

BROADCASTING IN GREENVILLE AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Norvin C. Duncan Jr.*

It is good to be with you and to be dealing with a subject that has been my vocation and avocation for most of my life. As a teenager I became fascinated with a crystal set radio and, with the help of a friend and one of my brothers, I began putting tubes and condensers and power supplies together and producing home-made radios - not only receivers but transmitters. As a so-called radio ham and amateur radio operator, I learned the Morse Code when I was in high school and operated my own short-wave station that brought me in contact with just about every country in the world. Now this continued into my college days but after a while I became more interested in the wider aspects of broadcasting, and when a job opened up at the only radio station in western North Carolina, I jumped at the chance and took off on a career that is still active to some extent.

The box and the recorded excerpts that I have brought along with me today from early days will deal primarily with radio, for I think that television and its history and its place in our lives today are so well known that our time will be better spent in just looking way, way back.

Broadcasting, over-the-air-waves broadcasting, came to Greenville and vicinity in May of 1933 when WFBC Radio came on the air. It was a low-power station - 100 watts for the first year or two. It could be heard over a radius of twenty or thirty miles. The Upstate was already being served by WSPA of Spartanburg and WBT of Charlotte. By 1933 only these three stations could be counted on for dependable radio service, at least in the daytime. At night, of

* Norvin C. Duncan, Jr. joined the WFBC Radio staff in Greenville in 1939. For many years he was program manager, news anchor and editorial spokesman for WFBC-TV. During his address to the Historical Society on October 16, 1994, he played tapes of radio interviews, "on the scene" broadcasts of historic events, and music of the 1940's. Printed here is a transcription of a tape of Mr. Duncan's address and of his tapes. Some editing has been done to fit the printed format.

course, it was another matter. Radio fans could pick up the powerful stations of big cities all across the country. But on the local scene WFBC was the only station until 1940, when WMRC went on the air. Some of you may recall what the call letters "WFBC" meant at the outset, not really "Watch Furman Beat Clemson." Actually the station first belonged to the First Baptist Church of Knoxville, Tennessee. But the church gave up the license and the Greenville *News-Piedmont* Company took over and brought the station here.

The station was housed at first in a small home on East Faris Road, then moved to the Hotel Imperial (later known as the Hotel Greenville), then to the Poinsett Hotel in 1941. I joined the staff in 1939 shortly after an announcer named Frank Blair left the station to take a job in Washington. Previously, Roger Peace, publisher of the newspapers, appointed his younger brother, B. H. Peace, Jr., as manager and hired a young fellow named Charles Crutchfield to help put the station on the air. Crutchfield was there for only a short time before going to Charlotte. Then Mr. Peace picked another man to be manager, this time a young fellow from the staff of his newspaper by the name of Bevo Whitmire. At the newspaper Bevo was the staff photographer and a reporter, and there I understand is where he met his dear wife, Mildred.

Those early days at the station featured programming that was entirely live except for phonograph records, and very few records were played the first few years. The station was a wonderful opportunity for local talent: singers, speakers, comedians. Well remembered by some of us old-timers are names such as Eleanor Barton, known as a singer on radio and as a writer in the newspaper under the name "Polly Piedmont;" Allen L. Weems, musician; Eber Lineberger, pianist and an announcer with the nickname "The Freshman;" Dupre Rhame, baritone soloist; Thomas Brockman, pianist; Mrs. Frances Withington, contralto; Mrs. G. A. McMahon, Jr., contralto; Mrs. Paul Cass, soprano; The Mackey Boys Choir, and I could go on and on. These performers and many more supplied much of the programming of those great years of radio - and all live. There was no tape recorder then. Only in the late 30's and early 40's was local recording made possible through the development of electrical transcriptions. I brought one along to show you after a

while.

After about three years of entirely local programming, WFBC took steps to provide wider coverage and expanded service. The nation was still in the throes of The Depression in 1935, but the Piedmont area was growing and the station met the challenge with an increase in power to 5,000 watts. This made it possible to serve areas that previously did not receive a good strong signal in this part of the state. Then in 1936, the station joined the NBC radio network. In those days it had two divisions, the blue and the red. A new era began, the period which is fondly looked back on as "The Golden Age of Radio."

As mentioned earlier, a second station came on the air in Greenville in 1940, WMRC. Mr. R. A. Jolley and his staff became very formidable competitors to WFBC. The second station brought some worth-while additional local programming along with network service from the regional broadcasting system, and then they picked up the blue network of NBC, and WFBC stayed on the red network. It was not until a year or two after World War II that a third station came into being, WESC. As the years passed other stations were established. FM came on the scene and today it seems that we are indeed surfeited with more radio stations than we can count.

