Programming Live Local Radio in the 1930s:

WDZ Reaches Rural Illinois

By Stephen D. Perry, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Communication

Illinois State University

Submitted to BEA History Division (Open Competition)

1999 Convention – Las Vegas, NV

Running Head: LIVE LOCAL RADIO

Contact: Stephen Perry
ISU Dept. of Communication
Box 4480
Normal, IL 61790-4480
sdperry@ilstu.edu
(309) 438-7339
Fax: (309) 438-3048

Programming Live Local Radio in the 1930s: WDZ Reaches Rural Illinois

Abstract

Though vast in quantity, little study has pursued the types of content programmed by the independent radio station. This study examines the first decade of full-time programming at rural WDZ, examining artist acquisition, financing, and genres. WDZ moved from a haphazard open-door policy to a more professional orientation. The station eventually made extensive efforts to reach out into communities it served, promoting both the station and the livelihood of on-air performers through paid concert appearances.

Programming Live Local Radio in the 1930s:

WDZ Reaches Rural Illinois

> Despite its dominance of America's waking hours and public consciousness from 1922 until its apotheosis in television in the early 1950s (and despite the attention that media such as film, television, and the press have received academically), radio remains a dark and fading memory somewhere between vaudeville and *I Love Lucy*—without the benefit of cable-channel reruns (Hilmes, 1997, xiv).

Much of what is known about radio's early decades comes from information available through the dominant and centralized sources, such as the NBC and CBS networks and the corporate parents of early networks, AT&T, RCA, GE, and Westinghouse. In fact, scanning the available literature, one would think that almost all programming of the time came through the networks with local stations acting as signal repeaters. This is because much of what was broadcast was produced live and went unrecorded in either sound or paper forms (Doerksen, 1999; Hilmes, 1997). Besides, programming was a heavy budgetary expense, and one wonders how any independent station could have sustained much live local programming. Yet, during the 1920s and 1930s, the percentage of stations affiliated with the national networks never exceeded 55% and only reached more than half as of 1938. This leaves the majority of stations during most of those years functioning as independent entities with only a few as members of smaller regional networks (Rose, 1940). The difficulty of obtaining information about programming at the local station level, since there is no central repository, has contributed to the lack of histories written about the independents. Thus, local programming and the economic structure that supported it needs to be explored when the sources that provide the necessary information are uncovered.

This research provides a historical case study of one of the earliest radio stations, WDZ, a station that did not affiliate with the networks in the pre-television years. Current station personnel referred this researcher to the Douglas County Museum for archives of the station's first 25 years. There a wealth of original sources was found, many collected as a result of

reunions coordinated by the museum for former station personnel. This data will be interpreted to uncover the place of a small, independent, rural station in the big world of radio known for its networks.

One study that has provided a picture of local programming in the early days of radio is Doerksen's (1999) study of WHN in New York. This station, as well as several others around the country in cities like Chicago and Detroit, programmed material that appealed to the masses with the intent of attracting advertising dollars. In fact, music publishers often paid for songs to be aired on these stations, a practice known as "song plugging" (p. 85), that preceded the practice of payola for playing rock-n-roll music. WHN also promoted vaudeville acts, speakeasies, and nightclubs for profit by allowing clubs to pay to have performers come into the studio or by broadcasting on location. Programming at WHN was so linked to the available economic incentives, that the publishers of Tin Pan Alley were even allowed to buy what might be music's version of the infomercial. These "musicmercials" were hosted by publishing company talent and featured music of specific publishers. The station's afternoon and evening programming was at times controlled by these "musicmercial" ventures. Other revenue sources for WHN and similar stations were local businesses that bought standard commercial mentions on the stations. WHN was so successful at finding ways to profit that it was said to have an annual income of $300,000 with expenses of $50,000 or less ("Month," 1925, cited in Doerksen, 1999).

The programming of independent stations like WHN included fare that appealed to the masses in the major urban centers of the 1920s and 30s. Other independent urban stations like KWKH, Shreveport, and WJBO, New Orleans, carried political programming and persuasion and were considered "undisciplined" used for giving open microphones to politicians (Bormann, 1958). KWKH appealed to the masses with one of the early "shock jocks," W. K. Henderson, who was known for using profanity and opening his show saying, "Hello world, this is station KWKH. How about a drink?" He even caused KWKH to have its license temporarily suspended through an on-air tirade against the commissioners at the FCC (Birkby, 1985).

But what about independent stations that appealed to the masses in more rural areas where vaudeville acts, nightclubs, and shock jocks would have found less acceptance than they did in the cities. This group would be important to study also since in 1938, of 738 stations, 437

were located in communities with populations under 100,000, and 246 were located in towns with populations under 25,000 (Rose, 1940). Both KFNF and KMA in Shenandoah, IA, served rural Iowa with programming about agricultural issues, homemaking on the farm, and live musical performances. These stations were supported by the large growth in each station's parent company seed business. KFNF helped the Henry Field Seed Company more than double its business in the first year it was on the air (Birkby, 1985). This study will provide a picture of programming and the economic means for its support at WDZ, a local station in rural Tuscola, Illinois, during the late 1930s.

Breakdown of 1930s Programming

According to an FCC study in 1938, of all program hours coming from radio stations, only 29.2% were taken from national network feeds. The airing of records accounted for another 11.6% and electrical transcriptions of programs accounted for 20.8% of airtime hours. The largest percentage of program hours originated locally using live talent. These programs accounted for 30.8% of all station airtime (Rose, 1940). Whether these programs were musical, dramatic, or variety shows in nature, a large quantity of talent was needed to provide the content. This was in addition to staff required to operate the station facilities and announce the programs.

Austin Lescarboura's (1975) analysis of programming costs in broadcasts indicates that broadcasters furnished musical talent for sponsored programming at cost. However, when this cost included a 6-piece jazz orchestra or a string quintet, such programs could be quite pricey by 1920s standards. While the funding to cover such broadcasts may have been attainable in larger cities, how would a station in a small town accomplish similar programming without the advertising base afforded by large population centers? WOAW, Omaha, as well as both KMA and KFNF utilized amateur performers who would perform for free in their earliest years (Birkby, 1985), but this alone would not seem to promote continuity of programming if there were not some benefit in the long run. This case study of WDZ will examine how performers were recruited and retained in rural Illinois.

