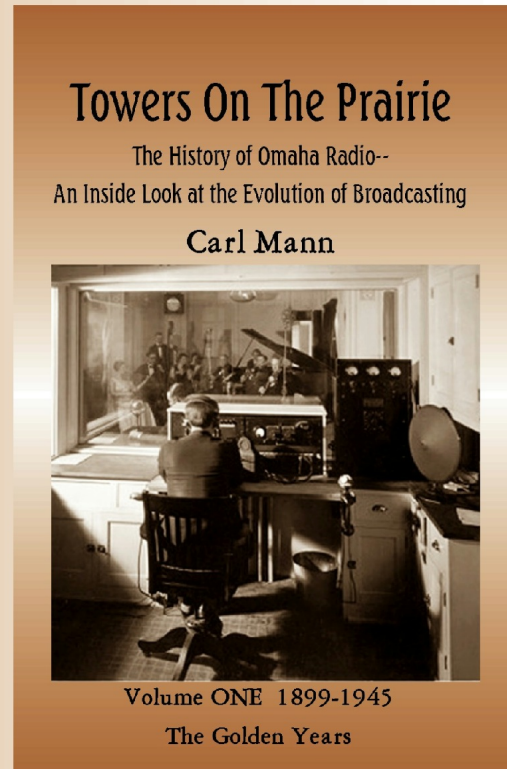


Towers On The Prairie--
The History of Omaha Radio
An Inside Look at the Evolution of Broadcasting
Volume ONE 1899-1945
Author: Carl Mann

Towers on the Prairie is the history of broadcasting as seen through the development of local radio stations in and around Omaha.

Big enough to be competitive and small enough to take chances, The U.S. Heartland is the perfect cross-section of Americana for telling the story of how educators, engineers, businessmen, and newly-emerging talent combined to develop this new medium. Radio's murky past involving rapidly advancing technology, regulations, and programming is documented here from its birth to the end of World War II.

Carl Mann is a retired radio broadcaster whose 50 years in the business range from the technical to Top 40 DJ. His years of research bring this medium's scattered history into focus in a comprehensive narrative that is labeled and indexed for easy research. Contact: catmann03@yahoo.com



9 x 6 paperback
228 pages, illustrated
\$16.17

Order at Amazon.com.

ISBN No. 979-8-9881383-1-0
Copyright 2022
Published 2023

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE – THE FIRST SIGNALS

WIRELESS STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA	1
GOVERNMENT REGULATION BEGINS	3
WUH Fort Omaha 1913	4
KDEF U. S. Post Office Station 1915-1927	5
SPECIAL LAND STATIONS EMERGE IN THE MIDWEST	7
9YT Wayne 1915-1924	7
9XT Lincoln 1915 – 1916	8
9XU Omaha 1916	8
9YD University Place (Lincoln) 1916	8
10- COUNCIL BLUFFS NATIVE LEE DEFOREST’S TRIODE	9
THE WORLD WAR AND RADIO	10
1920 - THE BUDDING OF BROADCASTING	12
9VE Omaha 1920	12
9YP Omaha 1920-1923	13
9YY Lincoln 1920	14
1921 - BROADCASTING BLOSSOMS- THE FIRST STATIONS	16
WOU Omaha 1921-1923	17
9XAA Omaha 1921	18
WYCG U.S. Army Station, Fort Crook 1921	18
WVU Fort Omaha 1922	19
1922 - BROADCASTING IN BLOOM	19
WDV Omaha 1922-1923	23
WAAW Omaha 1922- KOWH KMEO KCRO	24
WIAK South Omaha 1922-1925	24
WNAL Omaha 1922-1928	24
WPAF Council Bluffs 1922-1923	26
WCAJ Lincoln 1922-1933	26
WFAV Lincoln 1922-1927	27
WJAG Norfolk 1922-	28
WPAA Wahoo 1922-1923	29
WRAR David City 1922-1923	29
WOAE Fremont, Nebraska 1922-1925	29
WGAJ Shenandoah, Iowa 1922-1923	30
OTHER REGIONAL LICENSEES	30
WJAB Lincoln 1922-1925	30
WGAT Lincoln 1922-1923	30
WKAC Lincoln 1922-1923	31
WIAX Lincoln 1922-1923	31
WLAF Lincoln 1922-1923	31
WMAH Lincoln 1922-1925	31
WTAU Tecumseh 1922-1925	31
WSAS Lincoln 1922-1923	32
KFDU Lincoln 1923-1924	32
1923 - THE AM BROADCAST BAND IS FORMED	32
WOAW WOW Omaha 1923-	33
KFFX Omaha 1923-1925	33
KFLZ KICK Atlantic, Anita, and Red Oak, Iowa 1923-1933	34
1924 - THE AM BROADCAST BAND IS EXTENDED	35
KFCZ KOCH Omaha 1924-1928	36
KFOX Omaha 1924-1928	38
KFAB Lincoln 1924-1947	39
KFOR David City 1924-1927	40

