BROADCASTING THE PROFESSION: THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S RADIO HOUR

BY

CINDY C. WELCH

B.B.A., University of Kentucky, 1979
M.A., Morehead State University, 1988
M.S., University of Kentucky, 1991

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Christine A. Jenkins, Chair
Professor Warden B. Rayward, Director of Research
Professor Emerita Elizabeth G. Claffey Hearne
Professor Daniel Toby Schiller
ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an historical study of an attempt, from 1930 to 1936, by the American Library Association to harness the latest technology of the time (radio) in the service of public library outreach, literacy and information dissemination. While public librarians had varying degrees of success broadcasting from local stations across the country, the American Library Association unsuccessfully attempted to create and broadcast a national children’s radio program. The bulk of the dissertation maps the trajectory of the project, from its association with the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE) and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), to the offer of a script created by Newbery Award winner Hendrik Van Loon, and the program’s eventual demise due to political and economic pressures. It reveals parallels between librarians of the 1930s and librarians of the early 1990s, who wrestled with radio and the Internet respectively, suggesting a series of overlapping phases of library technology adoption. The phases are (1) discussion, where librarians debate the opportunities and limitations of using the technology in a library setting and for the library mission; (2) exploration, during which librarians make tentative use of the technology and provide directory-type information using it; (3) mediation, wherein librarians bring to bear their profession-specific skills of selection and evaluation; and (4) access, during which librarians acknowledge the economic and social implications of technology, and provide access to it for those who are unable to obtain it for themselves.
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LIST OF PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, AND AFFILIATIONS

Association/Institution Abbreviations
• AAAE – American Association for Adult Education
• AAUW – American Association of University Women
• ALA – American Library Association
• CSA – Child Study Association of America
• FREC – Federal Radio Education Committee
• GFWC – General Federation of Women’s Clubs
• CLRB – (ALA) Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting
• NACRE – National Advisory Council on Radio in Education
• NCER – National Committee on Education by Radio
• NCPT – National Congress of Parents and Teachers
• NEA – National Education Association
• NRA – National Recreation Association
• WNRC – Women’s National Radio Committee

Important People and their Affiliations

• Adamowska, Helenka – 1933 – Director of the Theatre Bureau for the Association of the Junior Leagues of America
• Alderman, Edwin – Original member of NBC Advisory Council, Education Committee chair; president of the University of Virginia; died in 1931
• Angell, James Rowland – Retired president of Yale University, became NBC’s Education Counselor in 1937
• Aylesworth, Merlin – NBC president until 1936
• Batchelder, Mildred – Head of the ALA Division of Library Work for Children and Young People
• Beatty, Cora M. – ALA chief of Membership Organization and Information
• Bogle, Sarah – Assistant executive secretary at ALA until her death in 1932
• Bolton, Frances Payne – Payne Fund president and major donor
• Boyce, Burke – Member of the Van Loon program team; former head of the continuity dept at NBC
• Brainerd, Bertha – NBC Commercial Program Director
• Charles Brown – First chair of the ALA Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting; Librarian at Iowa State University
• Case, Everett N. – NBC Advisory Council, Education Committee chair (following the 1931 death of Edwin Alderman)
• Chancellor, John – Adult Education Specialist in the ALA Office of Library and Adult Education
• Charters, W.W. – Director of the Bureau of Educational Research at Ohio State University
• Crandell, Ella Phillips – Payne Fund secretary
• Cuthbert, Margaret – NBC Director of Women’s Programs
• Davis, Mary Gould – Supervisor of storytelling at New York Public Library; chair of the Section on Library Work with Children; ALA’s unofficial liaison to the
Women’s National Radio Committee and the Radio Council on Children’s Programs