We are here today to look back. To do that and bring you some of the flavor of the Golden Era I have dug into the archives and come up with some excerpts that were included on a fiftieth anniversary special broadcast on WFBC in 1983. It was a four-hour broadcast. Some of you I hope heard it or at least some of it. It was presided over by announcer Russ Cassell with the help of yours truly. We are going to listen to a number of voices from the past and hear about some of the memorable events of those years, and then I will be back with a few more remarks.

Cassell: *Now Norvin we have talked about all the great names. This man's name seems to come up more than any other. I keep hearing Bevo, Bevo, and I understand you reported to Bevo Whitmire.*

Duncan: *I surely did, and he was one of a kind, Russ. Bevo was known as a showman, a journalist, a devotee of the arts, and a man who had the proverbial heart of gold. Bevo became known*

throughout the country from the 30's to the mid-50's, and I'm glad to say his voice is still preserved on a number of recordings that have been retained in our files of those years.

Bevo Whitmire: *Thank you very much "Dunc" and thank all you good people for being down here with us today and thank you so much for your patronage for 20 years. Twenty years is a long time in anybody's language and you being with us consistently day in and day out, week in and week out, we want you to know that we just love you all above and beyond everything else.*

Duncan: *On that particular occasion, Russ, Bevo Whitmire was awarding special twentieth anniversary plaques to the original advertisers on WFBC.*

Cassell: *That's something. You know I understand too, Norvin, Bevo had a special knack for hiring the best of talent: singers, announcers, technicians, whatever was needed to operate WFBC, that kind of set it apart as a distinctive station known not just locally for its quality and performance but throughout the South, and indeed in many parts of the country. The NBC radio network called on WFBC frequently to originate programs for the area especially when nationally known persons were making news in the South.*

Voice: *I remember so well how much pride all of the announcers of WFBC took in introducing Mrs. Banning on the NBC network nation wide.*

Duncan: *Yes, that's Charles Batson, WFBC program director and announcer in the 30's and 40's. Charlie, you were referring of course to that famous writer Margaret Culkin Banning.*

Batson: *That's correct, Dunc, she was in residence for a period of time up in Tryon, and WFBC was the closest NBC affiliate to her home there, so once a week she would commute down to Greenville and do her quarter-hour afternoon NBC show.*

Duncan: *You recall, I'm sure, some of the outstanding local news events of those days. Which one in particular maybe are you thinking of from those days in the 30's?*

Batson: *Well, I recall one in particular that was an exciting event for us. President Roosevelt made a stop in Greenville. He stopped down at the old Southern Depot on West Washington Street in Greenville. It was his only stop in the state, and we fed it out to a regional*

network. I had the happy duty of being the reporter on the scene and recall very vividly the huge crowd that came out to see this very popular president.

Duncan: *Thank you Charles Batson for being with us on our 50th anniversary program. Charlie, someone that you and I both will never forget is the beautiful young lady who served as receptionist and secretary at the Hotel Imperial, Hotel Greenville, and also the Poinsett: Miss Christine Bramlett, now Mrs Jack Dibble, who we located in High Point, North Carolina.*

Mrs. Dibble: *The twenty-two years I worked at WFBC were very happy years because of the wonderful people who owned the station and the most understanding and thoughtful boss, Bevo Whitmire. I appreciate your asking me to be a part of this 50th anniversary celebration and wish for WFBC continued success that it has enjoyed over these many years. Thank you so much, Norvin, and its been a pleasure talking to you.*

Cassell: *It always just intrigues me how many people have worked here and then gone on to bigger and better things.. And this next fellow really did achieve quite a bit of notoriety.*

Duncan: *This was in the engineering department, Russ. This gentleman went on to considerable fame as an engineer and a man involved in technological things of many kinds, and I refer to none other than Bob Rigby. Bob, what do you remember of those early years?*

Rigby: *When I discovered WFBC down here at their new plant out on the Piedmont Highway, there I said: 'Nan, this is a station that's alive, they're going somewhere.'*

Duncan: *I guess Clyde Ethridge was around.*

Rigby: *Mr. Ethridge at that time was the live-in resident engineer at the station. He was classed as the chief, and there were only two of us as full-time professional engineers and WFBC was a pioneer.*

Duncan: *I know that you are so modest that you don't talk about this but I just know that you are the inventor of the microwave oven.*

Rigby: *A lot of things that I've been involved in are still in the equivalent of radio without broadcasting. It was high frequency technology that led to the microwave.*

Cassell: *That's really something. Now every time I use mine at home*

I'll think of Bob Rigby.

