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“THE WAVES TRAVELED THROUGH EVERYTHING”: RADIO’S IMPACT ON TAMPA IN THE 1920S

by Heather C.R. McClenahan

In a hurry to get to work or to complete morning chores, *Tampa Tribune* readers may have missed the story on the newspaper’s back page on May 15, 1922: “World Now Passing into the Radio Era, Public is Becoming ‘Radio Bugs.’” No invention had ever received so much attention from so many scientists and engineers, and demand for radio equipment left manufacturers swamped. “Radio is with us to stay,” the article boldly proclaimed; “the general public have taken it up to so great an extent that we must either keep up with the progress of time or drop out of the procession.”¹

The *Tribune*’s rival answered the article that very afternoon. The *Tampa Daily Times* announced on the front page that it had received permission to begin the first radio station in Florida. During the next decade, station WDAE brought fighter Jack Dempsey into the city’s living rooms, kept anxious listeners updated during hurricanes, and helped introduce the nation to one of the most popular big bands of the era. Tampa’s experiences were repeated in towns and cities across the nation as radio’s popularity increased.

For the first time in history, Americans from coast to coast shared experiences instantaneously. What happened in the big radio markets of New York and Chicago trickled down to smaller locales. At the same time, with radio stations powerful enough to reach hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles, listeners learned of performers, people, and events throughout the nation. Scholars have argued that radio, more than any other phenomenon, led to the emergence of a national culture in the United States. The electromagnetic waves traveled without regard to regional lines or cultures and helped to create a national identity.²

During the 1920s, radio passed from a curiosity to a craze to an integral part of American culture. While much has been written about what happened to the medium in its early years, few have explored its impact on people or individual cities during the 1920s. Every radio history includes KDKA in Pittsburgh broadcasting the Harding-Cox election returns in 1920, WEA in New York playing the first advertisements, and the formation of the networks. Social historians have focused on the changes in radio audiences, the structure of the broadcasting industry, and the appeal of particular programs.³ But larger questions are often taken for granted: What made radio so popular? How and why did radio become such an important part of life? How did lives change with the introduction of radio? By studying Tampa in the early years of radio, this article seeks to explore and answer these questions.

The developmental stages of radio had just begun when the United States entered World War I. The Navy took over control of the airwaves and, at the same time, trained a generation of operators who would later bring entertainment, education, and news to the nation. The medium’s big break came when Westinghouse-owned KDKA went on the air on November 2, 1920 and broadcast the presidential election returns. The event sparked a craze in radio, as the figures demonstrate. The number of radio sets jumped from 50,000 in 1921 to 600,000 in 1922. Sales

zoomed from \$60 million in 1922 to \$358 million two years later. In January 1922 only thirty stations broadcast in the United States. By March 1923, 556 stations clogged the airwaves – clogged because until May of that year, all stations broadcast on the same AM frequency, 360 meters.⁴

Stations in the same town juggled times with each other, and radio buffs demanded that they go off the air some nights altogether so far-away stations could be received. That led to the institution of “Silent Night,” a period of one or two nights each week when stations in New York, Chicago, and other big cities voluntarily left the airwaves. “Silent Night” did not occur in Tampa, where WDAE broadcast only a few hours each evening, but the phenomenon would help Tampa introduce itself to the world. The *Times*' station received letters from as far away as Australia as its signal bounced through the atmosphere.⁵

Most families built their own radios in the early years – often out of an oatmeal box wound with wire, a galena or silicone crystal, and a pair of headphones. Listeners used a thin wire called a cat's whisker to probe the crystal and tune into stations. The simple devices featured no volume controls. More experienced radio amateurs developed tube sets which required cumbersome storage batteries. When Westinghouse manufactured the first commercial radios in 1920, crystal sets sold for \$25 and tube sets cost \$60. By 1922, hundreds of companies produced sets that came in all shapes, sizes, and prices.⁶

Most broadcasting history books cite 1922 as the landmark year for radio. WDAE in New York aired the first commercials, advertisements touting the Hawthorne Court apartments. RCA, Westinghouse, and others created technical innovations that increased radio sets' ability to pick up stations and made the sets more affordable. More than 600 stations went on the air, but then, many went off again, sometimes within days.⁷

Those who sought radio station licenses in the early 1920s did not plan to make money out of the venture. Rather, they sought publicity or prestige within the community. For instance, in Great Falls, Montana, the local newspaper launched station KDYS. The mayor spoke over the airwaves to a crowd of more than 800 who huddled around a receiving set in a dry goods store during the first broadcast. In some respects, the story is eerily similar to Tampa's, but the KDYS transmitter failed its first night and the station closed within two years. Radio listeners in Tampa can still hear WDAE.⁸



The first receiver sold by Montgomery Ward appeared in its Fall 1922 catalogue.