- De Forest, Lee – Inventor of the Audion, which improved radio wave reception and detection; started the De Forest Wireless Telegraph Company and later the De Forest Radio Telephone Company
- Dickerson, Luther L. – Librarian at Indianapolis Public Library; chair of the CLRB and member of the NACRE Library Committee
- Dill, Clarence C – Senator (D-Wash), co-author of Radio Act of 1927 and Communications Act of 1934
- Dixon, Esther H. – Executive assistant for Special Memberships and Endowment at ALA
- Drury, F(ranklin).K.W. – Executive Assistant to the ALA Board on Library and Adult Education; later worked with the CLRB
- Dunham, Franklin – NBC Director of Educational Programs for the Eastern Division
- Elwood, John W. – NBC Vice President, 1928-1933
- Evans, Ernestine – freelance reporter for the NYT and magazines; formerly editor for children’s books at Coward-McCann and Lippincott
- Evans, S. Howard – Lobbyist for Payne Fund
- Fessenden, Reginald A. – Canadian; his theory of continuous (as opposed to intermittent) wave was foundation of radio broadcasting; started the National Electric Signaling Company
- Frank, Mary – Librarian at the New York Public Library
- Gilchriese, Harry – Publicity director for Girl Scouts of America, Inc.
- Gordon, Dorothy – Radio personality
- Gruenberg, Sidonie – Director of the Child Study Association; chair of NACRE’s Parent Education Committee
- Harshaw, Ruth – hostess of Carnival of Books, a WMAQ program done in collaboration with ALA and Chicago Public Library
- Hutchins, Robert M. – NBC Advisory Council, Education Committee chair (following Edwin Alderman); President of University of Chicago
- Hyers, Faith Holmes – Publicist at Los Angeles Public Library; CLRB member
- Keith, Alice – Director of CBS educational radio
- Keppel, Frederick P. – President, Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Kohnstedt, Donald W. – Kansas City (KS) Librarian; member of the CLRB
- Langworthy, Mrs. B.F. - President of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers
- Larimore, Earle – one of the Stix production team, associated with the Theatre Guild, experienced stage director
- Lester, Robert M. – Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Lohr, Lenox – replaced Aylesworth as NBC President in 1936
- Marconi, Gugliermo – Italian, created distance wireless telegraphy system; started the Marconi Wireless Company of America.
- Merrill, Julia Wright – Chief of ALA Department of Information and Advisory Services and the Public Library Division
• Milam, Carl H. – Executive Secretary of ALA; member of the NACRE Library Committee and Board of Directors, member of AAAE board of directors
• Milligan, Lucy (Mrs. Harold) R. – 1933 – Chair of the Women’s National Radio Council; formerly associated with the National Music League
• Morgan, Joy Elmer – NCER chair; edited NEA journal
• Munn, Ralph – Librarian at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; ALA President
• Paley, William S. – CBS president
• Patterson, Richard C., Jr. – Executive vice president for NBC
• Perry, Armstrong – NCER official
• Redefer, Frederick – Executive Secretary, Progressive Education Association
• Royal, John – Program director and later NBC Vice President for Programs
• Rosenblum, David – NBC vice president and Treasurer
• Rossell, Beatrice Sawyer – Editor of Library Journal
• Sauer, Julia – Head of the children’s department at the Rochester (NY) Public Library; provided library support for the CBS program, “School of the Air”
• Spaulding, Forrest B. – Librarian at the Des Moines (Iowa) Public Library; member of the CLRB
• Stix, Thomas L. – agent for the Van Loon production, “Drums, Bells and Gongs”
• Trammell, Niles – Executive vice president of NBC
• Tyson, Levering – director of NACRE; formerly associated with AAAE
• Ulveling, Ralph – Librarian at the Detroit (MI) Public Library; chair of the CLRB
• Van Cleve, Jessie Gay – Children’s literature specialist at ALA Booklist
• Waller, Judith – Education Director, NBC Central Division; also the chair of the NACRE Operating Broadcasters committee
• Washburne, Carleton – Director of the Society for the Improvement of Children’s Programs and Superintendent of the Winnetka (IL) Public Schools
• Young, Owen D. – GE president, founder of RCA; NBC Board Chairman
INTRODUCTION

“Libraries existed long before printed books were thought of. They have kept pace with each new method of disseminating knowledge, so it is only fitting that they should embrace the radio as a new opportunity for services.”

- Alice B. Coy, *Library Journal*, 1927

In 1922 children’s librarians in Pittsburgh went to the local radio station to broadcast children’s stories over the air. It must have been a strange experience, standing in the rooftop shack that functioned as station KDKA, telling stories to a microphone; alone except for a technician or two and an imaginary audience. Radio broadcasting was in its infancy, and the children’s librarians involved may or may not have understood the technology they were using that day but they were eager to provide library services to as yet un-reached audiences.

Although we now live in a thoroughly wired world, this experience resonated with my own experiences as a reference librarian in the early 1990s just as the Internet was making its public debut. As with radio, there were early adopters that had been using the Internet for a number of years, but the bulk of the American public was just beginning to get involved with Pine electronic mail and early dial-up service that, in some incomprehensible way, connected us with people, places and things at a distance. Hypertext was being tested by reference librarians, and there was discussion about its potential for educating library users. Not very much later we were introduced to the wonders of the World Wide Web and whether or not they understood much of the technology or the process, public librarians began using it to create awareness of library locations and basic services. We learned new terminology, ‘information packets’ and
'GUI interfaces,' much the same way the 1920s librarian-broadcasters learned about 'signal strength' and 'broadcasting techniques.' In each case, the profession of librarianship examined and adopted the technology for its own uses and in its own ways; and in doing so enacted a similar sequence of phases that progressed from an examination of the appropriateness of the technology for libraries, to providing it for library users who could not provide it for themselves.

This dissertation looks at the profession's response to new technology through the lens of a long-forgotten experiment, the national children's radio hour. The program, which was to be sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) under the auspices of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE), was an attempt on a national scale, from roughly 1930 to 1936, to harness a new and radically different technology in the service of librarianship.

For that is what the librarians who were involved in the project intended to do; they weren't interested in the technology for its own sake, but as a communications medium that could help further librarians' goals related to education and outreach. They didn't develop innovative programming based on the unique capabilities of the tool; they adapted tried and true library services of the time – book promotion and children's programming – to the new medium. Even the children's national show was developed along the lines of a traditional library story hour, with books, stories and songs.

Due to a combination of funding and political issues the library radio project was unsuccessful in its bid for airtime. But what the project did accomplish was to give librarians the opportunity to engage in public discussions that explored what new communications technology – in this case radio – could offer to the profession, and
what constraints such opportunities might entail, e.g. whether the time and effort involved in producing programs was justified by public response.

**Research Questions**

ALA’s involvement in this project from, 1930 through 1936, can be seen as a convergence of factors, including the desire on the part of radio network executives to capitalize on the gold mine that was radio while creating an image of public service that would short circuit government attempts to regulate the industry; a sincere desire by child advocates and social welfare groups of the day (including libraries) to safeguard the mental and physical wellbeing of children in a time of great economic and social upheaval; and the public library’s involvement – both locally and nationally – with popular culture, especially for children. Five questions guided my research:

- What cultural and institutional factors led ALA to undertake this initiative?
- What sustained ALA efforts despite a lack of progress?
- Why did the project fail, given the apparent public and network support, as well as ALA’s other successful radio experience?
- Why did the networks seek library involvement, and why did they ultimately let it go?
- How does this inform our understanding of ALA’s involvement with emerging mass communications, in particular as the involvement relates to traditional library roles? Were librarians stepping outside their role as content-purveyors?

