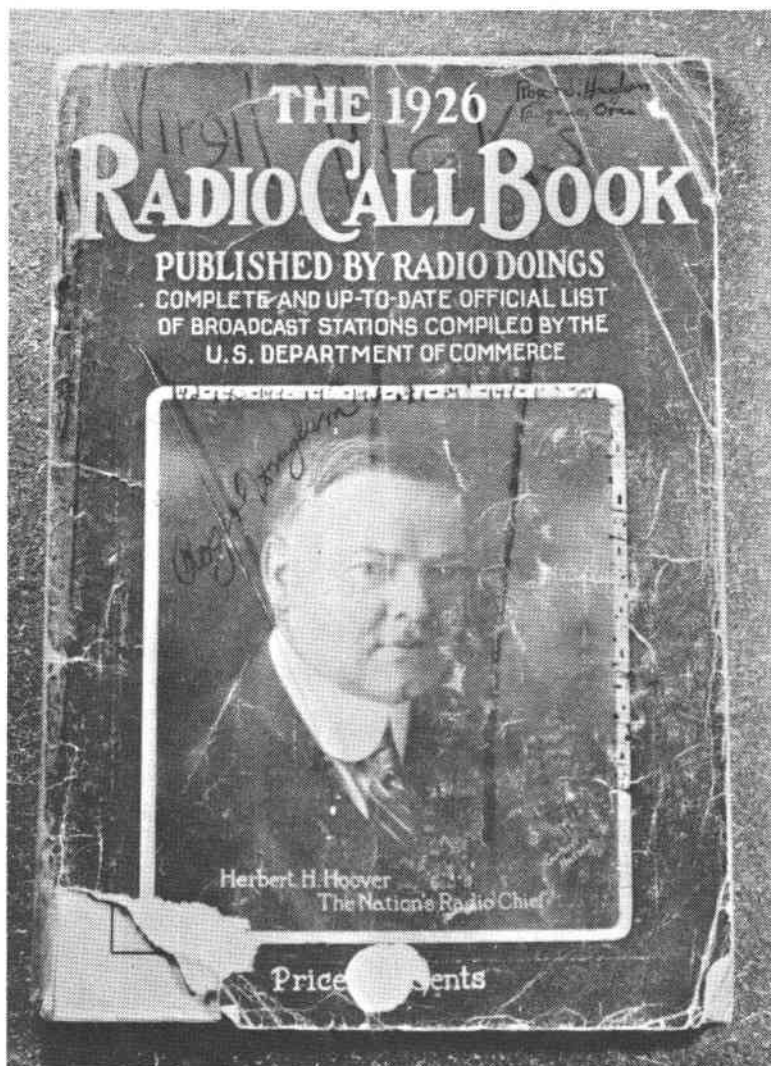


Lane County Historian



Radio Call Book—1926. Complete official list of Broadcast Stations compiled by U.S. Department of Commerce. —Roger Houghlum Collection

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. XIX, No. 1

Eugene, Oregon

Spring, 1974

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Lane County Historian is a quarterly publication of the Lane County Historical Society, a non-profit organization.

Membership in the Lane County Historical Society includes subscription to the Lane County Historian. Annual dues: \$3.00; family membership: \$5.00.

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by Roger J. Houghlum: Consultant on Media, Lane Community College, Eugene; Former Chairman, Dept. of Electronics, LCC.

Author: "The History and Development of Radio Broadcasting," 1971; "World System of Radio and TV Broadcasting," 1972; "Federal Regulations and Private Ownership: The American System of Broadcasting," 1973.

Founder, KRVM, Pacific N.W. pioneer Educational Broadcast Station; Co-Founder, Eugene Broadcasters Inc., which built KERG; Founder, Lane Community College FM Station, KICO.

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Radio Schools—1920s. "Big Future" and "Big Pay" stressed in Radio Service Trade.

—Roger Houghlum Collection

Early Day Broadcasting in Lane County

By Roger Hougum

Somehow the legend has persisted through the years that KORE was Lane County's first broadcast station, and that its first broadcasts originated from its studios on South Willamette street sometime in the mid-thirties

There is no question but that KORE played a dominant and influential role in early-day broadcasting in this area, but just a minimum of research reveals that when it first went on the air in 1928 from studios over the Metropolitan Store, at least two officially licensed broadcast stations had preceded it; and that "unauthorized," but not illegal, broadcasting of both voice and music had been going on in the Eugene area sporadically since World War I.

This was recently revealed in a series of tape-recorded interviews with Raleigh Wildman of Springfield and "Tommy" Thompson of Eugene, and in extensive correspondence with Jerry DeBroekert of Bend, all of whom had the good fortune to be living and working in Eugene during the most rapid period of radio's development in this area, the 1920s. Additional local color and background was contributed by the vivid recollections of the early years at station KORE as recalled by former staff members, Ted Charles and Dolph Janes of Eugene. Regrettably, Eugene radio pioneer, Paul Hoppe, died suddenly last summer just before his scheduled interview. Raleigh Wildman's recollections as

Lane County's first salaried "disc jockey" and chief engineer, both at KGEH, and later at KORE, are particularly comprehensive and complete, and his detailed and personalized account makes much more vivid and real this era of early-day broadcasting in Lane County, extending approximately from 1919 to about 1942.

Raleigh Wildman summarizes radio developments of this period as follows:

"At the time Eugene's second broadcast station, KFAT, was licensed to Dr. S. T. Donahue in the Fall of 1922 by the Department of Commerce, there was very little distinction between an amateur radio station and a broadcast station. In my opinion, KFAT, located in the doctor's dental offices on the second floor of the Link Building at the Northeast corner of 7th Avenue and Willamette Street, was operated more like an amateur station than a true broadcast station. It was on the air when he pleased, and shut down when he pleased; and there was no regular or fixed broadcast schedule. I felt that it was purely operated for Dr. Donahue's enjoyment and pleasure, not that of the comparatively small listening audience of that period.

"The equipment was pretty primitive too. The transmitter had just two tubes and was limited to 50 watts of power; there was only one microphone, and when the staff wanted to play phonograph records, they'd just wheel up a spring-

wound Victrola before the mike and pick up the music in that way. There was quite a lot of story-telling on the air too, principally directed towards Donahue's friends and acquaintances. During New Year's Eve of 1922 KFAT was on the air with a special broadcast, and it was rumored that some of the stories told got pretty 'raucous,' and that there were many telephone calls and letters of complaint from listeners. This very well could have been a factor in the decision not to renew the KFAT license in the Spring of 1923 when the existing Department of Commerce license expired.

"Shortly after the decision was reached not to renew the license of KFAT, two recent graduates of the University of Oregon, Frank L. Hill of Eugene and Curt G. 'Shrimp' Phillips of California who had become close friends while attending school, decided to go into the radio broadcasting business in Eugene. Their first step was to go to Portland and purchase from Lewis I. Thompson both the license and the transmitting equipment of his 10 watt broadcast station, KLIT. At



Frank L. Hill, early pioneer in radio broadcasting business, Eugene. —Courtesy, Register-Guard



"Tommy" Thompson, built KGEH, Eugene; KIDO, Boise; later founder of KPIR (KPNW). Thompson brothers operated Thompson's Radio Service, record and electronic equipment, etc., Eugene.