After suffering a postwar depression, a protracted cigarworkers' strike, and a punishing hurricane, Tampa boomed in 1922. Tourists flocked to the state; land buyers swooped down from the north looking for prime real estate. Construction started on the Gandy Bridge, the first to cross Tampa Bay. Development of exclusive Davis Islands and Temple Terrace would soon begin. These were exciting, heady times.⁹

In the midst of the boom came a small announcement in the May 15, 1922 *Tampa Times*: 'Stand By' Fans to Aid Times Test Radio Broadcaster." The short article asked radio listeners throughout the state to tune in between seven and nine p.m. for the next three days and to let the newspaper know if static interfered with the test. The newspaper did not tell them where to tune in on the radio dial because dials had not yet been invented.¹⁰

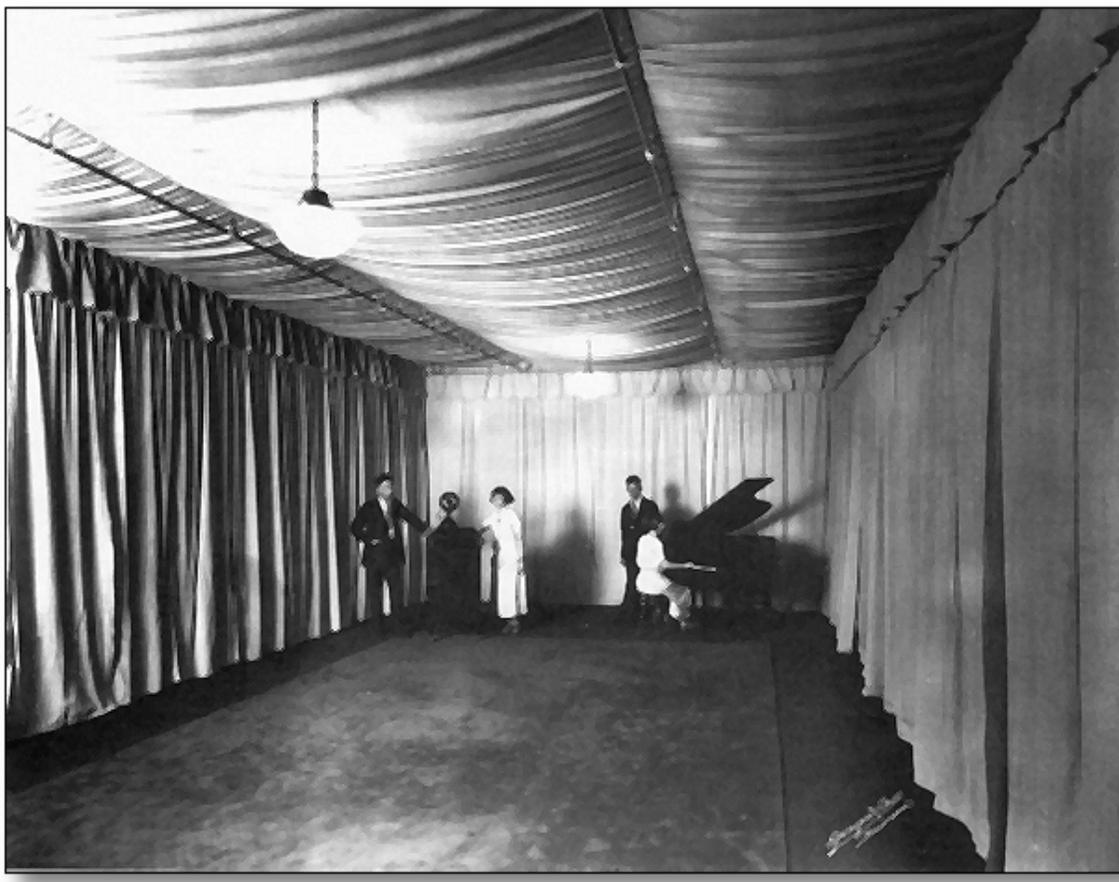
Tampa did not buzz with excitement over the news of a new radio station because so few people had receivers at the time, according to Sol Fleischman, a radio and television star who began his career on WDAE in 1928. But people did gather around what sets they could find, such as the one at the Eli Witt Cigar Store on Franklin Street that loudly squawked WDAE's first test. The station played phonographs and broadcast news events from the day: Chicago's labor war waged out of control, former Florida Governor Sidney J. Catts was indicted for accepting bribes, and the Automobile Club of America formed a chapter in Tampa. Almost as important to some listeners were the baseball scores that came over the airways.¹¹

The three-day test paid off. On May 17, the *Times* announced it had been granted a license by the government to operate its "radiophone" broadcasting station. It was one of ninety-seven organizations given a license that month, the twelfth newspaper in the United States to be so honored, and one of sixty-nine newspapers that would own a radio station by year's end. Soon regularly scheduled broadcasts featured Tampa singers and speakers "addressing the world" from the small studio atop the Citrus Exchange Building downtown.¹²

The first such broadcast came on May 31, 1922, with the following schedule:

7:30 p.m. Markets and News of the Day
7:45 Piano solo by Miss Helen Ray
8:00 Radio Greetings: Mayor Charles H. Brown
8:05 Solo and Quartet
8:20 Vocal Solo
8:30 "The Spirit of Rotary" by E.D. Lambricht, postmaster of
Tampa
8:45 Homer Moore Quintet
9:00 Bedtime Story, "How the First Sunflower Got Its Name," by
Children's Librarian, Marian Pierce
9:15 Solo

With the exception of the mayor's greeting and the quintet leader unwittingly bawling out his members over an open microphone when they finished their number, much of the programming over the next decade followed a similar pattern. Meanwhile, listeners across the state began responding to this new phenomenon.¹³



WDAEs broadcast studio as it looked in 1924.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System.