Over the course of this study a number of tensions emerged that help explain some of what happened as ALA’s national children’s radio program developed and ultimately failed: local service versus national initiatives; non-commercial (public)
broadcasting versus commercial (private) interests; radio programming versus data collection and advocacy (clearinghouse); and the value of technology (broadcasting) as an aid to outreach versus the demands inherent in implementing that technology.

Methodology

My dissertation is first and foremost an historical exploration of a particular point in time where public libraries – in particular children’s services, the profession’s association (the American Library Association), and early broadcasting interests (technology) intersected. The documents I examined in order to understand this history included meeting minutes, committee reports, conference proceedings, personal and business correspondence, flyers, pamphlets, brochures, booklets, membership and committee rosters, and project-specific information such as program outlines and diagrams. These documents were found in archival collections at the Library of Congress, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the Social Sciences & Humanities Library of the New York Public Library, and the American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois. The Library of Congress provided me with a prize indeed: two fifteen-minute radio programs written by Hendrik van Loon, the first Newbery Medal recipient, recorded at the NBC New York studios, and offered to the American Library Association in 1936 as part of the children’s radio program project.

In addition to archival sources, there were books, newspapers, journals and magazines of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s that provided important contextual information about radio broadcasting, the practice of librarianship, and the culture of the United States at that time. Books, journal articles, Web sites, and dissertations (pre- and
post-1940s) provided valuable insights and historical perspective that can only come with time and distance from actual events.

For the radio history aspect of my work, secondary sources that proved particularly useful included Erik Barnouw’s three-volume broadcast history that has long been acknowledged as a landmark analysis of the emergence of the American commercial broadcasting system, and is the source for much of the broadcast history established in Chapter 1. Barnouw’s first volume, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States, to 1933*, clearly laid out the facts of that history, positioned the major players and provided an understanding of how complicated and politically charged the evolution of radio as we know it actually was. Robert W. McChesney’s book, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, & Democracy*, focuses on the period from 1928 to 1935, and furnished ample evidence of the political machinations that culminated in the Communications Act of 1934. McChesney’s account emphasized the fight between educators and commercial radio interests, and demonstrated why it was inevitable in the United States at that time that our broadcasting system would favor commercial interests. Without this background, ALA’s alliance with the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE), the offer of airtime from NBC, and the difficulties encountered by local libraries as they tried to broadcast would have made little sense. Then, as I was building a sense of the history of broadcasting, Susan Douglas’ view of the confrontations between amateurs and the military, and her discussion of the Radio Act of 1912, in *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922*, convinced me that later conflicts had roots in this earlier period. The control of the airwaves by the wealthy and powerful, and potential for governmental intervention that occurred during the 1928-
1934 period did indeed hark back to the earlier struggles described by Douglas. The work of other scholars, including Michele Hilmes, Eugene Leach, and Susan Smulyan.

**Limitations**

There are, of course, limitations inherent in historical research. There were times when gaps in the archival record were more apparent, for example the instances when ALA was offered the opportunity to co-sponsor children’s radio programs with other educational or civic agencies. There was archival evidence of the offer to co-sponsor or collaborate, but nothing indicating any ALA response to these overtures. Another specific instance concerned the extensive early notes about the proposed children’s program – particularly concerning content, contrasted with no indication in the records as to why the project was dropped, or why no program script was ever prepared. In those situations, the researcher can only surmise from subsequent records what might have happened. Interestingly, I found important bits of the project’s progress in files other than those from ALA. For example, the actual program proposal that brought the Van Loon program to ALA was in the NACRE archives rather than ALA.

I have emphasized the period from 1930 through 1936, because these were the years ALA actively pursued the national children’s radio program, as evidenced in correspondence, and committee and conference reports. To provide an appropriate context for a history of this library radio project, I have included pertinent broadcast history from the introduction of radio at the turn of the twentieth century through the 1930s. Significantly, librarians continued to broadcast locally even after the national children’s library radio program disappeared from the professional literature in the mid-1930s and, for that reason, I have included a brief description of their efforts through
1956. In all cases I have limited my discussion to the various sources that have some bearing on the research questions I formulated as I began the study, and that emerged or were refined as the study progressed.

The national children's radio show on which I focus was to be broadcast outside of school, and most of the children's librarians involved in the project came from public libraries. For that reason I have confined myself to a discussion of radio programming for children that was created by or performed by public librarians, and devoted little attention to school broadcasts and school radio programming. In order to contextualize their involvement it was important to give some idea of what they were doing locally for their public libraries, so the programming information provided in Chapter 2 and Appendix E relates to youth services librarians working in public libraries. There is a great deal of material available on school-related broadcasting and radio as an instructional tool, but this has been dealt with only in passing.

I have focused on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) to the exclusion of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) that began operations in 1927 – only a year after NBC – and the Mutual Broadcasting System which entered the field in 1934. Both NBC and CBS offered free airtime to educational and civic organizations, but the national children's radio hour project as described in the archival record was the story of ALA, NACRE and NBC. Mutual came along much later in the national children's radio project arc, and like CBS, is not mentioned in the records connection with it.

Finally, although NACRE and its philosophical rival the National Committee on Education by Radio (NCER) were both important forces in the context of U.S. radio
history of that time, NCER was not involved in the national children’s radio hour negotiations, and so, has been excluded from the bulk of this narrative.