Origins of WDZ

Startup. Many stations claim to be the oldest or first broadcasting facility. The claims of KDKA, WWJ, and WHA to that title are well established. KQW (later KCBS) and "Harrold's

Station" are others claiming to be the "first radio station" (Archer, 1971; Greb, 1958; Smith, 1959/60). There can't be many, however, that have claimed the title of "the third oldest station in the nation" as WDZ has ("Hundreds Welcome," 1971; "Radio Day," 1971; "'Blue Grass' Roy," 1975; WDZ, 1938; WDZ, 1941).

In addition to claiming to be "the third oldest station," WDZ also claims to be the oldest station in Illinois and the first station in the nation to broadcast grain market reports (WDZ, 1941). It is doubtful that anyone would argue the latter claim. James Bush, a local commodity broker who had been telephoning grain elevator operators with market quotations, started WDZ's regular broadcasting in March or April of 1921 as experimental station 9JR because he decided broadcasting the quotations would be cheaper. The station was licensed as a public broadcaster on March 17th 1922, the 32nd FCC license issued (Nemec, 1983; Nemec, 1988b; Zimmer, 1978). Curtis Marsh, a 14-year-old errand boy, would put on a record to signal an upcoming report. When he was handed the report, he would run to the microphone, stop the record, strike a gong, and then read the report. This whole process lasted less than five minutes. This happened twice an hour. The rest of the hour was dead air until 1929 (Zimmer, 1978). Raymond Muir, the manager of the commodities company, gave the opening and closing market reports each day with March presenting all others (WDZ, 1938). One source lists Muir as "the first announcer of grain markets" ("Radio Day," 1971, p. 1).

As for the claim of being the oldest station in Illinois, this has been verified by Nemec (1988b). He notes that it was the fourth station licensed to the state, but two of the first three moved out of state, and the third went dark.

WDZ in the '20s. Due to the nature of airing grain market reports, there is not much to analyze about WDZ's programming in the 1920s. A schedule of broadcasts in January 1924 indicates that the station operated 6 days per week with "live stock quotations" on the hour and half hour from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. with one additional report at 1:15 p.m. (Nemec, 1989, p.1). The station also programmed some music at irregular times throughout the week. Most of these programs were of an impromptu nature, but at times regular schedules of entertainment were heard on Sunday afternoons and Thursday evenings. Specifics of any non-agricultural programs from this era are sparse at best.

Corporations like Westinghouse, General Electric, and AT&T used their broadcasting efforts both for company promotion and to develop equipment that could be patented and sold for this hobby of radio (Archer, 1939; Doerksen, 1999). Even rural broadcasters seem to have taken up the profession to support existing businesses, though they did refrain from direct solicitations over the air (Birkby, 1985). Bush seems not to have been satisfied with using the radio purely to support his commodities business. Instead he formed the Tuscola Radio Supply Co. to sell radio receivers. The musical programs seem to have been aired to help promote such sales (Nemec, 1988; 1989). By 1925, Illinois had more radio sets on farms than any other state, and in the five years between 1924 and 1928, the Tuscola Radio Supply Co. sold over $1.2 million worth of radios and related items (Nemec, 1988b).

Initially licensed to operate at 350 watts of power at 833 kilocycles, the station's license was reduced to a 10-watt license in August 1923. This matched the station's actual power output. WDZ had also changed frequencies to broadcast at 1080 a.m. earlier that year. In the spring of 1927 the station was given a fulltime 100-watt license. The station also had a slogan, "the buckle of the corn belt," that referred to both its geographic location and the chief agricultural product in the area, not to mention the link to programming featuring agricultural commodities prices. KMA, Shenandoah, used a similar slogan, "the cornbelt station in the heart of the nation" (Birkby, 1985), but it is unclear if either influence the other.

Again the station's license and frequency were changed on Nov. 11 1928 as a result of the nationwide reallocation plan in the wake of the Radio Act of 1927. The station was now given a license to broadcast at 1070 a.m. and was confined to daytime only broadcasting (Nemec, 1989). It was at this frequency that the station began to broadcast regular programming schedules in order to attract money from advertisers in November, 1929 (Nemec, 1988b).

Changes in the '30s. In 1930 Ruth Moore, who had been affiliated with the station since August of 1928 (Moore, 1933), became WDZ's Assistant Manager. This was all after having worked at the Radio Supply Co. beginning in 1927 (Nemec, 1988c). Around this same time, Edith Bush, the wife of owner James Bush, became the station manager after the short tenure of the station's first manager, E. J. Donaldson. Having women managers of fledgling rural stations may have been common practice (a practice also noted at KMA in Birkby, 1985) and with

Moore gave WDZ two women at the top (Keith, 1988; Nemec, 1988). Mrs. Bush served as station manager until 1936 after the WDZ Broadcasting Co. was reorganized. In October, 1935, a 75% interest was sold to Edgar L. Bill and Dale Morgan of Peoria. They appointed Mr. Clair Hull to replace Mrs. Bush as manager in January, 1936 (Nemec, 1983).

In March, 1936, the WDZ's frequency again changed, this time to 1020 a.m., in conjunction with a power increase to 250 watts. On May 14, 1939, a final power increase took the station's power up to 1000 watts, still as a daytime only station (Nemec, 1983).

Programming a Rural Station – The First Years

It is probably that the October 29th stock market crash led a commodities broker to decide to begin commercial programming in 1929 to supplement the regular market reports. While this can't be confirmed, it was within the next month that live musical programs were begun using local talent ("Listeners," 1995). The majority of that local talent entertained with hillbilly music.

Hillbilly music. What today might be considered "cornball and hokey" helped make WDZ into a "giant among radio stations in those (early) days, and it drew 'hillbilly' local entertainers from Kentucky, Tennessee and Southern Illinois" ("Listeners," 1995). Hillbilly music had some similarities with the jazz music that found a home on the independent radio stations in the urban centers. Jazz in the 1930s was a musical form that appealed to the masses rather than to the cultural elements of the community. It also was connected with much antisocial activity (Doerksen, 1999). The same seems to have been true with hillbilly music in the rural communities. Gib Buchanan attributed the bad image of the musicians to heavy drinking, a problem many had. He said he was plagued with band members who couldn't do their jobs right because they loved alcohol so much. Some band members probably deserted him because he wouldn't keep the supplied with liquor (Daniels, 1993-4). But liquor wasn't the only downfall of these musicians.