Duncan: *You know, Russ. before that Bob built the very first electrical transcription recording machine that WFBC ever had.*

Cassell: *That man must have been a genius.*

Duncan: *Indeed he was. And, Bob, if you'll forgive us we have Joel Lawhon on the line here. I know that you'll remember him from those early days. Joel what do you recall from way back then?*

Lawhon: *One of my most vivid memories of those early days was staying up all night in the spring of 1940 to broadcast the news of the German invasion of Holland and Belgium.*

Duncan: *This is the voice of Joel Lawhon, and Joel Mahon remembers many things like that, including some of the great old radio shows that we listened to from NBC in those days, right Joel?*

Lawhon: *Oh, Norm, you bet I do. Bob Hope with Jerry Colonna and his band of renown, Judy Garland, Basil Rathbone, and I admit that was my favorite network show in those days. But you know, Norvin, my first recollection of WFBC was seeing a notice on the Furman University bulletin board that WFBC was auditioning for announcers.*

Duncan: *You mean that's how you got your job?*

Lawhon: *That's how I got my job. I went to the studio and auditioned for Charlie Batson, and a couple of days later he called me up and said I was hired. I started work on May 3, 1939. I was a sophomore at Furman, and I must say that Charlie Batson taught me much about what I know about radio. And then not long after that, as you say, I met you. You arrived just a few months after I did and you're the one who taught me how to read news on the air, and I'm still doing it. The first thing I bought after I went to work was a good watch, and I still have it. It still runs. I'm wearing it right now. I took it out of the drawer this morning. I thought that it would help me remember those old days at WFBC, and it certainly has. Norvin, I just want to say in closing that the thing I remember most of all are the people. You and Charlie Batson as program directors were my first bosses. I've always appreciated all you did for me both professionally and helping me get through Furman while holding down a full-time job, and I'll remember always it was your friendship that caused me to decide to stay in this broadcasting business.*

Duncan: *Joel, thank you again, and I am going to lead in right now to something I know you will be interested in hearing. You know all station announcements were live back in those days. No canned station breaks, no pre-recorded commercials except those that came from New York on behalf of the national advertisers. Local announcers who had the night shift had the best assignments, because they could listen to all the big prime-time shows between station breaks every thirty minutes. One of the all-time favorites was the Fred Allen Show's Town Hall Tonight, with Senator Claghorn and all the rest.*

Cassell: *When we come back in just a few moments, as we continue our 50th anniversary show, we will hear from the man who is perhaps without a doubt the most famous person to ever work here at WFBC Radio.*

Voice: *Yes, I came to work at WFBC in the Greenville Hotel in 1937.*

Duncan: *That's none other than Frank Blair, the man who went on later to Washington and New York and became a fixture on the Today television show for more than twenty years. Frank, what are some of the particular reminiscences you have about the year you were at WFBC?*

Blair: *Well, the best remembrance I have of the whole thing, I think, was Bevo Whitmire. We were on the mezzanine floor of the hotel. My stay in Greenville was the most enjoyable. I enjoyed working for the Peaces, the Greenville News, the Greenville Piedmont, a close-knit operation. I think we accomplished something in electronic journalism in those days.*

Duncan: *You mentioned Bevo and, of course, everybody thought Bevo was just the greatest thing in the world*

Blair: *I went to Washington to tape an audition for a job I got there at the Mutual Network, and my shoes were pretty sloppy looking. He took off his shoes and he said, "Here wear these for good luck." They brought me good luck. He was that kind of a guy. He didn't want to see me leave and I really didn't want to leave him but opportunity was knocking and I just had to go, that was all.*

Duncan: *Frank, we appreciate your talking with us on the 50th anniversary program, and we commend you for all the fine work you did in New York and on NBC's Today. We followed you for these*

years.