**Organization**

One of the challenges of assembling a mass of archival material into a coherent whole is finding a way to organize it so that the story that emerges from the historical evidence is told clearly and succinctly.

Chapters 1 and 2 are background chapters, covering roughly 1900 through the early 1930s. Chapter 1 provides the broadcast history context (through 1934) that is so important to understanding what we will see as the push-pull of NBC’s relationship with both NACRE and ALA. Further, it situates commercial broadcasters’ interest in working with ALA and other organizations to develop a quality, national, library-based children’s radio program.

Chapter 2 covers a period similar to that in Chapter 1, but considers the interest that developed very early in the library community in harnessing radio for library purposes, particularly by children’s librarians. It begins in 1922, when the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh offered the first documented instance of children’s library programming on the air. We see the development within ALA (and the library community it represented) of interest in creating the national children’s radio program that is the major focus of this thesis. It also offers insight into how children’s librarians functioned on the local and national radio scene, and situates the national program project within the profession. It is likely that a somewhat skewed picture of the situation emerges, since few who failed or rejected library-related broadcasting would have been moved to write articles for the professional literature, which is the source of so many of
the success stories. But librarian surveys, conducted by ALA and external groups, indicate that a number of librarians either tried broadcasting and then discontinued it (for a variety of reasons), or chose not to pursue it at all. Those who wrote for the profession were convinced of broadcasting’s worth to the cause of books and reading, and saw radio as a tool for both publicity and education.

Chapters 3 through 7 constitute the main body of the narrative of the national children’s radio hour project, and weave together content about ALA, NBC and NACRE. The material grouped itself naturally into particular chronological project segments: the pre-development of the program, an initial focus on finding financial support, building a coalition to increase chances of finding funding, a project pause that signaled the beginning of the end of the project, and the final days of the project as it faded away.

Chapter 3 traces the pre-development of the national children’s radio hour project, from 1922 through 1931, including librarians’ attitudes about radio and the formation of an ALA committee dedicated to radio broadcasting. During this time NACRE contacted ALA regarding creating a children’s radio program, and librarians begin discussing what constituted a quality radio program for youth. By the end of 1931, the ALA Executive Board had officially approved the project and a program outline was completed.

Chapter 4 covers that period during 1932-1933, when enthusiasm for the project was apparent at both the networks and ALA – although for very different reasons. ALA was excited about the opportunity to reach a national audience with its messages about education and uplift, and began looking for program funding from philanthropies such
as Carnegie and the Payne Fund. The networks were reacting to a concerted push by educational interests (including NCER) to claim a piece of the fairly new and very lucrative broadcast industry. It was also a time when NBC began to see stronger signs of public discontent with both advertising and programming. This discontent was reflected in the library arena as well. Later that year, after seeing its funding attempts get nowhere, ALA assembled a small group of youth-related educational and social agencies to discuss potential collaboration on the ALA children’s program.

Chapter 5 discusses ALA’s attempt in 1934 to expand its library-sponsored children’s radio program project to include more than 30 youth-serving organizations in the hope that more partners would generate more financial support. This hope was soon dashed since ALA’s potential allies were willing to endorse the idea of the children’s program but not contribute dollars, and they brought few suggestions for other places ALA might seek funding. Another issue with the partnership was that ALA wanted to focus on creating a radio program rather than acting as a clearinghouse (information center), which appeared to be of greater interest to ALA partners. Public concerns about youth programming were on the rise, but with the enactment of the Communications Act of 1934 that favored network interests, NBC was less willing to listen to educators’ notions of how to address the situation. The door was closing on the opportunity to get the national children’s radio program on the air. A new group emerged, the Women’s National Radio Committee (WNRC), which marshaled women’s voices in protest against network programming and appeared to be usurping the clearinghouse role the ALA-coalition proposed.
Chapter 6 describes ALA’s further attempts, in 1935, to find funding. It is at this time that the coalition that ALA built created a proposal for both the program and the clearinghouse, a proposal that key figures in the coalition wanted to shop around to potential donors. NBC continued to hear complaints about excessive advertising and violence in children’s programming, and created a department dedicated to addressing the situation. For the first time ALA considered the possibility of accepting commercial sponsorship for the children’s radio program, but the idea quickly died for lack of support.

Chapter 7 describes the events in 1936 that were the end of the national children’s radio hour project. Funding remained an issue and in spite of increasing parental and societal concerns about children’s radio program, ALA backed off the project when it failed to find sponsors for a multi-part program written by renowned children’s author, radio personality, and Newbery Award winner Hendrik Van Loon. Although the program temporarily generated new excitement, NBC was unwilling to foot the bill for program production, and the cost of more than $100,000 for six months’-worth of programs was out of ALA’s reach. Six years after its start, the national children’s radio hour faded quietly into oblivion.

Chapter 8 explores an important difference between local and national library broadcast initiatives. Although the ALA radio committee moved to other projects, local librarians continued to broadcast whenever the opportunity arose, and radio continued to be a part of the library landscape into the 1950s.

Chapter 9 revisits my research questions and suggests possible explanations for what had happened during the years that ALA chased the dream of a national children’s
radio show. The tensions mentioned earlier are revisited to explore their impact on the
planning and execution of the program, and how ALA's insular view may have
contributed to the project's demise.

This concluding chapter also considers future areas of research that expand the
boundaries of this dissertation, questioning whether the technology phases adopted by
librarians change as the level of the tool's interactivity changes, or whether it holds true
for television and would apply to social networking opportunities such as Facebook,
MySpace, and Second Life. Children's librarians' experiences as early library-
broadcaster innovators raises the question of how client groups might influence
librarian's professional stances on technology adoption.