KFNF Shenandoah, Iowa 1924- KYFR	40
1925 - THE PUSH FOR COMMERCIALISM STRENGTHENS	41
KOIL Council Bluffs, Iowa 1925-1936	42
KMA Shenandoah, Iowa 1925-	43
CLOSE UPS and TECHNICAL	
KFKX and 9XW- SHORTWAVE FROM NEBRASKA	45
TRACKING THE FACILITIES, NOT THE CALL LETTERS	46
CALL LETTERS ASSIGNMENTS	47
UNDERSTANDING WAVELENGTH AND FREQUENCY	48

CHAPTER TWO- THE FIRST STATIONS

WAAW— OMAHA'S OLDEST	50
WOAW WOW-- OMAHA'S BIGGEST	55
KFAB— FROM LINCOLN, OMAHA'S FUTURE BIGGEST	64
KOIL- FROM THE HILLS OF COUNCIL BLUFFS	76
RADIO'S ROARING TWENTIES CHAPTER ENDS	86
CLOSE UPS and TECHNICAL	
STATION CALL LETTERS ORIGINATION	87
COMMERCIAL BROADCAST TRANSMITTERS	88
THE FEDERAL RADIO COMMISSION 1927-1934	88
THE PORTABLE STATIONS OF THE TWENTIES	92
KFVP 1925 Omaha Chamber of Commerce	93.
KUPR 1925 Union Pacific Railroad	93
KFQV 1924 Omaha Grain Exchange	94
KGIF 1928 R. B. Howell	95
KFOR - LINCOLN'S OTHER HISTORIC STATION	95
KFNF and KMA - THE LUCRATIVE SHENANDOAH STATIONS	97
OMAHA'S PIONEER RADIO ENGINEERS	105
EKKO VERIFICATION STAMPS	113
1923 NEBRASKA STATIONS LIST- <i>Omaha World-Herald</i>	113
1923 NEBRASKA AND IOWA STATIONS LIST- US Commerce Dept.	114
THE 1928 FREQUENCY ASSIGNMENTS list- FRC	115

CHAPTER THREE- THE GOLDEN YEARS

THE GOLDEN AGE DAWNS	127
OMAHA'S STATIONS DURING THE GOLDEN YEARS	120
WOW 590 Omaha	120
WAAW 660 Omaha	132
KOWH 660 Omaha (1939-)	135
KFAB 770 Lincoln	138
KOIL 1260 Council Bluffs	150
KOIL 1260 Omaha (1936-)	154
KICK 1420 Carter Lake, Iowa (1933-1934)	165
CLOSE UPS and TECHNICAL	
BROADCASTING TECHNICAL ADVANCES IN THE THIRTIES	173
RADIO RECEIVER ADVANCES IN THE THIRTIES	174
KFAB and WBBM SYNCHRONIZATION	176
THE NETWORKS IN A NUTSHELL	177
RADIO WINS THE NEWS BATTLE	182
INTERNATIONAL SHORTWAVE FROM OMAHA	184
BEFORE FM- KOIL AND THE APEX EXPERIMENTS	186
THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (1934-)	188
THE GRAND ISLAND MONITORING STATION	188
THE SHENANDOAH STATIONS REACH MATURITY	189

CHAPTER FOUR- THE WAR YEARS

KBON 1490 Omaha SIGNS ON	200
KOIL 1260 / 1290 Omaha ADDS DIRECTIONAL SIGNAL ARRAY	202
KFAB 770 / 780 Lincoln EXPANSION PLANS ON HOLD	207
WOW 590 Omaha LITIGATION FORCES CONTROL CHANGE	209
THE DAWNING OF FM	213
OMAHA RADIO AND THE WAR	214
CLOSE-UP and TECHNICAL	
DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA SYSTEMS	226
POST-WAR-- A NEW LANDSCAPE	228
ABBREVIATIONS GUIDE	229
BIBLIOGRAPHY	230
INDEX	231

INDEX

A

Anderson, Edward R. 14, 126
Anderson, Gordon 78, 184
Anderson, Roy W. 34, 166, 167
Announcer skills (descriptions) 71, 72, 80, 118, 131
Armstrong, Edwin 10, 11, 188, 213
Avery, Gaylord 130, 136, 219

B

Baron, Lee (also see: Lee, Eldon Vernon 1, 230)
Birkby, Evelyn 191
Bohlsen, Martha 131, 161, 162, 212
Bremser, Lyell 64, 149, 156
Brown, Rev. R. R. 59
Burke, Harry 130, 132