—Roger Houglum Collection

the same time I believe they also purchased the 50 watt broadcast transmitter of KFEC, licensed to the Meier and Frank department store.

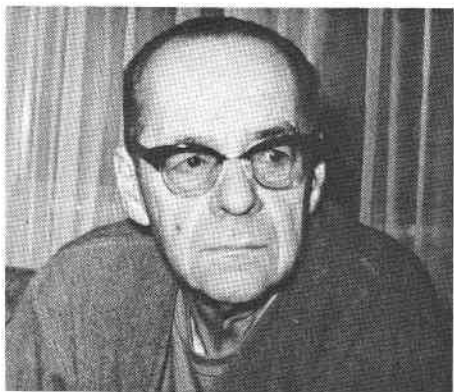
"Tommy Thompson and Paul Hoppe of Eugene helped bring the equipment to Eugene where it was promptly 'cannibalized' for parts, as it had little value in its existing form. The equipment so obtained was minimal; the important thing they were after was the KLIT broadcast license issued by the Department of Commerce.

"Within a month the station license was amended to specify the call letters KGEH rather than KLIT; the change was to reflect the sponsorship of the station by the Eugene Hotel where studios and equipment were to be located. The hotel made available to the station a large suite of rooms on the Southwest side of the building for the station's offices, transmitter room, and main studio. The late Paul Hoppe and Louis DuBuy, now sound engineer of the Oregon Legislature, were assigned the respon-

sibility of erecting the antenna on the roof of the building. It was to be a multi-wire 'flat-top' running North and South, and mounted on 50 foot poles, with a down-lead on the South end leading to the transmitter below. Somehow, in the process of putting up the north pole on the cornice of the roof, the pole broke away from Hoppe and Du-Buy and fell with a resounding crash to the sidewalk on 9th Avenue. It was a frightening experience, but fortunately no one was injured.

"As far as I could tell, no money changed hands between the Eugene Hotel and radio station KGEH. The radio station was expected to promote and advertise the hotel and its activities, while the station was to have the free use of a suite of rooms in return for this publicity.

"By this time there was little left of the original KLIT and KFEC transmitting equipment we had brought down from Portland; most of the gear had been pretty well dismantled for the component parts. Meanwhile I had designed



J. Raleigh Wildman, Springfield, was Eugene's first salaried chief engineer and disc jockey. He built, operated original transmitting equipment at KGEH and KORE.

—Roger Houghlum Collection
Photo, 1973, by Houghlum



GILFILLAN RADIO (battery) advertised in 1926 RADIO CALL BOOK.

—Roger Houghlum Collection

and constructed a new 50 watt transmitter for KGEH using a Western Electric Type 203-A tube in the final amplifier, and with an even bigger tube, a Type 212, used to super-impose the voice and music on the carrier wave. A General Radio crystal-controlled oscillator kept us on our assigned frequency of 1500 kc. This same transmitter was later used when we moved to studios over Hill's Economy Store and became KORE, and was still in service when the move was made to the South Wilamette location in the late 1930s.

"After about a year of operation at the Eugene Hotel, apparently the original mutual arrangement between the radio station and the hotel's management was terminated, and it became necessary to move KGEH to the top floor of the Morning Register building on the southeast corner of 9th Avenue (near the alley) and Oak. Strangely, we still had permission for our antenna to remain on the roof of the Eugene Hotel. So it was my re-

sponsibility to design, install, and make work a transmission line that would carry the power from the transmitter in the Register building to the antenna on the Eugene Hotel, a distance of a full city block. I remember that I had a dickens of a time in getting the antenna to take power from the transmitter. If I'd only known then what I know now about antennas it would have been easy, but then our understanding of antennas was minimal, and everything had to be done by cut-and-try. At that time we considered ourselves lucky to put out a signal to the Eugene city limits with 50 watts of power; now we talk to a space satellite 50 million miles away with a fraction of that power. Our knowledge has sure changed!

"The move to the Morning Register building was only of short duration, and was necessary to provide time for the construction of new facilities over Hill's Department Store at 733 Willamette Street. I'm sure that there was more than coincidence in the fact that this building was at that time owned by Frank Hill's father. I believe I have neglected to point out that KGEH was jointly owned and managed by Frank Hill and Curt Phillips.

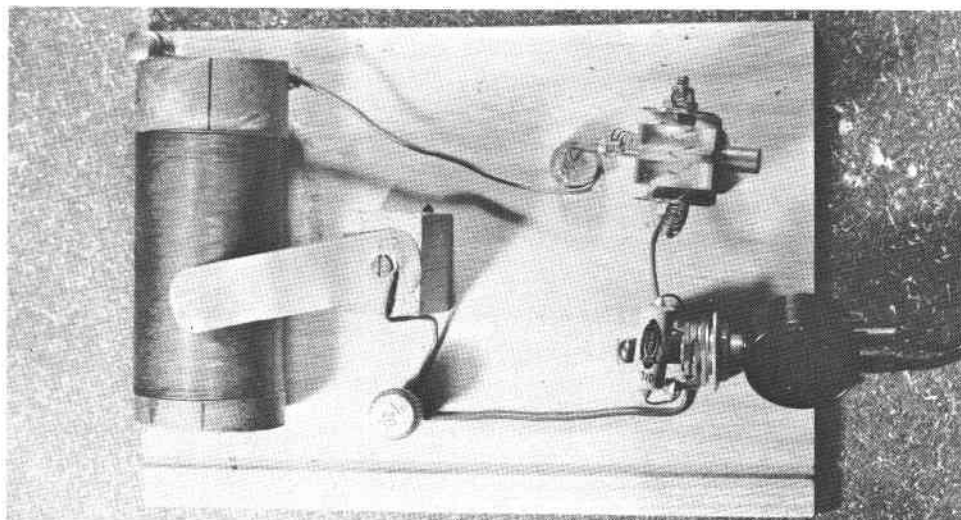
"About this same time they were planning a further expansion of their activities. This time they purchased KFAU in Boise, Idaho, operated by the Boise Polytechnic High School, and then operating under an experimental and educational license. Immediately, application was made to the Federal Radio Commission which had replaced the Department of Commerce as regulatory authority in 1927, for permission to re-license the station as a full-time commercial operation on 1,000 kc. with

1,000 watts of power. Soon this permission was granted, and the station became KIDO. As with KGEH, it was jointly owned by Frank Hill and Curt Phillips.

"In 1928 the move was made to the newly remodeled facilities over Hill's Economy Store, and at the same time the Federal Radio Commission granted permission to change the call letters to KORE. We also purchased some pieces of commercial transmitting equipment at the time of the move, replacing a few items that we had previously constructed.