Finally, the appendices that follow the conclusion act in large part as aids to the
reading of the work. There is a very selective timeline that juxtaposes important dates
from U.S. history, broadcast history and library history related to broadcasting. I have
included a list of ALA Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting members from 1926
when the committee was first form, through its end in 1940, and a list of the
organizations (and their representatives) that attended the coalition meetings in 1933
and 1934. I have also included a list of library-related children's radio programs from
1922 through 1956, which pulls together programs documented in the professional
literature and archival material used in the production of this dissertation. In addition,
Jessie Van Cleve's 1931 program outline is included for clarification, as is an excerpt
from the proposal the Van Loon group brought to ALA in 1936. The appendices end
with scripts from books on library broadcasting to give some taste of what librarians put
on the air.
CHAPTER 1: THE “AMERICAN” SYSTEM OF RADIO BROADCASTING

Radio broadcasting history is fascinating and complex, from the early days of broadcasting as a public relations gimmick to its eventual rise to prominence as the leading medium of mass communications in the United States during the 1930s and early 1940s.

The broadcast history that is particularly significant for this dissertation involves well-documented clashes: first between the American military and amateurs, between roughly 1910 and 1927, and then between commercial interests (some of whom eventually became the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System) and noncommercial interests (that included educational and nonprofit broadcasters), roughly 1927-1934. The results of these conflicts essentially established the commercial nature of the U.S. broadcasting system by means of legislation that concluded the matter in law but not in the hearts and minds of those most intimately involved. Fallout from these confrontations temporarily forced networks to exhibit at least the appearance of public concern and forced educational organizations to try to work with them.

Telegraphy to Networks

The inventions that are milestones in the history of telephony and telegraphy1 are important in this dissertation in that their ownership or control often created uneasy alliances and partnerships because, as Erik Barnouw says, “almost every invention became the property of a company, and eventually a weapon in titanic struggles, deals, and mergers, bearing on control of the broadcasting media” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 9).

1 For fuller discussions of these technologies see Erik Barnouw’s A Tower in Babel (1966) and Susan Douglas’ Inventing American Broadcasting (1987).
Modern broadcasting histories often begin with Italian Gugliermo Marconi (1874-1937) and his experiments that eventually resulted in wireless transmission of Morse code. He received a British patent on his invention in 1897, at which time the Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company, Ltd., later called the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, Ltd. was formed. Marconi continued to increase the distance his signal would travel, and in 1899 the British Navy installed wireless on three battleships. That same year Marconi traveled to America and, shortly after his arrival, the Marconi Wireless Company of America started selling telegraphy services to shipping interests. Although Marconi Wireless originally sold wireless equipment outright, a new purchasing structure quickly evolved: they began to sell the service itself; Marconi “would not sell equipment but communication” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 17).

The United States Navy was concerned about potential message interference, since all wireless messages at the time were carried on the same wavelength. More importantly, though, they were concerned about the Marconi company policy stipulating that only Marconi employees were allowed to operate equipment, something unthinkable aboard military vessels. The alternative suggested by Marconi Wireless was to provide the Navy with equipment and allow naval personnel to operate it, but they would have to agree to communicate only with Marconi shore stations (except in an emergency). This was completely unacceptable and Marconi was accused of attempting to establish a monopoly of wireless communication.

Other pioneers were experimenting with sound transmission, among them Canadian Reginald Aubrey Fessenden (1866-1931), who was interested in transmitting voices. In 1902 he started the National Electric Signaling Company and diverged from
Marconi’s methods by imagining a continuous rather than broken radio wave. His work with Swedish-born Ernst F. W. Alexanderson (1878-1975) at General Electric created refinements of his system that resulted in a 1906 Christmas Eve broadcast of voice and music, from Brant Rock, Massachusetts, and heard by ship’s operators as far away as the West Indies (Barnouw, 1966, p. 19-20).

Lee De Forest (1873-1961), an American who was also fascinated with voice transmission, worked at one time for Western Electric in the telephone department. He had studied Marconi’s transmission system and felt he could improve it. In 1902 the De Forest Wireless Telegraph Company was created, and the American Navy was among its first customers. De Forest differed from Fessenden and Marconi in that his financial backer, Abraham White, wanted to sell shares in the company, so De Forest performed public demonstrations and participated in the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair in order to showcase company assets and attract stock sales (Barnouw, 1966, p. 24). De Forest’s heart was in experimentation rather than spectacle and in 1907 he formed the De Forest Radio Telephone Company to continue his experiments with sound (rather than Morse code) transmissions, eventually developing the “Audion,” an important device for signal detection. In the course of his work he began broadcasting phonograph records, but soon invited live performers to his “laboratory” in New York City (Barnouw, 1966, p. 25). People were enchanted by the disembodied voices and the possibilities such technology represented.

In 1912 both Fessenden and De Forest experienced business setbacks. Fessenden’s lucrative contracts with the United Fruit Company ended when they decided to produce their own wireless equipment, and he lost his U.S. Navy business
because he was perceived to be ‘difficult’ (Barnouw, 1966, p. 42). De Forest’s company was beleaguered by patent infringement suits from Marconi, and bad press that accompanied government indictments for mail fraud from which he was eventually exonerated. American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) was interested in De Forest’s Audion device, but negotiations dragged on and De Forest was chronically short of cash. When he eventually sold patents (including the Audion) to AT&T, he reserved the right to continue to sell equipment to the lucrative amateur market.

