine that the adjacent county seat towns would have a radio station; but to my surprise, every county seat adjacent to Putnam County with the exception of Gainesboro (Jackson County), has one or more radio stations. That includes Crossville (Cumberland County) with two, Sparta (White County) with two, Livingston (Overton County) with one, and Carthage (Smith County) with one. As a matter of fact, the only county seat without a station of its own is Gainesboro, and I believe that the Livingston station has a remote studio there and broadcasts on a daily basis."

While each of these adjacent towns has gained a local radio outlet, WHUB met the challenge with each new grant by doing basically the same thing the station had done since 1940; it continued to serve all the people of the Upper Cumberland area with CBS Radio and local programming designed to entertain, inform, and educate its listeners. While no major changes in either programming or sales formats have occurred since the entry of new competition in the outer market area, WHUB's musical format has followed the trends of the times. More emphasis is placed on "contemporary"

music today than in earlier times, but this change was not fomented by competition within the marketplace. Rather, Medley and Mott have changed with the times. A large portion of their audience is comprised of students at Tennessee Tech.

These students want the more modern music played for their enjoyment. On the other hand, the advertiser wants a musical format which will attract listeners to his message. Thus, if the advertiser wants to attract the young, sophisticated college student to his business, then it is imperative that the medium be oriented to the message. While Tech students do make up a large segment of the WHUB audience, the remainder of the audience cannot be classified as a single-format audience, either. There are devotees to the classics as well as to the country and western music formats. For this reason, WHUB's programming through the years has contained all facets of music. While some classical programs were carried in earlier years, there is a dearth of the "Music of the Masters" today in the program scheme of the station. Strangely, at one point in the station's history, The New York Philharmonic Orchestra, carried live by CBS each Sunday afternoon, was the second most listened to program on the station, according to Stacey Mott. The most listened to program was the Jack Benny Show.

Medley feels that the station still has an ample number of listeners, even though Putnam County is surrounded by

other radio stations. Results from private surveys which he has underwritten or subscribed to indicate that WHUB is still the dominant station in the Upper Cumberland. Ironically, WHUB refuses to use the results of these surveys as a selling tool, simply because they do not wish to embarrass any of their compatriots in the area.

In commenting on the post-war period of expansion of broadcasting, Medley pointed out that WHUB enjoyed 22 years of sole station operation within Cookeville itself. When another station (WPTN) did sign on in July 1962, the dominance of WHUB had long been established. But, as Medley said then, "Well, here comes another station in Cookeville—what is going to happen to us?" Now he reflects back to those days and says that the competition has been very compatible, and both stations have continued to grow in stature, as well as revenue.

#### I. FM BROADCASTING COMES TO COOKEVILLE

Within a year of its sign-on, WPTN began FM broadcasting also. Medley's competition led him with that aspect of the radio service. WHUB added FM to its facilities in March 1964. According to Broadcasting Yearbook 1974, WPTN-FM simulcasts its AM signal. WHUB mostly programs separately on each

facility.<sup>1</sup> More of WHUB's current programming scheme will be discussed later in this chapter.

## II. TELEVISION IMPACT STATEMENT BY MEDLEY

Medley was queried about the impact of television on his station. Most stations in the country felt a great economic depression during the first years of operation by television in their markets. Medley claims that television (primarily from Nashville, with some spill-over from both Knoxville and Chattanooga), not only failed to hurt his revenue in the early fifties, it actually seemed to increase his business as TV, established itself in East and Middle Tennessee major markets. Medley's explanation regarding this variance from the national pattern is that regional and local advertisers who had been using larger radio stations to reach into the Cookeville market (such stations as WSM and WLAC in Nashville) found that, while television advertising might have appeared attractive for their goods or services, they could not afford to pay the increased announcement/program rates demanded by television stations.

Medley believes these regional advertisers found that they could realize greater saturation of their markets by buying spot announcements on, local radio stations out in

---

<sup>1</sup>Broadcasting Yearbook, 1974, p. B-194.

the countryside. This gave them as much, if not more, advertising value on a cost-per-thousand basis as had using only regional/clear channel radio stations previously. Medley says that many regional accounts also felt that their dollar was better spent in the countryside than in the cities, since the neophyte television medium was attracting more viewers in the city. Since few rural TV sets appeared in the early days of the medium, Medley feels that the smaller advertiser who could not afford television advertising anyway found a larger radio audience in the areas outside the cities.

#### Medley Has a Failure

One effort in the history of Luke Medley's long association with broadcasting was a failure.

In the early 1950's, as TV broadcasting was spreading across the nation from the major metropolitan areas into the hinterlands, Medley became interested in this new medium. He made inquiries to his attorneys and engineers as to the possibility of getting a channel assigned to Cookeville. The chances looked good that channel five might fit into the Upper Cumberland without undue expenses of extended hearings and possible court battles. Medley pursued a petition for channel five through his Washington legal and technical representatives. The proper papers were prepared with

documentation as to the ability of Luke Medley to operate such a facility. Possibly the headiness of his recent defeat of the wolves at the door of the AM operation spurred him on. Perhaps, as he has demonstrated for 35 years, he only wished to be in a position to furnish the people of the Upper Cumberland—his people—with every opportunity for advancement through his ability as an electronic gatekeeper. Only Medley knows the real reason, but those who know him suspect that the second reason was more important to him. Medley was like the rest of the broadcasters in the nation; he wanted another outlet to reach his audience with -both sound and picture.

The petition was presented to the FCC, and subsequently hearings were held in Washington, D.C. Medley invested money, knowing that he must actively pursue the grant. His application in 1939 for the AM operation had convinced him that one must prove to the Commission that one wants to serve his market in the best manner possible.

Sometime during the proceedings, the FCC engineers changed the mileage separation between transmitters. This was at the time that the "freeze" on Very High Frequency allocations was being lifted, with concurrent reappraisal of air mile separation between transmitters. The Commission granted the channel to WLAC-TV, Nashville, on August 6, 1954.

This was probably one of Luke Medley's greatest disappointments as a member of the broadcasting industry. He was truly heart-broken by the fact that he could not now add television to his service area.

Disappointments are numerous in all businesses. Broadcasting is no exception. But for Luke Medley, this was one of the greatest.

#### Salesmen Assist Merchants in Promotions

As the 1950's began, WHUB's salesmen were busy assisting the merchants in promotional activities. Medley believes that the merchants did not really understand how they could improve their sales by using effective promotional campaigns on their own. He feels that it took many years for the Cookeville and Upper Cumberland merchants to really understand effective promotion of the products and services which brought them their revenue.

One of the salesmen who was influential in merchandising and promotion for his clients was Henry G. Trent, Trent came to WHUB as a representative of several small market stations scattered throughout East and Middle Tennessee, He primarily represented the stations with such companies as The Chattanooga Medicine Company. Trent took great pride in his merchandising and promotional activities on behalf of his clients. Although he was not a full-time employee of

WHUB, or any other station, he still made his home base at the Cookeville station.<sup>2</sup>

In 1962, WHUB moved its studios and offices from the public square in Cookeville to a new building which Medley had designed and constructed two blocks west of the former location. Incorporated into the two-story masonry building are separate levels of activity. The lower level contains an 1,100 square foot studio, used on occasion for live entertainment programs, and at other times the room is used for community meetings of wide interest topics. The large studio serves to present public affairs forums through the facilities of the local CATV system at other times; also, simulcast by WHUB. In addition to the studio, the lower level contains an engineering workshop and storeroom, a snack bar, and rest rooms.