C

Carper, Charles 64
Carson, Johnny 49, 156
Chansky, Lou 58, 61
Chase, Tom 128, 214, 215
Clark, Ray 219, 224, 225
Cramer, Wilber 18

D

D-Day coverage 222-24
DeForest, Lee 3, 8-10, 43, 79
DeMoss, Lyle 72, 118, 130, 132, 136, 147, 153, 214, 220-22
Dirks, Dietrich 69, 142, 145, 146, 154
Driftmier, Leanna 102, 190
Duopoly, KOIL-KFAB-KFOR 96, 97, 135, 138, 140, 145, 147, 153-55, 160, 181, 200, 204, 209
Durand, F. P. 93

E

Educational broadcasting 9, 20, 26, 27, 29, 34, 64, 67, 118, 120, 122, 137, 166, 228, 230
Edwards, John 157, 158
Everhart, Slim 147, 148
Everly Brothers 194, 195

F

Fessenden, Reginald 2
Field, Henry 30, 40, 44, 83, 98, 99, 102, 103, 105, 115, 190
Flanagan, Father (Boys Town) 149, 164, 165

G

Gillin, John 121, 210, 213
Gloomy, Gus (also see: Grubb, Gayle) 39, 66, 68, 70-73, 118
Grubb, Gayle 39, 66, 68, 70-72

H

Harvey, H. C. 65, 206
Hay, Bill 49, 66, 214
Hemple, Carl A. 6, 17, 20, 23, 50, 108, 109
Henry, John 145-47, 153, 154, 159, 160, 168
Holtz, Thompson 214, 215, 221
Homemaker programs 102, 121, 131, 161, 190, 191
Hoover, Herbert 21, 42, 81, 89
Hosford, Harold R. 51, 53, 93
Howell, R. B. 17, 18, 20, 55, 95, 109
Hughes, Harold 80, 118, 150, 204, 220
Huse, Gene 28, 207, 208
Husker football 15, 40, 67, 69, 71, 137, 145, 149

J

Jensen, John C. 8
Johnson, Homer 211, 212

K

Kelpe, Henry 150
Kieny, Marie 120, 121
KOIL Krime Klan 119, 150, 151, 156, 182, 205
Kotera, William 105, 106, 108, 125

L

Lee, Don 179, 180
Lee, Eldon Vernon 1, 230
Linden, Adolph 75, 178, 179

M

Manchester, Frank 167
Marsich, Mary 148
May, Earl 30, 41, 44, 98-104, 180, 190, 194, 195, 230
May, Foster 128-30, 134, 219, 220, 230
McGaffin, James 218, 219
McIntosh, Frank 61, 105-8
Meyerson, Leo 199
Millener, Frederick 4, 108, 110, 111
Mona Oil Twins (also see: Wolfe, and Tolliner) 80, 119, 185

O

Olson, Ray 130, 131, 214, 220, 221

P

Paley, William 84, 139, 140, 178, 216
Palmer, Lester 60, 128, 193
Pearl Harbor coverage 218, 219, 223
Peck, Henry 220
Peterson, H. O. 14, 15, 115
Peterson, Marcus 26, 115

R

Rockwell, Ronald J. 12, 13, 17, 20, 22–26, 36, 37, 39, 50, 55, 57, 58, 78, 91, 105–8, 110, 185

Rouse, Gene 25, 60, 61

S

Sarnoff, David 81, 82, 177, 213

Searle, Don 43, 76, 79–81, 83, 105, 117, 147, 150, 153, 160, 162, 184, 185, 196

Searle, Harold A. 76, 79, 152

Sharpe, Virgil 150, 221

Shuman, Howard 40, 96, 97, 116

Sidles, Harold 64, 66, 138, 145, 175, 200, 204, 209

Smith, Al 49, 117, 119, 142, 144, 155, 172, 198

Smith, Emerson 146, 157, 230

Smith, Vernon 136, 230

Sosby, Eddie 148

Stefan, Karl 28, 207, 208

Steinberg, Grace Poole 169

Stiles, Gene 60, 61

Storz, Todd 137, 138

Stuart, Charles 145, 200, 204, 209

Stuart, James 97

Stuart, Ken 134

T

Texas Mary (also see: Marsich, Mary) 148

Thompson, C. H. 36, 37, 106

Tolliner, Ned 80

Twyman, Harvey 161, 206

W

Weaver, Allan 14

Weimer, Orville 39, 137

Weldon, James O. 108, 112

West, Belle 161, 162

Wiseman, William O. 22, 130, 158, 214

Wolfe, John 80

Women in radio (also see: Homemaker programs) 120, 121, 191

WOW Announcers Quartet 130, 131, 215

Y

Yeiser, John 21, 23, 24, 55, 57, 58, 108–10

Young, Jessie 102

Z

Ziegler, Percy 49, 155, 156