There was plenty of room at the new location for all KORE facilities. Originally there had been perhaps 10 or more apartments upstairs over the department store. Those nearest Willamette Street were remodeled to provide a large master control room as well as a formal studio. The control room was so arranged that the turntables were waist high and the mike was suspended from the ceiling, forcing the operator to work standing up. Actually you were so busy announcing, reading commercial copy, spinning the heavy shellac records of that day, and changing steel phonograph needles that you were too busy to sit down anyway.

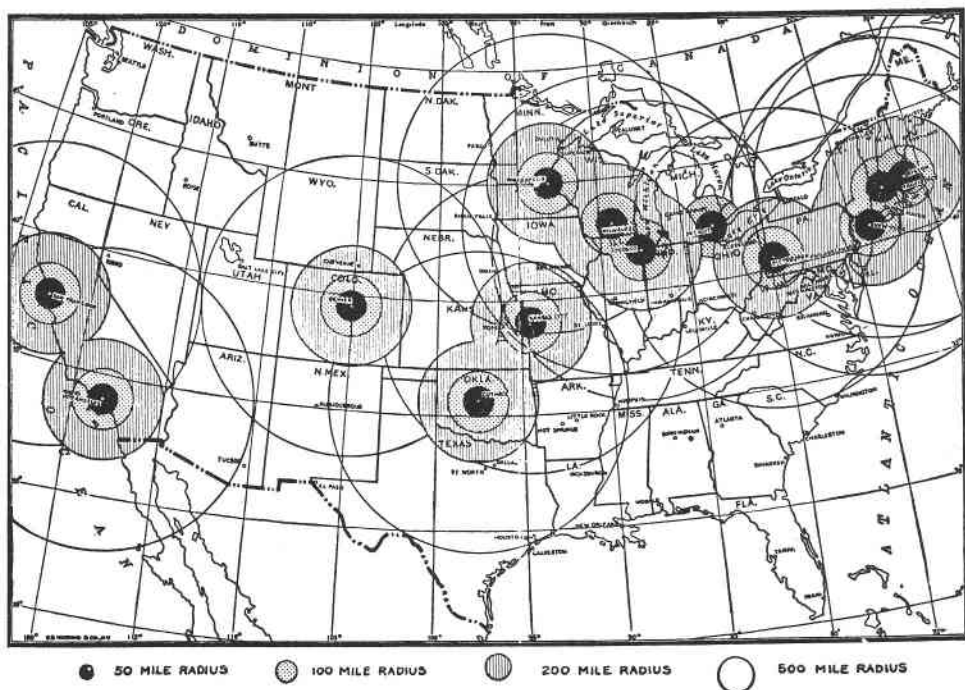
"The main studio, like the control room, was heavily draped with monks cloth to prevent echoes and reverberation, and was similarly equipped with a double-button carbon microphone. These mikes were energized by a 6 volt storage battery which on occasion would run down in the middle of a broadcast. This made it necessary to shut down the station for a half hour or so while we re-charged the battery. No one was particularly concerned by this loss of air time. There was also a suite of offices, a transmitter room, and a storage



"Crystal Set" lay-out of early 1920s. Tuning was accomplished by moving lever across coil of wire (left). Precise adjustment of "catwhisker" on galena crystal also necessary. Earphone plug, lower right.
—Roger Houglum Collection



Typical "DX Listener" post (long distance reception) used in early 1920s. Brandes Headphones (left) Echophone regenerative receiver and 1926 RADIO CALL BOOK.



LEADING RADIOPHONE BROADCASTING STATIONS

Principal Radio Broadcasting Stations in 1922. Note large areas of the country without service from any station.

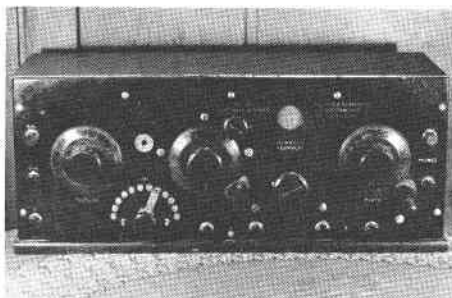
—Roger Houghlum Collection

area. And this time, Paul Hoppe and Louis DuBuy managed to install the roof-top antenna without incident!

"Up until I left to work for the Hickok Meter Company in Cleveland, Ohio in the mid thirties, things at KGEH and KORE were pretty informal as far as maintaining a regular broadcast schedule was concerned. I remember that when the station was still operating as KGEH in the Morning Register building that as chief engineer and announcer I had the first shift in the morning. I'd put the station on the air about 7:00 a.m., then program from records for perhaps an hour and a half. By that time I'd be out of records which we'd borrowed the day before from the record department at McMorran

and Washburne's department store. I'd shut down the station, return the records, pick up an armful of new ones, then probably stop off for a cup of coffee on the way back. Returning to the studios, I'd put the transmitter back on the air and resume broadcasting. This pattern of operation went on for years with scarcely a complaint from management or listeners.

"I'd say that for the first 10 years of the KGEH-KORE operation, that the station didn't own a single record; they were all borrowed from McMorran and Washburne's which fortunately saw the value of radio promotion of their records, and had the best stocked record department in town. All other radio stores refused to cooperate with us, feeling that radio



Colin Kennedy Type 281. Short Wave Receiver manufactured in San Francisco about 1922. "Short Wave" of 1920s included much of standard broadcast band of today.

—Roger Houghlum Collection

was a dangerous competitor which would be sure to ruin their business.

"News came from the wire services of United Press (no teletype yet), and from a radio news service called, I believe, Press Wireless. It was sent in International Morse code, and came through on short wave at the rate of perhaps 22 words per minute. I recall that there was a war going on in Ethiopia at the time, and it was a real strain to copy those place names on the typewriter at that speed, and get them spelled right.

"By the early 1930s, KORE had joined the Mutual Network briefly, but the network pay for the use of the station's facilities was so much less than local merchants were paying that financial pressures forced the station to terminate this contract, not to be resumed again for a number of years.

"During this same time period, Phillips' management at KIDO in Boise was hard-driving and aggressive with the result that even in its first year of operation the station showed a very substantial gross income and a large increase in its listening audience. In Eugene, Frank Hill, who had never been in vigorous health following

a laboratory accident at the University, operated KORE in a much more relaxed and easy-going manner with the result that both gross income and the station's total audience were disappointingly small by comparison with those of KIDO. It was then amicably agreed to dissolve the partnership, with Hill individually owning KORE and Phillips, KIDO. It's my understanding that Phillips died many years ago, and that his wife, Georgia, now remarried, owns and operates one of Boise's TV stations.

"Part of my salary, and that of other staff members in those depression years, came in the form of 'trade-outs'—merchandise or services offered in payment for radio advertising when cash was hard to come by. I recall that I got part of my clothing free from Paul D. Green's Store for Men; and every month I'd get a free haircut

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Typical radio receiver advertisement in RADIO CALL BOOK of 1926. —Roger Houghlum Collection

at Ole's Barber Shop, just around the corner on East 7th Avenue.