The second level is devoted to the broadcasting activities of the station's day-to-day programming. A

---

<sup>2</sup>Henry G. Trent had been a highly successful furniture dealer on Gay Street: , in Knoxville. His store was located where the Fowler's main store is now located; Financial reverses in the 1930's forced Trent to declare bankruptcy and lose several million dollars. Although he never recovered his lost fortune, he also never lost his "dashing gentlemen" flair. He worked twice as hard, he once said, to be a success, as he had worked at trying not to be a failure. Trent died in 1964 when his car was struck by a train near Strawberry Plains, Tennessee.

master studio, with piano and sufficient space for a small band, is used extensively by ministers and their singers on Sundays. The main studio also serves as an interview area when more than two persons are involved in the interview. Additionally, the second floor contains an announce booth, a production control room, and both AM and FM master control rooms. Medley and his staff have expansive office space on the same level of the building. A record library for each operation (AM and FM) and a newsroom complete the floor plan.

The WHUB facility is generally recognized across the state as one of the finest for a market of its size.

Medley sees a parallel growth between WHUB and the Upper Cumberland economically. He also believes that his station has contributed substantially to the growth pattern of the community through station promotion and through his personal association in public affairs.

#### Parallel Leadership—Media and Politics

Medley's belief that his association with the public through office-holding contributed to the growth of the community has merit. He had been a member of the Putnam County Quarterly Court for five years when WHUB began broadcasting. Medley retained that seat on the court from Buffalo Valley until 1948, when he moved his family to Cookeville.

During the next two years he was not directly involved with the court. However, he did keep an active interest in the court's actions. Then, in 1950, facing an almost impossible task by running as a Republican in an overwhelmingly Democratic county, he amassed better than a two-to-one margin over the incumbent for the chief administrative office of Putnam County, the County Judgeship.

He held that office for the next eight years. In 1958, he again sought the Judgeship. This time he was defeated. While awaiting the availability of the county judge's office again, Medley ran for and was elected to the mayor's office in Cookeville for two terms.

In 1966, Medley again offered his candidacy for the county Judgeship. He regained the office by the slimmest of margins.

Luke Medley lost his bid for reelection as Putnam County Judge in August 1974. He now says that was probably the best election he ever participated in because, now that he no longer holds a public office, he can look around at the problems of the county through the eyes of a plain citizen again. During the past 34 years, Medley has been involved at the city and county levels as a government official of Cookeville or Putnam County. During those 34 years, he feels that many times he may have had only one viewpoint of a problem. Now that he is no longer bound by

the oath of public office, he can become more than the chief administrative officer of his county. To say that Luke Medley will assume the robe of elder statesman is to deny knowledge of the man, however. His activity in behalf of his city, county, and the entire Upper Cumberland area will continue to be just that--active.

#### Economic Contributions by Medley and WHUB

Throughout those politically productive years, Medley says that he has held one goal higher than all others for his community and the area. His chief interest has been, and continues to be, the promotion of growth of the community and the county industrially. As county judge in the 1950's, he bought the first land for industrial use which was acquired for the county. Within a year, a company was in operation on the site with about 700 employees.

In 1940, when the station was first established, the principal industries in the community had been the Cookeville Shirt Company, employing primarily women; the Cookeville Planing Mill, a large sawmill and flooring manufacturer, employing mostly men; and the Tennessee Handle Company, which did a substantial business, including quite a bit of export handle sales. However, the primary economy of the county in 1940 was derived from agrarian resources,. Approximately 75 percent of the total economy was based on agricultural pursuits.

In the past 30 years, this situation has practically reversed itself. Now, agriculture accounts for only about 25 percent of the total economy. An estimated 20 percent comes from service such as governmental and educational pursuits. Tennessee Tech contributes substantially to the Cookeville economy through both personnel and facilities. The remaining 55 percent of the economical pie comes from industrial sources. More people are gainfully employed in Putnam County in 1975 than at any other time in its history. Putnam County was the seventh fastest growing county in Tennessee during the 1960's.

Medley contributed heavily to this growth through his association with state politics, both Republican and Democratic. For many years he held the position of secretary to the Tennessee Republican Executive Committee. During the late Governor Frank G. Clement's (Democratic) administration, Medley was chosen by the Governor to sit on a committee which was responsible for laying out the 1,041 miles of interstate highways which traverse the state. Interstate 40 travels windingly through some 40 miles of Putnam County. There are eight interchanges in the county; more than in any other county between Knoxville and Nashville.

At one time Putnam County had 70 schoolhouses. In 1975, through consolidation and an excellent bus program, the students are educated in 14 schools. Naturally, the student

population has continued to grow along with adult population. By spending vast amounts of money for newer facilities, and using better management methods, the school budget and program has improved tremendously.

Economically, the county has grown along with WHUB. In 1940, retail sales in Putnam County totaled about three million dollars. Total bank resources then were about the same figure. Today, bank resources in Putnam County are in excess of 150 million dollars with spendable income in the community also in excess of 120 million dollars. Retail sales totaled roughly 93 million dollars in 1974. All this improvement was made despite the fluctuation of the nation's economy during the same time frame.

#### Cultural, Educational, and Civic Improvements

Medley was one of the organizers of the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce in 1949. Medley says that this "mirror in the open door" has attracted industrial growth to both the community and the county.

In addition to his involvement, in the business aspects in his community, Medley also has been a very active member of the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters. He was one of the charter members at its organizational meeting in Nashville in 1949. Both Medley and Stacey Mott have served on the TAB Board of Directors.

When WHUB began broadcasting in 1940, there were two men's clubs in Cookeville—the Lions and Rotary. The Lions were organized in 1922; the Rotary Club in 1935. Medley became a member of the Lions in 1940 and a member of Rotary shortly thereafter. He remains a member of both today. He has served as president and secretary of the Lions Club.

Since the inaugural broadcast of the station, a number of civic, fraternal, and service organizations have been brought to Cookeville. Clubs such as Kiwanis, Civitan, Optimist, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and other men's groups have thrived. The distaff side has also been actively organized into various garden clubs, The Business and Professional Women's Club, and other groups which have programs mainly of interest to women. The latest organization to join the community's rolls is an Elks' Club.

Tennessee Tech has grown. When Medley was starting to prosecute the application for the station, he asked the bursar at Tech to give him an appraisal of the school's properties in 1915 (when it began), and the changes reflected until 1940. The value of the property' in 1915 was \$25,000. In 1940, the value had increased to \$750,000. In 1975, there are individual buildings on the campus which have cost in excess of three million dollars each to construct.

Tech originally started as a technical high school and junior college. It moved to a four-year college with the

granting of Bachelors' degrees. Now, Tech annually awards Masters' degrees and some Doctors of Philosophy degrees. Medley says that he is told that Tennessee Tech ranks as one of the seven outstanding engineering universities in the nation.

Student enrollment at Tech is another story. When Medley was enrolled there, the student population was about 350. The 1975 enrollment is more than 7,000 students, representing almost every county in Tennessee, possibly half the states in the nation, and 10 or 12 foreign countries. The faculty, in keeping step with student enrollment, has grown accordingly.

