



# THE WMT RADIO STORY

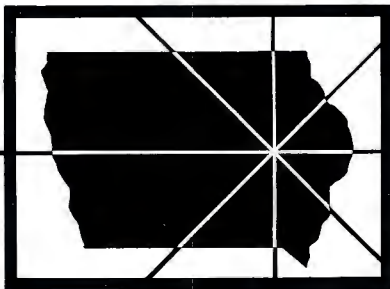
*40TH ANNIVERSARY: 1922-1962*

THE VOICE OF IOWA  
FOR 40 YEARS

WJAM

1922

WMT  
RADIO  
1962



The history of Radio Station WMT is the history of broadcasting itself, for the men who built the station helped build the industry. Located in the heart of America's richest agricultural and industrial belt, WMT has served since its beginning both as a proving ground for the great and a springboard for the unknown. Many former staff members have become the famous names of today . . . its executives have earned a place in radio history . . . and its 40 years of broadcasting in the public interest have gained for it respect and admiration through the radio industry. It's quite a story!

## On July 30, 1922...40 Years ago...

. . . Radio Station WJAM, forerunner of today's WMT, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, went on the air with two carbon transmitters (the word "microphone" hadn't been invented yet!), a 115-foot tower, a "powerful" 20-watt transmitter, and high hopes. Today, 40 years later, WMT Radio, "The Voice of Iowa," is on the air with 21 microphones, 600 kilocycles, 5,000 watts, and still higher hopes for continuing success in our next 40 years!

WJAM was the project of Douglas M. (better known as "Tex") Perham, who designed and built the first five wireless telephone stations in the U. S. The first broadcasting equipment was housed in a converted garage on Cedar Rapids' southwest side. Soon the "studios" were moved into three rooms of Perham's home at 322 Third Avenue, S.W. The antenna and transmitting tower were mounted on the roof.

Commenting on the tower, a 1922 newspaper article reported: "Bystanders stopped in open-mouthed wonder and gazed at it, speculating on its purpose. Some thought it was a windmill. Others said it was to be a signal for airplanes. Still others, more advised, explained that it was to be a radio aerial tower."

Design suggestions for the first studio were offered by Mrs. Helen Kacena Stark of Cedar Rapids. An early description of them reads: "the studio is entirely draped with heavy pleated drapes which are suspended on brass rods which hold them four inches away from the walls. Doors and windows are heavily curtained."

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
Telegram	T
Day Letter	DL
Night Message	N
Night Letter	N L

If name of these three symbols appears after the check (operator's word) that is a telegram. Special message character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

**WESTERN UNION**  
  
**TELEGRAM**

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
Telegram	T
Day Letter	DL
Night Message	N
Night Letter	N L

If name of these three symbols appears after the check (operator's word) that is a telegram. Special message character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT      GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

RECEIVED AT 314 SECOND AVE., (OPPOSITE POST OFFICE) CEDAR RAPIDS, IA.      7 32

A 30 24 COLLECT 14 EXTRA

DC WASHINGTON DC 29 #80A

D M PERHAM

0 515  
 CEDARRAPIDS IOWA

AUTHORIZED TO OPERATE BROADCASTING STATION PENDING ACTION ON FORMAL APPLICATION WAVELENGTH THREE HUNDRED SIXTY METERS CALL LETTERS

WJAM REPEAT WJAM

S W STRATTON ACTING SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

This is how it all began . . . broadcast authorization.



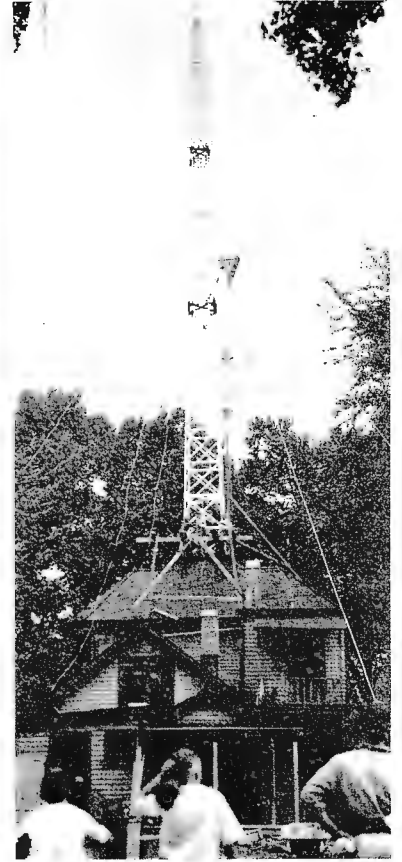
In 1922, radio comes to Cedar Rapids. Our first call-letters were WJAM . . . our first home—this converted garage.



Founder "Tex" Perham makes first test broadcast July 19, 1922, via carbon transmitter (the word "microphone" hadn't been invented yet!) A \$5.00 prize went to listener reporting from farthest distance (60 miles).



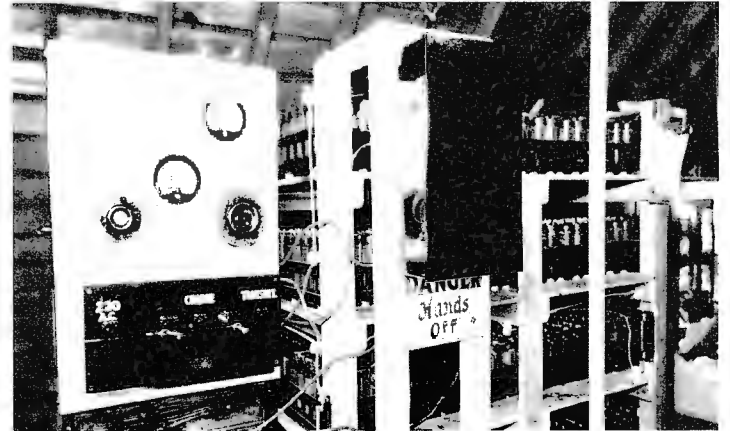
Nattily-attired but unidentified 1922 songstress looks suspiciously at WJAM's 50-pound microphone. Another songstress, Mrs. Helen Kacena Stark, highlighted first broadcast with "On The Gin-Ginny Shore."



Broadcasts were beamed from this 115' tower, mounted atop Perham's home in southwest Cedar Rapids. The studio and transmitter were in the garage behind the house.



Early Iowa radio history originated in this corner of WJAM's "heavily draped" studio, where the area's top musicians and lecturers provided radio entertainment.



On July 30, 1922, this powerful 20-watt transmitter figured in national radio history, as it sent out the first program to be amplified and heard by a crowd. Before this, only people using ear-phones and crystal sets could hear programs.

## “Don’t Bring Me Posies . . . When It’s

“The floor is covered with several thicknesses of deadening felt, over which is stretched a heavy velvet carpet. Every means has been provided to produce perfect acoustic effect which is so necessary to the pleasing broadcast of complex musical numbers.” The studio microphone was mounted “on a special mahogany pedestal.” Incidentally, no visitors were permitted inside the building when programs were being broadcast, owing (the first records say) “to the fact that the slightest noises are readily picked up and transmitted.”

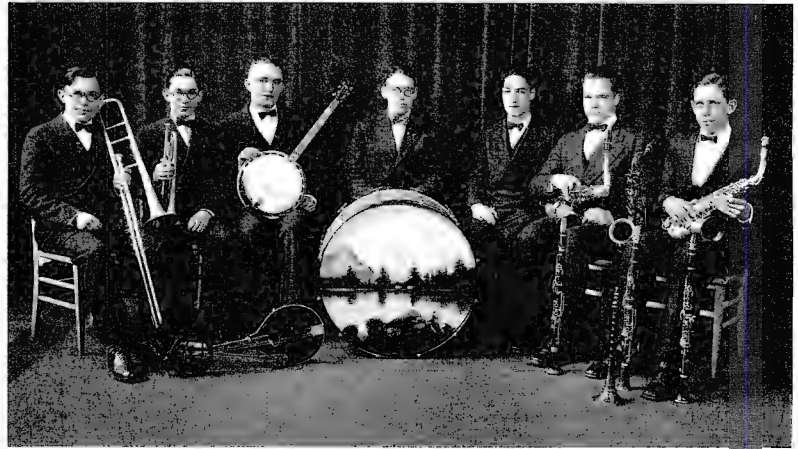
WJAM Radio’s first program was an hour of music by a Cedar Rapids band called “The Manhattan Dance Orchestra,” directed by Max Sturges. Among other selections, songs on the first program included “Don’t Bring Me Posies When It’s Shoesies That I Need” . . . “Kitten On The Keys” . . . “Those Longing-For-You Blues” . . . and a little something called “Deedle Deedle Dum.” The first program was reported as heard by pioneer radio fans on their crystal sets in Vinton, Monticello, Olin, Amana, and Hopkinton. There was also a report from Centerville—100 miles away!

It was heard, too, by Cedar Rapids folks who didn’t even own a crystal set! As an experiment, The Serenado Manufacturing Company, picked up the hour on its crystal detector, amplified it and directed it through their open office window on the 4th floor of the O.R.C. Building to a large crowd assembled on the street below. Early records list this as the first successful public test in the history of radio!

At its inception, WJAM was on the air for only one hour a day, from 7 to 8 p.m. on 1120 kilocycles. All of the first broadcasts were musical and some of the earlier Cedar Rapids groups included “The Weatherwax Quartet,” “The Hanford American Legion Post Drum and Bugle Corps,” “The Murray Family Orchestra,” “The Sunshine Six,” “Bill Bontly’s Novelty Orchestra,” “Guy Clark’s Orchestra,” “Dawson Grim and his Orchestra” and “The Strand Theatre Orchestra.” Trumpet duets by Dudley Nashold and Fayette Moore were favorites, as were solos by harpist Amanda Barham, pianist Ruth Hurtt Yount and Professor Joseph Kitchin, violinist.



No recorded music for WJAM!—Listeners were treated to live entertainment from the area’s top musical groups. Many early broadcasts featured The Murray Family Orchestra. This 1922 photo shows: Estella,



If you were a “Charleston” dancer in the twenties, you may recall Dawson Grim and his Orchestra, another WJAM favorite. This 1924 group included Orval Stow, Lester Stow, W. Litsey, Dawson Grim, Art Jackson, Claude Boles and Vic Hoagland. “Dig” that crazy drumhead!