“Thank you for the pleasure you are giving us,” came the praise from Fred and J.A. Haslinger of Oldsmar soon after the station went on the air. Piccolo and violin solos particularly impressed the couple. A.W. Anders of Plant City wrote, “You sure came in fine.” And another Plant City resident claimed to have heard the broadcast over his new aerial made of bed springs. Norman Stillwell, a fourteen-year-old Tampa boy, bragged in a letter to the *Times* that he had built a receiver for seventy-five cents and could hear WDAE loud and clear.¹⁴

Pierce Electric Company, Tampa’s distributor for RCA, became the first to cite WDAE in its newspaper advertisements, telling radio fans they could pick up the new daily broadcasts on sets that ranged from \$32.50 to \$200. While Pierce customers impatiently waited four to six weeks for a receiver because demand outstripped supply, Hunter Electric promised that shipments of radio equipment arrived weekly. As radio distribution rivals fought each other on the *Times*’ pages, the newspaper tooted the station’s horn. “Dealers in radio receiving apparatus in Florida report that the demand for outfits since The *Times* announced its broadcasting station has been enormous.” Later a story claimed hundreds of receiving sets had been installed since the announcements of a new station. Self-congratulations aside, the newspaper and radio executives

did have some reason for satisfaction. Letters and telephone calls came in from a far away as Key West and Jacksonville in those first few days.¹⁵

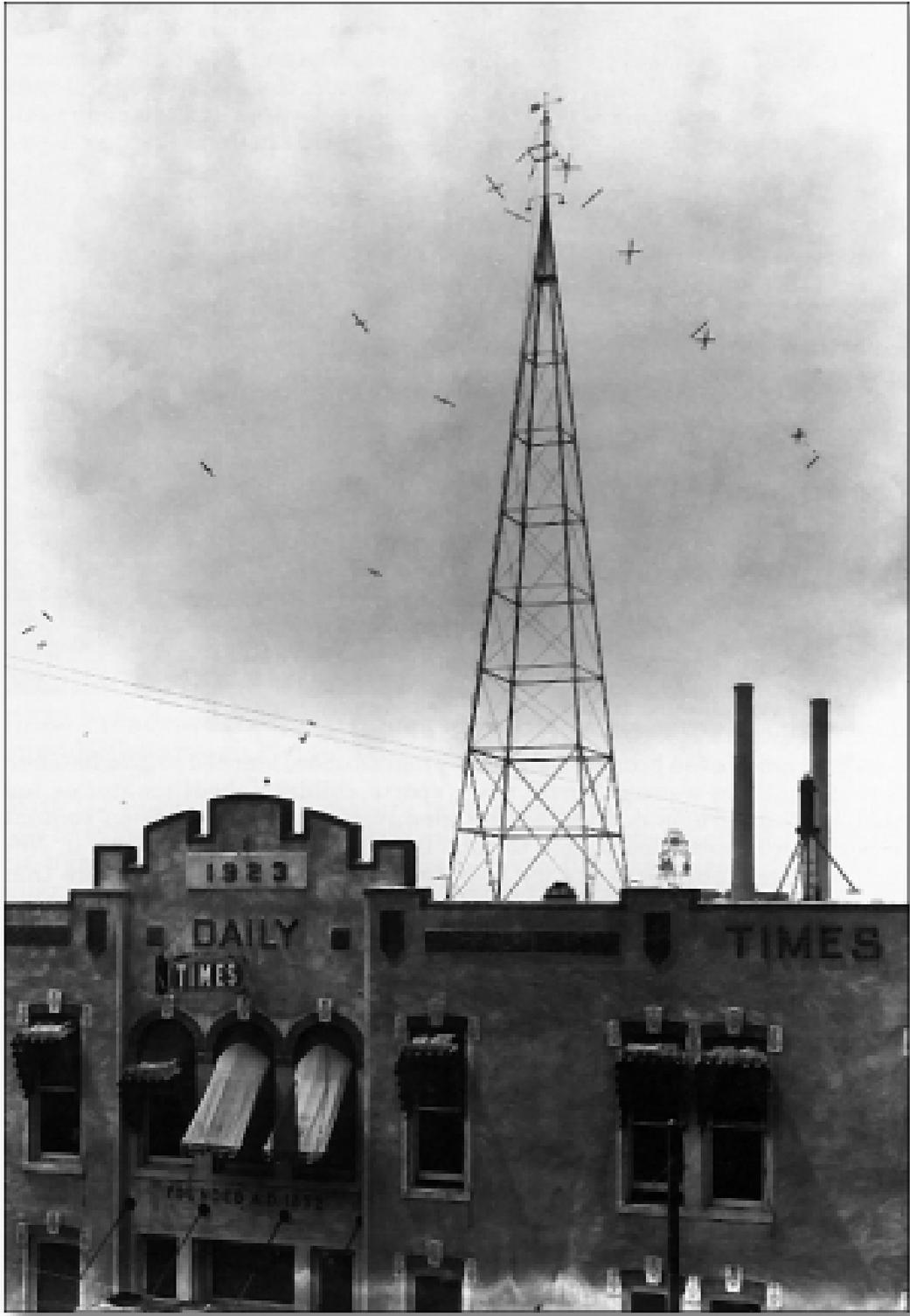
Radio, one of the most novel inventions in history, had arrived. While bureaucrats in Washington wondered how to regulate the airwaves, youngsters like Normal Stillwell, Sol Fleischman and, soon, their parents tuned in. "Fans predict that the time is not far distant when nearly every home in the cities and the country will be equipped to listen in on concerts," the *Tampa Times* proclaimed. Those predictions proved absolutely correct.¹⁶