From a population under 4,000 in 1930, to between 16- and 17,000 residents today, Cookeville has also grown with WHUB and Tennessee Tech. The Putnam County population is now 38,200 according to Standard Rate and Data Service. The 1970 U.S. Census showed 35,487 in the county. This population increase has not come from happenstance. Luke Medley and many other Upper Cumberland concerned leaders have developed programs and plans to keep the residents, especially the younger ones, at home on the plateau.

While two or three counties in the area have continued to lose population, a neighboring county, Overton, during 1972 and 1973 was the fastest growing county in Tennessee.

Settled amid one of the most favorable resort recreation areas in the United States, between Dale Hollow, Cordell Hull, and Center Hill impoundment, Cookeville could easily boast of being the vacation spot of the nation. But, one finds that Luke Medley and his fellow Putnam Countians do not hog the spotlight. They join with their neighbors in the surrounding counties to promote the entire Upper Cumberland vacation land. Because of this, the entire area gains, not only additional revenue from initial visitors, but also a lot of return business from the friends they cultivate each year through managed tourism.

#### Localizing the Coverage from a Regional Viewpoint

Before the establishment of radio stations in adjoining counties, WHUB actively served those communities; For example, while WHUB covered the activities of the Cookeville High School Cavaliers athletic teams by live play-by-play during the 1950 and 1951 football seasons, WHUB taped the White County High School games and played them back on Saturday mornings. This enabled White County (Sparta) residents to hear their Warriors in action. When Sparta gained its own radio station, WHUB stopped the delayed broadcasts. Today, Cookeville's Cavaliers and the Tennessee Tech Golden Eagles are first in the priority rank at WHUB, but the station has also been alert to furnish play-by-play

accounts of the University of Tennessee athletic teams through the years.

While the station has drawn its contours of concern to a smaller area in most instances, the newscasts of WHUB are still largely regional in scope. Earlier in this study, it was noted that the station continues to announce obituaries from funeral homes throughout the Upper Cumberland. In addition to such coverage of area deaths, the major newscasts of the day also report events which have occurred throughout the Middle Tennessee sector.

Post-World War II events prompted WHUB to engage in more local news-gathering efforts than it had previously. When Joe Mabry returned from the Navy, he became interested in news gathering and reporting. News events, whether of interest solely to the Putnam County audience, or to a national audience, were covered. If the interest extended past area lines, then the stories were passed to United Press and CBS Radio. Mabry was also the Cookeville correspondent for The Nashville Tennessean. Hence, in addition to his stories first heard on the air over WHUB, many of the stories were later read by hundreds of thousands of subscribers throughout the Mid-South. Mabry's talent as a writer has probably never been surpassed by another staff member at WHUB. His administrative ability was also noteworthy. His ability to keep a staff of energetic

announcers at peace with each other was superb. The sound which emanated from WHUB proved that Mabry had the knack for choosing the right person for the right show.

In 1954, Mabry suddenly disappeared, and Stacey Mott was named station manager. While details still are not known about the disappearance, all Medley has said is that he found a letter from Mabry stating that he was leaving the station. Medley found the letter on a Monday morning, leading him to believe that the letter had been placed under his office door late Saturday afternoon. Mabry asked for, and received, a ride to Nashville at that time with Charles Burch, a former engineer at WHUB, who was returning to his duties at WSM in Nashville. No further word of Mabry has been received.

Mott, who has been continuously at WHUB since 1949, stepped into the vacant job and is regarded by Medley as an invaluable general manager. He was appointed a vice-president of WHUB, Incorporated several years ago.

Medley's oldest son, Martin, is the commercial manager of the station. He also is manager of the cable antenna television system in Putnam County as well as four other systems in Middle and West Tennessee.

WHUB Today

While the initial application for WHUB was not immediately available in the FCC files in Washington, it would be interesting to compare the proposed breakdown of programming for 1940 and the latest proposal filed for renewal of both the AM and the FM facilities of the station. According to the renewal application in 1973 (the last year, under which Medley was required to file for renewal), WHUB proposed the following breakdown of all programming exclusive of sports and entertainment:

<u>Type of Program</u>	<u>Hours Weekly</u>	<u>Percent</u>
News	15	11.1
Public Affairs	2	1.5
All Other	8.5	6.3

The music format proposed for AM operation was: Standard Pop-23 percent; Current Pop-43 percent; and Country and Western-34 percent. Duplication of AM service by FM was proposed to be 25 percent.

The FM operation, monaural until 1975, is now a stereo multiplex facility.

Both operations are presently staffed by 15 people, three of whom are part time employees.

No record has been located of the first rate card issued by WHUB. But Medley says that the present rate card

(Number 10) is not significantly changed from the first one. The present card is shown in Figure 17 in the Appendix.

WHUB is just as deeply involved today in the pursuit of bettering its image through service to the people as it has been for its previous 35 years of existence. The station has maintained an excellent relationship with its listeners, the advertisers, and the service-oriented people whom it serves. Tennessee Tech and area high school sports broadcasts are regular features during the individual seasons. Church services, a public service since the station's first regular Sunday morning worship service broadcast, continue to be heard weekly. The farm news which is so vital to that 25 percent of the audience still agrarian in nature is a daily feature of WHUB.

One other long-standing program which has been aired every Saturday since the beginning days is the International Sunday School Lesson. The Reverend Andrew Albert has conducted this lesson over the years. It is still a Saturday afternoon feature of WHUB.

There have been few major changes in the format of WHUB through the years. As was pointed out earlier in this chapter, music tastes have changed and the station's selections have ridden with the crest of the times. However, at no time in its history has WHUB ever used a single-type music format. It probably has led the pattern for small

market stations in continuing to play the diversified musical formats which were popular in the Golden Era of Radio—the 1930's and 1940's. Using the CBS Radio Network as a base, the station features mostly standard pop music during the drive-times and current pop early afternoon and late evening. Country and western music still makes up the fare for early morning and noontime listeners.

Luke Medley has not given in to the fads of music which swept the country as radio appeared to be dying in the early 1950's. WHUB continued to program a diversified format, maintaining its image among its listeners and advertisers. For this reason, when you ask anyone who resides in the eastern boundaries of Middle Tennessee what is the Voice of the Upper Cumberland—do not be surprised if the great majority answer you—WHUB, Cookeville, Tennessee.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY

The Radio Act of 1912 was the first legal action taken in the United States to license operators of wireless communications transmissions. The Act came about following the disastrous Titanic sinking with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. It has been established that the excessive loss came about due to lack of a radio watch at the time of the Titanic's collision with an iceberg. The radio operator on a ship less than 15 miles from the Titanic had gone off duty, and closed down his station, just minutes prior to the catastrophe.

In November 1920, Radio Station KDKA, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania became the first licensed broadcast station in the nation when it began fulltime operations by presenting election returns in the presidential campaign between Warren G. Harding and James M. Cox. Shortly after KDKA's inaugural, many other stations began appearing, mainly in the major metropolitan areas of the country. It soon became evident that some form of regulation must be established by the government to control the cacophony of sounds emanating from both fixed and portable transmitters.

Then Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, who was designated by office under the Radio Act of 1912 to license any United States citizen requesting registration, called four conferences with broadcasters to establish some form of arrangement which would offer control of the airwaves. These conferences, held from 1922 through 1925, were to offer the broadcasters themselves the chance for self-regulation, with minimal government influence. Hoover was disappointed that the broadcasters seemed to want governmental control of the industry.