> Many a hillbilly singer was known to come into small towns such as Tuscola, Shenandoah (Iowa), Grand Island (Nebr.), etc., 'love' the local girls and then skip town, leaving a lot of broken hearts and sometimes a pregnancy or two. There was a day when the residents of Tuscola weren't sure if they loved or hated the station (Nemec, 1988a).

Tribe's (1984) examination of country music's roots in West Virginia, one of the prime areas for fostering the music's growth, examines the influence of radio stations that programmed hillbilly music. He notes that Wheeling, West Virginia's WWVA was hesitant at first to move in the direction of hillbilly commercialization. In the late 1920s when the station got started, most of its performers sang or played the more mainstream music styles common on the networks. This hesitancy was likely related to concerns over the music's image of being connected to less desirable cultural activities. Listener requests for hillbilly music and "yodeling songs" (p. 44), along with a new program director who believed there was business potential in attracting the mass audiences with "a generous amount of down-home style music"(p. 44), led the station to adopt what became known as a country music format. KMA had also found hillbilly styles to be a popular addition in their live music segments in the late 1920s (Birkby, 1985).

Many of the earliest performers on WDZ didn't have to "come into town" to perform, they were local people who had some talent. One of the earliest performers was Roy Freeman. Grain market announcer Curt March gave Freeman the chance to play his guitar and sing, "and just get over mike fright" ("'Blue Grass' Roy," 1975, p. 4) in late 1929. He had a 15-minute show that he did without pay for the next two years. After leaving WDZ he became known as "Bluegrass Roy" when he moved to a station in Kentucky. There his hillbilly music style attracted a sponsor, the Hamlin Company, and he made his living performing on radio for many years including a stint back at WDZ in the 1940s ("'Blue Grass' Roy," 1975).

Another early act on WDZ was a group called The Puddle Jumpers. The group consisted of four local men who played "real old 'hoe down,'(on the guitar, violin, and two mandolins) and loved every minute of it" (Maxey, 1988). The group also played a lot of marches and waltzes (Palmer, 1988). They were on the air from the station's earliest days through at least 1933 where they appear on a program schedule ("WDZ Program," 1933). Approximate dates based on family recollection place the group on the air beginning in 1929 or possibly earlier when the station performed music on an irregular basis (Maxey, 1988). Their show was on every Sunday at 9 a.m.

While it is doubtful that The Puddle Jumpers were paid for their performances, they obviously had other reasons encouraging them to put in their efforts at the station. One reason was purely the love of performing or the thrill of being on the radio. Another was for the fame

and popularity it brought them. Dane Walker (1988), the son of one member, indicated that they indeed loved what they were doing. They had so much commitment to the station that it influenced the name chosen for a son. One of the group members, Guy Reese, added a baby boy to his family on Feb 14, 1930. According to Reese's older daughter, since the show was really popular, they asked listeners to write to the station suggesting names for the son. After more than two weeks, he was named Wendell Dean Zorman Reese and for the rest of his life went by the same nickname as the radio station, W.D.Z. (Maxey, 1988). Walker (1988) also emphasizes the popularity of the group, saying that farm families along Route 49 would wave to the group from their lawns as the group traveled from their homes in nearby towns to Tuscola for their radio show.

Though there are no descriptions for several other programs, many seem sure to have fit the hillbilly genre based on their names. These included Accordion Bill, the Jug Band, Wandering Cowboy, Hoosier Vagabonds, and The Singin' Coal Man ("Roster," 1988; "WDZ Program, 1933).

In these first years of programming, talent was secured by inviting listeners to send in cards and letters or call in person to ask to broadcast a program.

> All are given a chance. After their first audition, and they aren't so frightened of the old 'Mike'—they are more anxious than ever to return for other broadcasts. So that is the secret (to be) talent over the air. And many book for weeks in advance, so they are sure of their time of broadcast. And we want our listeners to know that all are invited to broadcast. So if you can sing, give readings or play some instrument, get yourself a time to broadcast (Moore, 1933).

There were no auditions for the early talent. It was all amateur, and if "you had a guitar or a French harp and wanted on the air, they would put you on" (Zimmer, 1978). With such an open broadcasting policy, one would expect that much of the time the performances would be of poor quality. One listener from that era said, "A lot of it was just corny stuff. But it was good humor. Regardless of how lousy it got, it was good humor" ("Listeners," 1995). Marsh said, "I only had to cut one guy of the air, and he was just awful. He was trying to sing and play the guitar, but the guitar wasn't in tune and he wasn't either" (Zimmer, 1978). Much of the evidence, in fact, shows

that many of the performers who were regular were very fine musicians. Some went on to become quite famous in their day, especially some of those who were on the station staff.

Staff performers. Some early performers were paid for their services. These were local people who had quality talent. Lester Burnett began performing and announcing on WDZ in early 1930. He was said to play 26 different musical instruments, but the guitar and accordion were his favorites. By 1933, he was on eight shows a day as either a headline or accompanying performer. The station's format was not uniformly hillbilly and neither was Burnett. He performed a variety of music. Along with Earl Parker and Denver Darling, Burnett sang in "The Trio," a group that sang current Mills Brothers songs, beginning at 8:30 every morning. After a recorded show and the news, he was back on in solo performance at 9:15 where he sang country songs and played many instruments. Parker and Burnett then performed as a duo at 11:30 followed again by the trio at noon (Smith, 1994; "WDZ Program," 1933).

For all of this work, Burnett was "getting' $18 a week and getting' it regular" (Grove, 1977). In addition to his music work Burnett broadcast a children's show, "during which he chatted and told stories to youngsters who wandered into the small studio" (Smith, 1994, p.132). It was on that show that he took a character name "Mr. Smiley," a name with which he eventually became famous as "Smiley Burnette." A country music promoter heard Burnett on one of his broadcasts and not long afterwards, in December 1933, a soon-to-be-famous Chicago-based country singer, Gene Autry, called and hired Burnett away for nearly twice his WDZ salary (Grove, 1977; Smith, 1994). That started Burnett on his way to fame and fortune as a writer of 353 western songs, star in more than 60 motion pictures in roles including Autry's sidekick, and as engineer Charlie Prattin on *Petticoat Junction* (Grove, 1977; Keith, 1988).