Radio was magic. People who first listened to static-filled broadcasts over ill-fitting headphones in the 1920s still speak of it in awe. "It was like a miracle," Sol Fleischman recalled. Voices came out of the air, and people had never heard nor seen anything like it. "It was the most amazing thing!" remembered Mary Delp, who first listened to radio in the early 1920s on her uncle's crystal set. "I was astounded [at] the very fact that there was music you could hear and no one was playing." Even *Times* editor and five-time Tampa mayor D.B. McKay seemed mystified by the phenomenon. People who would not listen to a phonograph in their home scrambled to hear it on the radio. "What radio fans are really interested in is the mysterious wireless itself.... The wireless has a basic and universal appeal because it is closely allied with the supernatural, even the uncanny," he claimed.¹⁷

Radio gained even broader appeal as programmers learned to give listeners more of what they wanted. Music, news, sports, children's bedtime stories, and other such programs dominated the airwaves in the 1920s. Soon content, rather than novelty, led people to tune in. A study of radio stations in New York, Chicago, and Kansas City in February 1925 showed that more than seventy percent of the programs focused on music while about ten percent included news, sports, and other information. Entertainment, church services, and other miscellaneous programs made up the remaining twenty percent. In Tampa at the same time, more than eighty percent of the programming consisted of music. WDAE broadcast nightly from five to seven-thirty and on Thursdays from three to ten. Musical performances made up eight of ten programs listed for Thursday nights in February 1925 while a lecture from the Bradenton Board of Trade and a humorist completed the list.¹⁸

In the 1920s, artists sometimes appeared for publicity alone, but they also put on some spectacular performances. Tampa scored a coup in 1925 when Miguel Fleta, leading tenor for the New York Metropolitan Opera, chose to make his radio debut on WDAE. He sang a Mexican ballad that the *Times* claimed was heard from Philadelphia to San Antonio and by multitudes in Cuba, where Fleta was a hero. Later in the decade, the station broadcast live from the Davis Islands Country Club where the roof pulled back on clear nights and Isham Jones and his orchestra played beneath the stars. Jones, originally from Chicago, composed such popular songs as "It Had To Be You" and "I'll See You In My Dreams." He led one of the finest dance bands of all time, and broadcasts of his concerts over WDAE are said to have drawn thousands of letters from every state and a number of foreign countries.¹⁹

Despite great performances and performers, radio schedules proved erratic, at best, throughout the nation. Live shows ran over and under time. Guests were sometimes delayed, and station employees filled in by singing, playing instruments, or improvising some other way to keep the



WDAE's broadcast tower in 1924 was on top of the *Tampa Daily Times* building at the corner of Franklin and Washington streets.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System.

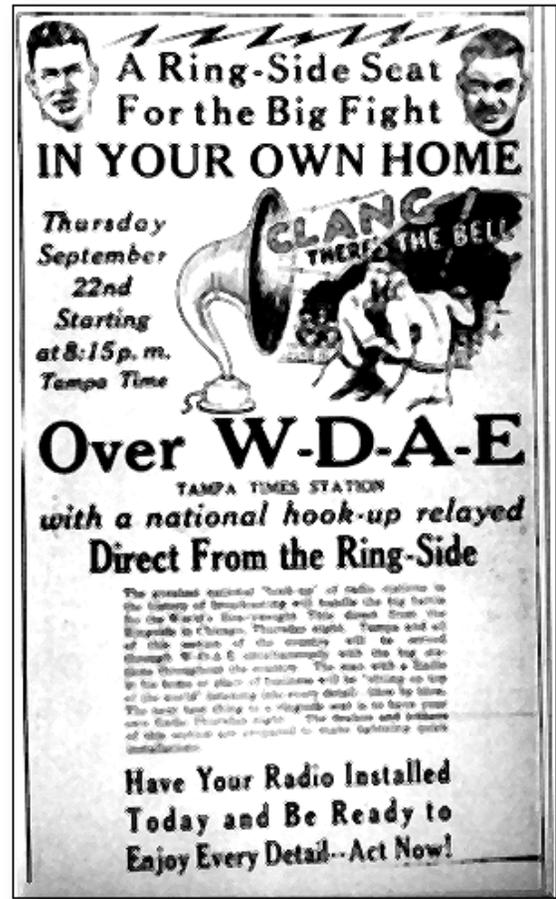
audience occupied. WDAE was not immune to such troubles. "Sometimes you would be off the air for half an hour because you didn't have anything to go on the air," Fleischman recalled. Once Harry Slichter, managing editor for the *Times*, filled a ten-minute empty slot with a trombone solo.²⁰

Along with dance music, sports broadcasts gained popularity as a radio staple in the 1920s. Sports reached a golden age during the Roaring Decade, with the likes of Babe Ruth in baseball, Red Grange in football, Bill Tilden in tennis, and Bobby Jones in golf. Radio, with its hyperbole-prone announcers, helped those stars to shine, as evidenced by the Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney fight in 1927, probably the most promoted and most spectacular sporting event up to that time.²¹

The popular Manassa Mauler and scholarly Tunney fought in Philadelphia in 1926, and, to the chagrin and surprise of most Americans, Dempsey lost. The boxers set up a rematch in September 1927, to be held at Soldiers Field in Chicago. A record 104,000 fans spent over \$2.6 million for seats. Much of the rest of the nation, an estimated 50 million people, listened in on radio.²²