"In addition to being KORE's chief engineer, I also had the Early Bird program each week-day morning, starting at 6:30 a.m. This would run for a few hours; then I'd 'sack out' for a while before starting my daily technical maintenance. I'd usually be followed by Tom Hall who was a real character. Like me, he was a 'combination man'—both an announcer and a licensed operator. But he really had the knack for getting along well with the people who showed up for our live Western and Country music shows. Frequently, he'd wind up as their master of ceremonies as well as the announcer. Tom later left KORE to work for radio stations in Washington, and I believe he was working in Walla Walla when he was killed in a traffic accident.

"We also worked closely with chief announcer, Day Foster, who also served as program director. After many years at KORE, Day finally resigned to found a weekly newspaper, or shopping guide in Portland; then joined forces with Eugene attorney, Erven Kincaid to co-found station KASH in Eugene. I believe he died before he could take an active role at KASH.

"Stan Miller was the third announcer-technician on our staff. Stan was friendly, good-humored, and well-liked. He was always willing to take any operator or program shift when someone was ill or had to be out of town. He left KORE in the late 1940s to join the staff of KIRO in Seattle where he died six or seven years ago.

"Ted Charles alternated with me in the later years at KORE doing the Early Bird show. He also had his daily live program from the main studio, Piano Soliloquy; and

taught jazz piano lessons on the side. He's the owner and manager of a profitable local business that makes and distributes pastry shells.

"And finally, there was our flamboyant newsman and sportscaster, Rush Hughes who was the son of novelist, Rupert Hughes. He was always at his best when working at something which was colorful or dramatic. He later held important positions with the Mutual Network, even doing audience participation shows on a coast-to-coast basis.

"Would you believe it? The station had its own 'conscience,' too. This was in the form of Billie Harper who served as receptionist, secretary, and Frank Hill's 'Girl Friday.' Billie took radio broadcasting very seriously, and whenever we'd get a little out of line, stumble over our commercials, mispronounce a word, or use poor taste in selecting music, in a day or so we'd receive a postcard or letter through the mails calling the matter to our attention. They were always signed 'Aunt Polly,' and though we soon found out who was sending the letters, they kept on coming!

"My final observation is that how fortunate some of us have been to go through this tremendous development of radio, television, and electronics in less than the space of one lifetime. As I have previously mentioned, when I first got started in radio we thought we were doing wonders by sending a broadcast signal to the Eugene city limits with 50 watts of power; just recently NASA has been sending a radio signal to our space satellite near Jupiter, 50 million miles away, with a fraction of that power. And the satellite then sends back TV pictures in full color with even less power. It just seems incon-

ceivable that we have improved our technology so much in such a relatively short time."

* * *

G. M. "Jerry" DeBroekert, now retired and living in Bend, Oregon, spent many of his early years in Eugene attending school and experimenting with radio reception and transmission at his home which was located on Mill street near the site of the present EWEB building. He passed his Department of Commerce Amateur Operator exam in 1921 at the age of 14, and was assigned the call letters 7SY which he still retains today as W7SY. Jerry worked for many years for the State of Oregon in various capacities; just prior to retirement he was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Central Oregon in Redmond.

Like Raleigh Wildman, Jerry points out the comparatively small distinction between broadcast and

amateur stations in the period immediately following World War I. He notes that he frequently broadcast both voice and music over his station 7SY on a wavelength of 200 meters or less, and received listener reports not only from the local area but from such locations as Washington, Northern California, and even Hawaii. This was accomplished with a single UV-202 tube which was normally rated at about 5 watts output power. In 1923 when his license was submitted to the Department of Commerce for renewal, the regulations had been changed, and amateurs were prohibited from operating in the standard broadcast band and transmitting music in competition with licensed broadcast stations.

Jerry recalls, too, another "unofficial" source of music broadcasting in the Eugene area which was closely followed by those residents lucky enough to have receivers in those days. As Jerry describes it:

"In the period 1919, 1920, and 1922 the Army Air Corps flew daily patrols during the forest fire season from the old Eugene Airport which was located in those days east of Chambers street in the southwest portion of the city. A communications unit was stationed at the airport to maintain contact with the patrolling aircraft, and was located in a tent. The communications unit included a transmitter rated at 10 watts power which was capable of broadcasting both voice and music over the frequency range of 200 to 550 meters, covering the complete broadcast band of those days. During the evening hours members of the communications crew would play phonograph records for the entertainment of Eugene listeners, comparatively few in number at that time. Most of those who had receivers



"Jerry" G. M. DeBroekert, Bend, Oregon. As Eugene schoolboy in early 1920s broadcast voice and music over his licensed amateur radio station 7SY, later W7SY. Recalls visits to early broadcast stations.

which could pick up the broadcasts were the radio amateurs of this period, licensed by the Department of Commerce. During the fire patrol's last summer in Eugene, that of 1922, music was broadcast nearly every evening from perhaps 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., or so. They seemed to have a good supply of records, but I don't know what the source was. The call sign 'nine one' was used as they were the 91st Air Corps Division.

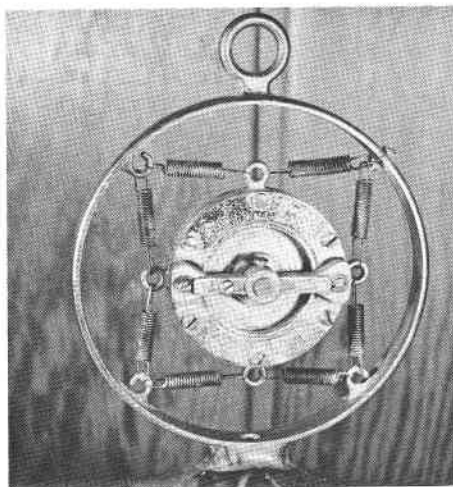
"Eugene's first official radio broadcast station, KDZJ, was licensed by the Department of Commerce in 1920, and operated in 1920 and 1921. It was licensed to a University of Oregon student by the name of Garrett Lewis, and was located in his home. To the best of my recollection, the station was located on Villard Street between 12th and 13th Avenues. I was present the day Mr. O. R. Redfern, the Radio Inspector from the Seattle District, inspected and approved it, so there is no question in my mind but that it was a legal operation and Eugene's first official broadcast station as well. Its equipment was minimal: just a single 202 tube as an oscillator modulated by another 202 tube, and with a power output of perhaps 5 watts on 360 meters wavelength, which would be about 800 kc. Like other broadcast stations that were to follow, its basic problem was that of too few receivers in the hands of listeners, so the audience was very small.

"However Lewis soon disposed of the station and its equipment, and to the best of my knowledge, sold it to Dr. S. T. Donahue, a Eugene dentist with offices in the Link building at 7th and Willamette. Dr. Donahue then applied to the Department of Commerce in the summer of 1922 for authority to con-

struct a new radio station in Eugene to operate with a power of 100 watts on a frequency of 1090 kc. The studio location was given as 681 Willamette, the same as that of the dental offices, and the new call letters assigned were KFAT.