Blair: *If WFBC is 50 years old, I'd have to be at least eighteen years older than that. My best to WFBC owners and management to you good people who stuck by it all these years. Its sort of like an alma mater to me.*

Cassell: *Well Norvin, I guess Frank Blair was probably unquestionably the most famous person ever to work here.*

Duncan: *He certainly had the national fame. He is the one who was known really throughout the nation on radio and on television.*

Cassell: *You know, one of the most popular radio programs during the time Frank Blair was here at WFBC was the NBC show that came from Hollywood every Wednesday night. It starred a great trooper. He kept on singing right into the 1970's. [Bing Crosby singing: "When the Blue of the Night...."] Bing Crosby and Kraft Music Hall continued as a fixture on WFBC and NBC radio for many years.*

Duncan: *It did and, Russ, I suppose there is no other NBC program that I personally remember more vividly than that. We would gather in the studio at night, those of us who were on the night shift, and sit there and just listen all the way through.*

It has been pointed out that there were no tape recordings in the late 30's and 40's or hardly any until the late 40's. During the war we did have what was known as wire recordings. They were hard to come by. The main recording device was a rather cumbersome electrical transcription recorder device, and WFBC had its first one when engineer Bob Rigby designed it and made it himself. I have one here to show you: a 16 inch aluminum-based disk, 15 minutes on each side. This was the forerunner of the LP's that came along later and brought you a lot of music and everything else on the LP recordings. That very one came from the old WFBC engineering department. By the way Bob Rigby, whom some of you I'm sure know, has been living in Greenville for some years in retirement. His genius in electronics and the science of radio waves was so amazing the government excluded him from the military draft in World War II and sent him to New York to work with scientists on special projects relating to the propagation of radio waves. His work resulted in development of a microwave heating device that speeded up production of airplanes and incidentally gave him the privilege of

cooking hamburgers in his New York apartment in the world's first microwave oven.

Incidentally, the big agencies in New York used those electrical transcriptions for commercial announcements 33 1/3 rpm. They sent their commercials out all over the country and individual stations found the disks very handy for local recording purposes. But the networks for some years shied away from doing any of their programming by recording transcription. It was only when a spectacular event occurred in the late 30's that NBC radio broke the rule of no transcriptions and put a recording on the air. Who knows what it was?

NBC had sent an announcer and engineer to New Jersey from Chicago to record the arrival of the German airship Hindenberg and the network intended to use the recording later on its local stations in Chicago and New York. And in a few moments you will hear a portion of that very well-remembered recording.

By 1920, Russ, more and more communities with only one radio station were beginning to get competition. Greenville saw a second station come into being. Asheville had a second station, then so did Spartanburg. Smaller cities were getting their very first station. Some struggling new stations began to look for ways to obtain worthwhile programming.

Cassell: *WFBC led the way with one of the first regional networks, becoming the key station for what was known for a number of years as the Blue Ridge Network. It was a joint venture with stations in several states all affiliated with the NBC Network so that any of the smaller stations who were not commercially supported for certain NBC programs could carry WFBC's locally produced program and insert their own commercials. The Blue Ridge Network included stations in Greenwood; also in Asheville, North Carolina; Kingsport, Tennessee; and Bristol, Tennessee; and Virginia.*

Duncan: *And Russ the man who was responsible for forming that Blue ridge regional network was Mr. B. T. Whitmire, the late Mr. Bevo Whitmire. He is not with us today, he passed on in 1956, but we are glad that his wife is still in our midst. Mrs. Whitmire, you recall those days very vividly, I'm sure.*

Mrs. Whitmire: *I remember just about everything that happened*

here since I came here to college and finished in 1925 and went to work on the newspaper.

Duncan: *And isn't this how you met your husband by the way?*

Mrs. Whitmire: *Yes, he was on the paper too. At that time he was covering the legislature in Columbia, and they took me on as a substitute until he got back.*

Duncan: *It wasn't probably more than a year, was it, that they decided Bevo would do very well and transferred him from the newspaper up to run the radio station?*

Mrs. Whitmire: *Well, Bevo kept asking for it because he wanted to do it. He was very anxious to do it. Finally, Roger Peace told him just go down there and take it over. "I don't care if you make any money or not, just run it." So, he did.*

Duncan: *And he was just cut out for that kind of job. Mrs. Whitmire we are very grateful for your participation and thank you for reminiscing with us.*

Cassell: *Boy, she is still a lovely lady, isn't she. You know being a part of the News-Piedmont Company for many years, WFBC Radio had a natural inclination to give news a very high priority. This was the philosophy of a family run organization headed up by Roger C. Peace who was assisted by his brothers, Charlie Peace and B. H. Peace, Jr. The latter served as president of the WFBC division for many years.*

Voice: *My husband, B. H. Peace, loved his association with WFBC Radio. It was one of the first radio stations in the area. It was very exciting in a new field.*