# Shoesies That I Need!"



trumpet and whistling soloist; Grace, trombone; Billy K., drums; Virginia, cello; Irma Hromek, piano; and Ida, violin, bandleader and reader.



This historic photo was taken on the night of August 30, 1924. The occasion was WJAM's first broadcast away from the studio, at Dreamland Ballroom, which featured the celebrated Guy Clark Orchestra. The newspaper reported that "new remote control broadcast equipment will hurl the strains through the air!" Band members, left to right in front: George Zbanek, Emil Petranek, Russell Bash, Charlie Martin, Chris Christensen and Adolph Skersick. In back, Vince Stodola, Guy Clark, Fred Erickson, Dempsey Jones and "Tex" Perham, who operated the engineering controls.



The nationally-known Ray-O-Vac Twins, Ross Wildey and Billy Sheehan, were heard regularly over WJAM in the twenties.



In the 1920's, vaudeville and silent movies were in their hey-day, and each theater featured its own orchestra. The Strand Theater Orchestra of Cedar Rapids, under the direction of Everett Foster, was one of the midwest's finest, and frequently presented special broadcasts over WJAM. Here you see Leo Dvorak, Fred Becker, Frank Kopp, Everett Foster, Joe Stoddard, Ralph Jackson, Mabel Paul, Charlie Brabbitt and Joe Hicks, Sr.

# WMT'S EARLY YEARS:--THE ROARING TWENTIES...WJAM...“TEX” PE

On August 3, 1922, in response to requests by fans in Monticello and Central City, WJAM began to broadcast Mississippi Valley, American and National league baseball scores. Also, by the end of the first week of broadcasting, social clubs in Marion were formed, with WJAM programs as featured entertainment. Other eastern Iowa towns soon followed the trend.

While music and baseball scores were the first items aired, in the next few weeks speeches, religious programs and market reports were added. A big event in the fall was the telegraphic report of the 1922 World Series between the Yankees and the Giants on which the station (early log entries again say) “scooped Chicago stations 10 to 15 minutes in the doing!” Another first year broadcast highlight was a pickup of French Premier Clemenceau’s Chicago speech, “marred somewhat by the fact that ‘the tiger’ got so enthused that he walked beyond the range of the transmitting microphones!”

Another live broadcast worthy of note came on March 7, 1924, when “Tex” Perham turned his WJAM microphone over to a “new-fangled fad:” jazz! For a full hour, listeners heard the exciting sound of New Orleans jazz pioneer King Oliver and his famous “Creole Jazz Band”!

Another very significant development in WMT’s family tree came 10 days after WJAM went on the air. On August 9, 1922, another Cedar Rapids radio enthusiast, Harry Paar, began operation with an amateur station. The call letters: W9CNF—later becoming commercial as WKAA and still later changed to KWCR. His transmitter and meager studio facilities were housed in a barn-type building on the east side of town at 1444 Second Avenue. So, during this neophyte period of Cedar Rapids radio, there were actually two stations operating simultaneously—soon to combine into WMT Radio.



Cedar Rapids’ two most outstanding radio pioneers were “Tex” Perham, right, and Harry F. Paar. This 1923 photo was taken in the control room of Paar’s amateur station (W9CNF), forerunner of commercial stations WKAA and KWCR. Both stations belong in our family tree as they were eventually combined into WMT.



Western music was as popular in 1928 as it is in 1962—Slim Thompson’s group performed then over KWCR, which from 1928 to 1934 was the only radio station located in Cedar Rapids, since WJAM’s call-letters were changed to WMT and moved to Waterloo in 1928.

# RHAM...KWCR...HARRY PAAR...SNAKES...HARRY SHAW...WMT RADIO!

In 1928, WJAM Radio was sold to Harry Shaw, who moved its studios to Waterloo, and changed the call letters to "W-M-T", taking these letters from the name of his newspaper, "The Waterloo Morning Tribune." Mr. Shaw's radio activity, however, was not limited to WMT, for he became one of the first presidents of the National Association of Broadcasters and helped in the founding of "Broadcasting" magazine. He was also one of the first broadcasters to realize the importance of low dial location, thus securing the all-covering and much-envied position that WMT now occupies on the broadcast band—that of 600 kilocycles. In addition, Mr. Shaw was one of the few newspapermen in the country at that time who foresaw the importance of radio and newspaper cooperation, and he built WMT's policy around the words "public service." He also introduced a young network called "Columbia" to WMT listeners on a limited basis. This first CBS affiliation lasted for five years.

Soon after the move to Waterloo, Harry Paar's Cedar Rapids station (WKAA) changed its call letters to KWCR, became commercial, and moved its studios downtown to the second floor of the Don Cook Building (across the street west from the Roosevelt Hotel). Broadcasting from the KWCR facilities was hampered somewhat by the fact that Mr. Paar had a definite fondness for snakes! And, not only snakes—but monkeys, wildcats, and a variety of large hovering birds as well! The snakes had the wonderful habit of sliding out the windows and down the drainpipes to sun themselves on the awnings of the shop below—not to mention slithering across the floor during a live broadcast! Despite this "radio-active" menagerie, the show went on!



Harry Shaw—owner and manager of WMT, 1928-1934.



# 1931--HARRY SHAW OPERATES WMT IN WATERLOO... COWLES BRO

In 1931, two brothers purchased the part-time, 100-watt KWCR from Harry Paar\* and, although at that time they were comparatively unknown as broadcasters, today they are recognized as pioneers in the regional network field. They were John and Mike Cowles of the Des Moines Register & Tribune. The Cowles brothers brought in two more brothers, Sumner and Bill Quarton, to operate KWCR. The Cedar Rapids Broadcast Company was formed and, under this new administration, many progressive and wide-sweeping business and programming changes were made. The radio studios were moved into more spacious quarters on the 7th floor of the Montrose Hotel and two new 75-foot transmitting towers were erected on the roof. With these new facilities, power was boosted to 500-watts daytime and 250-watts nighttime. The studios were formally opened January 11, 1932, and served an eight-county area. It was in these studios that one local boy got his first start in the entertainment business. His name was Don DeFore!

\*Mr. Paar's snakes, monkeys, birds and wildcats were not included in the deal!



Third Avenue in Cedar Rapids looked like this in the early 1930's when the next important chapter in WMT's history began—new management, new studios and equipment, increased power, and a new home in the Montrose Hotel (note antenna on the hotel roof).



Sumner Quarton.

**Sumner D. Quarton**  
President and General Manager  
Cedar Rapids Broadcast Co.

*HISTORY: A graduate, University of Iowa Law School; Practicing Attorney in Algona and Des Moines; Former Kossuth County Attorney and Secretary Kossuth County Fair Association: NOW: A permanent and enthusiastic resident of Cedar Rapids.*



William B. Quarton.

**W. B. Quarton**  
Advertising  
Salesman

# THEIRS PURCHASE KWCR IN CEDAR RAPIDS!...A NEW ERA BEGINS!



"The Four Musketeers"! Recognize the fellow in the back? He's Don DeFore, whose career began in our studios as a singer. Now, of course, he is Cedar Rapids' best-known Hollywood personality. The other three "Musketeers" are Joe Wild, Ray Clark and Cliff DeFore.



"The Rainbow Trio"—Virginia DeFore, Marguerite and Doris Glime—were also featured on KWCR, 1932-34, on a program sponsored by The Hamilton Seed & Coal Company.



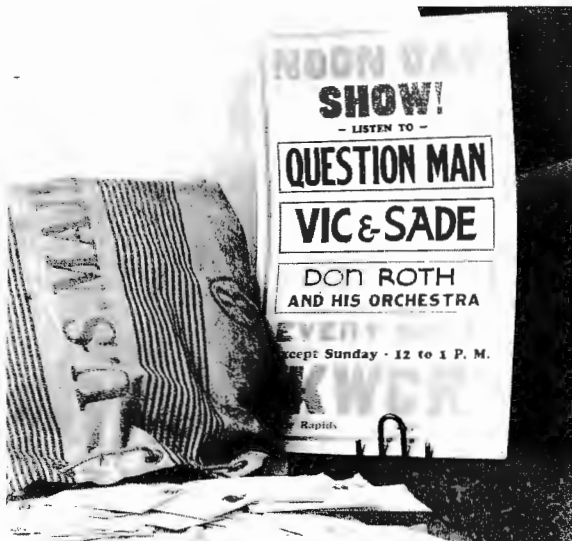
Top seniority ranking at WMT belongs to Leo F. Cole, who started his career here in 1930 as an engineering technician. Today he is Business Manager of The WMT Stations.



One of the early announcing voices was that of Bill Spargrove, now a network announcer on the West Coast.



WMT's Assistant Chief Engineer was Charlie Quentin, shown here working on KWCR equipment in 1932. Mr. Quentin now heads up the engineering department at KRNT, Des Moines.



The grand-daddy of today's popular "Voice of Iowa" show was KWCR's "Question Man" with Art Shepard. The program was the first local broadcast to interview passers-by on a street corner. Questions were submitted by mail and they came in by the hundreds!



Another announcer who got his start here and went on to national broadcasting assignments was Ed Prentiss, who worked on many early KWCR programs.



Engineering-wise these two strange-looking pieces of equipment are important in our history. They were the first turntables which played records at a speed of 33-1/3 rpm—a revolutionary development at that time.

# 1934--COWLES BUY WMT... RETIRE "KWCR"!... WITH STUDIOS

In October of 1934, the Cowles brothers purchased WMT from Harry Shaw in Waterloo and installed Craig Lawrence as temporary manager there. Now they owned both KWCR and WMT. Seven months later, they retired the call letters "KWCR" and moved WMT's transmitter and towers back to Cedar Rapids with Sumner Quarton as manager and Bill Quarton as commercial manager. Studios, however, were maintained in both Waterloo and Cedar Rapids until after World War II when the Waterloo facilities were closed in 1947. WMT's first permanent manager in Waterloo was Don Inman. The Cedar Rapids studios remained in the Montrose Hotel until the fall of 1937 when the studios were moved to the 4th and 5th floors of the Paramount Theater Building.