"Garrett Lewis was to become KFAT's chief engineer, and a little later on, was to be assisted by a newly licensed Eugenean by the name of Paul Hoppe whose amateur call was 71W. The two of them apparently rebuilt the KDZJ transmitter to meet the higher licensed power requirement of KFAT by replacing the 5 watt UV-202 tubes originally used by the much larger type UV-203s. A larger motor-generator power supply was also obtained.

"A double-button carbon microphone was also purchased, the first such unit to be placed in service in Eugene. It was used for both voice and music pickup. When music was to be broadcast from records, the mike was positioned for best pickup from a wind-up mechanical phonograph."



Double-button carbon microphone similar to those used by Stations KFAT, KGEH, and KORE in the early 1920s and 1930s.

James M. "Jimmie" Morris, radio pioneer, and for nearly 25 years the manager of the State-owned radio station KOAC in Corvallis, recalls in his recent book, "The Remembered Years," a visit he paid to the dental office in the 1920s to witness first-hand a live broadcast featuring a male opera star who had been appearing at the Heilig Theater across the street. With the "studio" equipped with only hard, plaster walls, the reverberation was terrific, and the broadcast ended in an overpowering howl or squeal. The singer's comments were, "My! I've never sung in a place like this before!"

At one time Jimmie operated a small radio parts store in Eugene where radio amateurs could buy the components needed for assembling their transmitters and receivers. Also, Eugeneans with no technical bent could have their radio receivers custom-wired to order. Jimmie admits that the name of the business, Eugene Radio Laboratories, was a little grandiose in terms of the actual cash flow. He also seriously considered establishing a broadcast station in Eugene in the early 1920s, but finally decided against it. The address of Eugene Radio Laboratories was at first at his home at 650 East 12th Avenue; then later moved to 860 Willamette Street where it was located "upstairs over a hardware store."

* * *

Ted Charles, owner and manager of KING CHARLES of Eugene, a firm which manufactures and distributes baked pastry shells throughout the United States, also has a vivid recall of his experiences while working at KORE when it was located over Hill's department store:

"I joined the staff of KORE in



Ted Charles, Eugene announcer and copywriter, KORE in early days over Metropolitan store. His PIANO SOLILOQUY, a daily feature for years.

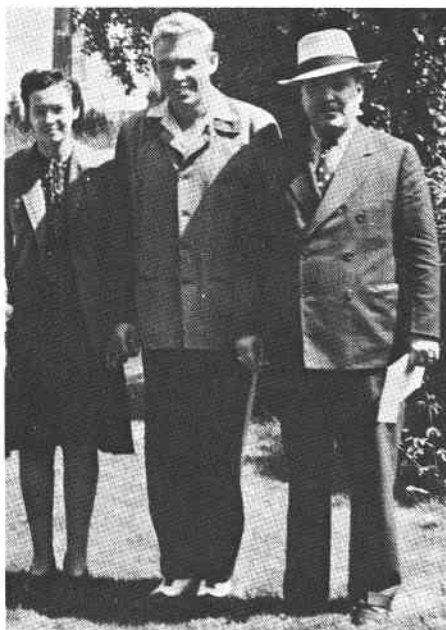
1931, and remained until 1936 when I left to manage radio station KAST in Astoria. At first, almost all of KORE's programs, both recorded and live, originated in the upstairs studio or control room over 733 Willamette. At that time, Frank Hill was the station manager and owner; Tom Hall was a licensed operator who also served as an announcer; Rush Hughes was the principal newscaster, but also handled sports; Day Foster, the chief announcer who also served as program director; and, of course, Raleigh Wildman who was the chief engineer and senior member of the staff.

"Violet Hill (Mrs. Frank Hill) was playing an increasing role in the station's operation, particularly its programming, when I first joined the staff. She would monitor the station's broadcasts at home for long periods of time, noting mispronounced words, poor choice of music selections, and the like. Then she would call the matter to our attention with a friendly, informal note. She was always kind and considerate. I would say that Violet personally selected and

purchased every record which was in the KORE library of that time, and took the responsibility for their cataloguing and filing.

"As I have already mentioned, at first almost all of our programs featured 78 rpm shellac records; then we began to be more adventurous and originate a few programs away from the studios. These were, of course, called 'remotes.' Our first remote broadcast was from the stage of the McDonald Theatre, and featured Frank D. C. Alexander at the Wur-litzer pipe organ. Frank Hill, himself, was the announcer. Later remotes featured George Hebert as the Man On The Street; and, of course, there were the wrestling matches broadcast from the Eugene Armory.

"One of Frank Hill's enthusiasms



Left to right, Marge Jackson, Frank Hill's secretary and bookkeeper; Dan Matter, special events director (later, husband of Violet Hill after death of Frank), and Frank Hill, KORE owner and manager.

—Rager Hauglum Collection



KORE Talent Contest, McDonald Theatre stage. Curtain "teaser" promotes upcoming Lillian Russell film.
—Courtesy, KORE Studio

became the promotion of amateur talent shows from the stage of the McDonald. He usually asked me to contact the 'talent' and get the show organized. We used to fill the entire first floor of the theater with people who had come to see and hear Eugene's most talented youngsters perform. Neither KORE nor the McDonald realized as much as a dime from these talent show broadcasts, and this loss of potential station revenue always bothered me. Finally I called this to Frank's attention. His reply was, 'When you get interest like this, it's always good for the station.' He was right and I was wrong, for the broadcasts were creating an interest in this new medium of radio, yet I was thinking about the money we were losing.

"Other remote broadcasts were gradually developed and improved. Day Foster was the sportscaster on a number of remote broadcasts of football games taking place at Hayward Field. Then there was George Hebert's witty and entertaining Man On The Street broadcasts from the sidewalk in front of the Outdoor Store, almost across Willamette street from the main studio. George was very clever and skillful in asking questions of the passers-by; then 'steering' the conversation when it was getting off



Valley Radio Club, Eugene (circa 1934). Back Row; Dot Dotson, Wally Mull, Carl Thom, Gerry De-Broekert, L. L. Brakel, Wink Wintler, Glendon Dotson. Front Row: Vic Watts, Hilt Koupal, Henry Leaders, Earl Lyons, Vance Clark and Raleigh Wildman.
—Dotson Photo

the track or into controversial issues.

"Staff salaries when I joined KORE reflected the fact that during this period of time the station was largely a sustaining rather than a commercial operation. It's my recollection that the chief engineer, Raleigh Wildman, and later, Harold Gander were paid about \$125 per month; Day Foster as chief announcer was getting \$80 per month; while Tom Hall and Stan Miller as announcer-technician were receiving \$55 per month. As the newest addition to the staff, my monthly salary was exactly \$30 per month! But there were some fringe benefits that made it possible to survive. Mr. Hill gave me the use of one of the adjacent apartments which I fixed up as a piano studio where I could give lessons in jazz piano to supplement my income, and this kept me going.