As a result of the conferences, Congress passed enabling legislation in 1927 which encompassed all communications services using "wireless" means of transmission. The Radio Act of 1927 was a first step toward solving the regulation of broadcasting. The five-man Federal Radio Commission did take over the licensing and regulatory control of the wireless services. However, there remained problems which required more legislation. Some members of Congress felt that all communications services should be under one Federal agency.

Shortly after assuming the presidency in 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt sent an interdepartmental committee memorandum to Congress, expressing his thoughts about having all communications services under a single agency. His memorandum stated that the Federal Power Commission and the

Interstate Commerce Commission were autonomous, thus a single communications agency should be formed.

As a result of that memorandum, Congress enacted the Communications Act of 1934. The new legislation placed all wire and wireless communications services under a single independent agency; renamed the agency as the Federal Communications Commission; and expanded the agency from five to seven members.

Today, the Communications Act of 1934, with amendments, governs the operations of all wire and wireless communications services in the United States.

An amendment to the Radio Act of 1927, carried forward to the Communications Act of 1934, kept the number of radio stations fairly static throughout the country. The Davis Amendment to the Act of 1927, named for its originator, a Tennessee member of the House of Representatives, established five zones throughout the United States. The amendment was designed to spread the stations through the zones, thus assuring some equality between major metropolitan areas and rural areas.

The Davis Amendment became a bar to the first efforts of M. L. Medley of Buffalo Valley, Tennessee, in his quest for a radio station in Cookeville, Tennessee. When Medley first applied to the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) in the

early 1930's, he was informed that the zone was already fully subscribed and that no allocation could be made.

Medley next applied to the newer Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1938. The Davis Amendment had been repealed in 1936, unknown to Medley until his renewed interest. The FCC forwarded appropriate materials to him which would allow him to make a formal application for a radio station in Cookeville. Through the efforts of a friend, Jesse Beasley, and his brother, Beverly, who was an attorney, M. L. "Luke" Medley applied for the grant.

Medley found that his knowledge of the broadcasting industry was very limited. He traveled to Washington, B.C., shortly after notification that his application had been accepted by the FCC. His purpose for the trip was to gain as much information in advance of the FCC scheduled hearing as possible. Upon learning that he would need legal counsel for the hearing, Medley decided that he could not afford to pay an attorney from the meager assets which he possessed. He estimates that total assets in 1939, when he was in Washington, were about \$10,000; much of which he states was not cash. He had included property and household furniture in his total assets, he says. Medley decided to represent himself at the hearing.

Medley and his brother, Beverly, arranged to conduct a "trial" hearing before an FCC examiner prior to the scheduled

official hearing. When told that the case\*appeared to be ready for presentation, the two Medleys went to the FCC hearing room, presented their case and returned to Cookeville.

Other than a short dispute over the transmitter site, the permit to construct the station was granted. Upon clarification of the site dispute, Medley was informed to proceed.

A bad winter in Middle Tennessee precluded very much work on the station's physical plant. However, spring weather allowed commencement of the site preparation. WHUB Radio signed on the air on July 20, 1940. From the beginning day's broadcasts until mid-1944, the station was an independent operation. Since there was no network affiliation, the only means of providing music was from either records or from live performers in the studios.

World War II began within 18 months after the station's inaugural broadcast. Although station revenues were about equal to expenses during those 18 months, the first months of 1942 started a steady decline in advertising business. Scarcity of goods and personnel shortages contributed to the drought of money. Medley had many thoughts of returning to his father's store at Buffalo Valley during 1942 and 1943, he says. However, he remained at the helm of the operation through the stormiest time.

In 1944, Medley made his first visit to New York to seek affiliation with one of the major networks. After an unsatisfactory offer from NEC Blue Network executives, he agreed to an arrangement with Mutual Broadcasting System. Not fully satisfied with the Mutual arrangement, and still uncommitted officially since he had signed no contract, Medley visited the CBS Network offices at 485 Madison Avenue. Medley stayed in New York for the remainder of the week, meeting twice daily with a CBS station relations executive. Finally, on Friday, the CBS official told Medley that he might as well return to his station in Cookeville. If any further information was required, Medley would be notified.

On Sunday, Medley was notified by mail that he would have a full affiliation with CBS beginning July 10, 1944. WHUB Radio has been an affiliate since that date.

Medley credits the beginning of a turn-around in his station's revenues to the affiliation and the ending of World War II. With the conclusion of the war, scarce goods returned to the marketplace, thus allowing advertisers to use the station's facilities.

WHUB served as a yardstick for many station owners immediately following the war. Small market radio began to flourish throughout the country in 1946. The Upper Cumberland area was no exception. One of the first new grants was to a county adjacent to Putnam County, at which time Medley

wondered how anyone could undertake the establishment of a station in a town smaller than Cookeville. That station, plus six others now operate within range of WHUB's signal.

Medley continued to progress with the station as he entered the political arena, serving as the chief administrative officer for both the City of Cookeville as Mayor, and as the Putnam County Judge.

One failure blotted the perfect record of Luke Medley. In the early 1950's, when television began to move from the metropolitan areas out into the hinterlands, Medley petitioned the FCC for channel five to be moved to the Cookeville area. The petition was filed after a realignment of VHF television allocations by the FCC in its "Sixth Report and Order" of 1952. Transmitter separation mileages were changed, moving Cookeville into a possible interference zone of another channel five station which was already in existence. Medley lost the fight to WLAC-TV, Nashville.

#### I. CONCLUSIONS

During the 35 years of its existence, WHUB Radio has been a focal point for not only the Cookeville city audience, but for the residents of the entire Upper Cumberland plateau. For many years, it alone provided regional reporting for the people of Putnam, Cumberland, Overton, White, Smith, DeKalb, Warren, Jackson, Pickett, Fentress, and Clay Counties. From

1940 until early 1947, when WMMT (now WAKI) McMinnville began operations, WHUB was the sole station in the area.

When Luke Medley began planning for WHUB's existence, it is very apparent that he had no idea what was required to operate a radio station. The fact that Jesse Beasley had encouraged him to apply for a station, and the subsequent late-night discussions, built the fire of desire in Medley to gain the advantage over any other applicant for a radio station in Cookeville.

His naivete was demonstrated many times in his first years of operation. Even the idea that a network would be on the doorstep offering affiliation as soon as he went on the air was not dissipated immediately. He thought that NBC Blue Network would offer an affiliation when he met Kiggins in Chicago. Undaunted by the mild rebuff there, he later went to New York, again seeking approval from Kiggins of an affiliation. After the second encounter with the NBC Blue executive, Medley appears to have matured in his thinking about how his station would be accepted by the industry's executives. His approach to CBS Radio was much more businesslike and much less emotional.

Medley has always placed the community at the top of his priorities. If WHUB could help in gaining industry for the community, he allowed its use. When major considerations of community interest, such as bond issues or school

construction projects were at issue, Medley made the station's facilities available to all sides in the discussion. WHUB has always had an open microphone available to any serious, community-wide project.

While serving as County Judge and mayor, he frequently allowed WHUB's microphones to be used as sounding boards by those who opposed his stand on issues.

When WHUB became the sixteenth radio station in Tennessee in 1940, it assumed a leader's role in serving not only the public interest, convenience, and necessity, it also truly became the "HUB of the Upper Cumberland." For through the foresighted leadership of Luke Medley and the approximately 120 employees who have passed through the pay line there in 35 years of operation, Cookeville and Putnam County have definitely become better places to work and live.