Starting in the summer of 1932, Darling was also listed as part of the station staff, making it likely that he received a salary for working at the station. His specialty was playing his guitar and singing "mountain songs." In the Spring of 1933 he was performing as part of "The Trio" and also had his own solo show from 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. on weekdays. On Tuesday and Saturdays, he had an additional half hour at 2 p.m. ("WDZ Program," 1933). He left WDZ in August, 1933, and his career eventually led him to New York where he achieved fame, recording over 120 songs including "Old Shep," and "Twilight on the Trail" (Keith, 1988; Livesay, 1981).

Parker, the third member of The Trio, was also part of the station staff. He began at the station in 1931 and worked there many of the years through 1946. (He left and returned three times.) In addition to two shows per day with The Trio and performing as part of the musical duo with Burnett, Parker also announced “the commercial programs of the day” and was known as the “Singing Announcer” (“WDZ Program, 1933). While he did not go on to the national fame of the other members of The Trio, at least one listener said, “he had as much singing talent as both of them . . . possibly more” (Nemec, 1988c).

Other programs. Some music departed from the hillbilly genre. On Sunday afternoons there were as many as four dance bands in a row that appeared (Zimmer, 1978), showing that WDZ wanted to maintain a higher culture element in their programming. Another program on the schedule called Piano Melodies was aired twice each day. It was probably performed by Donna Wagner, known as Polly, who was the staff pianist and organist beginning in 1931. Guitar Melodies, Vibraphone Music, Girl’s Quartet, a soloist named Bob Stewart, and Hymn Time were other musical programs aired (“WDZ Program,” 1933).

Still other programs featured local elements of the community, many serving the station’s public service requirements. Interviews with a Marine recruiting officer (“’Blue Grass’ Roy,” 1975) and a program called “Life in the Navy” covered the military. The Lutherans had a half-hour program, and the M.E. Church had an hour. The Illinois’ Women’s Clubs had a Thursday afternoon program and the Moultrie Legion Post filled a half-hour on Sundays. A 15-minute weekly show called “Farm Talk” added to the appeal to agricultural interests in the area. Finally, an hour-long show called “Studio Party” was aired on Saturdays (“WDZ Program,” 1933). The show, hosted by Ruth Moore, was a children’s show also known as “Aunt Ruthie’s Birthday Party” (Farris, 1996; “Hundreds,” 1971).

The Middle Years – 1934-36

The information available on the middle part of the decade is slim. Aunt Ruthie’s Birthday Party lasted through this period as part of its seven-year tenure. One newspaper reported that during those seven years Moore received over a million letters, an amount that seems almost unbelievable for a local program (“Hundreds,” 1971). One former fan said she and her sister used to “go up to the WDZ building and watch them through the window (where) you

could see them. One Saturday there was posted a sign if you wanted to join in 'Aunt Ruthie's Party on Saturday, sign up. We did and they asked us to sing on Saturdays" (Farris, 1996). She added that they used to sing hymns on the program since that's what her mother wanted them to sing (Farris, 1996).

The Champaign Salvation Army sponsored another program of this period that also featured religious music. Their program was on from Fall 1933 for about three years. Program schedules for three of their programs indicate that the program began with four songs, usually solos or duets. Some titles included "Beautiful Garden of Prayer," "The Last Mile of the Way," "Sweeter as the Years Go By," "Blessed Assurance," and "If You Could Hear My Mother Pray Again." After the four songs, there would be a "message" delivered by one of the officers of the group. Three or four more songs would then finish out the program, again solos and duets (Bialeschki, 1988; "Radio Program," 1933; "Radio Program," 1934a; "Radio Program," 1934b). Some songs were sung as "requested by grandma Vermillion of White Heath," or some other listener announced by name ("Radio Program," 1934a).

A program described as "news and music" was on the air, hosted by a Mrs. Nussel, starting about 1934 ("Radio Day," 1971). Donna Wagner, pianist and organist, left WDZ but returned in 1935 for another two or three years. Other groups who were on the radio in the middle years included Ira P. Accord & His Pumpkin Rollers, The Meier Sisters, The Olson Sisters, Paul Robertson and Orchestra, Tex Terry's Cowboys, Bozo & Lois, The Buccaneers, Ray & Todd, Mac Willis & His Doctors of Rhythm, Rhythm Rambler Cowboys, The Yeddo Hotshots, and others ("Mac Willis," 1936; "Roster," 1988). The styles of music used by these performers can only be surmised by their names for the most part, but it seems safe to say that hillbilly music was still featured by many performers. Tex Terry's Cowboys, for example, are pictured at the 1936 Douglas County Cornhusking Contest in an old photo. The nine performers pictured play a wide range of instruments appropriate for hillbilly music including the accordion, banjo, and fiddle ("Tex Terry," 1936). Additionally, the "Ray" of the group Ray & Todd was Jimmy Ray Livesay. Promotional literature from 1938 says he was given a sales job to keep him from singing and playing the guitar since he only knew four chords (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938). Such tongue-in-cheek humor is consistent with that used by hillbilly performers.

Hillbilly musicians who performed at the end of this period included Alger “Curly” Bray and Frank Jennings. Bray was a vocalist and Jennings was a fiddle player. Neither initially stayed at WDZ very long, though each returned after a stint at KMA in Iowa where they performed as part of a group known as Pals of the Praire (Birkby, 1985).

Whether or how any of the performers in the middle years of the decade were paid is unknown. On stations like WWVA performers would use their radio appearances as a way of getting their name out so that they could perform in public halls and gatherings for money (Tribe, 1984). KMA also used amateur talent until the 1940s (Birkby, 1985). Knowing of the popularity of many of the local radio performers from the early years, it seems sure that they received requests for live performances. However, this would probably have been on a happenstance basis in the early and middle years of the ‘30s at WDZ.