During the next 10 years, WMT's growth was spectacular, with its staff not only enlarged, but doubled! Technical facilities, too, under the expert guidance of Chief Engineer Charles Quentin and WMT's present Chief Engineer George Hixenbaugh, who succeeded him in 1944, were expanded to establish and maintain WMT's engineering excellence and leadership in the industry.

In October, 1934, the station became associated with the Mutual network and the NBC Blue network—an affiliation which lasted five and a half years. Then, on May 1, 1940, WMT moved back to the Columbia network—an important and happy relationship which continues to this day. It is interesting to note that, for years, Cedar Rapids was the smallest city in the United States with a basic CBS affiliation—a tribute to WMT's tremendous coverage pattern.

In December, 1943, WMT's commercial manager, William B. Quarton, succeeded his brother Sumner as station manager and, in October of 1944, WMT was acquired by The American Broadcasting Stations, Incorporated, who still own and operate the station. ABS was founded by another broadcast pioneer, LeRoy Mark of Washington, D.C., who has many radio "firsts" to his credit. Today, Mr. Quarton is the executive vice president and chief administrative officer of ABS, and Kenneth L. Hastie is vice president and manager of WMT Radio.

1934 marked the beginning of the "Golden Years" of WMT broadcasting. Shows and personalities were born during this era that will live forever in the memory of eastern Iowa and midwest listeners. This was the day of the traveling bands, remote broadcasts, and "the big, live shows." They represented the finest talent heard anywhere in radio. This was also the "hey-day" of the "soap opera," Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Kate Smith and Amos 'n Andy. Here they are—the great sounds of WMT Radio.....



First of the really great WMT personalities in the 1930's and 1940's was The Cedar Valley Hillbillies, first introduced to the middlewest by WMT's new 5,000 watts of power which established our status as one of America's foremost regional stations. The Hillbillies were, left to right: John Getty; Marvin Steele; Don Roth; Ray Bandfield and John McLean. At the microphone is Bert Puckett.



Another tremendously successful musical organization was organized and led by "Sheriff" Tom Owen. Tom brought the above band to WMT from Chicago where they were stars of the WLS "Barndance." The "Cowboys" were, from left: Bub Goodwick; Harry Condon; John Dye; Wayne Jennings; Tom Owen; Gene Horsch and Mibs Allen.

# IN BOTH CEDAR RAPIDS AND WATERLOO -- GOES REGIONAL!



Another famous WMT graduate, Bert Puckett, was with WMT ten years, as announcer and sportscaster of Cedar Rapids Raider baseball games. Because the ball club was afraid game broadcasts would cut down attendance, Bert was not allowed inside the park and was forced to describe the action while perched on a nearby house-top overlooking old Hill Park diamond from the outfield! This unique play-by-play situation continued until his final year with WMT at which time he was allowed to do in-park broadcasts! In 1942 he left to become "Bert Wilson," Voice of the Chicago Cubs.



THEN—Howdy Roberts came to WMT in 1935. A graduate of I.S.T.C., he preferred a radio career to teaching.



NOW—27 years later, Howdy is dean of WMT's air personalities, early-morning friend to thousands of "Musical Clock" listeners.



Another significant move came in 1937 when WMT moved its Cedar Rapids studios to the Paramount Theater Building. Studio "E," above with a capacity of 60 people, was the largest of six studios, each of which was the ultimate in scientific design and sound-proofing.



Until 1947, WMT had complete facilities in both Cedar Rapids and Waterloo. Above is the main Waterloo studio, housed in the Russell Lamson Hotel. This unique two-city arrangement prompted the musical jingle long familiar to our listeners: "Time to smile, 600 on your dial . . . Columbia network, Mutual, too . . . Cedar Rapids and Waterloo."



Frank Makinster, now a 26-year engineering veteran, shown at the controls in Waterloo studios.

## WMT'S NEW HOME

BY RAY COX

**S**INCE the management of WMT in Cedar Rapids threw open the doors of their new studios and offices on November 7, several thousand people have taken advantage of the opportunity and have inspected the new home during the week of "open house."

The new studios are a far cry from the old-style radio studio with its heavy drapes and hangings deadening every sound! The new studios are finished with hard plaster walls and ceilings which are cleverly constructed to furnish the necessary brilliance for faithful reproduction without introducing objectionable echo. The offices and six new studios, which occupy the entire fifth floor of the Paramount Theater Building in Cedar Rapids, were designed and constructed by the McKay Brothers Construction Company. Acoustic engineering and sound treatment of the studios were specified by Electrical Research Products, Inc., of New York City.

The steady stream of interested listeners who have visited the new studio realize that extreme care was taken in planning and construction. Every modern engineering discovery and radio technique was incorporated to facilitate transmission and reception of programs. The average listener does not realize the technical details necessary for a perfect program—but WMT's listeners will hear and see the latest developments.

Acoustic engineers have discovered that the objectionable echo which formerly was eliminated by the use of heavy drapes or other sound-deadening material can be controlled by eliminating parallel planes in the studio walls. Outside noise is excluded by the "floating" style of construction.

The new WMT studios are literally "rooms within rooms." Inside thick masonry walls of hollow concrete block are constructed the inner studio walls. These are built up of cement plaster, one and one-half inches thick, on metal lath supported by steel members resting on special concrete blocks. At no point is a rigid contact made with the outer walls. This insures against the transmission of sound and vibration through the walls. Instead of being on a straight line from corner to corner the inner studio walls follow a curious zig-zag pattern, so that no two parallel surfaces are directly opposite.

FLOORS are constructed of reinforced concrete, then a layer of mineral wool to halt transmission of sound at this point; next a second layer of concrete, a mastic base, and finally the top surface of rubber block, which is laid in colorful modernistic patterns providing a decorative note as well as a serviceable studio floor.

Visitors to the new WMT studios will be afforded an excellent view of studio "D" and "E" by long plate-glass windows off the main lobby. These, as well as all other studio windows, consist of double panes of heavy glass, separated by a dead-air space. The outer pane is one-quarter of an inch thick and the inner pane three-eighths of an inch. The inner glass is set with the top sloping in to cut down all of the objectionable sound reverberation.

Elaborate precautions have been taken to insure no sound-leaks at the studio doors. Each studio is entered through a sound-lock, which is lined with special acoustic tile and thickly carpeted. The doors close against jams of sponge rubber, and the inner studio doors are drawn tightly shut by special latches resembling refrigerator hardware. Unlike the studios, where the walls are acoustically brilliant, the soundlocks are designed for maximum sound absorption. This end is achieved so well that the effect is almost oppressive as one walks through the sound-locks.

There are no drapes or hangings of any kind in any of the studios and the design of the studios is entirely functional. At no time was the proper acoustic engineering practise compromised for the sake of appearance. And yet the studios are undeniably beautiful. Walls and ceilings are painted a light ivory. In the floors the decorators were able to introduce striking accents of brilliant color. Beautiful reds, blues, yellows and light grays stand out in contrast to black and dark-brown backgrounds.

**I**N ITS new studios, WMT manufactures weather conditions to order by the use of two air-conditioning plants. Should the occasion demand, the soft, balmy atmosphere of the tropics can be provided in mid-winter to create the proper mood for native Hawaiian musicians. Or, if a visiting Arctic explorer should feel more at home in a rigid climate, the thermometer in the WMT studio could be quickly lowered to near freezing point. However, for the most part, highly sensitive automatic electric controls will keep studio temperature and humidity at the proper point for most efficient work. The air-conditioning equipment, which is really two complete plants, one for the studios and a separate unit for the offices, occupies an entire room on the fifth floor of the Paramount Theater Building.

The office air-conditioning equipment provides refrigerated filtered air to all WMT offices in summer and warm, filtered air in the winter. Automatically controlled steam radiators in the offices supplement the air conditioning plant for heating in winter. Thus the correct temperature is maintained in all offices automatically the year around. This unit is known as a high velocity system, as the air is circulated through the offices with considerably more force than in the studios.

The studio system not only maintains correct temperatures the year around, but also regulates the humidity of the air entering the studios. In winter, when the studios are only partially occupied, warm air is soundlessly circulated to all studios. As more artists gather in the studios, the temperature of the incoming air is lowered. As the demand on the air-conditioning plant increases, cool air from outdoors is pumped into the system, and if that fails to sufficiently lower the temperature, the refrigeration system automatically starts and the air is passed over a frosty cooling coil.

The air is kept moist in winter by introducing steam into the airstream; it is dried in summer with the refrigerating unit. The transmission soundlocks between the studios through the air-conditioning ducts presented a major problem to the engineers. It was solved by an ingenious system of sound-absorbing duct-lines and baffles made of finely spun glass. These baffles, together with the low velocity of the air entering the studios, make the system absolutely silent in its operation, a primary requisite in an installation of this type.

**B**UT it is in the homes of WMT listeners where the real difference will be noted. Studio programs are heard with new clarity. Artists sound as though they were in the same room. From the voice of a single speaker to the balanced perfection of an entire orchestra, the new WMT Paramount Theater Building studios provide realism of reproduction that is unique. We're mighty proud of our new studios, and as loyal WMT fans we think you'll be proud. For no other radio station west of the Mississippi has beautiful new studios as modern and as well designed and constructed as WMT.

# "VOICE OF IOWA" WITH "PERSONALITIES-PLUS"! --- BERT PUCK



WMT pioneered the "man on the street"-type interview program in 1935. The earliest of these was the daily noontime "Question Man" with Art Shepard shown here in 1938 talking with Mrs. LeRoy Kling in front of The Little Flower Shop in downtown Cedar Rapids.



The WMT Bohemian Orchestra, under the direction of L. Frederick Cole, presented old-world melodies each week on KWCR and later on WMT. The 1939 band, left to right: Charlie Brabbit; Richard Blahnik; Vern Jeffrey; Robert Larimer; L. Fredrick Cole; Chauncey Faye; Leo Rigel; and Joe Cerveny.



Paul Palmer shown at our Waterloo controls in 1930. Paul is a WMT 28-year engineering veteran.



Perhaps the outstanding woman broadcaster in WMT's early history was Mrs. D. Pirie Beyea, known as "Scotty" on her daily programs in the 1930's. A World War I nurse, world-traveller, philosopher and writer, she also worked for CBS and NBC. Scotty, now 85, is retired and lives in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Another pioneer in the field of women's broadcasting was Beulah Marsh, who for 19 years as "Jean Joyce, Killian's Personal Shopper," did the commercials for Killian's morning newscasts.