Amateur operators, aka “ham” operators, took to radio telegraphy (dots and dashes) with great enthusiasm. The airwaves were free to anyone with equipment and the number of ham radio operators jumped from 150 stations in 1905 to more than 10,000 by 1914 (Walker, 2001). Hams came from all walks of life, young and old, male and female (Hilmes, 1997), and shared a passion for the freedom and adventure represented by radio.

Figure 1: Crystal Radio Set, 1922

It was so popular, Boy Scouts could earn a radio merit badge and headphones

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2 This diagram is an adapted illustration of a type of 1922 crystal radio set commonly constructed by amateur operators. The round oatmeal box was used to hold the tuning coil. The original diagram appeared in Gernsback, H., 1922, Radio for All, and J.A. Davidson adapted the diagram wording, replacing “aerial” with “antenna”. Image retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crystal_radio, February 2, 2008.
disappeared from local telephone booths only to reappear in amateur’s homes.

Boys – and men – were constantly filing down nickels to make coherers, or winding wires around round objects – broken baseball bats or, later on, Quaker Oats boxes. In attics, barns, garages, woodsheds, apparatus took shape. Because of the noise and other menaces and hazards, real or imagined, the activity was for a long time banned from living quarters (Barnouw, 1966, p. 28).

Hams were a gregarious lot, forming clubs and organizations, keeping the airwaves busy 24 hours a day. For example, San Jose (California) resident Charles “Doc” Herrold, who started a College of Engineering in 1909 within which radio was a major focus, held his first child up “before a microphone so that friends in the Fairmont Hotel could hear the cries” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 35).

Enthusiasts created unofficial agreements about use that helped them avoid ethereal traffic jams, but they shared the air with commercial and military groups (the U.S. Navy, in particular) who protested that the amateurs were an impediment to preserving the safety of shipping and the sanctity of the U.S. coastline. One Irvington, New York, youngster received a letter from the Brooklyn Navy yard, “complaining that he was blanketing out its operators when they were trying to talk to ships at sea.” In another instance, two school-age children in New Jersey who were discussing their arithmetic homework on the air stopped a navy operator in New York City from broadcasting (Barnouw, 1966, p. 29).

To the amateurs, the ether was neither the rightful province of the military nor a resource a private firm could appropriate and monopolize. The ether was, instead, an exciting new frontier in which men and boys [sic] could congregate,
compete, test their mettle, and be privy to a range of new information. Social order and social control were defied. In this realm the individual voice did not have to defer to the authority of business or state. This realm, argued the amateurs, did not belong to hierarchical bureaucracies: it belonged to 'the people' (Douglas, 1987, p. 241).

Generally speaking, amateurs were respectful of military needs – as they were of each other's needs, but they took great pleasure in occasionally tweaking the Navy's nose since they were often better equipped and trained than their enlisted counterparts. They created false distress calls and were said to interfere with commercial and military broadcasts. One instance, discussed by Susan Douglas, tells of a Nantucket ship, the Bremen, that purportedly received incorrect navigation and weather information. An investigation revealed that amateurs had been behind the whole story and, what's more, the Bremen had actually sunk in an unrelated incident a week earlier (Douglas, 1987, p. 208).

According to Douglas, commercial interests were just as likely as amateurs to interfere with naval transmissions, but the Navy went after the amateurs.

The amateurs began to defend themselves against a public campaign waged by the U.S. Navy. Military officials began lobbying in Washington for stricter regulation of or elimination of the amateur. Their justification for such suppression was difficult to dispute: safety at sea and national security (Douglas, 1987, p. 209-210).

After several years of complaints from the Navy and commercial operations, as
well as the key role wireless played in protecting lives at sea\textsuperscript{3}, Congress was pushed to enact the Radio Act of 1912, which mandated operator licenses, allocated wavelengths for both government and citizen use, and made ether management the responsibility of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor (Douglas, 1987). Amateurs had been contained, for the moment, and the military had its own dedicated section of the radio spectrum. The Act was America’s first piece of radio legislation, and it set two important precedents; (1) “only consolidated institutions – in this case, the navy and the Marconi Company” could protect the public interest; and (2) “the state would assume an important role in assigning property rights in the spectrum … on the basis of claimed needs, previous investment, and importance of the messages” (Douglas, 1987, p. 236). Need, investment, and importance eventually played out along political and economic lines; bigger, better funded, and well-connected organizations were thought to have the most important messages because they had the best equipment and the farthest reach.

**The Rise of the Amateur**

In 1916 American Marconi sued Lee De Forest for patent infringement related to the Audion, and won its suit. The victory was complicated by the fact that the patent on the part of the Audion under dispute was now owned by AT&T, and a circuit invented in 1914, by Edwin H. Armstrong, so improved the performance of the Audion that “radio reception now called for use of this patented circuit. A new factor was thus added to the patent triangle” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 47). Inventions and improvements co-mingled, and often sorting out the appropriate rights and patents created conflicts.

\textsuperscript{3} The details of the role wireless played in lifesaving efforts for two sea disasters, involving the *Republic* and the *Titanic*, can be found in Douglas, 1987, pp. 200-202 and pp. 226-33, respectively.
World War I accelerated inventions, innovations and resulting patent issues, but the government was in no mood for delaying the production of important war materials – among them radio sets – so patent problems were set aside and Secretary of War Franklin D. Roosevelt promised they would be settled at a later date. Such a promise “made possible a vast co-ordinated development of radio technology during World War I” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 48) and introduced other players to the radio scene – in particular General Electric (GE) and Westinghouse, who produced vacuum tubes for receiving sets. The massive military build-up necessitated the exchange of specifications so that more than one manufacturer could produce what was so urgently and quickly needed. Thus, for AT&T, GE, Westinghouse and American Marconi, “their fortunes became interlocked by war” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 49).