Professionalism Established, 1937-1939

While the first seven years of the decade were characterized by open invitation to come perform on the station, the later years saw efforts to attract quality musicians who could still be brought on board with little expense to the station. In fact, some of these efforts seem to have begun in 1936 after the change in ownership of the station. The programming as a whole doesn’t take on the new sense of professionalism, however, until 1937. This period of station programming is well documented both through archival records and more recent retelling of the WDZ history by those who participated on the station at the end of the 1930s.

The programming was also expanded to fill permitted hours during this period. In the early years the station started broadcasting at 8 a.m. and signed off the air by 3:45 p.m. A programming guide from January of 1937 indicates the broadcasting day had been shortened to start at 10 a.m. but continued until sundown. By the end of 1939, however, the broadcasting day was running from 6 a.m. until the latest time permitted by the daytime license (“WDZ Programming,” 1937; “WDZ Programming,” 1939/40).

Technology enhances programming. During this time the station initiated the use of equipment for remote broadcasts. This included a vehicle, the “WDZ ‘White Relay Truck’” (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938), with a 100-watt transmitter to relay broadcasts from area locations, and some two-watt, battery operated transmitters that could be worn on the back of an assistant

as an announcer broadcast from remote sites (Cassens, 1936). The remote broadcasts included a "Man on the Train" program instead of the "Man on the Street" interviews featured on many stations. In fact, since Hull's wife did many of the interviews, it was later called "The Woman on the Train." According to the station's promotional booklet, the announcer and engineer each paid for their own 20-cent tickets for each ride ("Best Programs," 1937; WDZ Broadcasting, 1938).

> The one block main street in Tuscola didn't present many people to take part (in interviews). So every day, an announcer and engineer would go to Villa Grove (11 miles away). There we would put the small transmitter on the seat of a (train) car and the antenna was put in the back where one of the lanterns ordinarily was placed. The announcer would then interview passengers on the local train until we reached Tuscola. The program lasted 20-30 minutes (Cassens, 1936, p.1).

Other remote programs included "Roving Neighbors." During this feature, an announcer and engineer assistant would go door to door in the broadcast area for informal interviews on general topics of interest. An assistant wore the portable transmitter, and the relay truck was parked close by to facilitate the broadcast. A third "vox populi" broadcast was "The Farmer on His Farm" featuring interviews with farmers in the midst of their duties. "Our High Schools on Parade" featured broadcasts from one of the ten area schools with coverage of spelling bees and music among other things (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938). High school sports were also included when the first football game between Arcola and Tuscola was broadcast on Thanksgiving Day in either 1937 or '38 (Cassens, 1996).

County cornhusking contests were broadcast as was a ladies milking contest with WDZ microphones trying to keep up with ears of corn as they "plunked against the backboards" (Cassens, 1996, p.1) and giving "a squirt-by-squirt account of the (milking) competition" (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938, p. 9). Special broadcasts of the era included three broadcasts from planes. One broadcast occurred as the plane flew over Decatur, Illinois, distributing 10,000 free tickets to a barn dance. The second occurred in conjunction with Airmail Week when broadcasters rode on a flight from Decatur to Indianapolis. Another broadcast a parachute jump from a plane (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938). Paid staff covered most of these advertising supported shows.

WDZ's use of remote broadcasts may be somewhat unique for a rural station. Neither KMA and KFNF seem to have utilized such techniques in rural Iowa. Instead, their farm broadcasts resulted from guests coming in to the studio for interviews. Women's features emphasizing homemaking on the farm were often broadcast on both Iowa stations and sometimes originated from the host's kitchen. However, these programs resulted from hard-wired connections run to the talent's home rather than the remote wireless technology used at WDZ (Birkby, 1985).

Programming Music. Of course, many late 1930s programs continued the well-practiced formula of live music. WDZ expanded their operations to include four broadcasting studios in different cities by 1937 and added a fifth on New Years Day, 1938. This allowed them to serve the local interests of the Illinois towns Effingham, Danville, Paris, and Mattoon as well as Tuscola. In 1937 each studio featured a swing music orchestra. However, these bands seem to have been largely displaced in 1938 ("Best Programs," 1937; "Next Sunday," 1937; "WDZ's Fifth," 1938). The Novelty Six, "Southern Illinois' finest dance band," and Gaylord Roberson's Swing Band, "jitter-bug music with a capital 'J'," still remained in the artist promotional material for 1938 (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938), while the Screw Ball Club Orchestra, "radio's funniest dance and jive band" ("Dance 9," undated), is found on the schedule in late 1939 ("WDZ Program," 1939/40). In addition to any remaining swing bands, some hymn music, and other religions programs, the station seems to have focussed their music format to feature the hillbilly or western sound (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938; "WDZ Program," 1939/40; "WDZ's fifth," 1938).

Hillbilly and western artists. While some artists were advertised as being able to perform popular music, which in that era usually indicated the big band sound, almost all were listed as hillbilly or western singers in the late '30s. The Lad and His Dad, and Ma – which later became just The Lad and His Dad – featured Glen Clawson and his pre-teen son Gerry on guitar, mandolin, bass, and banjo. They were on the station four times per week. The Southerners were "four fine hillbilly musicians, young and full of pep" ("WDZ Artists," 1939a) who had never taken music lessons, but all played several stringed instruments. The Yodeleers were two teenage girls who sang hillbilly and popular music to guitar. The Dunn Sisters were three children aired each Saturday who sang hillbilly, western, and popular music to their own guitar playing. "Lazy"

Jim Day was listed as "the pride of Short Creek, Grayson County, Kentucky" (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938, p. 3). He was listed as a hillbilly comedian with a slow drawl who sang and talked comedy and had "sold 10,000 pictures of himself" ("WDZ Artists," 1939b).

The Montana Sweethearts sang western ballads in cowgirl costumes and were "adept at yodeling" (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938). Red Slim Belcher, as a "typical Kentucky Hillbilly, . . . (drew) as high as 500 letters weekly" ("WDZ Artists," 1939b). He was on air six days per week singing and playing the banjo. Another "Red," Red Batchelor, joined WDZ in the mid-late 1930s and sang with The Harmony Rangers starting in 1937. They later joined forces with a female trio called the Rangerettes and appeared as the Rangers and Rangerettes (Batchelor, 1996).