From the beginning, WHUB has been a pillar in the community. Program material has been presented for all elements of the audience. Farm programs, to include weekly reports from the county and home demonstration agents, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service representative, University of Tennessee extension service materials from the UT Radio Tape Network, and all other available sources of rural material have been used. The daily farm and market reports from Nashville and Knoxville, stock market reports, the entire gamut of price indices which

might be of interest to WHUB's diversified\*audiences have been incorporated into their program schedule.

There is no indication that Luke Medley plans to retire to some neutral corner now that he no longer is the Putnam County Judge. No mention is made that he will sit quietly by and advise the younger men who have assumed his old positions of responsibility on how those offices should be run. Always, Luke Medley's voice will be heard. Ever his knowledge will be available, if requested. But Luke Medley has gone back to the first love of his life... he has re-entered the dream of his younger years . . . the dream that he and a friend, Jesse Beasley, shared so many years ago. This dream now is his retreat to which he comes to relax. All the years of hard work are behind him now. WHUB is a success. The Voice of the Upper Cumberland still carries the messages which he and Jesse Beasley dreamed about. No longer is there concern about whether or not Cookeville, Tennessee, can support a radio station. The proof has been there for the past 35 years.

In retrospect, it is doubtful that a man with less fortitude than Luke Medley could have opened a radio station in Cookeville, Tennessee, at the end of a great depression and the beginning of a great world war, and have still owned it 35 years later. Men of lesser stamina would long ago have "closed the doors and gone back to clerking at the store!"

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnouw, Erik. A Tower in Babel – A History of Broadcasting in the United States. Vol. I. New York: Oxford Univ. Press . 1966.
- Barnouw, Erik. The Golden Web– A History of Broadcasting in the United States. Vol. II. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 1968.
- Barnouw, Erik. The Image Makers – A History of Broadcasting in the United States. Vol. III. New York: Oxford Univ. Press. 1970.
- Beasley, Jesse M. Personal correspondence between Mr. Beasley and the author. January 15, 1974.
- Broadcasting. Vol. 17, No. 1. July 1, 1939. Washington, B.C.: Broadcasting Publications, Inc. 1939. 100-166.
- Broadcasting Stations of the United States, U.S. Federal Radio Commission. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government ' Printing Office. 1931.
- Broadcasting Yearbook, 1974. Washington, D.C. : Broadcasting Publications, Inc. 1974.
- Broadcasting Yearbook, 1975. Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Publications, Inc. 1975.
- Communications Act of 1934. Public Law 416, 73rd Cong., June 19, 1934.
- Coppinger, Libby, and Carolyn Underwood. Thesis andDissertation Manual (Rev. Ed.). Knoxville: The Univ. of Tennessee. 1969.
- Duke, Charles R. Personal correspondence between Mr. Duke and the author. May 21, 1974.
- Emery, Edwin, Phillip H. Ault, and Warren K. Agee. Introduction to Mass Communications. 3rd Ed. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co. 1971.

Federal Communications Commission Reports. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Fifteenth Census of the U.S., 1930. Vol. I., Population. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1931.

Fowler, Zachary S. "A Study of the Chronological Development of the Radio Broadcasting Stations in Athens, GA." Journalism Abstracts. Vol. II. 1973.

Head, Sydney W. Broadcasting in America, A Survey of Television and Radio. 2nd Ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1972.

Hodges, John C. and Mary E. Whitten. Harbrace College Handbook. 7th Ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1972.

Hunter, Charles F. "A Historical Study of Radio Station KSUB and its Cultural and Economic Implications as They Affect Iron County, Utah." Journalism Abstracts. Vol. III. 1965.

Marshall, Susie B. Collins Gem Dictionary of Spelling and Word Division. London: Collins. 1968.

Medley, M. L. Personal Interview. November 17, 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_. Personal Interview. October 19, 1974.

Mott, Stacey J. Personal Interview. January 15, 1974.

Oakley, Turley M. Radio Broadcasting-Tennessee. Knoxville: The Univ. of Tennessee. 1953.

Putnam County Herald. July 6, 1944.

\_\_\_\_\_. July 20, 1944.

\_\_\_\_\_. July 27, 1944.

\_\_\_\_\_. October 26, 1944.

\_\_\_\_\_. March 9, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_. July 19, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_. September 6, 1945.

Radio Act of 1927. Public Law 632, 69th Cong., February 23, 1927.

Radio Broadcasting – Bibliography . Kenneth R. Sparks, ed. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse Univ. 1971.

Radio Shack Dictionary of Electronics. Rudolf E. Graf, ed. 4th Ed. Fort Worth, TX: Radio Shack, a Tandy Corp. Co. 1974.

Roget's Thesaurus of the English Language in Dictionary Form. Garden City, New York: Garden City Books. 1940.

Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940. Vol. I., Population. Washington, B.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1942.

Station License Record File. Washington, B.C.: Broadcast License Division, Federal Communications Commission.

Station Ownership File. Washington, B.C.: Broadcast License Division, Federal Communications Commission.

Statutes at Large of the United States of America from January 1935 to June 1936, 74th Congress. Vol. 49., Part I, Public Laws. Chap. 511, p. 1475. Washington, B.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1936.

United States versus Zenith Radio Corp., 12F (2nd). 614 at 618 (1926).

Watson, Gaylon H. "A History of KWTO, Springfield, MO." Journalism Abstracts. Vol. II. 1964.

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam Co. 1965 .

Weeks, Lewis E. "Order Out of Chaos: The Formative Years of American Broadcasting, 1920-1927." Journalism Abstracts . Vol. II. 1964.

Word Finder , The . J. I. Rodale, ed. Emmaus, PA: Rodale Press. 1947.

World Almanac and Book of Facts, The, 1975. New York: Newspaper Enterprise Assn. 1974.

## APPENDIX



Figure 1. Certificate for Patriotic Service - 1940.