"My specific duties at the station were spelled out in detail. An-

nouncing, of course, and I had several program shifts a day. The first one was real early in the morning, and I was given this shift because Day Foster and I both liked to get up early. And then I'd fill in at various times through the day as needed. Every afternoon I'd present my Piano Soliloquy live from the main studio. When I had any spare time during the day, I was supposed to be writing 'continuity,' or 'commercials,' for sponsors, an assignment which I learned to enjoy.

"Specifically written into my contract was the understanding that I was to be responsible at all times for maintaining the supply of wood for the station's pot-bellied stove. This required frequent trips to the woodpile on Park street, then back up a long flight of stairs with an armload of slab wood. Somehow, in between these activities I managed to give a few piano lessons a day; then my final assignment for the day would be a late evening an-

nouncing shift. All of this added up to a long, long working day, yet I found it to be both interesting and enjoyable.

"Some of the air shows that I still recall vividly included the daily request program which was on the air each afternoon for several hours. Known at first as simply 'Request Program,' its title was later changed to At Your Command, which continued for many years. It took two girls every afternoon to handle the telephone requests and dedications, and even then the lines were overloaded. KORE's telephone number in those days was the single digit '3,' very easy to remember.

"And then there was the Early Bird program which continued for many years, and was mostly sprightly, up-beat music to make it a little easier for the listener to get under way in the mornings. We all took turns doing it, but Rush Hughes finally drew it as his assignment. Rush was the colorful, dramatic type, and was always at his best when doing a program which offered a similar challenge. He was also good at news and sports.

"Since daytime reception from Portland was usually poor on the comparatively insensitive radios of that period, the chances were very good that if you lived in Lane County and your radio was turned on, it would be tuned to KORE. Since there were no other local stations at that time, there was no other alternative.

"Although KORE was scheduled to be on the air up to 16 hours a day, quite frequently we'd be off the air for various reasons, usually transmitter trouble. This was less of a financial loss than it might at first seem since much of the time shown in the program log was

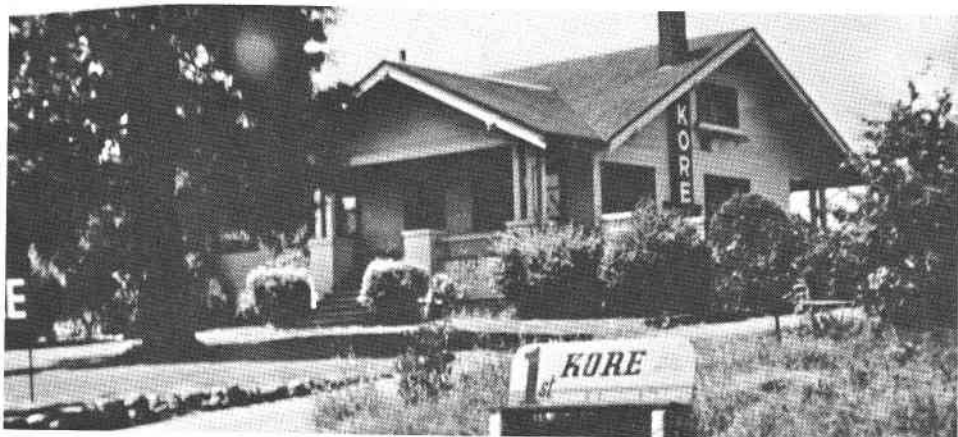
listed as 'sustaining' and comparatively little as 'commercial.' Not until quite late in the thirties was the station's sales staff able to sell as much as half of its available commercial time.

"During my 5 years at KORE, the entire West Coast was going through a severe depression, making it very difficult for us to sell our radio spots, or commercials. We'd make up these one dollar ads which weren't too professional at first, but the best we could do. We were supposed to use a maximum of 60 words for a dollar announcement, but if it took 200 words to get the idea across, we'd use 200 words—and still for a dollar! You never knew whether the station was to be paid for these spots in money or in 'trade-outs' of merchandise or services. It might take the form of a cord of wood or a free haircut.

"I'm proud of the fact that I wrote and sold the very first radio spots ever used by Springfield businessmen. Up to this time the sales staff had concentrated on the Eugene market. This was natural since Eugene's population at this time was around 20,000; Springfield at the most was about 4,000. But I was fired with ambition in those days, and was determined to sell some radio advertising in Springfield. So I contacted several potential accounts there, wrote a series of spots for these Springfield merchants. They liked them, and they were used on the air.

"I think that this moderate success was the turning point in my career, one that led me to move into sales as a profession, a field I've followed ever since.

"Record shows from the old KORE control room were always tiring since you had to handle so many of those heavy shellac records that only played 3 minutes



KORE Building, former Eugene Country Club building at 26th and Willamette (circa 1936).

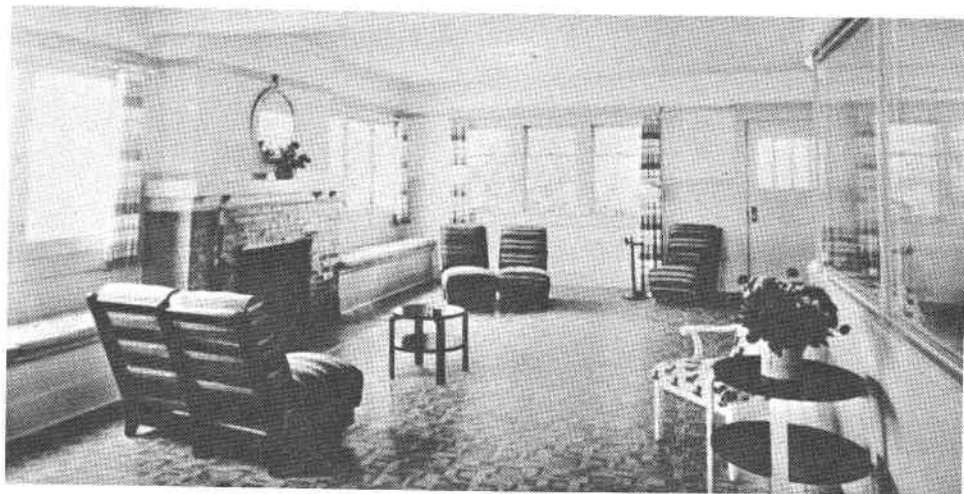
—Courtesy, KORE Studio

per side. Also the control desk and microphone were so high you had to stand while you worked. Really, you were so busy that there wasn't time to sit down anyway.

"For news, we cut stories out of the Morning Register and the Eugene Guard. Later when the papers consolidated to form the Eugene Register-Guard we had to be quite careful what stories from the paper we'd use since the relationship be-

tween Frank Hill and Managing Editor Bill Tugman was quite strained at times.