Una Marie, the sweetheart of Coles County, started at WDZ at 19 years of age. Her publicity image was that of an enchantress, enchanting men and other creatures. She was said to have been born on Halloween. She was an "expert with broom – and cat" and could wiggle her ears (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938). Early *WDZ-er* newsletters emphasized her ability to enchant creatures saying Jim Day's pictures might scare cockroaches but hers would hypnotize them. As for enchanting the men, she was quoted as saying "Love . . . makes a daredevil out of Jim Day," "I wish Red Belcher would have his overalls creased the other way if he wants me to sit on his lap all the time," and "I like to make boy friends mad, cause it's so nice when we make up again" (WDZ Broadcasting, 1937/38). Una Marie sang the news and sang and played country guitar music (Keith, 1990).

Many other hillbilly and western artists played on WDZ from 1937-39. Twenty-three different acts were advertised by the artists bureau for bookings in 1939, and this did not include all of the on-air performers ("WDZ Artist," 1939a; 1939b). Twenty-nine acts are hyped, in promotional literature from one year earlier. Again this was only a selection of the station's singers and programs (WDZ Broadcasting, 1938).

The Kentuckians. One group that can serve as an example of those who performed on WDZ is The Kentuckians. Led by Gib Buchanan who played mandolin, the group of four first appeared on WDZ in 1936 as special guests after winning a novelty band contest at a contest sponsored by WLS radio station from Chicago. Lillie Mae Buchanan played the accordion, and two other members who varied over the years played guitar, bass or other stringed instruments.

After their guest appearance they were asked to join the Al Stass troup traveling around as the WLS Prairie Farmer show. Once that ended in 1938, the group was on their way back through central Illinois. They stopped to see some friends, and the friends hooked them back up with WDZ (Buchanan, 1988; personal correspondence, Gib Buchanan, Nov. 3, 1998).

They stayed through the summer of 1938 before venturing off to WDOD's Radio Playhouse in Chattanooga, Tennessee for the winter. Gib Buchanan then received an offer in the spring of 1939 to return to WDZ and manage the artists bureau for all acts that wanted to perform live. He said, "I came running back to Tuscola" (Buchanan, 1988, p.2). Back at WDZ, The Kentuckians formed a partnership with The Bar-X Cowboys and Sweetheart Mary, a group skilled in playing stringed instruments, and often performed together. Gib had taken on the nickname "Goober" during his time away from WDZ, so The Kentuckians' act featured "Goober P. Nutt, the favorite nut of the South, and Lillie and her accordion." Gib also did a comedy routine as the character Grandpappy Fudley, "the champion tobacco chewer of the South" ("Labor Day," 1939).

An early recording gives examples of what the audience might have expected from Goober P. Nutt. The recording, called 'Goober's' Comic Songs, is a compilation of humorous hillbilly songs from old radio programs featuring Goober singing and playing the mandolin. A rough approximation of song titles (no titles are listed on the recording) includes "Father Put the Cow Away, I Cannot Milk Tonight" and "Good Ol' Turnip Greens."

A couple of early scripts for performances by The Kentuckians are also extant. Their performance of Saturday, Apr. 16, 1938, 4:15 p.m., starts with the show theme music. Then the songs "Just Come on in," "Round-Up in Cheyenne," and "Tennessee Wagoner" are listed. A dialogue segment fits in the middle of the program featuring Grandpappy Fudley:

Fudley – Whoopee. Boy I couldn't keep my feet still on that one.

Ray – You know Grandpappy is feeling froggy this afternoon. He was out hunting mushrooms this morning.

Gib – He didn't find anything but frog stools.

Fudley – I'd a-been up here in time to sing on that program this morning but I was detained.

Flip – Yeah. There was a farmer chased Grandpappy out of his wheat field and locked him up in his stable.

Gib – Grandpappy had a hard time convincing the feller that he wasn't the neighbor's billy goat.

Fudley-Taint so. That's the biggest one that smart alec ever told. Billy goat. Baa-a-a. I ought to wrap this walkin stick round your neck.

Ray – Now don't get mad Grandpappy. He was just kidding you a little. We'd like to hear you yodel a little.

The script then returns to the names of two more songs: "The False Hearted Lover" and "Little Brown Jug" ("The Kentuckians," 1938).

Response to the group's performances show that they performed requests. One listener wrote, "Thanks for the song, it was really swell. Would you please sing a song for Emma Acorn, another waitress, at the intersection 49 & 9. Requested by me-on the Monday program" (Hickorynut, 1939). Another said, "I would appreciate it very much if you would put Grandpappy Fudley back on the air, and I want the old Codger to sing 'The Old Apple Tree in the Orchard' for my wife, Mrs. Imo Z. Beal. Please don't treat Grandpappy so mean as you have in the past, and let him sing more. He is an old favorite of mine" (Beal, 1939). It seems that this fan had no idea that Grandpappy Fudley was one and the same as the 32-year-old Gib Buchanan who led the Kentuckians.

The Kentuckians moved on to WIBC in Indianapolis in late 1939 taking the Bar-X Cowboys and Sweetheart Mary with them. The Kentuckians played on other stations over the following years including WHOP (Hopkinsville, Kentucky), WPAD (Paducah, Kentucky), WVLN (Olney, Illinois), and WSIX and WLAC (Nashville, Tennessee) (Daniel, 1993/4). Gib Buchanan went on to perform with stars such as Porter Waggoner, Jim Reeves, and Ernest Tubb and even was the star of his own TV show, "The W-6 Roundup," on Nashville's WSIX-TV (Kentuckians , 1999).

Financing live music. While artists like The Kentuckians still were not paid for their appearance on the station, WDZ had formed an artist's bureau with booking agents to promote live performances by the acts on the station. These performances were for a fee and provided the

groups with income based on their appeal to those interested in live entertainment for social occasions. This attracted musicians to the station who stayed as long as their bookings were good (Buchanan, 1988; 1995).