By 1919 a pre-World War I deal contemplated by Marconi and GE for the sale of the valuable Alexanderson transmitters was back on the table. These transmitters would become exclusive to Marconi companies, for use all over the world. As the deal was being negotiated, Owen D. Young, general counsel for GE, put the details in a letter to acting Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt, who passed them on to top officials in the U.S. Navy. The United States government was concerned that the agreement would concentrate communications technology in a single company – and outside the country. Navy officials met with the GE board of directors, and insinuated that the president disapproved on political grounds. Young and his contacts in the Navy then arranged for the formation in 1919 of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), whose charter specifically stated that any and all officers or board members had to be American citizens, and that not more than 20% of its stock could be owned by non-Americans.
American Marconi was “invited” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 59) to transfer its assets and operations to RCA, and individual stockholders would receive RCA shares to replace those they held in American Marconi. With the acquisition of Marconi’s stations and shipboard installations, RCA was in an immediate position to begin broadcasting, which it did in February 1920.

World War I also had an impact on amateur operations. The 1912 Radio Act granted absolute power to the president in times of war; he could take control of any radio operation – large or small.

On April 6, 1917, the blow came. A state of war existed with Germany. That same day, all amateur radio apparatus was ordered shut, dismantled, sealed. Next day commercial wireless stations such as ship-to-shore stations were taken over by the navy. Almost all stations still in operation were now under navy or army control (Barnouw, 1966, p. 37).

Many radio amateurs went into service with the military, taking their skill sets with them. They were deployed in locations as diverse as the New England coastline and the trenches of Europe. Although the war ended in 1918, the Navy kept control of American radio stations because, according to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, that control had proven its value during the war. But Americans were tired of the strictures and control imposed by war (Craig, 2000), and in 1920 the Navy released its hold and the airwaves opened for business again. But now, in addition to individuals, corporate interests were a competing voice in the radio mix.

RCA, formed from the assets of America Marconi in 1919, eyed the radio field eagerly. Within only a few months of its creation, RCA allied itself with General
Electric, AT&T and Western Electric (an AT&T subsidiary), and each company claimed a piece of the “world of electronic communications” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 60). GE was a major shareholder of RCA (30.1%), as were Westinghouse (20.6%), AT&T (10.3%), and United Fruit Company (4.1%). Barnouw estimates that nearly two thousand patents were now co-owned by the RCA group. “Radio technology,” according to Susan Douglas, “was now embedded in interlocking corporate grids, and RCA had become a civilian version of the military monopoly that had controlled radio during the war” (Douglas, 1987, p. 290).

Amateur experimentation and broadcasting resumed, although more experiments were conducted in formal laboratories and under the auspices of companies than in 1914. Among the experimenters was Frank Conrad (1874-1941), who worked for Westinghouse and who was a weekend amateur radio operator. He, his sons Francis and Crawford, and interested friends began testing broadcasts from a Pittsburgh garage workshop in 1920 and eventually the broadcasts went out every Saturday night, with phonograph music provided by the Hamilton Music Store in Wilkinsburg (Pennsylvania). As Barnouw notes, this activity was indistinguishable from many other amateur broadcasts spread over the country, but in September 1920, something changed. The Pittsburgh Sun ran an advertisement for the Joseph Horne Department Store which, looking for a way to increase sales on its radio sets, mentioned Conrad’s intermittent broadcasts. This item caught the attention of Westinghouse boss, Harry P. Davis, who encouraged Conrad to set up shop at the Westinghouse plant – complete with a stronger transmitter. Davis proposed that Conrad schedule regular broadcasts, duly advertised, to create a continuing program for those who purchased
Westinghouse sets. A month later, Conrad applied to the Department of Commerce and received a license to broadcast using the letters KDKA (Barnouw, 1966, p. 67-68). The impact of the broadcast was everything Davis hoped it would be: lines of people waited to buy receiving sets, newspapers covered the broadcasts and mentioned the Westinghouse name. This event has historically been identified as the birth of radio broadcasting. Other stations, in fact, came earlier: KQW (San Jose, California) first broadcast in 1909, and maintained a regular schedule in 1912; New Rochelle (New York) station 2ZK began broadcasting music in 1916; and 8MK in Detroit (Michigan) started regular broadcasting in 1920. Another KDKA urban legend (like being first to broadcast regularly scheduled programming) is that KDKA was the first station publicly licensed to broadcast a regular schedule of programming (Head, 1956, p. 109), although Hilmes indicates KDKA was actually the eighth to receive a broadcasting license from the Department of Commerce (Hilmes, 1997, p. 44). For my purposes, KDKA is still significant because they appear to be the first radio station to put children’s librarians on the air.

In 1920 there was one radio station licensed, and only a few more in 1921. From January to May of 1922, the number of licenses granted to broadcasting stations by the United States Secretary of Commerce increased from 30 to 218; and by the end of the year the number of licenses exceeded 500 (Barnouw, 1966, p. 91).

All over the country amateurs – they now numbered tens of thousands – were buying parts and putting sets together .... Amateurs were also making transmitters, often using one or more parts sold by RCA. In many cases they then decided to use these transmitters for regular broadcasting and applied for
new call letters and wave lengths (Barnouw, 1966, p. 82).