"During my employment at KORE, in addition to the people I've already mentioned, I also worked with Marjorie Jackson who was the station's bookkeeper and traffic manager; Stan Miller and Tom Hall who 'doubled' as announcers and technicians; and with both Raleigh Wildman, the chief



Observers' Lounge, KORE Building, 26th and Willamette (circa 1936).

—Courtesy, Norman Hill



Dolph Janes (right) KORE News Director, MCs KORE SKI FAIR EVENT.

—Courtesy, KORE Studio

engineer, and Harold Gander who replaced him when 'Hal' moved to Cleveland, Ohio.

"When I left KORE for Astoria in 1936 to manage KAST in that city, plans were already underway in preparation for the move to the new site at the old Eugene Country Club building at 26th and Willamette, but I wasn't around long enough to participate in that move. Returning from Astoria several years later, I decided that with my successful background in selling and promotion, I would move permanently into that field, a decision I've never regretted. I've never returned to radio broadcasting, but I have continued to have a lively interest in both it and television."

* * *

Dolph Janes, currently Director of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, Southwestern Region, went to work at KORE in 1938 as a part-time newscaster for what was considered a handsome sum in that depression year, ten dollars a week! He points out that at the time he was a contest winner for the Lord and Thomas Ad-

vertising agency, and was paid by them, not KORE. Some of Dolph's other recollections follow:

"Day Foster was the production manager at KORE at the time I went to work there in 1938. Day was a real 'pro' in every sense of the word, and gave me, a college freshman, a great deal of help and encouragement. His job was much the same as that of a program director today. It was his responsibility to plan and title the various program formats, then to check



Dolph Janes, KORE, interviews industrialist and crusader, Vivian Kellems.

—Courtesy, KORE Studio

with Marjorie Jackson, the traffic manager and secretary, to see that they actually got on the air. I understand that Marge is retired now, and living with her niece in Ashland.

"Other members of the KORE staff when I first joined the station were Harold Gander who was chief engineer; Vern Sahnaw and Stan Miller who were 'combination men'; and Jack McCarty who could do almost everything: be a disc jockey, read the news, or broadcast a football game. He even did a Man on the Street broadcast from in front of the old Tiffany-Davis drug store at 8th and Willamette.

"Jack's principal program was the request show, 'At Your Command,' which came on the air at about 2:00 p.m. six days a week, and probably had the greatest audience of any KORE program. Frequently it ran until 4:00 o'clock or so in order to handle the great volume of requests from listeners. I always looked forward to Jack's vacations since it gave me a chance to take over temporarily this glamor spot as the announcer on 'At Your Command.'

"Harold Gander had planned the move of KORE from its location over the Metropolitan store on Willamette street to its new location at 26th and Willamette where the former Eugene Country Club building had been remodeled to accommodate all of the station's operations. Gander had also constructed a new 250 watt transmitter in his spare time, and it was placed in service at the time of the move. To help you identify the location, the present Music West store is on approximately the same site.

"There was a large studio on the main floor, an observation lounge,

a control room, a suite of offices, and a combined transmitter room and record library which also housed limited news facilities. The basement provided an apartment for the caretaker, some storage facilities, and a number of tiny offices, mostly for the sales staff. The 175 foot antenna tower stood just to northwest of the building.

"An interesting sidelight was that chief engineer Harold Gander, although he sounded fine on the air, detested announcing. So every Saturday morning when he had a regular program shift, he'd swing by the fraternity house and pick me up to do the announcing for him. He paid me for this extra announcing out of his own pocket!

"I continued as a part-time newscaster on the KORE staff but on the Lord and Thomas payroll until 1939 when I was officially made a KORE employee, but still on a part-time basis. Needing full-time employment, I left KORE for a full-time job at KBND. Duke Young, present owner and manager of KFMY-FM of this city took my place at KORE. A year later Glenn McCormick, KORE's sales manager, called and offered me a full-time opening at KORE which I immediately accepted.

"I found that Lionel Trommlitz had become KORE manager while I was away. He was quiet, reserved, and not at all the flamboyant type of person one usually associates with radio station management. Tromm had made his home off and on in Eugene for 30 years, but had been working also at General Motors in Seattle and for a credit association in Salem. At the same time, Glenn McCormick, later to become owner and manager of KSLM in Salem, was moving to Baker, Oregon, to go into radio broadcasting there.



Lionel Trommlitz, manager at KORE.

"During these early years of World War II the amount of commercial announcements and sponsored programs had shown a tremendous increase. The Eugene-Springfield area was growing rapidly, and at the same time the newsprint shortage was restricting newspaper advertising. Then, businessmen who had always used newspaper advertising exclusively, were willing to turn to radio as an alternative. Soon the demand for commercial time on KORE had reached the point where there was always a waiting list of prospective advertisers. And whenever an air availability occurred, it was only necessary for someone from the sales staff to go into town and 'write up the business.' No selling was necessary, only order-taking. Actually, it was after 1945 and the end of the war before it was necessary for KORE to develop an aggressive sales staff.

"But I've gotten a little ahead of my story. In the late thirties, the University of Oregon started offering courses in broadcast techniques through its Speech Department. I was in the same beginning class of 1937-38 as Laura Bryant (now

Laura Plank) and Bruce Nidever, both of whom became very active in commercial radio in Eugene. Laura specialized in interview shows and programs for women on both KORE and KASH. Bruce was a staff announcer at KORE for years, later becoming involved in the production of 'spots' for other radio stations, and in the narrating of sound tracks for commercial films. As a matter of fact, he's still doing that.

"I also recall that KOAC, the State station in Corvallis, was beginning to originate broadcasts from a studio constructed in a practice room in the University's School of Music. Marvin Krenk, now a salesman for KVAL-TV, directed a number of programs there which I observed.

"The final personnel change I can recall at KORE before I was drafted was Floyd Viken taking Harold Gander's place as chief engineer when Harold decided to move to Seattle. Every morning Floyd would be warming up the technical equipment before broadcasting began at 6:00 a.m., meanwhile selecting records for his early-morning show which lasted until about 9:00 o'clock. With his friendly, folksy approach, he soon developed a loyal following of listeners that was with him every week-day morning for years. When his shift was over, he was soon busy with his job of technical maintenance and equipment construction. Floyd was a real genius at designing and building electronic equipment, and preferred to build everything from 'scratch' rather than buying it ready-made.

"Programs were showing rapid improvement, especially those from the Mutual Network which was again affiliated with the station. Then there were programs, too,

on 'electrical transcriptions,' 16 inch discs that revolved at 33½ rpm. Those from C. P. McGregor were especially good. I particularly remember with fondness such programs as Jack Bailey and Queen for a Day; Bill Cunningham; Crimes of Carelessness; and House of Mystery. In the news field, Glenn Hardy with the Alka Seltzer News was outstanding.

"I was inducted into the Army in 1942, and after a long tour of duty and extensive hospitalization, I returned to KORE in 1948 as full-time news director. But it was never quite the same again; 1942 was the end of an era, and what followed after 1945—well that's another period of history and another story."