Earliest live actors on WMT were these "Play Box" artists, who presented half-hour dramatic programs each Sunday evening just before The Jack Benny Program. This was in the middle 1930's. The sound effects man at the left is Donald Zook and next is Director Ray Plamadior. The Thespians are Darryl Horsfall (who is now a movie and TV regular), Mary Jo French, Gwen Story, Allan McKee, Eileen Kelly, Max Hahn (now Channel 2's "Dr. Max,") Ted Munger and an unidentified child.



In 1935, Douglas Grant, "Gospel Baritone," broadcast a daily program of sacred music. His accompanist is Eleanor Gough. These two also made regular Sunday evening appearances at churches throughout Iowa.

# ETT, DON ROTH, DOUG GRANT, LIBBIE VAUGHAN, ART SHEPARD



Here, at the work table of her famed "Magic Kitchen," is Libbie Vaughan, hostess of WMT's first programs for homemakers. By 1938, Libbie, with eleven years on the air, was WMT's most experienced broadcaster. A skilled actress as well as a home economist, Libbie filled her "Magic Kitchen" with impersonations of such visitors as Mrs. McPleasant and Mrs. DeGroat.



Jolly "Deutschpieler" were Les Hartman and the "WMT German Band," great favorites in the 1930's when they broadcast daily from our Waterloo studios. The nattily-attired gentlemen in the back row are Harry Sheridan, Rolla Bryan, George Timm, Justin Perkins, Shep Shepard and Lynn Allison. That's Ted Conway at the piano and Les at the far right.



Advertising, once merely tolerated for the sake of the program to follow, had by now taken its important place as a part of the program itself. At our Waterloo studios, Commercial Manager Don Inman was in charge of sales.



The most significant advance of 1935 was the erection of WMT's first two towers and new transmitting building near Marion, giving us 2,500 watts of power daytime and 1,000 watts at night. In 1941 our third tower was added, when WMT received authorization to transmit with 5,000 watts, day and night. This was also a significant event for another great name in Iowa industry, as our new 5,000-watt transmitter bore the "Serial #1—Collins Radio" label. Two great "firsts" combining to serve you.



The Master Control Room is the nerve-center of any radio station, and by 1938, new equipment gave us this modern look. Ever-expanding live programming, on-the-spot broadcasts, news, music and network shows all were supervised here. This demanded an engineering staff of 12 men (large for those days). Shown here at the consoles are Dean Harger (now in his 26th WMT year), left, and Bob Besser, controlling an early broadcast by Ralph Slade's orchestra.



Two more engineers in our exclusive "20-Year Club" are Ross Wilson, left, and Bob Kucera. Both are assistant chief engineers today. The engineering staff boasts a total of 222 years service by nine "20-Year Club" veterans.

# BOB LEEFERS, BOHEMIAN BAND, THE JONES BOYS, "JOE DOAKES



Beloved Bob Leefers was first heard on WMT as "Neighbor Bob," proprietor of "Tall Corn Time" heard daily at 5:30 a.m. This was the start of regular farm service broadcasting, heard over our five-state area.



Mail from listeners has always been important to WMT as it reflects the wishes of our audience. Looking over stacks of requests in the late '30's are "Peggy and Her Pals": Tony Dvorak, Verle Stirskey, George Julis and Peggy Fuller.



At this time, it was popular to broadcast from sponsors' stores. Izzy Ginsberg's old First Avenue store was the scene for shows featuring Al Gerardi's orchestra. Announcer at the right is Bert Puckett and immediately behind him is Mr. Ginsberg.



Thirty years ago, dance bands were at their peak in popularity with dozens playing nightly in WMT-Land. WMT featured many of them regularly, such as Don Roth and His Orchestra: Nate Estes, Don Roth, Bob Zila, Verle Stirskey, John Getty, Tony Dvorak, and Robert Long. Other bands included—Dad and the Boys, Ralph Slade, Freddie Mauck, George Cervanka, and Court Hussey.



Another popular band which was introduced to dancers throughout the midwest via WMT microphones was Joe Fisher and his Orchestra. For many years, they were regulars on our early-morning program, now called the "Sunrise Hour," hosted by Bob Leefers and presented for our rural audience.

# ”, TOBY AND SUSIE, BENNE ALTER, CEDAR VALLEY HILLBILLIES



No book on the history of WMT would be complete without a picture of Dempsey Jones and the Jones Boys. One of the world's few left-handed banjo players, Dempsey has starred on WMT variety programs for more than 20 years.



Toby and Susie—Neil and Caroline Schaffner, of traveling tent show fame, had their first sponsored daytime program on WMT. The four-year run of this happy daily quarter-hour series delighted WMT-Land listeners by the thousands in the late 30's and early 40's. Here you see an episode in progress with Ray Cox handling sound effects, "Susie Sharp" and "Toby Tolliver," and Benne Alter as "Handyman Jack Long." Douglas Grant, right, was show announcer-producer.



L. Von Linder was a familiar announcing voice from the Waterloo and Cedar Rapids studios. Lindy today is program director of WCCO Radio in Minneapolis.



Lyle Harvey, was known to thousands of midwest radio fans as "Joe Doakes," the part he played daily during the noon-hour with The Iowa Cornhuskers.



The original setting for WMT's famous "Family Party" broadcasts was the "home of Neighbor Bob," played by Bob Leefers at the left above. The homespun plots developed as other cast members dropped by for visits as Peggy Reece, L. Von Linder and Bob Welty are doing here.



"Family Party" played before crowds of up to 2,000 people from the stage of the Paramount Theater in Cedar Rapids. Here you see Bob and Babe Leefers in typical rube costumes. Both the Leefers were graduates of the chautauqua and vaudeville circuits.



The late and great Benne Alter followed Art Shepard as host for sidewalk interview programs. Shown here, in the early 1940's, he does his "The Man on the Street" from the corner of First Ave. & 1st Street, N.E.



# FRAN ALLISON, HOWDY ROBERTS, JEAN

Throughout the years, listeners have judged WMT's programs and personalities "tops" in midwest broadcasting. During the 30's and 40's, the station originated on a regular basis, such "star-studded" productions as "The WMT Family Party" with a cast of 20. Other favorites were "Quaker Party Time," employing 54 people including a 30-voice choir and Vic Miller's 12-piece band, and the famous "Toby and Susie" (Neil and Caroline Schaffner) quarter-hour weekday comedy series.

During this era, eastern Iowans were also being royally entertained and informed by such WMT personalities as: Benne Alter; Art Shepard ("The Man On The Street"); Howdy Roberts ("Rath's Kiddies Review"); Smilin' Dean Landfear ("Off The Record"); Douglas Grant ("The Gospel Baritone"—also news and program director); Libbie Vaughan ("The Magic Kitchen"); Joe Doakes (Lyle Harvey); blind organist Frank Voelker; "Neighbor Bob" Leefers; "Scotty"; Maureen Canavan; "Singing Farmer" Marlan Peterson; Sunny Sue "The Yodelin' Cowgirl"; The Happy Chappies; Paul Handel; Bill Brown; L. Von Linder; western singers Lonie and Tomie and many, many more.

One of the all-time favorites was the "Rath's Kiddies Review" amateur show, emceed by Howdy Roberts for over 10 years. The program showcased the talents of the area's small-fry every Saturday morning from the stage of Waterloo's Paramount Theater—where it was always "standing room only!" Howdy also took the show "on the road," originating local talent broadcasts from hundreds of towns in all parts of WMT-Land. Later the show name was changed to "Talent Time" with Paul Clarke and was aired from the Cedar Rapids studios and from the "WMT Radio Theater" at the YMCA.

On another of WMT's talent shows, "Here's Your Lucky Break," a beautiful young lady performed so well she won a chance to appear on the "Major Bowes Amateur Hour" in New York. The rest is show business history. Her name: June Haver.

Other nationally-known personalities who got their start at WMT include: Radio-TV stars Fran Allison and Red Rowe; network announcers Franklyn McCormack, Ed Prentiss, Bob Pfeiffer and Bill Spargrove; movie star Don DeFore; singer Rose Marie Jun; and the late sportscaster Bert Wilson (known to WMT listeners as Bert Puckett).



Longtime WMT listeners will always remember Fran Allison as "Aunt Fanny," the character she introduced and perfected when she began her radio career at our Waterloo studios. "Aunt Fanny" carried Fran to national prominence on Don McNeil's "Breakfast Club." This early photo shows Fran with Les Hartman and his German Band.



Comic side-kicks then and still good friends today, Fran Allison in her "Aunt Fanny" costume and announcer Howdy Roberts from 1936 photos.



For nearly 20 years, WMT's most fun-filled hour was the Saturday noontime "Family Party" broadcast, with a cast of from 15 to 20 entertainers. Shown on the stage of the WMT Radio Theater in the Cedar Rapids YMCA are: Bob Leefers as "Si Perkins," piano and organ duo Bob Colston



Staff organist for all of WMT's live programs in the early 1940's was talented Maureen Canavan.

# JOYCE, UNCLE ELMER, RED ROWE, DAD & THE BOYS, DEAN LANDFEAR



The year 1962 also marks 40 years in show business for "Toby and Susie." Living legends, the Schaffner Players made their last circuit of WMT-Land this year, but they will live forever in the history of traveling tent shows.



Blue denim overalls were the trademark of "Dad and the Boys"—Bob Welty, "Dad" McLean, Walter Meeker, Banty Harville, Christy Christensen and Bob Long.



Yodelin' Cowgirl — Sunny Sue Webb was "the darling of the Family Party" broadcasts.



and June Caldwell, Singer Gene Elston, accordionist Doris Newman, Don Jones, Czech duo Mildred Mahring and Rose Marie Jun with accompanist Herb Erickson, Dempsey Jones, The Cowboys, Frank Coburn as "Uncle Elmer" and announcer Paul Clarke.



"Quaker Party Time" featured the largest cast of any regularly scheduled program in our history. It originated from Quaker Oats' Stuart Hall before an audience of employees. That's Rose Marie Jun at the mike.



Red Rowe sang and played guitar with several WMT musical units. Later he was a regular announcer before moving to California where he has become the star of his own West Coast network shows.