To broadcast the fight, WDAE joined sixty-eight stations in the largest network ever up to that time. The *Tampa Tribune* estimated at least twenty-five percent of the city's population would hear the bout. Businesses such as Thompson Electric Company and Studebaker Gulf Sales, as well as clubs like the Knights of Pythias and Egypt Temple Shrine, planned radio parties. In addition, the newspaper noted, more than 3,600 Tampa homes had radios.²³

Excitement about the fight built up for days in the nation's sports pages. Hundreds of people stood in the streets outside the *Times* building to hear the WDAE broadcast over loud speakers. Tampa native Dorothy Smith remembers her father and brothers gathering around the set in their Tampa home to listen to the dramatic fight – which did not interest her in the least – shouting at the radio as they rooted for their man. For seven rounds, Dempsey chased Tunney, who "boxed circles around the ex-champion," easily thrusting aside his savage lunges. Then Dempsey found a vital spot and Tunney went down. The referee delayed the count for five seconds because Dempsey refused to move to a neutral corner. In what became known as the famous "long count," Tunney pulled himself up at nine. Again to the disappointment of much of the nation, he went on to win the fight.²⁴



An ad for the 1927 Dempsey-Tunney fight was clearly used to sell radios.

Photograph from WDAE by Hampton Dunn.

Even local sporting events like college and high school football games captured audiences in Tampa. One such game led to the nearly legendary broadcasting career of local radio and later television star Sol Fleischman. Telephone lines were unavailable between Tampa and Gainesville for live broadcasts of University of Florida football games. Therefore, a telegraph operator sent the play-by-play to Tampa, where another operator transcribed the information and an announcer put it over the air. Because of time lag between when the announcer finished describing a play and the telegraph operator received new ones, the station kept a small band in the studio to fill in the gaps. Fleischman played drums for the band. Prohibition notwithstanding, on September 28, 1928, the announcer got drunk before the end of the game. The station manager asked the band members if one could step in. When no one volunteered, a friend of Fleischman's piped up, "Sol's got a big mouth." The retired announcer likes to say he sat down at the microphone to finish the game and got up fifty-four years later.²⁵



Sol Fleishman in 1928.

Radio announcers such as Fleischman and New York sports announcer Graham McNamee became local and national celebrities. Their voices went into people's homes, and listeners began to consider them friends. Radio personalities in New Jersey and Kentucky even received proposals and propositions in letters from adoring fans in the mid-1920s. "Everybody treated me like a member of the family wherever I went," Fleischman recalled. While announcers contributed to radio's popularity, they would also play a role as the medium became an essential part of American life.²⁶

Radio brought more to the nation than entertainment. From news of the hero's welcome for Charles Lindbergh in 1927 to weather reports, people tuned in instantaneously to the world around them. "I can remember everybody crowding around during an emergency or an event," said Pearl Wilson, who grew up near Tampa. At the same time, the medium became a big business, creating jobs during the booming 1920s for radio manufacturers, retailers, engineers, announcers, and musicians.²⁷

After Herb Brown graduated from Hillsborough High School in 1929, his father urged him to take a correspondence course in radio repair. The younger Brown set up a small shop in his parents' home and later worked for a wholesale radio parts distributor and as a transmitter engineer for WDAE. After World War II, Brown opened his own electronics store on Nebraska Avenue. "Radio was not in my thoughts ... except as a listener" in the early years, Brown reminisced. But when the opportunities came along, he rode the wave into the expanding

business of radio. The number of radio dealers in Tampa jumped from one in 1922 to twenty by 1930.²⁸

As the industry boomed, entrepreneurs looked for ways to make money from the magic airwaves. Critics expressed doubts over AT&T's plan for "toll broadcasting" on WEAF in New York in the summer of 1922. One publication declared advertising "positively offensive to great number of people." But the developer for Hawthorne Court apartments, who paid \$50 for the nation's first radio ad, claimed sales jumped up. Within seven months, two dozen sponsors used time on New York's WEAF, and the idea would soon catch on throughout the nation.²⁹

Towne's Tampa Steam Laundry became the first company to advertise on WDAE. As George Seargeant, the seller of that ad told the story, he and chief engineer William Pharr Moore, decided one day in 1926 that the station needed some daytime programs. Mack Towne appeared reluctant to buy time at 7 a.m., but Seargeant eventually talked him into sponsoring an early morning program. Coffee companies, department stores, and jewelry shops soon signed up to keep the station on the air during the day. By 1929 WDAE, which started out as a "toy" for the *Tampa Times*, supported itself with advertising revenue.³⁰

While some lamented the commercialization of the industry, radio proved how useful it could be in 1928. Hurricanes besieged Florida in the 1920s. A 1921 storm caused about \$500,000 in damages in Tampa. Another one devastated Miami in 1926. When the next big tempest came along two years later, radio technology had advanced enough to play a part in saving human lives and aiding victims.³¹

The '28 hurricane struck the east coast of Florida on September 16 and turned northward, losing force as it swept up the peninsula. Four WDAE staff members remained on the air seventy-two hours, relaying news of the storm as wires blew down throughout the state. Tampa, with maximum winds of twenty-eight miles per hour, was spared, and the broadcasters got that word out quickly.³²