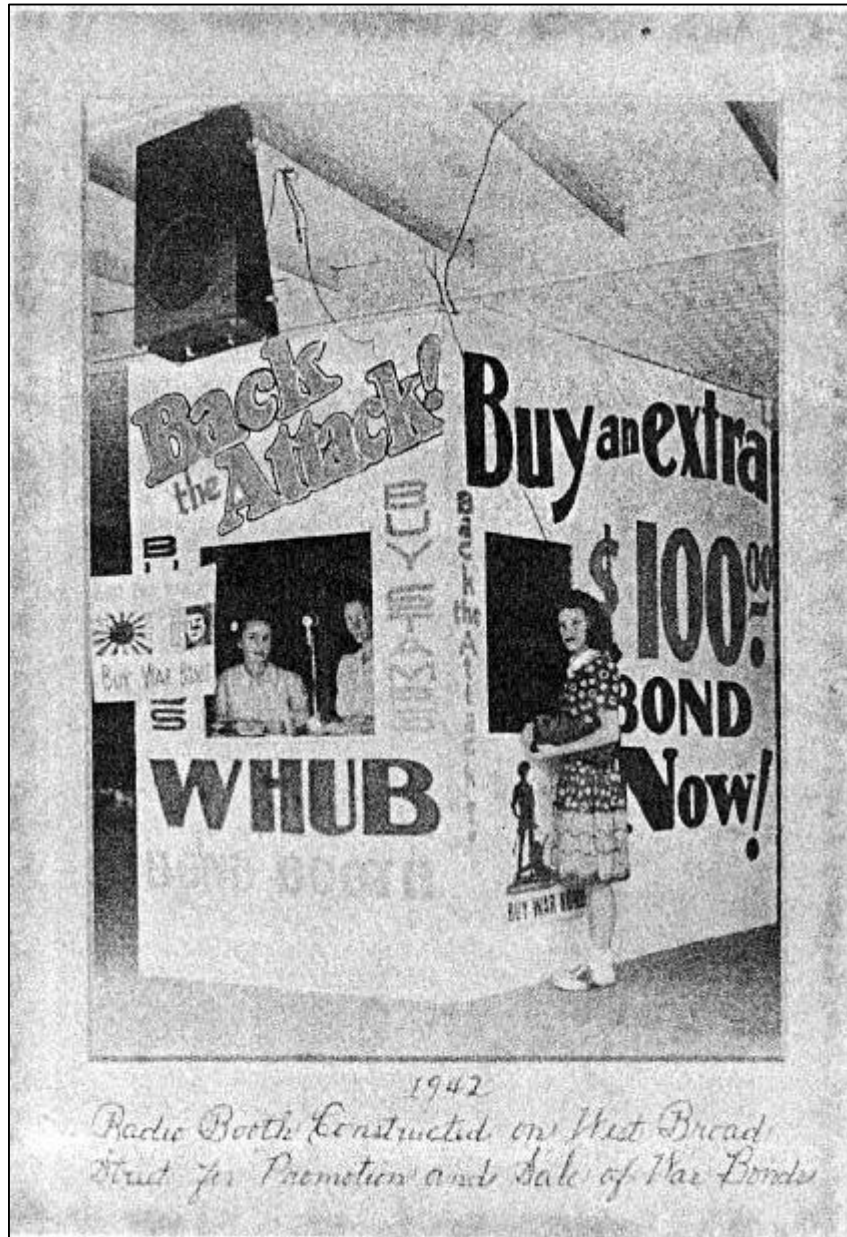


Figure 2. Buy War Bonds Booth - 1942.

Radio Booth Constructed on West Broad Street for Promotion and Sale of War Bonds.

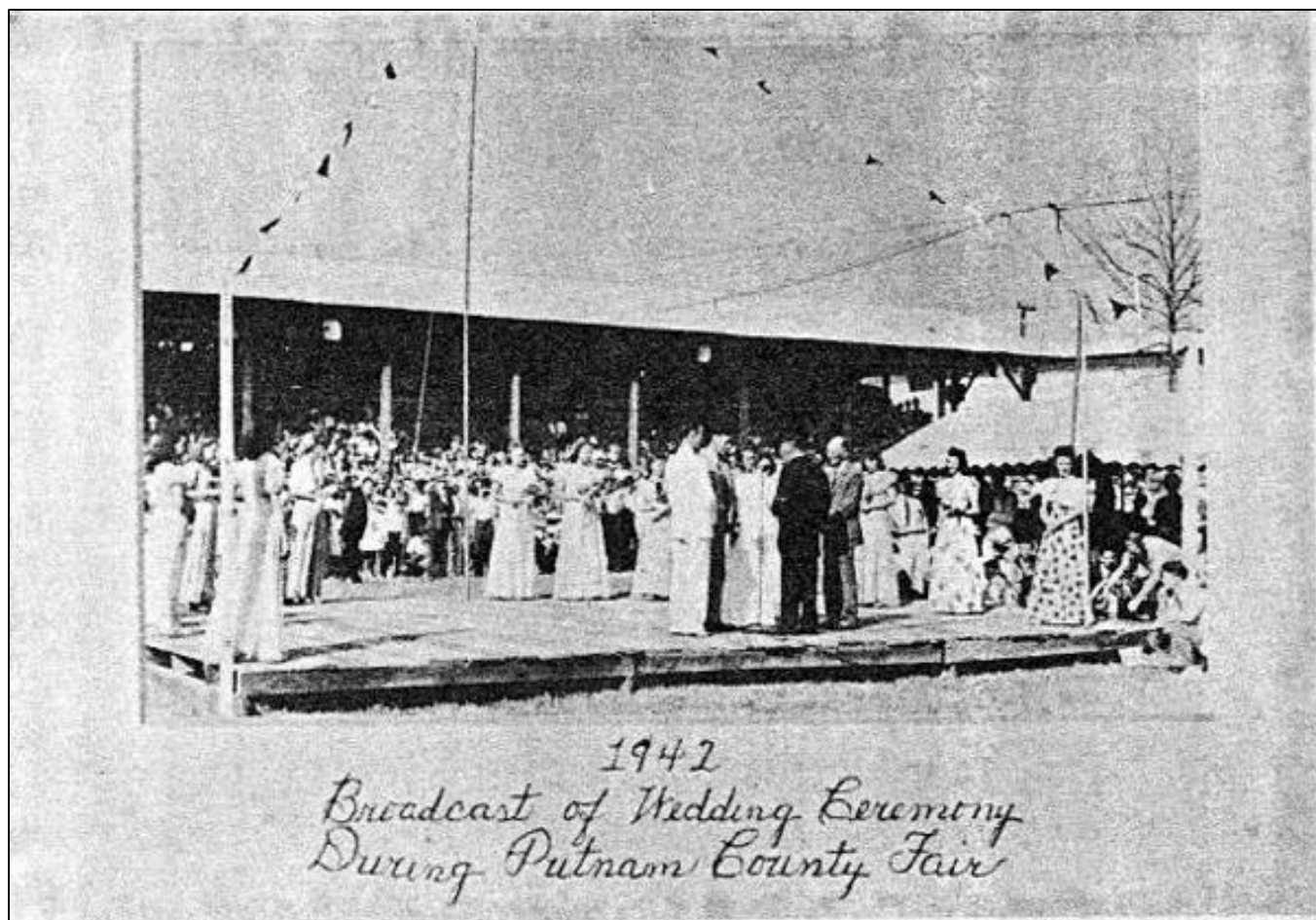


Figure 3. On the air wedding - 1942.

Broadcast of Wedding Ceremony  
During Putnam County Fair



Figure 4. Esso Amateur Hour - 1942/1943.



Figure 5. Children's Gospel Hour - 1944.