Frank Coburn, another veteran star from vaudeville days, brought "Uncle Elmer and his Daffy Doodlers" to WMT in the early 1940's. In front are Bob Singer and Gene McLean. In back are Ralph Davison, Jack Nye, "Elmer," Leo Greco, and Chet Stalker.



One of the most familiar voices of all to WMT listeners is the friendly voice of Dean Landfear, now program manager, who joined us in 1943 and is now well past a mark of 5,300 "Voice of Iowa" broadcasts!

# ROSE MARIE JUN, LES HARTMAN, JUNE CALDWELL, KAY ADAMS,



"The Voice of Iowa" truly lives up to its name! Countless of thousands have talked into Dean's microphones, not only in our studios but when the show has highlighted celebrations in numerous Iowa towns, such as this broadcast from Anamosa where Bud Goettch talks with Landfear.



All of eastern Iowa attended the wedding of "Toby and Susie"—via WMT Radio. The bride and groom are in front. Also present for this historic event were "Uncle Elmer," Babe and Bob Leefer, Bob Welty, and an unidentified witness.



Morris Sanford Company presented "Listen Ladies" daily for 15 years. Hostess for the first eight years was Wilma Adams, known as "Kay" Adams, and shown here with Bob Caldwell, Executive Vice President of the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce.



The late Marjorie Norrgard was another popular hostess for "Listen Ladies."



Recording star Rose Marie Jun of Cedar Rapids, started her singing career on WMT.



Singing Cowboy "Happy Haines" was featured daily in the 1940's.



"This is . . . Off The Record"—famous words which signaled start of Dean Landfear's disc jockey show from 11 p.m. to midnight from 1943-'53. Emphasis was on quality music, with Monday nights reserved for jazz fans.

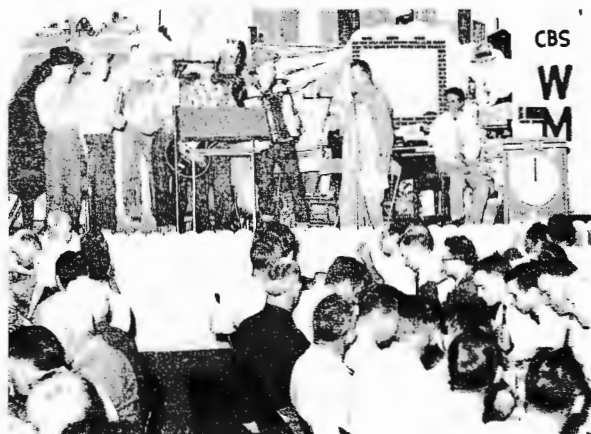


For years WMT broadcasts were features at the Waterloo Dairy Cattle Congress. Shown here in the International Harvester Tent are Si Perkins (Bob Leefer) and Howdy Roberts. Congress-goers always put visits to WMT attractions on their "must" list.



First of WMT's unique "National Clean Plowing Contests" originated by Andy Woolfries took place in 1946, near Newhall. Here the Jones Boys entertain crowd of 35,000.

# MICHAEL McELROY, L. VON LINDER, JERRY SMITH, HAPPY HAINES



Whenever big things happened—WMT was there! A traditional All-Iowa Fair broadcast was our noontime "Voice of Iowa" and Tom Owen's Cowboys.



The famous Iowa Cornhuskers, led by Les Hartman, made WMT musical history in the middle 1940's. Here on a remote broadcast were Justin Perkins, Paul Wolfman, Ramey Lawson, Hartman, and Red Rowe.



Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper crowned this wind-blown queen at 2nd National Clean Plowing Contest held in Cedar County in 1947.



He was "Neighbor Bob," he was "Si Perkins" . . . without make-up, here is Chief Announcer Bob Leefers.



Gov. Robert D. Blue with Dean Landfear on 1946 Dairy Cattle Congress broadcast.



During World War II, Admiral William F. Halsey addresses WMT listeners.



Frank Voelker, blind organist, could not play by ear. All his music heard on WMT was transposed to braille and memorized.



CBS announcer Bob Pfeffer is another WMT alumnus. He's remembered as announcer and evening newscaster in late 1940's.



Dean Landfear reminisces with two early WMT personalities, Michael McElroy and Fran Allison.



Yodeling Cowboy Jerry Smith, another show business veteran, entertained our early morning listeners.



An introductory dinner in 1946 provides this earliest WMT photo of Chuck Worcester, farm director.

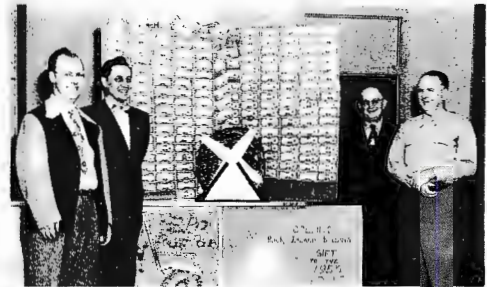


If you attended WMT broadcasts in the late 1940's, you saw staff organist June Caldwell.

# TAIT CUMMINS, BOB PFIEFFER, CHUCK WORCESTER, LEO GRECO



It was a big day for WMT in 1949 when our personalities outdid 166 other CBS stations in raising money for the March of Dimes. Our total of \$12,598 won us a covered wagon from Jack Benny. Shipping off the safe full of money are: Ira Beabout, Railway Express Agent; Wm. B. Quarton, General Manager; Walter Meeker, Expressman; and WMT's Wally Pearson, Tait Cummins, Bob Leefer, Dean Landfear, Beryl Starbuck, Chuck Worcester and Howdy Roberts.



WMT March of Dimes activity continued until 1953 and was climaxed when Sports Director Tait Cummins tried to match his weight in dimes. Church groups, school collections, individual donations (even a poker game pot) swelled the total to \$3,360.00 more than six times Tait's weight in dimes! Largest contribution came from Collins Radio employees and was presented to Tait by Marvin Sutton, Don Dryland, and Hugo Sindlar.



A new band was born in 1948—Leo and His Pioneers. Leo Greco, at the top here, an Oelwein accordionist, had played with many WMT groups. An overnight success, the original Pioneers included, in front: Walt Miller, Dick Harvey and Bob Morahn. Behind them are Norb "Shorty" Pudil and Darwin Meeks. Over the years, Leo's band has set attendance records throughout the midwest, and consistently won the "Downbeat" magazine award as top country and western band in the nation.



For many years, WMT maintained a Radio Theater in the Cedar Rapids YMCA Building. Among the programs broadcast from there was the "Family Party" with capacity audiences like this on hand.



Every "Family Party" program featured a Czech melody sung by Rose Marie Jun and Mildred Mahring. Accompanying them here are Doris Newman, Don Jones and Herb Erickson. Photo is from Waterloo Dairy Cattle Congress grounds in the late 1940's.



By 1948, the "Clean Plowing Contests" had become "WMT Farm Field Days." Started by Chuck Worcester, this fourth annual event near Anamosa featured 50 exhibits, 200 farm equipment demonstrations and a crowd of 40,000.



Lew Van Nostrand was appointed sales manager in 1948. Today, a 22-year veteran, he is Vice President-Sales for WMT-TV.

PUBLIC  
EPHONES



The scope of WMT's broadcast activities at such events as the National Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo calls for a large staff of engineers and equipment. Here's what we used in 1948! Engineers are: Merv Powlishta; Frank Makinster; Chief Engineer George Hixenbaugh; Ed Updegraff; and Dean Harger.

# , TOM OWEN, "LITTLE EFFIE", SUNNY SUE, MARLAN PETERSON

WMT musical units, too, were midwest entertainment headliners. For four decades, bands such as the famous "Tom Owen's Cowboys" booked out of the station, traveling a five-state area to fill personal appearances, originate broadcasts, and generally bring "toe-tappin'" music and WMT greetings to hundreds of communities. "Sheriff" Tom, a real radio pioneer, was the original square dance caller for the "WLS Barn Dance" in Chicago where the band was known as "The Plowboys." Tom brought the boys to WMT in 1937, changed the name to "The Cowboys" (their theme song was "Pony Boy")—and so began a happy 20-year musical love affair with midwest listeners and dancers who demanded the best in western swing. From 1937 to 1957 the band set many ballroom attendance records which still stand today—probably never to be surpassed. They aired over 6,000 live shows on WMT and traveled well over a million miles—wearing out six cars and three buses! On this page you see the pictorial evolution of "Sheriff Tom Owen's Cowboys"—one of the nation's all-time great western bands.



1937—The original Cowboys, left to right, were: Chuck Youtzy; Don Wachal; Gene Horsch; John Dye; Mibs Allen; Bub Goodwick; and "Sheriff" Tom Owen. Chuck and Mibs were with the band for 19 of the 20 WMT years!



1942—Murphy Products Company, long-time Cowboys sponsor, congratulates Tom on his 5th WMT Anniversary. 1942 Sales Manager Don Sullivan is at left Manager Bill Quanton at right. New face, third from right in front is Jim Pye.



1947—The Cowboys were musical mainstays of WMT's Saturday "Family Party" programs. Here you see Chuck Youtzy and his famous "Little Effie" characterization. Accordionist is Jeri Smith.



1948—By this time the Cowboys were national recording artists on the Mercury label. Newest addition to the band was accordionist Leo Greco who replaced Jeri Smith.



1949—The above stagecoach was not used as transportation by the Cowboys, although, by this time, the boys had worn out three band buses in their travels! New face here is Johnny Willis who replaced Leo Greco.



1950—Johnny Ketelsen, front row right, and accordionist Jimmy Lynn Herman replaced Bub Goodwick and Johnny Willis. "The Best In Western Swing" tradition continues!



1951—The voice of Tom Owen's Cowboys for all 20 years was announcer "Neighbor Bob" Leefer shown here during a 12:45 to 1:00 p.m. noontime broadcast. Accordionist is Jerry Fronke.



1952—WMT's 30th Anniversary celebration at Hawkeye Downs featured the band shown here doing their famous rendition of "12th Street Rag"—which, as always, proved to be a show-stopper.