Duncan: *This is Mrs. Dorothy Peace speaking now. The widow of B. H. Peace, Jr., and she can certainly recall many of the historic occasions of those years and many of the people who were here at WFBC. Mrs. Peace, what is one of your recollections of those times?*

Dorothy Peace: *Well, one was in 1938 when the Hindenberg exploded and NBC was right there with the cameras, and they scooped it. Of course we got it, so it was really a major scoop.*

Announcer's Voice: *It's practically standing still now. They've dropped a rope out of the nose of the ship, and it has been taken hold of on the field by a number of men. ...It burst into flames! It's terrible; oh my, get out of the way please, it's burning...bursting into*

flames and it's falling. This is terrible. It's one of the worst catastrophes in the world...four or five hundred feet in the sky. It's a terrific flame ladies and gentlemen. It's smoke and it's flames....

Peace: *All through the years it's fantastic the way WFBC has kept growing. My husband really enjoyed the years he worked with the station.*

Cassell: *Well, Norvin, that brings us to World War II, beginning in Europe in 1939. It brought continuing emphasis on news programming, special events and documentaries, and WFBC covered all of the historic broadcasts relating to those world shaking events.*

Duncan: *I'll never forget, Russ, September 1, 1939. Adolph Hitler's military forces invaded Poland. And then on September 3rd, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced Britain was at war with Germany.*

Chamberlain: *I am speaking to you from No. 10 Downing Street. This morning the British ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government the final news saying that unless we heard from them by 11:00 that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would be declared.*

Cassell: *For a year or more the war in Europe seemed rather far distant to most Americans, and life went on in more or less the usual way. WFBC newscasts told of the so-called Phony War in Europe when little or no action was taking place. Then came the collapse of France and the taking over of all of western Europe by the Germans.*

Duncan: *And, Russ, I remember that the American lend-lease program to Britain was increased at that time, and the nation adopted a rhythmic tune as a sort of second national anthem.*

Cassell: *Oh, yes the best remembered recording of that tune ["American Patrol"] was made by Glenn Miller who was later to serve in the United States Air Corps and lose his life after taking off in a plane from England.*

World War II was just ending as 1946 arrived. Personnel began returning to their old jobs at WFBC. They were trying to adjust again to civilian life, which wasn't exactly easy. The young men who had left as bachelors were coming back as married war veterans with families and finding no suitable homes in which to live. Even a small apartment was almost impossible to find for many

months. Families had to double up with each other and put their names on waiting lists.

Duncan: *I can attest to that. It was quite rough, Russ, in those days. But radio programming began to regain its old peace-time flavor now that personnel were more readily available, and the big entertainers could settle down to their more normal routines after traveling around the world to entertain troops.*

Cassell: *One of the most popular and commercially successful local programs on WFBC during the first several years after World War II was a late night show dreamed up by announcer Jimmy Capps. It was called Ballroom in the Sky, featuring a popular type of dreamy romantic music that appealed to high-school and college-age listeners.*

Duncan: *Jimmy Capps theme song was Artie Shaw's "Dancing in the Dark."*

Cassell: *One of the most spectacular news stories of WFBC's entire 50 years occurred in 1947. I wasn't around then, but that's when the Ideal Laundry exploded with what many people thought was the force of an atom bomb.*

Duncan: *Actually, Russ, I think it was 1946, there's been some speculation about that. I think we can say it was 1946. It is regrettable that the late Bevo Whitmire is not here today to give us his account of that event. He lived only a few blocks from the laundry, and I think he actually ran all the way from his home on Buncombe Street to the studios in the Poinsett Hotel to put the very first bulletin on the air. At any rate, Bevo did sort of re-enact that occasion several years later when the station observed its 18th birthday, and we have a recording of that.*

Voice: *That was about the most spectacular thing we ever covered wasn't it, Bevo?*

Whitmire: *Yes, Dunc, and I still marvel at the double quick time we managed to get to the laundry area on the Buncombe Road and come on the air with an eyewitness description.*

Duncan: *Well, you were almost too much of a newsman that evening, Bevo. My wife told me afterwards how she was listening at home to our description on the station and heard you say, "Dunc, the police think another tank may blow up any minute. Do you think we can get*

up a little closer?"