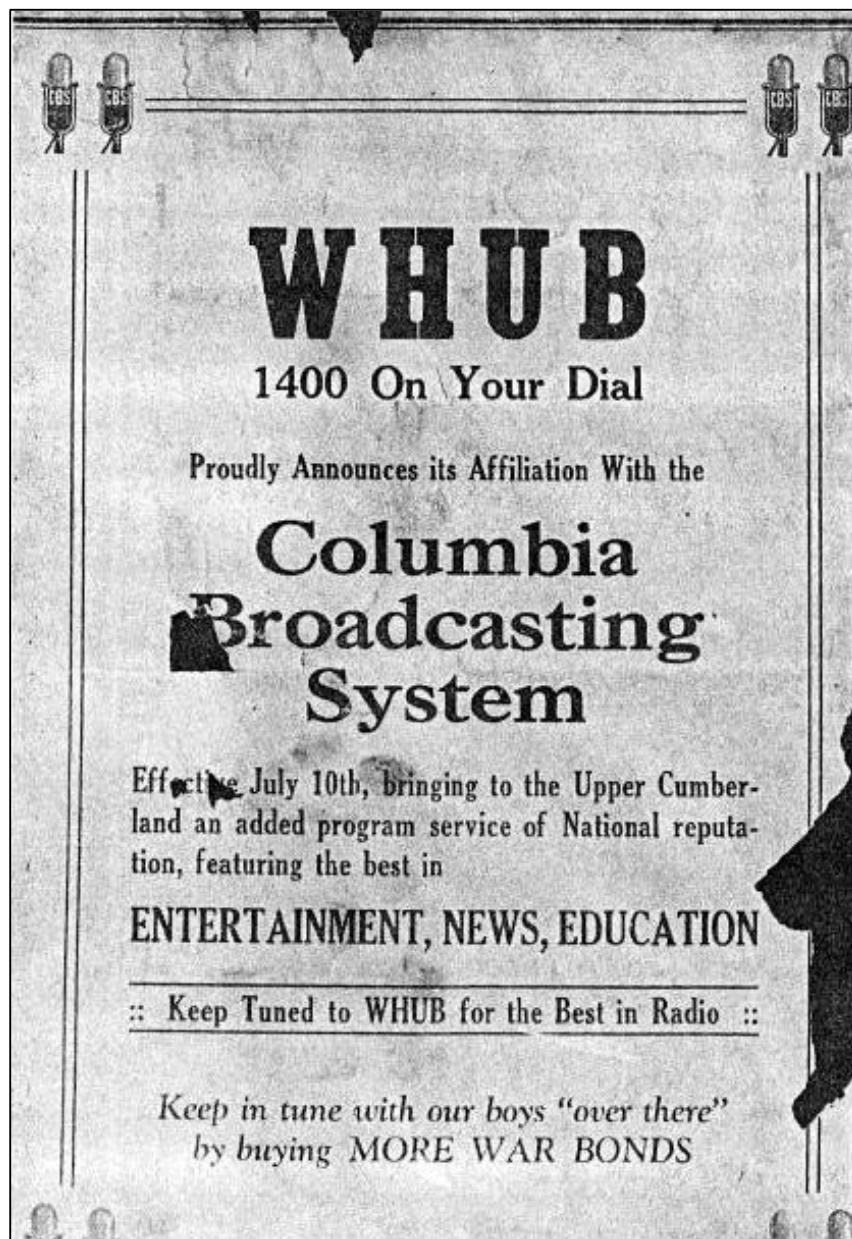


Figure 6. CBS Affiliation Announcement - 1944.

WHUB  
 1400 On Your Dial  
 Proudly Announces its Affiliation With the  
 Columbia  
 Broadcasting  
 System  
 Effective July 10<sup>th</sup>, bringing to the Upper Cumberland  
 An added program service of National reputation,  
 Featuring the best in  
 ENTERTAINMENT, NEWS, EDUCATION  
 Keep Tuned to WHUB for the Best in Radio  
 Keep in tune with our boys "over there"  
 By buying MORE WAR BONDS



MUSTARD AND GRAVY UNIQUE IN RADIO - 27 July 1944

(Transcription of Figure 7)

Both Are Prosperous Business Men: Married Sisters, and Entered Radio Contest For Fun. Couldn't Quit.

Something different in radio entertainment comes to the listeners over WHUB in the Mustard and Gravy programs sponsored by Retonga every day Monday through Saturday at 8:30 A.M. Few shows approach these entertainers in versatility, humor, and fidelity to characters portrayed.

Hillbilly, blackface, even the imitation of a brass band and a circus midway seems easy to Frank Rice "Mustard" and Ernest Stokes "Gravy". The announcing on the program is by Clint Faris, whose naturally friendly, cheerful voice adds to the attractiveness of the fifteen minute shows.

The team of Mustard and Gravy is unusual in several respects. Both are prosperous grocers and don't depend on radio for a living. They married sisters. Although their wives are good radio entertainers they seldom take part in the programs.

The advent of Stokes and Rice on radio was more or less accidental. They and their wives enjoy music of the fireside variety and of evenings used to entertain themselves and their neighbors in Wilson, NC with songs and instruments. Finally a radio station was opened in Wilson and an amateur contest was staged. Mustard and Gravy entered for the fun of it and won. They were engaged for a week's stay on the station, and had no thought of staying longer. When their week was up, letters began to pour into the station asking for a continuation of the Mustard and Gravy program. This led to more radio engagements and finally to the formation of a group of entertainers who gave shows in nearby towns.

"This is when it ceased to be fun," said Mr. Stokes. "It was hard to keep everybody happy, so we disbanded the troupe and quit radio."

But the station and their friends would not let them quit, and soon they were back, just the two of them, under the names of Mustard and Gravy. They have been sponsored by Retonga for about two years. Recently their programs were transcribed and put on a score of stations throughout the East and South, and were instantaneous success.

Messrs Stokes, Rice, and Faris work together as a team. Their shows are seldom rehearsed. Gravy works on the general situation with suggestions from Mustard and Faris. Most of the dialogue is ad lib. Cues are passed from one to the other all through the show. If Mustard tries to borrow four bits from Gravy he may be telling him that the program still has four minutes to go. They write many of their songs themselves.

Both Mr. Stokes and Mr. Rice are native North Carolinians. Mr. Faris is a native of Georgia.

**OUR PLEDGE**

WHUB was founded in 1940 to provide a service to the public. Through peace and war it has functioned "in the public interest" for four consecutive years. Well aware of its position of leadership, WHUB renews its pledge to continue that type of service which gained for it a national reputation as

**The Voice of the Upper Cumberland**  
**W H U B**  
 1400 On Your Dial  
 M. L. Medley, President

---

**WHUB**  
 Brings You the Biggest Shows in Town




Figure 8. Our pledge/greatest show - 1944

OUR PLEDGE

WHUB was founded in 1940 to provide a service to the public. Through peace and war it has functioned "in the public interest" for four consecutive years. Well aware of its position of leadership, WHUB renew its pledge to continue that type of service which gained for it a national reputation as

The Voice of the Cumberland

W H U B

1400 On Your Dial

M. L. Medley, President

W H U B

Brings You the Biggest Shows in Town

**THE BIGGEST SHOW IN TOWN**



**JOAN DAVIS SHOW WITH ANDY RUSSELL!** Bloodhounds? No, but she might have a billy and a pair of handcuffs stuffed in her pocket. For Joan Davis is off on another man hunt, and the Joan Davis Show is off on another merry-go-round of fun for everybody. May we add that Andy Russell sings as only this new star can sing? Plus Harry Von Zell! Monday, 7:30 P.M.



**WE, THE PEOPLE!**  
The little people - your next door neighbor - the you and I of America, speak for themselves. Mike Boulton introduces the stories packed with the heart and hopes of our great nation. Sunday, 9:30 P.M.



**FRANK SINATRA!**  
The number 1 man on young America's popularity parade sings the songs you love and is host to the world's greatest stars tonight! Wednesday, 8:00 P.M.



**ANDRE KOSTELANETZ!**  
Shimmering beautiful arrangements of your favorite melodies. And an unusual weekly Youth Award which may be won by the boy next door! Thursday, 8:00 P.M.



**KATE SMITH SINGS!**  
Stars in her eyes ...a voice and heart as big as all America. Hear Kate and Ted Collins tonight when they bring songs and laughter to all the family. Friday, 7:30 P.M.

**WHUB 1400** ON YOUR DIAL  
COLUMBIA NETWORK

The Biggest Show in Town

**JOAN DAVIS SHOW WITH ANDY RUSSELL!**  
Bloodhounds? No, but she might have a billy and a pair of handcuffs stuffed in her pocket. For Joan Davis is off on another man hunt, and the Joan Davis Show is off on another merry-go-round of fun for everybody. May we add that Andy Russell sings as only this new star can sing? Plus Harry Von Zell! Monday, 7:30 p.m.