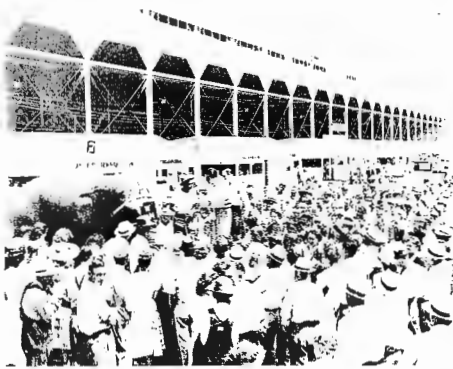


1957—Tom Owen died May 27, 1956, but the band went on under Johnny Ketelsen. The Crawford Brothers, Von (left) and Keith (right), replaced Chuck and Don. Marlan Peterson and Sunny Sue were regular guest stars.

# BERYL STARBUCK, WALLY PEARSON, COLE McMARTIN, VIGORTONES,



"Brave" donning the feathers is Dean Landfear, since 1948 a member of Tama's Mesquakie tribe. The Indians named him "E-Nee-Weh-Too-Neh-Moo-Ta"—or "Chief Blabbermouth!"



"The Voice of Iowa's" biggest guest visited the show at the All-Iowa Fair in 1950. (The elephant worked for peanuts!)



Nighthawkey—Wally Pearson introduced WMT's 1953 all-night program, purpose of which was to provide truckers and motorists with complete road and weather information.



Seldom speechless, Howdy Roberts had no answer when Jolly Jack Yager chided him for being late to work. Jolly Jack was a regular early morning "Musical Clock" sponsor who frequently delivered his own commercials!



Happy ending to a speeding ticket! City of Manchester gave Johnny and Becky Roberts this toy fire truck, after Dad was pinched!



Live programs from Cedar Rapids' Danceland Ballroom were exceed each week by Announcer Beryl Starbuck. He's the one on the left (!) in this 1949 photo.



WMT Manager Bill Quarton welcomes Doug Grant into "20-Year Club." Doug's first 20 years included work in all phases of WMT Radio; since 1953 he has headed up operations at WMT-TV.



Every organization has stag parties. This 1951 get-together was a farewell for News Director Jim Bormann. Front row: Howdy Roberts, Paul Clarke, Merv Powlishta, Howard Anderson, John Palmer, Bob Kucera, Bruce Anderson and Ev Gilbert. 2nd row: Bob Gardiner, Bob Widmark, Don Baughman, Beryl Starbuck, Kenny Blake, Bill Quarton, Jim Bormann, Vern Hansen, and Leo Cole. 3rd row: George Hixenbaugh, Cole McMARTIN, Tait Cummins, Wally Pearson, Bob Lilly, Johnny Holmes, and Ross Wilson.



In the 1950's, eastern Iowa's showcase for musical small-fry was "Hiltbrunner's Talent Time," a Saturday morning feature on WMT. Previously the show had a long run as "Rath's Kiddies Revue." That's Lucia Clarke at the piano, young Judy Lamparek with the accordion, and Emcee Paul Clarke.

# PAUL CLARKE, JIM BORMANN, WALTER CRONKITE, PAT PATTERSON



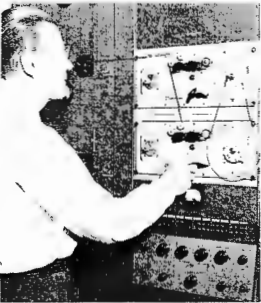
"Country Editor" — Hugh Orchard scanned weekly newspapers for unusual items; spiced his afternoon programs with homey wit and philosophy.



WMT's 30th birthday prompted huge celebration at All-Iowa Fair, with CBS guest stars Martha Tilton and Curt Massey.



Traditional "WMT Tent Theatre" at All-Iowa Fair could seat 300. Usually the happiest place on the midway, it was sometimes hectic, too, like 1958—the year the tent caught on fire and blew down three times!



Recording Engineer Burt Champin was responsible for one of the midwest's busiest and most complete recording labs.



One of the longest records in radio annals was The Killian Company's continuous sponsorship of the "9 A.M. News" for over 25 years. This 1949 photo shows Beulah Marsh ("Jean Joyce"—personal shopper), 1934 salesman Bill Quarton, the late A. L. Killian, and Doug Grant, 1934 newscaster, now Vice President—TV Operations for WMT-TV.



At his 1949 appearance Gene Autry chats backstage with Dean Landfear. In the background are Johnny Bond, Chuck Worcester, and Beryl Starbuck.



When Art Linkletter's CBS program "People Are Funny" originated in Cedar Rapids in 1953, Dean Landfear served as his announcer.



"Saturday with Marshal J" was last of the big shows from WMT Radio Theater in the YMCA.



The kiddies came in droves when WMT threw a free Christmas party at the Paramount Theater in 1955. Sign marks entrance to our studios and offices on the 4th and 5th floors of the building.



# BOB JOHNSON, DICK CHEVERTON, BILL ROBERTS, FORD ROBERTS,



The last of WMT's big, live broadcasts was daily "Noontime-RFD" from studio "E". This 1958 show featured three bands and various singing stars. Seated in front: The Sobaski Twins. Front row: Bobby Andrews, Rusty Wagner, Shorty Pudil, Mibs Allen, Marlan Peterson, Sunny Sue, Von Crawford, Hughie LeKin, Howdy Roberts, and Mary Sedlacek. Back row: Leo Greco, Bob Morahn, Jess Goin, Dick Harvey, Dwayne Stepanek, Johnny Ketelsen, Announcer Ford Roberts, Keith Crawford, Chuck Wakeland, Dick Edwards, Bill Sass, and Kenny Thompson.



1957 "Voice of Iowa" guest was Iowa's own Bob Feller, from baseball's Hall of Fame.



Another member for the "20-Year Club"—Bob Leefers was the guest of honor in 1957. Bob is surrounded by long-time friends Doug Grant, Leo Cole, Brad McGowan and Bill Quarton.



An antique crystal set recalls "the good old days" for the station's first sponsor in 1922, the Iowa Electric Light and Power Company. This 1955 photo shows Harold Rowe of Ambro Advertising Agency, left, Sutherland Dows, Light Company President, and WMT's Bill Quarton.



In 1951, Howdy Roberts rescued his clarinet from the attic and formed WMT's newest band—the Rangers. Between his "Musical Clock" and his dance band, Howdy's busy day and night. The band's daily programs from the International Harvester tent are annual highlights at the National Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo.



During the late 1950's, Marlan Peterson, "The Singing Farmer," was a Sunday noontime feature. The "Vigortones" shown here include Bob Zila, Frank Osmanski, Marlan Peterson and Bill Dutcher.

# ROY DAHMER, SALLY EVANS, BY GOSDEN, JIM WICKS,...CBS, TOO!



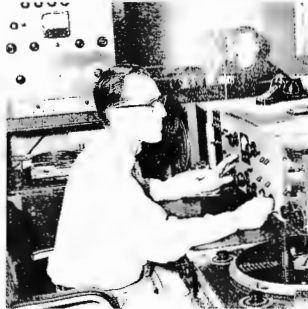
The house that WMT listeners built! One of the most novel farm homes anywhere is the one on Chuck Worcester's farm as it was built by scores of volunteer carpenters from various counties in WMT-Land. This 1952 photo shows farmers from Iowa County putting down the roof. That's Ray Happel (long-time farm program sponsor) in front with Chuck.



Fun-filled "WMT Nights" hold the attendance record for the Cedar Rapids baseball park. It's hard to believe, but our "home team" beat the professional Braves in 1960. Our only "old pro" was Bill Zuber, former Yankee pitcher in the dark suit. Dem bums in front are: Bob Nance, Bob Bruner, Bob Mikkalson, Jerry Brady, Bill Alford, Roy Dahmer, and batgirl Connie James. In back are Zuber, Mollie Houser, Tait Cummins, Bill Sass, Cliff McAdams, Keith Miller, Chuck Worcester, Howdy Roberts, Don Hastings, Grant Price, Paul Eells and By Gosden.



It was always fun to listen to any program aired by Ford Roberts, best-remembered as host of "Hawkeye Hits," where listeners picked the records.



Sally Evans was a morning regular in the 1950's with her "Charm and Home Hour" broadcasts. That's engineer Dean Harger in the foreground.



Jim Wicks, regular "Wax Works" host, visits with 103-year old Mrs. Mary Weston of Strawberry Point.



Engineer John McNerney, left, is the man responsible for all the tricky sound effects on Howdy Roberts' surprise "interviews" with celebrities.



Iowa's top Nighthawkeye is By Gosden whose enthusiastic show-biz-style never runs down—not even at 12:40 a.m. sign-off.



The most welcome phone calls in eastern Iowa come from Canada's gift to WMT, Roy Dahmer—superb music man and Gus Glaser "Money Man."



"Kiddies Revue" host in 1921, Howdy Roberts, is shown here with two early-day winners: our own Bill Dutcher and singer Kate Smith (Mrs. Joe Costa) of Dubuque. This 1962 reunion was part of our 40th year festivities.

# WMT RADIO -- "FARM SERVICE AT ITS BEST!" -- ANDY WOOLFRIES

WMT Radio blankets much of the richest farming area in the world, including one-fourth of all "Grade A" land in the nation. Recognizing the need to serve this vast part of our audience, WMT has consistently featured programs of interest to the farmer. This service started with the pioneer farm reporting of "Neighbor Bob" Leefer and was enlarged under Andy Woolfries. With the arrival of Chuck Worcester from CBS in 1946, our farm department began to take on its present scope as more and more features were added. To Worcester belongs much of the credit for WMT's position as the foremost radio farm department in the nation. Looking for an assistant in 1952, Chuck chose the brightest young man in farm broadcasting, Bob Nance. Four years later, when Worcester became director of news services, Nance became farm service director. Today, Bob's two outstanding associates are Farm Editor Bill Alford and Farm Reporter Jerry Brady, who also are recognized nationally as top farm broadcasters. This team airs more than 20 hours a week, travels up to 4,000 miles a month, and sells for more than 100 farm accounts. Most important of all: Bob, Bill and Jerry assure the continuance of our tradition . . . "Farm Service At Its Best!"



Andy Woolfries holds a firm spot near the top in any history of our Farm Department. Irish-born Andy, a radio pioneer in our KWCR days, returned to WMT in 1942 as our first Farm Director. Until 1947, Andy informed our vast farm audience with talk to "people and cows."



Warren Kester, left, was right-hand man to both Woolfries and Chuck Worcester from 1944-48. Worcester, as originator of the National Corn Picking Contests, Gadget Shows, farm scholarships, etc., built WMT's Farm Department to its present position as the nation's finest.