Duncan: *On the day of the explosion, I'll never forget, we went over to the Sheriff's Department which was next door to the Poinsett Hotel and got in the patrol car and went straight on up to the laundry. Jack Fulmer was with us and I'm sure you will never forget that will you, Jack?*

Jack Fulmer: *Definitely, yes, I never will forget that. As we walked to the Cash and Carry, which was next door, we walked in and we saw the groceries lying all over the floor. We had to wade through them to find a telephone so that we could hook up our amplifier and broadcast from the Cash and Carry Grocery Store. On thing I remember, too, across the street was a church. We took the pipe organ from that church and laid it out on the floor.*

Duncan: *I do remember many shattered homes.*

Fulmer: *Even down Main Street, there were plate glass windows broken out down the street.*

Duncan: *And so Jack Fulmer, who is now by the way chief engineer for WFBC Radio, went looking into the store, waded through a big shambles of can goods and groceries, found a telephone, hooked up the amplifier, and went on the air.*

Duncan: *We are speaking to you now from the Cash and Carry Store on Buncombe Street in Greenville just a few hundred feet from the scene of the terrific explosion that apparently demolished the Ideal Laundry and Cleaners. Now, when we arrived a few minutes ago, firemen and policemen had been on the scene just a short time and its really not possible at the moment to give you very many details of what happened. Fire Department officials have just told us that there seems to be little doubt that it was a propane gas explosion. And a number of employees were still in the building working when it happened. There are reports of several casualties. No one seems to know at the present time just how many. The force of the explosion was obviously tremendous for many houses on Buncombe Street appear to have been bashed in by a hurricane. And there are reports that the explosion was felt and heard as far away as Spartanburg. Bevo Whitmire is headed this way again, and he probably has been talking to the police chief. No, he's not ready to give us his own report yet, but I expect shortly he'll bring someone*

over to the microphone who can give us a better idea of just what's happened. Somebody's calling to me now from across the store. Apparently he's giving us some kind of warning. Another propane tank? Ladies and gentlemen, if I understand correctly what's being said across this shambles of a store, the Fire Department indicates that there may be a chance that another tank of propane gas may explode at the site of the Ideal Laundry. Of course, where we are at the moment is fairly close, but I wouldn't think another such explosion would do much more damage than has already been done right here. At any rate the walls are still standing here at the Cash and Carry. We intend to stay on the air as long as possible to keep you informed about all this.

Cassell: Norvin, they should have given you a medal for bravery for that. That's the way it was in November 1946, when Norvin Duncan described that spectacular explosion of Greenville's Ideal Laundry. I'm sure a lot of people still remember that blast that shook the area like an earthquake killed half a dozen people who were working in the plant, destroyed houses over several blocks of Buncombe Street and even broke windows in store fronts throughout downtown Greenville.

Duncan: Getting back to the business of broadcasting, Russ, WFBC concentrated on local broadcasting to a larger extent during the first three or four years after World War II and even developed and produced the first local soap opera series in the South. News commentator James Dawson, a terrific writer, wrote the script for "A Story of Catherine Cole." Dawson even played varying rolls in the program as did several others of the staff. And in the late 40's Dawson left Greenville to join Charles Batson in Washington as an executive of the National Association of Broadcasters.

Cassell: Greenville was still in its so-called Golden Age. WFBC carried the cream of the crop from NBC - leading daytime soap operas, great comedians, and dramatic shows in prime-time, and the memorable musical features of those years. Perhaps none is better remembered than the show that brought great singers and orchestras to the American public for many years: *The Voice of Firestone*.

That is another kind of program we do not hear much of these

days. Since those days we have had a vast change in music preferences, not only in music but in the way things are done on both radio and TV. The manner in which recordings are produced, the development of compact disks, digital technology and so forth. Can you realize that anyone in the Upstate can now tune his radio dial today and pick up more than 40 radio stations? The TV viewer can tune not only to half a dozen over-the-air channels but also to distant stations through cable, plus scores of cable channels. They even talk about 500 channels coming. Are we going to have a few more couch potatoes? They say that the rapidly developing super highway will bring us more mind-boggling things, far more than I even want to think about and with your permission I would like to close with just an editorial remark or two. My own concern is that our marvelous developments in technology have been so greatly misused in so many ways that our progress in other areas has not kept pace. Some 25 years ago a chairman of the FCC called television a vast wasteland. Though there is an oasis here and there today in radio and TV, I feel there is still too much of the wasteland in evidence. It is regrettable, I think, that so many people today have so little understanding of what broadcasting was like in earlier years. Looking back on the history of it, I can only say that I found it rewarding in many ways and I would not trade my memories of the good old days for any amount of today's broadcast fare, through whatever kind of technology. Those are my sentiments. As they used to say on TV: "That's my opinion, what's yours?"