WDAE responded indignantly to a report on WEAF that the storm lay waste to Florida from Palm Beach to Tampa. The stations exchanged messages "while hundreds of thousands of fans listened in all over the country," the *Times* reported. "The New York station then corrected the false report." Mayor G.B. Knowles of Bradenton commended the station "for correcting the misinformation about storm conditions being broadcast" and combating "false propaganda against us in the north." George Clements of the Bartow Chamber of Commerce praised the station for keeping the people of the state as well as the nation informed of the "true conditions" and for counteracting "stories sent out by irresponsible persons, including newspaper correspondents eager to get first page at the expense of accuracy."³³

Despite the optimistic outlook in Tampa where officials seemed most worried about the state's reputation with tourists, Palm Beach, Okeechobee and other southern communities lay flattened. The storm killed more than 800 people in twenty-four towns and left 16,000 homeless. The Red Cross requested five million dollars in aid. WDAE again swung into action, raising money for storm victims over the airwaves.³⁴



A remote broadcasting unit used by WDAE to cover events in the 1920s:

Photograph courtesy of the Florida State Archives.

When natural disasters occurred throughout the decade, Tampans raised funds for the victims. Announcers from the station and the community usually took to the WDAE airwaves to get help, and the *Times* was always quick to give credit to the radio station for the thousands of dollars that came in. Bravado aside, such examples demonstrate just how important radio had become.³⁵

Radio changed peoples lives. It affected everyone from school boys who tinkered with homemade sets to local acts that hit the big time. Listeners began altering their schedules in order to accommodate radio programs. Parties took on a new sound as radio rather than phonographs became the music medium of choice. Drivers equipped their automobiles with cumbersome gadgets to pick up radio stations. Social lives were transformed as people gave up old-fashioned visiting and neighborly chats to gather around the crackly box for entertainment and news. Radio captured imaginations and opened up the world.

At school, young boys discussed their exploits on simple crystal sets, recalled Vernon Lastinger. “The big thing was to stay up late at night and see how far you could get a station on them, how far your set would bring in something. Oh man, when you’d get a new station you’d

write it down and brag the next day," he said with a laugh. Two prominent stations he remembered tuning in were KDKA in Pittsburgh and WBT in Charlotte. Off and on through the 1920s, the *Tampa Times* ran program schedules for radio stations from Boston to San Francisco so local listeners could hear the sounds elsewhere.³⁶

Educational programming remained a small part of radio in the 1920s, but Mary Delp remembered one important lesson. "I learned to dance," the eighty-year-old recalled with delight. She especially loved listening to classical music and the big bands that came from stations far away.³⁷

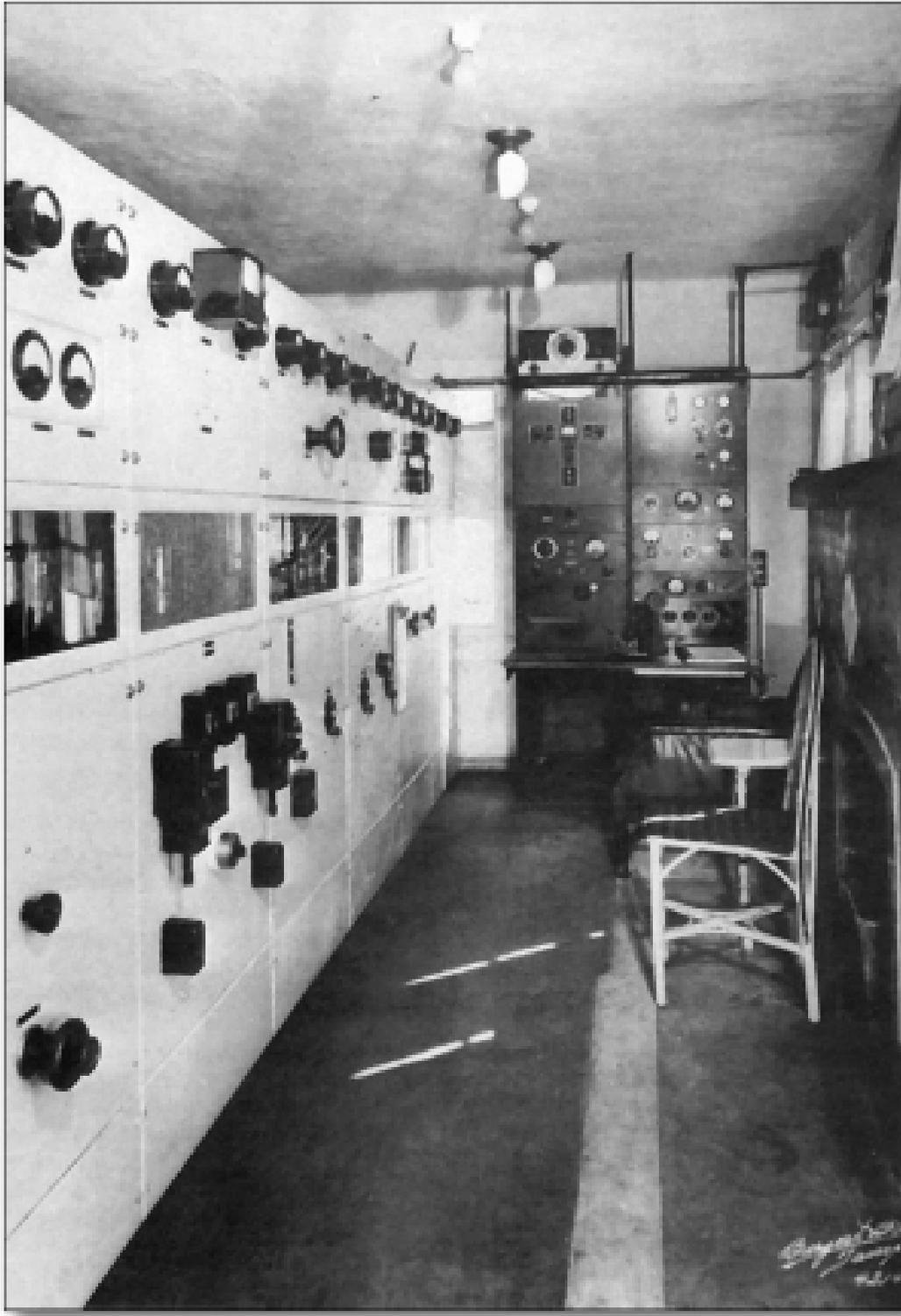
As WDAE and other radio stations began expanding their hours later in the decade, women found they could perform chores and listen at the same time. Such actions would eventually lead to the rise of daytime soap operas. But in the early years of radio, listening proved a much more formal affair. Families and neighbors gathered around to hear music and news, using their imaginations to picture events as they happened.³⁸