Buchanan (1988) tells that as part of this arrangement, the groups who appeared on the station were required to attend Sunday sings at Patterson Springs during the summer. There, starting around 10 a.m., church services were held followed by a full day of singing. The groups were not paid for these appearances, though some were allowed to attract sponsors who they would mention during the performance in exchange for merchandise or money, a practice that was also used at times on station KMA (see Birkby, 1985). Gib Buchanan complained about having to attend the event because it cut into potential Sunday bookings for The Kentuckians. He was told that he could sell a gas station to sponsor his act in exchange for a tank of gas. He went out and got three different stations to exchange gas plus $5 for mentions during Sunday performances. When station manager Hull found out how much he had been making the summer was already over. Buchanan was informed that from then on he would have to give the station its cut from any such money (personal conversation, Gib Buchanan, Oct. 1998). The Patterson Springs performances were broadcast live on the station. The sings would draw large crowds (as many as 20,000) who would "bring dinner and spread it on the grass, and (musicians) would always be invited by several different families to share their dinner . . . . It was a great showcase for the talent . . . who did want to make public appearances, or play dances" (Buchanan, 1988, pp. 2-3; WDZ Broadcasting, 1938).

There was at least one other way the station sought to enhance artist appearances. An agreement was worked out with a tent owner to set up and move his tent. In exchange, the station provided talent and gave free promotion of where the tent was to be each day. This would have provided the acts with at least a somewhat regular place to appear. However, it didn't draw well so the venture was short lived (Buchanan, 1995).

The WDZ artist's bureau charged rates that varied by the size and popularity of the groups. Rates also fluctuated somewhat substantially during 1939, the year for which rates were available. Rate sheet #1 lists prices ranging from a low of $2 for Pearl Kirby, a female singer/guitar player, to a high of $15 for The Kentuckians. Rate sheet #2 prices had climbed to a

$3 low and $16 high for the same two acts, but some artists had their fees almost double ("WDZ Artists," 1939a). A third rate sheet from that same year shows Pearl Kirby's rate increased to $4 while three groups including the Kentuckians, the hillbilly and folk Oklahoma Ramblers, and the six-piece hillbilly Pals of the Hills all received $20 per appearance. Some fees had increased nearly 200 percent from the first rate sheet ("WDZ Artists," 1939b). The most expensive group, The Kentuckians, were able to book 49 dates over a 4 ½ month period ("Shows Played," 1939).

The Kentuckians continued a similar practice at other stations, though the practice was not necessarily institutionalized by the radio stations for the talent. Contracts from 1949 and 1950 show the Kentuckians agreeing to perform for $100 at a dance and for $150 for four performances at a county fair. In each of these contracts it is stipulated that Buchanan would promote the performance "as often as possible under (WVLN, Olney, IL) station policy, before show or appearance."

Conclusion

Much like the practices at WHN and other urban independent stations, WDZ strove to appeal to the masses with their programming. Instead of using the urban popularity of jazz music to appeal to the masses, hillbilly or western music, along with a helping of hymn singing, was found to appeal to those in the rural farmland around Central Illinois. The hillbilly music, like its jazz counterpart, was not always welcomed for some of the less desirable cultural side-effects that accompanied it. However, the popular acceptance of the genre was sufficient to convince management to employ its usage over other "classier" forms of entertainment.

Unlike WHN, where publishers, speakeasies, and nightclubs in New York City paid for live music programming, there was no direct support of live music programming for this station in the rural Midwest. This prevented the station's programming from becoming a string of "musicmercials," in the sense that all of its programming was conducted at the pleasure of anyone with cash in hand. Instead, it left the door wide open for any group wanting to promote its concert appearances to schedule a slot on the station's programming schedule.

While it is clear that some performed on WDZ purely for the enjoyment of entertaining on the radio, and maybe for the local fame, it was the potential for profit from live entertainment that was used to improve the station's program quality. Management efforts eventually included

organized promotion of station artists in order to attract quality performers to the station. These efforts included opening studios into several cities in the coverage area, sponsoring a portable tent for concerts, and showcasing performers at live open-air events in the summer.

While on the surface there are stark differences between the financing of live music on urban stations and WDZ, underneath it all goes back to the money spent by listeners interested in some live entertainment. The money people could spend on speakeasies, nightclubs, and vaudeville acts prompted these businesses to purchase opportunities to get their acts on the radio at WHN. In the same way, the money that people spent to attend the occasional event in each of the dozens of towns and boroughs served by WDZ encouraged artists to promote themselves through regular radio appearances. Thus, it seems to have been the need of the listener for entertainment beyond the radio, something live, which financed much of the programming at independent stations across different radio markets.

At WDZ, however, listeners spent money directly on radio too. While other stations unofficially promoted existing seed, tobacco, or electric businesses run by the station's owners, WDZ management took advantage of the audience's desire for musical entertainment and began a successful radio selling business as a means of profiting from the medium. This supplemented the owner's broadcasting of commodities market reports to benefit his brokerage business in the wake of the stock market crash of 1929.

Of course, commercial advertising also financed much of WDZ's programming. As the end of the 1930s arrives, station management has clearly determined that direct contact with the people through "vox populi" broadcasts as well as barn dances and live all day sings serves to attract listeners and advertiser dollars to the station. Such contact is provided over a wide coverage area of many miles, many towns, and even between towns, as live interviews were conducted with farmers working their fields.

The use of many of the same performers at other stations from the Midwest to Tennessee indicates that WDZ was not an isolated example of live local hillbilly programming. Performers often migrated between stations looking for greener pastures with better booking potential.

While much has been learned, this case study has only "tilled the soil" of one rural radio station's development and practices. More in-depth examinations of WDZ's practices as well as

examinations of similar stations could shed light on the impact these stations had on their rural communities. Further, the frequency with which performers had to change locations in order to maximize booking opportunities and the quantity of performers who actually were able to make a living at live local radio performance is unclear. Surely, the unique cultural legacy of local radio, rural and urban, is worth recreating and examining to understand our broadcasting legacy.

References

Archer, G. L. (1939). *Big Business and Radio*. New York: American Book-Stratford Press.

Beal, A. J. (1939, June 14). Letter to radio station WDZ Artist's Bureau. Personal collection, Stephen Perry.

"Best programs for WDZ-ers." (1937, Dec. 17). *WDZ-er*. v. 1 no. 2, p. 1.