Eastern Iowans came to know Chuck's family almost as well as their own. His popular "Sunday Visits" from the farm were full of homey conversation about family activities. That's Estelle with Chuck. The children are: Steve, Julie, Pete, Dave and Ricky.



In 1947, Chuck and Iowa State College President Charles E. Friley complete arrangements for WMT's first \$1,000 Farm Scholarship Award. This award, now renamed in Chuck's memory, has gone to 15 outstanding agricultural journalism students, each of whom used this experience as a valuable stepping-stone to outstanding positions in the field today.

# , CHUCK WORCESTER, BOB NANCE, BILL ALFORD, JERRY BRADY



This is one of our favorite pictures of Chuck, as it so perfectly combines his two careers—farming and broadcasting.



Bob Simmons, a Jefferson County farm boy who became WMT Farm Editor, helped start annual "Favorite Farmer's Daughter" contests.



In 1957, Carla Folkers of Scotch Grove was the first "Favorite Farmer's Daughter" showered with gifts in this popular WMT Contest.



Great names from all fields have talked into our mikes. Here department store founder J. C. Penney is interviewed by Farm Editor Bill Alford.



Greatest crowd ever to attend a WMT event, 120,000 were on hand for the 1958 National Corn Picking Contest held near Marion. One of the speaking attractions that day was a young man with Presidential hopes, Senator John F. Kennedy. Afternoon speaker was President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who also found time to compare the problems of a Gettysburg farmer with Iowa farmers. Started by Chuck Worcester in 1949, the contest had now attained national scope with entrants from seven states and hundreds of behind-the-scenes workers. So it was fitting that on its 10th anniversary, the national contest came back home to WMT-Land.



Still another farm department innovation, the WMT-Iowa State Fair Gadget Show has for 16 years showcased the inventive genius of the Iowa farmer. The unique show was inaugurated by Promotion Assistant Vern Hansen.



WMT's exclusive "Farm Cavalcade" series broadcasts direct from the nation's top 15 agricultural events. One stop is the All-Iowa Fair Fat Steer Championship where Bob Nance and Bill Alford interview the 1960 winner, Kathy Beale of Buckingham.



As WMT's farm news coverage grew, so did our award-winning department. Today it is capably manned by this trio: Farm Editor Bill Alford, Farm Service Director Bob Nance, and Farm Reporter Jerry Brady.

# IF IT'S NEWS YOU'LL HEAR IT FIRST ON WMT! SINCE 1922 -- "T

WMT's news coverage is unique in the radio industry. Listeners in more than 500 communities have learned to depend on us for hometown news as well as regional, national and international developments. Sixty-five area correspondents relay stories to the News Center. Other facilities include five leased wires, two mobile units and a complete weather radar installation. This mass of information is processed, edited and aired by seven newsmen with a combined total of over 85 years of broadcast experience. But it wasn't always this way. In the beginning, news bulletins were received by short-wave wireless and decoded. Newscasters had to ad-lib over the static-caused blank spaces. WMT's first official news director was Douglas Grant, followed by Al Haugner, who originated the correspondents system. He was followed by Jim Bormann, Dick Cheverton, Chuck Worcester and Grant Price . . . each of whom was responsible for major advances in radio news reporting. Over the years, WMT has earned a nationwide reputation for news excellence and has been honored by many national awards. These include the Alfred I. duPont Award, the Sigma Delta Chi Award and the National Radio-TV News Directors Award. With more than 300 news programs per week, WMT brings you . . . "the most complete news in Iowa radio."



Doug Grant's news career started more than 30 years ago when bulletins came via short-wave wireless, but he is best remembered for his 10 p.m. newscasts during World War II.



Newsman Carter Reynolds deserves a place in our history book, as his voice first broke the news of Pearl Harbor to eastern Iowans on December 7, 1941.



During World War II, eastern Iowans, via WMT, first came to depend on such great CBS reporting names as Edward R. Murrow, Robert Trout, Charles Collingwood, Eric Sevareid, William L. Shirer, etc.



Among the advances introduced by Jim Bormann, news director 1947-51, were state-house reporting and expanded on-the-scenes news coverage.



Another well-remembered newscaster is Pat Patterson, featured on the noon-news programs from 1944-47.



WMT listeners knew Walter Cronkite long before he became nationally known on CBS. As our 1949 Washington correspondent, he met other news staff members Bob Henry, Mel Hallock, Bill Roberts, Jim Bormann, Cole McMartin and Howard Anderson.



Gene Claussen joined us right after World War II as evening newscaster.



Newsman Howard Anderson once talked a diamond thief into confession on one of his evening newscasts.



Eastern Iowans have depended on Cole McMartin to wrap up the news for them nightly at 10 PM for the past 12 years.



WMT featured Walter Cronkite with exclusive daily telephone reports from Washington, D.C.

# THE MOST COMPLETE NEWS IN IOWA RADIO"! 1962: 9-MAN STAFF



Early morning and noontime newscasts were Bill Roberts' responsibilities in the late 1940's and early 1950's.



The late Jim Shirek's favorite assignment was covering the Iowa legislature.



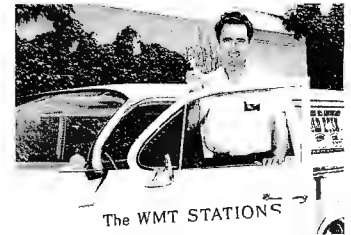
Under News Director Dick Cheverton, our news center won three national awards.



Chuck Worcester was Director of News Services at the time of his fatal accident in 1961.



This news staff was rated "best in the nation" in 1955 by the Radio-TV News Directors' Association. Shown with their trophy, from left in front: Cole McMartin, News Director Dick Cheverton, Henry Lippold, and Bob Bruner. In back are Bill Roberts, Del Blumenshine, Bob Johnson and Jim Shirek.



Since 1961, WMT's Director of News Services has been Grant Price, shown here with one of his department's mobile units for on-the-scene reporting.



Weather Consultant Conrad Johnson has perfected his science to a fine art.



News Center staff today includes Cole McMartin and Martin Jensen, seated, with Roger Dunnette, Dick Threlkeld, Bob Bruner, Grant Price and Dave Shay standing. They bring you "The most complete news in Iowa radio."

# WMT SPORTS COVERAGE: TOPS IN MIDWEST RADIO! -- REPORT

The United States is the most sports-loving nation in the world. And WMT has served Midwest sports fans since the days of our infancy, when baseball scores were the first "news items" on WJAM. WMT was also one of the first stations in the nation to broadcast college football, while our baseball ancestry dates from Bert Puckett's play-by-play booth on the roof of a house! Nevertheless, WMT was without a bona fide sports department until 1947 when Tait Cummins became our sports director. It's doubtful if there's anyone in eastern Iowa, sports fan or not, who doesn't know Tait. A veteran reporter and columnist for 30 years, Tait grew up in Iowa sports. His close association with sports figures the country over repeatedly gives him the inside track on big stories. On the lighter side, Tait likes his listeners to have fun and his many contests hold all the mail records at WMT. But perhaps Tait's expansive personality is his biggest asset. It's apparent in his easy style of writing, and his informal style on the air. His popularity with Iowans accounts for his many speaking dates, about 125 per year. Cummins' activities are so numerous they can hardly be counted, but his own favorite work area is with young people. Some of his projects here include his "Keep Iowa Athletes in Iowa" campaign, his "WMT Collegiate Honor Roll" of outstanding football players, and his own "network" of high school reporters in nearly 200 schools. It's a good thing Tait loves his work because he does a lot of it—35 programs a week on WMT Radio!



Dr. Eddie Anderson was Iowa Hawkeye football coach in 1947 when Tait Cummins joined WMT as our first full-time Sports Director.



Here's our favorite photo of Tait. It shows him at half-time in Iowa's stadium with three Cummins trademarks: battered hat, pipe and sandwich!



Tait can't recall a WMT-Land town where he hasn't appeared in 15 years, but not all welcomes were as spectacular as this one at Sigourney.



The "knife and fork circuit" is familiar to Tait. Over 2,000 banquets in 15 years is one reason he often diets. That's SUI's Forest Evashevski at the right.



From 30 years experience, Tait knows most of the big names in the sports world. Here he visits with former champ Joe Louis.



No sports figure is closer to Tait than Evy; in fact, they have their own mutual admiration society.



Unbeatable—that's the only word for Tait and Frank Carideo's broadcasts of Iowa football games. Frank, a member of Football's Hall of Fame from his All-American days at Notre Dame, joined Tait in WMT's booth when he retired as an Iowa coach in 1950. Tait's colorful play-by-play, coupled with Frank's authoritative analysis, has made them Iowa's most-listened-to team.

# ED BY THE DEAN OF IOWA SPORTSCASTERS -- TAIT CUMMINS



In the football season, WMT listeners know that Tuesday night at 10:15 means its time for great fun with Tait and his forecasting panel. In 1953, the "experts" were Lee Winger, Tait, Coe College Coach Dick Clausen, and Frank Carideo. Clausen's seat in turn has been filled by Wally Schwank and Glenn Drahn.



WMT "Follows the Hawks" in basketball, too. Sportscaster Bob Mikkalson, left, began his play-by-play accounts in 1958, the same year Sharm Scheuerman became Iowa head coach.



The "WMT Collegiate Honor Roll" of football players in 1956 included Jerome Rothmeyer of Calmar, right, being introduced to Clinton's Kenny Ploen, star quarterback of Iowa's 1957 Rose Bowl Champs.



Authors!—In 1948 Tait was asked to write the first history of Iowa Hawkeye football. Above, he shows a copy of his book to the authors of this book you're reading now — Jim Bowermaster, WMT Promotion Manager, and Tait's wife, Dotty.



How was Hawaii? Well, this picture speaks for itself, and leads into the fact that The WMT Stations' three consecutive "Hawaiian Holiday" trips with 369 happy Iowa travelers is a record unequalled in the tour industry.



"Outdoor Iowa", with hunting and fishing news, is one of Tait's favorite programs. Here he's in action at Prairie du Chien's Ice Fisheree.



Tait's famous for all kinds of contests on his programs. His annual contests based on the state boys and girls basketball tournaments get results like this, and 16 lucky winners get a week's free vacation at Hackensack, Minnesota, fishing resorts.