With the advent of radio, life also changed dramatically in Tampa's Latin enclaves of Ybor City and West Tampa. Prior to 1922, residents sat on the front porches of their cottages, chatting with neighbors and waving to passersby. After radio came along, people stayed indoors, listening to magical music and other programs, said Tony Pizzo, the late Tampa historian whose father owned one of the first radios in Ybor City. Pizzo also recalled almost everyone tuning into Cuban radio stations on Saturday mornings to hear the results of the lottery games. A person walking down the street in Ybor City would not miss a bit of the broadcast that wafted out from almost every house. Such scenes would later be repeated throughout the nation with popular drama and comedy programs like "Amos 'n' Andy." While folks still gathered with the family to listen to the radio, social life shifted forever. "It really changed the lifestyle of America," Pizzo concluded.³⁹

Radio also brought a devastating blow to the cigar factories where Cuban, Italian, and Spanish immigrants toiled. After a prolonged strike in 1931, radios replaced *los lectores*, the readers who had informed and entertained more than two generations of cigarmakers as they worked. Factory owners feared the readers incited workers by reading radical newspapers and novels. The radio never caught on well in the factories because most workers did not speak English, Pizzo explained. Still, the replacement of *el lector* with a black box displaced a rich part of Latin heritage.⁴⁰

Radio brought other social changes outside the home. At a political rally on May 25, 1922 – just days after WDAE took to the air – only 150 to 200 people showed up. The *Times* blamed the small crowd on "radio concerts, the movies, and other attractions that kept many away." Soon after that, politicians learned to use the radio to get their message to the public. Florida Governor John Martin went on the air live during a noon broadcast in November 1927. Tampa native Doyle Carlton kicked off his successful gubernatorial campaign on March 2, 1928, with a speech from the courthouse that was broadcast over WDAE.⁴¹

Radio fit the spirit of the 1920s, a period typified by consumerism, self-confidence, and leisure time. It brought free entertainment into the home. Unlike magazines or newspapers, where



WDAE's 5 kilowatt transmitter in 1932.

Photograph from *WDAE* by Hampton Dunn.

audiences could pick and choose what they read, everyone who tuned into the same station listened to the same programs. That gave radio power that no other medium could match up to that time.⁴²

While "Silent Night" allowed listeners to learn about other areas of the country in the early 1920s, networks and syndicated programs would bring them common experiences later in the decade and into the 1930s. Stations had joined together by telephone or telegraph wires as early as 1922, when WJZ in Newark and WGY in Schenectady, New York, linked for the World Series. But technical difficulties kept such broadcasts from becoming popular until AT&T developed special cables for the transmissions. The National Broadcasting Company debuted its nineteen-station network on November 15, 1926, with a four and one-half hour show that included broadcasts from the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel and a skit from Will Rogers in Kansas.⁴³

WDAE joined the younger Columbia Broadcasting Network in March 1930 and connected with it full time in June 1931. Tampa residents then heard the same shows as listeners in Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and more than seventy other cities in the United States. Workers commuted in the mornings with the same cheery tunes in Florida as in Nevada, and families throughout the nation sat down at the same time to hear Hank Simon's famous "Show Boat" musical program, isolated by walls but joined together by airwaves.⁴⁴

Even before the difficult decade of the 1930s, radio's golden age, the medium had begun to play an integral part in American life. From people who worked in the industry to avid fans to those who just heard radio at a neighbor's house, radio intertwined itself with the population, bringing scenes of life from as close as next door to as far away and exotic as New York or San Francisco. The foundations had already been laid when popular syndicated programs such as "Amos 'n' Andy," which drew an estimated 40 million listeners in the early 1930s, came along to enthrall a depressed nation.

By the end of the 1920s, radio could certainly not be considered a craze or a fad. Radio entertained, taught lessons, brought instantaneous news, saved lives, and amazed young and old. In eight short years, it had become indispensable. Vernon Lastinger best summed up his generation's fascination with radio while explaining its impact: "The waves traveled through everything."⁴⁵

¹ *Tampa Tribune*, May 15, 1922, 12.

