MUCH PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE SINCE OPENING

Pioneer Voice Of W.N.C. Serves Mountain Area

The Pioneer Voice of Western North Carolina,” Radio Station WWNC, is 15 years old today.

Asheville’s chamber of commerce established the station here in 1927, following nearly four years of experimental development of another station in Asheville operating with the call letters, WABC, now the key station of the CBS network in New York.

The original WWNC transmitter was purchased in 1927 from station WSM, Nashville, Tenn. At this time broadcasting had more or less graduated from the “cat-whisker” era into the full grown whistles and heterodynes of vacuum tube transmission and reception. The inaugural program in 1927 makes an interesting commentary today, as evidenced by reference to The Asheville Citizen of February 22, 1927:

Opening Program Recalled

“The voice of WWNC, hurtling down out of the Land of the Sky in its inaugural program Monday night, paid Western North Carolina’s respects to North America.”

WWNC’s christening program began at 7 o’clock when a dinner program and concert by Spencer’s orchestra was broadcast from the ballroom of the George Vanderbilt hotel.

The Asheville Times of February 23 reported: “Promptly at 8 o’clock the new station stepped forward shyly and began its career amid the kilocycles.”

hour, between 9 and 10 o’clock on Sunday evenings, beginning on January 6th, 1929. In March 4th, 1929, WWNC joined the NBC network after the end of the four and a half years of growth and development.

Late in 1933, Don S. Ellas, vice-president of the Asheville Citizen-Times company, became general manager of the station. Through his foresight and vision, the station made rapid progress in the art of salesmanship, program production and operation in what is best known in the trade as “serving the public interest, convenience and necessity.” Mr. Ellas remains today more active than ever in the administration of the station’s affairs, and he now serves as a member of the Board of the National Association of Broadcasters, and a member of that body’s executive committee. He has been active for the industry in numerous other agencies organized for the betterment of broadcasting.

The two latest forward steps left to report in this brief sketch include the construction of new studios in 1939 simultaneously with the building of the new Citizen-Times headquarters. Coincident with this forward step came recognition of the Columbia Broadcasting System.

So, WWNC has grown from a few hours on the air a few times a week, to a full-time business and entertainment medium, not alone for Asheville, but for all of Western North Carolina.

Though the transmitter remains on the roof of the Flatiron building, WWNC has a construction permit from the Federal Communications Commission for increase in power to 5,000 watts and the erection of a new transmitter and antennae outside the city limits. However, the war effort has forced the priorities and allocations board in Washington to forego granting construction ratings to broadcast stations until after the war.

WWNC still enjoys by federal grant a choice spot on the dial, 570 kilocycles, comparatively free from interference.