Tait will always help the youngsters and he's a favorite with them. Above, Independence Little Leaguers get autographs.



Like father, like son!—Little Charlie Tait Cummins was a year old before he got his first pipe like Dad's! Big Tait's listeners know all about Charlie.

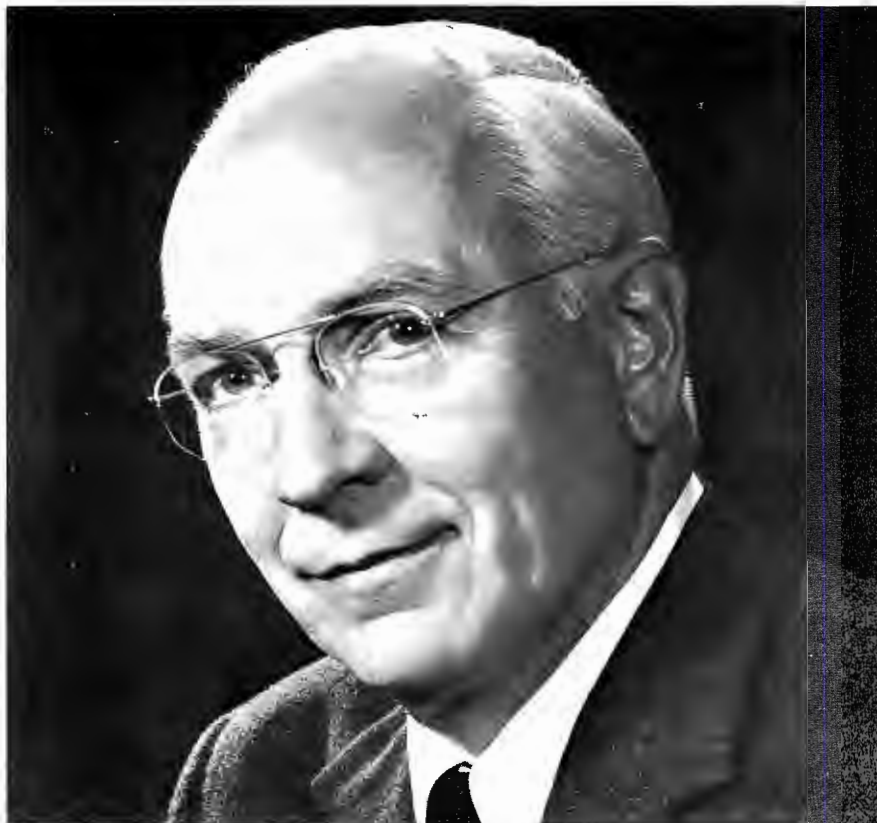




Under Mr. Quarton's guidance, WMT has won numerous national awards for distinguished public service. Above in 1952, he accepts the coveted Alfred I. duPont Award in Washington, D.C. from Mrs. Jessie Ball duPont and Dr. Francis Gaines.



Bill Quarton enjoys great respect in the broadcast industry. In 1962 he was honored with the co-chairmanship of the National Association of Broadcasters' annual convention in Chicago. Other dignitaries gathered for this picture are, in front: Governor LeRoy Collins, NAB President; Newton Minow, FCC Chairman; and Edward R. Murrow, Director, U.S. Information Service. Standing with Mr. Quarton is co-chairman Joe Higgins of WIBC, Indianapolis.



## WM. B. QUARTON--Executive Vice President, WMT Stations

Most WMT Radio listeners are well acquainted with the programs and personalities that have made the station eastern Iowa's favorite for four decades. Most, however, are not acquainted with the man who has guided the operation into a broadcasting "place in the sun" for half of its 40 years—William B. Quarton, who today is Executive Vice President of The WMT Stations. Many years ago in Algona, Iowa, a very old and very wise friend counselled a very young and very curious Bill Quarton to stop investigating every new field that fascinated him; to find a pursuit and stick to it. "When you do that," said the friend, "You'll go places!" And, in 1931 Bill Quarton did just that. He went to work as low man on the sales staff to-tem-pole at struggling Cedar Rapids station KWCR, managed by his brother Sumner. Even before 1931, when he was working in New York City, he couldn't resist advising brother Sumner how to run the station. Finally weary of the regular suggestions, Sumner wrote Bill: "If you know so much about it, come on out here and go to work!" By 1936, Bill's astute suggestions had advanced him to commercial manager; by 1943 he was WMT station manager; and in 1953 he became Executive Vice President of The WMT Stations' parent company, The American Broadcasting Stations, Incorporated. Which of the Quarton theories were chiefly responsible for WMT's ever-increasing popularity? Well, besides his tremendous understanding of eastern Iowans and their needs, it's probably his willingness to allot big pieces of budget to two fields: first, promotion and merchandising at the local level; and, secondly, seeking out and building WMT's personalities to a popularity in our area that equals or exceeds that of national celebrities. In the field of personal public service his achievements are legion. He has served as president of both the Cedar Rapids Junior and Senior Chambers of Commerce, and is a trustee and member of the executive committees of Coe College and St. Luke's Hospital. On the state level, he has long been vitally interested in all matters affecting Iowa. In 1960 he was president of the Citizen's Committee for a Constitutional Convention On Reapportionment. In the broadcast industry, Bill Quarton is recognized as a pioneer and influential leader. He has served two terms on the National Association of Broadcasters' Radio Board (1948-1952) and was chairman of the finance committee. He also served three distinguished years on the Television Code Board—the last year as chairman. Mr. Quarton was one of the original incorporators of the Radio Advertising Bureau, serving as secretary and as a member of the executive committee for its first three years. In connection with the CBS Network, he was an active member for four years on the CBS Radio Affiliates Board and, also, four years on the CBS Television Board, the last year as chairman. At present, he is chairman of the National Association of Broadcasters' Television Board. There's no question that Bill Quarton is a busy man, yet his first order of business has always been to personally concern himself with the problems and suggestions of our listeners. From Mr. Quarton's top management level, down to our newest employee, it is this type of close listener association which has made WMT Radio truly "The Voice of Iowa."



KENNETH L. HASTIE, Station Manager



## THE WMT RADIO MANAGEMENT TEAM



LEO F. COLE, Business Manager



GEORGE HIXENBAUGH, Chief Engineer



BERYL STARBUCK, Sales Manager



DEAN LANDFEAR, Program Manager



GRANT PRICE, Director of News Services  
[www.americanradiohistory.com](http://www.americanradiohistory.com)



JIM BOWERMASTER, Promotion-Merchandising Manager

# WMT RADIO -- 1962: 53 STAFF MEMBERS SERVING EASTERN IOWA



388 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE TO WMT LISTENERS!—That's quite a record, and it belongs to the 15 members of our "20-Year Club!" They are, left to right in front, Engineers Burt Champlin and Don Baughman. First row: Ken Hastie, Station Manager; Leo Cole, Business Manager; Lew Van Nostrand, Vice President-Sales, WMT-TV; Bob Kucera, Assistant Chief Engineer; Paul Palmer, Engineer; and Ross Wilson, Assistant Chief Engineer. In back: Howdy Roberts, Announcer; Bill Quarton, Executive Vice President; Ed Updegraff, Engineer; Frank Mainker, Engineer; George Hixenbaugh, Chief Engineer; Dean Harger, Engineer; and Doug Grant, Vice President-WMT-TV Operations.

WMT Radio-1962 occupies studios and offices on the 4th and 5th floors of the Paramount Theater Building in downtown Cedar Rapids and in Broadcast Park. In the early days, a handful of people operated the station, but today, WMT maintains an experienced staff of 53, working out of 12 departments to fill a 21-hour day with the best in listening. At the right you see some of the people who work behind the scenes. If it wasn't for these people and the important functions they perform daily—you wouldn't hear any of the familiar personalities pictured on the next page. The station simply wouldn't be on the air! The majority of WMT's fine staff is Iowa-born-and-bred—and, to paraphrase Meredith Willson: "they know the territory!"



Radio Departmental Staff, left to right, front row: Len Bjella, Sales; Bob Carpenter, Continuity; Fran Barker, Engineering; Bob Mikkalson, Sales; Dan Katz, Sales; Loren Abbot, Traffic Manager; and Urban McMann, Maintenance. Back row: Pat Petersen, Farm Department; Marge Brinkman, Sales; Beryl Starbuck, Sales Manager; Ruth Brainard, Accounting; Mary Barton, Accounting; Sally Eggleston, Continuity; Carol Smith, Business Office; Lola Oswald, Receptionist; Jim Ward, Promotion; Gerry Frank, Continuity Director; Anna Mary Eells, Music Librarian; Burt Champlin, Engineering; Anne Hannon, Traffic; Carol Cole, Sales; John Stock, Chief Accountant; Bette Shimek, Executive Secretary; Herb Castorf, Engineering; Paul Palmer, Engineering; Dorothy Pilicer, Accounting; and Pamela Emerson, Continuity.

# WITH THE FINEST IN NEWS, ENTERTAINMENT AND INFORMATION



**BILL ALFORD**  
Farm Editor



**JERRY BRADY**  
Farm Reporter



**BOB BRUNER**  
Newsman



**TAIT CUMMINS**  
Sports Director



**ROY DAHMER**  
Announcer



**ROGER DUNNETTE**  
Newsman



**PAUL EELLS**  
Sports Announcer



**BY GOSDEN**  
Announcer



**MARTIN JENSEN**  
Newsman



**CONRAD JOHNSON**  
Weather Consultant



**DEAN LANDFEAR**  
"Voice of Iowa"



**COLE McMARTIN**  
Newsman



**BOB NANCE**  
Farm Director



**GRANT PRICE**  
News Director



**HOWDY ROBERTS**  
Announcer



**BILL SASS**  
Announcer



**DAVE SHAY**  
Newsman



**DICK THRELKELD**  
Newsman



**JIM WICKS**  
Announcer



On this, our 40th Anniversary, WMT Radio salutes all of the people who have been with us through the years . . . our founders, our sponsors, our executive, air and technical personnel—but, most of all, our listeners, who have made these 40 wonderful years possible and worthwhile. It is to the listeners, our followers since the crystal set era, that we owe our greatest debt of gratitude, for without their support and confidence, there would never have been a WMT.