² Tom Lewis, "'A Godlike Presence': The Impact of Radio on the 1920s and 1930s," *Magazine of History* (Spring 1992), 28; Christopher H. Sterling and John M. Kittross, *Stay Tuned: A Concise History of American Broadcasting* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1978), 89-90; and Tom Lewis, *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio* (New York: 1991), 181.

³ Susan Smulyan, "Radio," in the *Encyclopedia of American Social History*, ed. by Mary Kupiec Cayton, Elliott J. Gorn, and Peter W. Williams (New York: 1993) 1835.

⁴ Michael Emery and Edwin Emery, *The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988), 314; Erik Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel: A History of Broadcasting in the United States*, v. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 91.

⁵ Barnouw, *A Tower In Babel*, 94; Interview with Sol Fleischman at his home in Sun City Center, Florida, April 15, 1993, notes and partial tape in possession of author.

⁶ Fleischman interview; Interview with Vernon Lastinger at his apartment in Tampa, Florida, April 15, 1993, notes and partial tape in possession of author; Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 79.

⁷ See Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel*, for more details on 1922 events.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 104; Sterling and Kitross, *Stay Tuned*, 62-63.

⁹ Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa* (St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Printing Co., 1950), 247-68.

¹⁰ *Tampa Daily Times*, May 15, 1922, 1.

¹¹ Fleischman interview; Headline from *Tampa Daily Times*, May 15, 1922.

¹² *Tampa Daily Times*, May 17, 1922, 1; Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel*, 91; Hampton Dunn, *WDAE: Florida's Pioneer Radio Station* (Tampa: Fort Brooke Press, 1972), 13.

¹³ *Tampa Daily Times*, May 31, 1922, 1; Dunn, *WDAE*, 15.

¹⁴ *Tampa Daily Times*, May 29, 1922, 5; Dunn, *WDAE*, 16; *Tampa Daily Times*, May 19, 1922, 11.

¹⁵ *Tampa Daily Times*, May 19, 1922, 1; 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Fleischman interview; Interview with Mary Delp at her apartment in Tampa, Florida, April 15, 1993, notes and tape in possession of author; *Tampa Daily Times*, May 29, 1922, 4.

¹⁸ Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 73; *Tampa Daily Times*, radio schedules from February 1 through 28, 1925.

¹⁹ Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 72; *Tampa Daily Times*, February 7, 1925, 1; Leo Walker, *The Big Band Almanac* (Pasadena: Ward Ritchie Press, 1991), 217-18; Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz, 1930-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 51; Dunn, *WDAE*, 20.

²⁰ Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*, 72; Dunn, *WDAE*, 16.

²¹ Allison Danzig and Peter Brandwein, eds., *Sports' Golden Age: A Close-up of the Fabulous Twenties* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1948), ix; Benjamin G. Rader, "Compensatory Sport Heroes: Ruth, Grange and Dempsey," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 16 (Spring 1983), 11.

²² James P. Dawson, "Boxing," in *Sports' Golden Age*, 42; Rader "Compensatory Sport Heroes," 20.

²³ Emery and Emery, *The Press*, 316; Dunn, *WDAE*, 92-93.

²⁴ Interview with Dorothy Smith at the Seminole Heights Recreation Center in Tampa, Florida, April 8, 1993, tape and notes in possession of author; *Tampa Daily Times*, September 23, 1927, 1; Dawson, "Boxing," 77.

²⁵ Fleischman interview.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel*, 164.

²⁷ Interview with Pearl Wilson at the Seminole Heights Recreation Center in Tampa, Florida, April 8, 1993, tape and notes in possession of author.

²⁸ Interview with Herb Brown at the Seminole Heights Recreation Center in Tampa, Florida, April 8, 1993, tape and notes in possession of author; *R.L. Polk and Company's Tampa City Directory*, 1922 through 1930.

²⁹ Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel*, 105, 107-08; Emery and Emery, *The Press*, 314.

³⁰ Dunn, *WDAE*, 19-21.

³¹ Grismer, *Tampa*, 247.

³² *Tampa Daily Times*, September 17, 1928, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, September 17, 1928, 1; Dunn, *WDAE*, 3-4.

³⁴ *Tampa Daily Times*, various articles from September 17 through September 24, 1928.

³⁵ See, for example, *Tampa Daily Times*, February 1925.

³⁶ Lastinger interview; for schedule examples, see *Tampa Daily Times*, February 1, 1925.

³⁷ Delp interview.

³⁸ Interviews with Wilson, Smith and others at Seminole Recreation Center.

³⁹ Telephone interview with Tony Pizzo, April 20, 1993, notes in possession of author.

⁴⁰ Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, "The Reader Lights the Candle': Cuban and Florida Cigar Workers' Oral Tradition," *Labor's Heritage*, 5 (Spring 1993), 19-22; Pizzo interview.

⁴¹ *Tampa Daily Times*, May 26, 1922, 2; Dunn, *WDAE*, 23-24.

⁴² J. Fred MacDonald, *Don't Touch That Dial: Radio Programming in American Life, 1920-1960* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), 22-23; Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience* (New York: Viking Press, 1950), 137.

⁴³ Barnouw, *A Tower in Babel*, 243-44; Emery and Emery, *The Press*, 314-16.

⁴⁴ Dunn, *WDAE*, 29-31; *Tampa Daily Times*, June 19, 1931.

⁴⁵ Lastinger interview.