* * *

(Typical KORE Schedule)
KORE PROGRAM SCHEDULE
FOR TUESDAY, AUG. 23, 1938

Morning

7:00 Early Bird
7:45 Morning Devotional
8:00 Variety Program
8:30 Haven of Rest
9:00 News and Music
9:15 Between the Bookends
9:30 Denver Darling
9:45 Joyce Trio
10:00 News and Music
10:15 Pinky Hunter
10:30 Roundup
10:45 Jimmy Shields
11:00 Hollywood Charm Counselor
11:15 Let's Dance
11:30 Hawaii Calls
11:45 Paul Lamkoff
12:00 Peacock Court

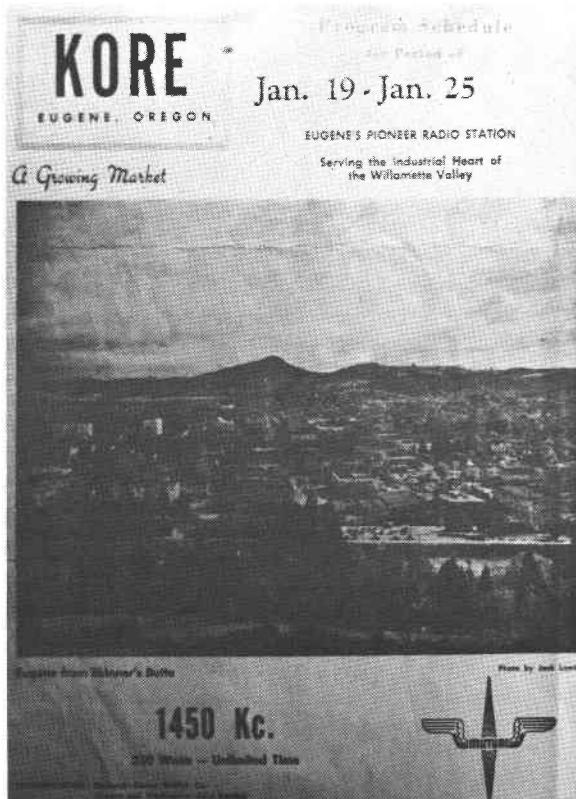
Afternoon

12:15 News
12:30 Agricultural Daily
12:45 What Lane County Thinks
1:00 Voice of the Farm
1:15 Charley Eckel's Orchestra
1:45 Works Progress Administration
2:00 At Your Command
3:00 Feminine Fancies

3:30 Mr. Mergenthwinker's Lobbies
4:00 News
4:15 Christian Science Program
4:30 Radio Campus
4:45 Playground Program
5:00 Reveries
5:15 Frank Ferneau's Orchestra
5:30 Howie Wing
5:45 Club Cabana

Evening

6:00 Streamline Swing
6:15 Phantom Pilot
6:30 Frank Bull
6:45 News
7:00 Chico and Orchestra
7:15 Meet Your Neighbor
7:30 Green Hornet
8:00 Let's Dance
8:15 Don't You Believe It
8:30 Our Quartet
8:54 Roundup
9:00 News
9:15 House of McGregor
9:30 Say It With Words
10:00 Dance Music
11:30 The Playboys
11:45 Dream Time
12:00 Sign Off



Cover used on KORE program guide for many years
—Photo by Jack Lamb

FORMS FOR TESTAMENTARY GIFTS

Language to be used for bequests designating the Lane County Historical Society (a tax exempt organization) as a beneficiary of your Will:

- (1) "I devise to the Lane County Historical Society, a corporation existing under the laws of the State of Oregon, \$..... to be used for the benefit of the Lane County Historical Society in such manner as its Board of Directors may direct."
- (2) "I devise to the Lane County Historical Society, a corporation existing under the laws of the State of Oregon, \$..... to constitute a permanent endowment fund to be known as the Fund. Such fund shall be kept invested by the Board of Directors of the Lane County Historical Society, and the annual income therefrom shall be used for the benefit of the Lane County Historical Society in such a manner as its Board of Directors may direct."



QUEEN FOR A NIGHT broadcast from McDonald Theatre stage. Left, Dan Gayle.
—Courtesy, KORE Studio

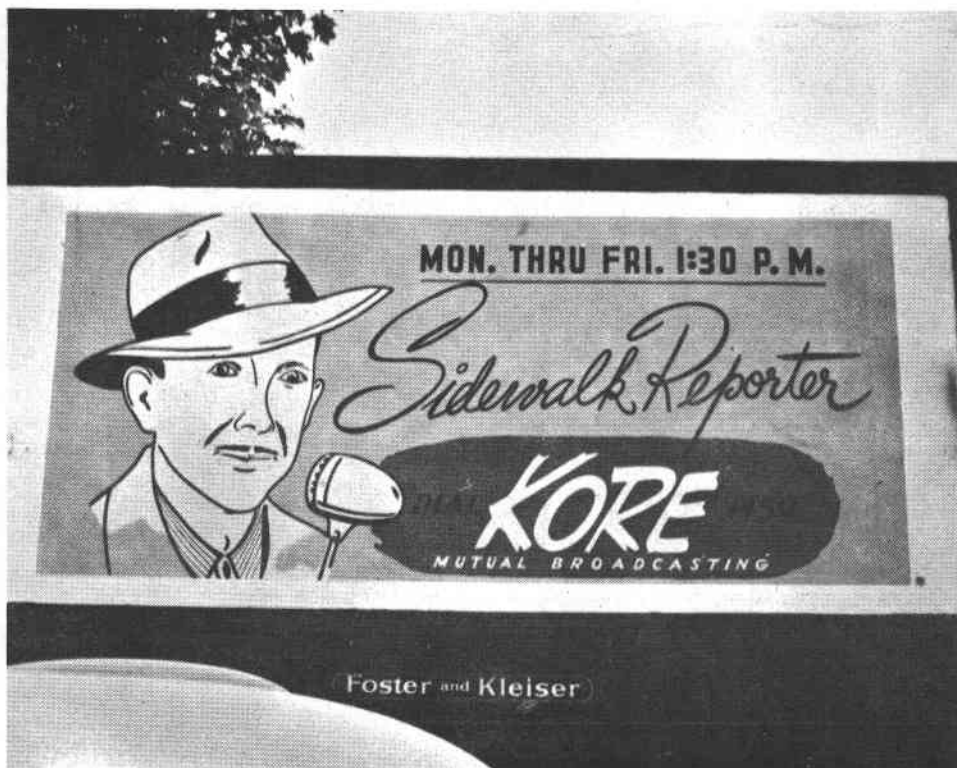


George Hebert and His Gang broadcasting outside Eugene's Outdoor Store, 7th and Willamette.

—Courtesy, KORE Studio

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
740 West 13th Ave., Eugene, Oregon

Organization
Non-Profit
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 96
Eugene, Oregon



George Hebert's MAN ON THE STREET broadcast (Billboard Promotion)

—Courtesy, KORE Studio