Bialeschki, F. (1988, May 3). Letter to Lynitta Summer. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Birkby, R. (1985). *KMA radio: The first sixty years*. Omaha, NE: Barnhart Press.

"'Blue Grass' Roy Freeman." (1975, Sept. 11). *Tuscola Journal*, p. 4.

Boreman, E. G. (1958). This is Huey P. Long Talking. *Journal of Broadcasting, 2,* 111-122.

Buchanan, G. (1988, Jan.). Letter to Lynnita Sommer, Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Buchanan, J. G. G. (1995, May/June). You never forget the smell of canvas. *Country Musical Trails Less Traveled*, v. 6 no. 3, pp. 1,5.

Cassens, G. (1936, March 8). Letter to Lynnita Sommer, Museum Director. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Dance 9 to 1—Oct. 4." (undated). Promotional flier. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Daniel, W. W. (1993-4, Fall/Winter). The favorite nut of the South. *Old Time Country,* v. 9, pp. 12-17.

Doerksen, C. J. (1999). 'Serving the masses, not the classes': Station WGN, pioneer of commercial broadcasting of the 1920s. *Journal of Radio Studies, 6,* 81-100.

Farris, A. (1996, Mar. 2). Letter to Lynnita Sommer. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Greb, G. (1958). The golden anniversary of broadcasting. *Journal of Broadcasting, 3,* 3-13.

Grove, H. (1977). *Woodland: The name of our township.* Astoria, IL: Stevens Publishing Company.

Hickorynut, K. (1939, Aug. 19). Letter to "Goober P. Nutt." Personal collection, Stephen Perry.

Hilmes, M. (1997). *Radio voices: American broadcasting 1922-1952*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

"Hundreds Welcome WDZ Personalities." (1971, July 22). *The Tuscola Review,* v. 98, no. 29, p. 6.

Keith, A. H. (1988, July 3). WDZ alumni replay memories. *Central Illinois Herald & Review*, p. A3.

Keith, A. H. (1990, May 20). Murder victim was early radio star: Toledo woman sang the news to 'chase the blues.' (unidentified newspaper clipping) WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Kentuckians File (1999). File of various unidentified newspaper, magazine, and other clippings about the Kentuckians and Gib Buchanan. Country Music Foundation Library and Media Center, Nashville, TN.

"The Kentuckians: Lillie, Gib, and Flip, with their Granpappy [sic] Fudley." (1938, Apr. 16). Radio program script. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Labor Day Celebration." (1939). Promotional flier. Gib Buchanan personal collection.

Lescarboura, A. C. (1975). How much it costs to broadcast. In L. W. Lichty & M. C. Topping (Eds.) *American broadcasting: A source book on the history of radio and television*, New York: Hastings House.

"Listeners of now-defunct radio station remember strange format." (1995, Jan. 16). *Benton Evening News*. News clipping, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Livesay, J. R. (1981, May 7). A radio editorial: To the memory of Denver Darling. WLBH-AM & FM, Mattoon Broadcasting Co. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Mac Willis & His Doctors of Rhythm Boys." (1936, Jan. 5). Picture given to Mrs. J. L. Bush by Mac Willis. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Maxey, F. (1988, June 28). Letter to Lynnita Sommer. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Month in radio." (1925, July). *Radio broadcast*, p. 341.

Moore, R. (1933). Personnel of Staff. (unpublished document), WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Nemec, R. (1983, July 8). (untitled report). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Nemec, R. (1988a, May 24). Letter to Lynnita Sommer. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Nemec, R. (1988b, June 20). WDZ – How it began. (unpublished text of speech). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Nemec, R. (1988c, July 9). Letter to Lynnita Sommer. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Nemec, R. (1989). Broadcast profile: WDZ. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Next Sunday will mark eighth battle of the bands broadcast; Effingham "Sweet" Band Leads." (1937, Dec. 10). *WDZ-er*. v. 1 no. 1, p. 1.

Palmer, R. (1988, July 7). Letter to Lynnita Sommer, President, Museum Association of Douglas County. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Radio Day to Feature Former WDZ Stars." (1971, July 15). *The Tuscola Review*, v. 98, no. 28, p. 1.

"Radio Program." (1933, Oct. 23). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Radio Program." (1934, April 9). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Radio Program." (1934, Sept. 10). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

Rose, C. B., Jr. (1940). *National policy for radio broadcasting*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

"Roster of Former WDZ Tuscola, Illinois Talent and Staff." (1988). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"Shows Played in 1939." (1939). Appearance list, Personal Collection, Gib Buchanan.

Smith, R. F. (1959/60). 'Oldest station in the nation'? *Journal of Broadcasting, 4,* 40-55.

"Tex Terry and his gang." (1936). Photo from Douglas County cornhusking contest. Station Files, Library of American Broadcasting, University of Maryland at College Park.

Tribe, I. (1984). *Moutaineer Jamboree: Country Music in West Virginia*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.

Walker, D. (1988, July 14). Letter to Lynnita Sommer. Correspondence file, WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"WDZ Artists Bureau." (1939a). Price listings for artist appearances. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"WDZ Artists Bureau." (1939b). Price listings for artist appearances. Gib Buchanan personal collection.

WDZ Broadcasting Co. (1937/38). *WDZ-er* newsletter, v. 1 no. 1-4. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

WDZ Broadcasting Co. (1938). Your friends at WDZ: The right spot on your dial. Promotional programming booklet. Station Files, Library of American Broadcasting, University of Maryland at College Park.

WDZ Broadcasting Co. (1941). People are your market at WDZ. Promotional sales material. WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"WDZ Program Schedule." (1933, March). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"WDZ Program Schedule." (1937, January). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"WDZ Program Schedules for November 1939 thru [sic] October 1940." (1939/40). WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.

"WDZ's fifth studio is opened at Paris in the Hotel France on Saturday Morning Jan. 1st." (1938, Jan. 7th). *WDZ-er.* v. 1 no. 4, p. 1.

Zimmer, R. L. (1978, July 17). Gong, then market report highlighted early WDZ radio. (unidentified Associated Press clipping), WDZ Collection, Douglas County Museum, Tuscola, IL.