**WE, THE PEOPLE!**  
The little people - your next door neighbor - the you and I of America, speak for themselves. Mike Boulton introduces the stories packed with the heart and hopes of our great nation. Sunday, 9:30 p.m.

**Frank Sinatra!**  
The number 1 man on young America's popularity parade sings the songs you love and is host to the world's greatest stars tonight! Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.

**Andre Kostelanetz!**  
Shimmering beautiful arrangements of your favorite melodies. And an unusual weekly Youth Award which may be won by the boy next door! Thursday, 8:00 p.m.

**Kate Smith Sings!**  
Stars in her eyes ...a voice and heart as big as all America. Hear Kate and Ted Collins tonight when they bring songs and laughter to all the family. Friday, 7:30 p.m.

Figure 9. Biggest Show in Town - CBS Week - 1945.





Figure 11. Name the CBS stars contest - 1945.  
 The Biggest Show in Town  
 CBS WHUB CBS  
 You Can Win!  
 Name the Stars  
 40.00 Cash  
 Get Entry Blank Inside Store

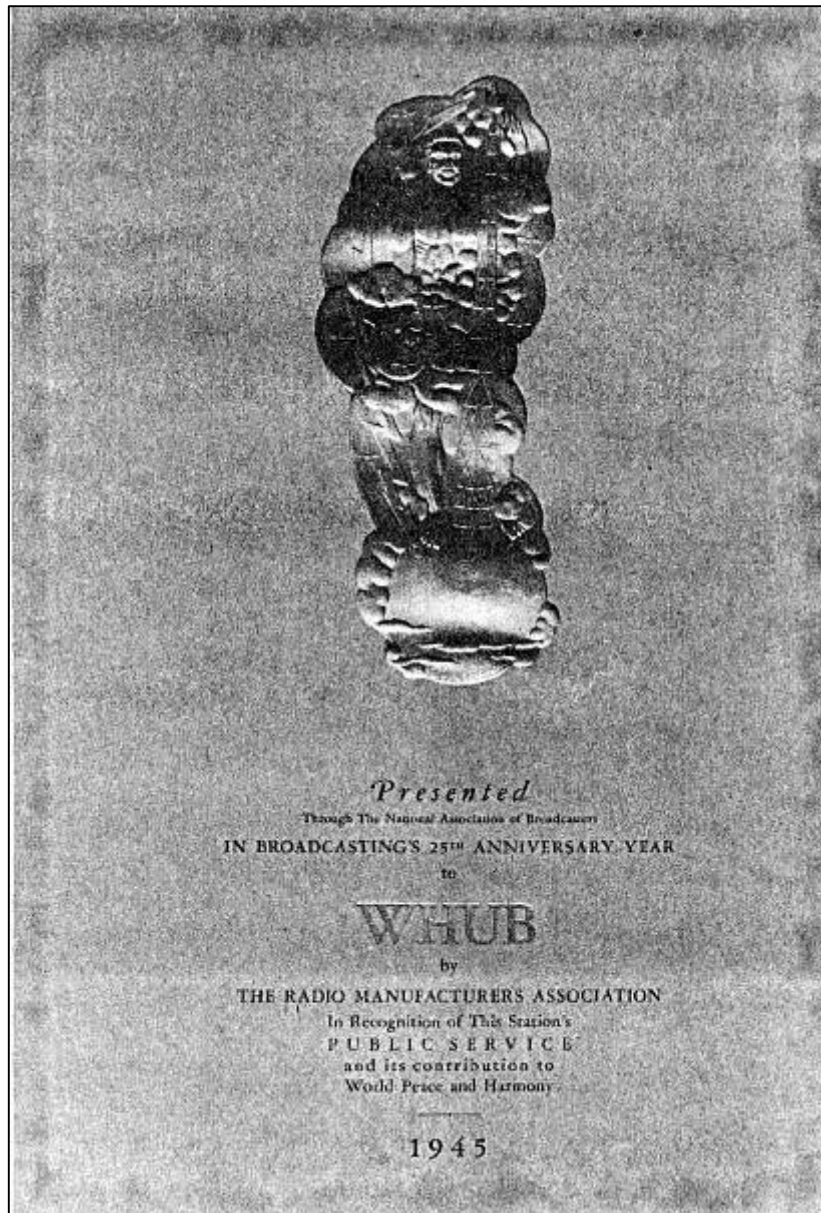


Figure 12. Radio Manufacturers Association Award - 1945.

Presented  
 Through the National Association of Broadcasters  
 IN BROADCASTING'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY YEAR  
 to  
 W H U B  
 by  
 THE RADIO MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION  
 In Recognition of This Station's  
 PUBLIC SERVICE  
 And its contribution to  
 World Peace and Harmony

---

1945





Figure 14. United Press Award - 1955.

This is to Certify That  
 Station W H U B  
 Has Been A Part Of The World Wide  
 News Distribution System of  
 The United Press  
 Continuously Since July 16, 1940  
 Frank Bartholomew



Figure 15. CBS Thirty-Year Golden Mike Award - 1974.

## WHUB Rate Information

Card No. 10 October 1, 1975

FIXED TIMES		
NUMBER	60's	30's
1	4.70	3.40
100	4.40	3.20
300	4.10	3.05
1000	3.95	2.90

TRAFFIC PLAN		
(Circulate 6 - 10 a.m. & 3 - 7 p.m.)		
NUMBER	60's	30's
1	4.00	2.95
100	3.75	2.70
300	3.60	2.60
1000	3.45	2.40

TOTAL AUDIENCE PLAN		
NUMBER	60's	30's
1	3.20	2.35
100	3.00	2.20
300	2.90	2.05
1000	2.75	1.95

---

WHUB-FM (Stereo 98.3)		
NUMBER	60's	30's
1	2.10	1.60
100	2.00	1.45
300	1.95	1.40
1000	1.90	1.30

Announcements sold subject to pre-emption for programs and special events.  
Rates subject to agency commission.

Figure 16. WHUB Rate Card Number 10.



Figure 17. M.L. "Luke" Medley - 1975.

## VITA

John Harvey Carr was born in Maynardville, Tennessee, on February 16, 1927. He attended elementary school in that city and was graduated from Central High School, Knoxville, Tennessee in 1944. He entered the United States Army as a Private in May 1945. Following his military service, he entered Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, where, in March 1952, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. He was employed as a staff announcer at WHUB, Cookeville, Tennessee during his four years as an undergraduate. He again entered the United States Army in June 1952 having been commissioned a Second Lieutenant from Reserve Officers Training Corps at Tennessee Tech. Following release from active duty in March 1954, he returned to broadcasting for the next nine years, serving in administrative capacities including general managership of WOKE, Oak Ridge, and WLAF, LaFollette, both in Tennessee. He returned to the U.S. Army in November 1963, serving two tours in the Republic of Viet Nam, one tour in Brussels, Belgium, as well as duty in the continental United States. He was medically retired as a Major in October 1971.

He entered the Graduate School at The University of Tennessee in March 1972, and received the Master of Science

degree with a major in Communications in December 1975. He is a member of Alpha Epsilon Rho.

He is married to the former Mary Sue Garrett of Algood, Tennessee. They are the parents of four children, Marti, John H. III, Robert E., and Richard J. Carr.