The overwhelming interest in obtaining radio licenses combined with the restricted number of licensed frequencies available caused stations to have to share airtime, and eventually led to competing broadcasts that often resulted in noise from interference rather than programming. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that non-government and non-military broadcasting stations were restricted to the “entertainment” frequency (360 meters) or the agricultural information and weather frequency (485 meters).

During 1921 the Department of Commerce, responsible for granting radio licenses, adopted a new category of license, for “broadcasting” stations – differentiated by their focus on voice rather than Morse Code transmission. The Department, however, “did not allocate time periods; it simply told each station to work out a division with others in its area. Unending local bargaining – or bickering – therefore followed” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 91-92).

Station openings may have been numerous but so, too, were closures. During 1922, “642 new stations began broadcasting, while 94 disappeared. In 1923, 298 station closures easily outnumbered 249 new entries” (Craig, 2000, p. 9). Nonetheless, by 1923 there was a broadcasting facility in every state except Mississippi, and 39 states had more than three such facilities (Craig, 2000, p. 9), that could range from tarpaulin-

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4 Radio waves are part of the larger electromagnetic spectrum that also includes X-rays, ultraviolet light and microwaves. AM radio waves are at the mid-range of the radio section. AM stations broadcasted at spots on the spectrum between approximately (accounts vary) 540-1630 kilohertz, and stations were assigned locations 10 kilohertz apart to prevent any sound distortion. Less than 150 potential station locations had to be distributed among as many as 500 potential licensees. There were mitigating factors, for example different station transmitter strengths meant that two stations geographically separated could share a wavelength designation without interference.
covered shacks to stand-alone buildings.

In 1922, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover convened the first of four annual conferences designed to solicit comment from all parties concerned, including amateur operators and government agencies in addition to RCA, AT&T, GE, Westinghouse and others. Hoover was convinced that those with a vested interest in the outcome were the ones that should be able "to a very large extent, to regulate and govern themselves" (Hoover, quoted in McChesney, 1993, p. 279). In Hoover's memoirs he identified this first conference as a time to inquire into the critical situation that has now arisen through the astonishing development of the wireless telephone [Hoover's phrase for radio]; to advise the Department of Commerce as to the application of its present powers of regulation, and further to formulate such recommendations to Congress as to the legislation necessary (Hoover, as quoted in Barnouw, 1966, p. 94).

Conference attendees were unanimous that something needed to be done, and it was the government's job to do it. Legislation was drafted at the conference but failed to gain traction in Congress. There were twenty different – and unsuccessful – pieces of legislation on radio that came up for consideration in Congress between 1921 and 1923 (Barnouw, 1966, p. 121).

The rush toward radio continued. Station owners were a diverse group of individuals and businesses that, according to a 1923 Department of Commerce count, included (among others) 69 newspapers, 29 department stores, 18 automobile/battery/cycle dealers, 13 music/jewelry stores, 12 churches and YMCAs, and 6 hardware stores. Most of them looked at radio not as education or entertainment,
but as a way to promote commerce (U.S. Department of Commerce, *Radio Service Bulletin*, February 1, 1923, as reprinted in Banning, 1946, p. 132-133.) Broadcasting was "intended to reap indirect values, not direct revenue. The precise form of the expected values – future sales, donations, prestige, enrollments – was seldom exactly defined" (Barnouw, 1966, p. 105).

Among the varied groups entering the airwaves were educational institutions, and by the end of 1922 there were 74 colleges and universities with station licenses (Barnouw, 1966, p. 98). In fact, in 1922 the University of Nebraska offered two-credit radio courses for $12.50 per student, "for which the listener was offered textbook, examination, and two points of credit on satisfactory completion" (Frost, as quoted in Barnouw, 1966, p. 223-6).

In spite of the overwhelming demand for licenses there was no provision for denying a license and in 1922, in an effort to cope with the onslaught of station applications, the Department of Commerce began registering stations at the 400 meter spot. Stations in this new location, known as the Class B stations had to broadcast at a higher wattage (which required a stronger transmitter), and had the additional restriction of not being able to use phonograph records. Hilmes described Class B tenants as marked by owners with deep pockets and almost always related commercial interests; radio set or transmitter sales (RCA, Westinghouse, General Electric, and AT&T), newspapers (by 1923, the *Detroit News*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Atlanta Journal*, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, the *Louisville Courier Journal*, the *Forth Worth Star Telegram*, the *Chicago Daily News*, and the *Los Angeles Times Mirror*, among
others), and major department stores (Bambergers, Shepard Stores, John Wanamaker, Gimbel Bros.) (Hilmes, 1997, p. 51).

Adding the new section of stations, according to Barnouw, “create[d] an aristocracy of well-financed stations at 400 and a hoi polloi at 360 ... the ‘B’ stations were, for the moment, relatively free of chaos. But at 360 meters the congestion grew” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 101).

AT&T entered broadcasting in 1922, via something they called, “toll broadcasting,” modeled on telephone service, in which they provided a conduit but not content for paying customers. “The American Telephone and Telegraph Company will provide no programs of its own, but provide the channels through which anyone with whom it makes a contract can send out their own programs” (Banning, as quoted in Barnouw, 1966, p. 107). Since radio advertising didn’t exist at this point and programming was still in its infancy, they were essentially selling an empty box. Ultimately they were forced to provide some programming, and filled their time – which was only a few hours a day – with a varied docket of mostly amateur talent. A few months later, in August 1922, the first paid commercial broadcast aired over AT&T-owned station, WEAF. The Queensboro Corporation bought ten minutes for $50, to promote apartment sales in Jackson Heights, New York (Barnouw, 1966, p. 110). This sale of time was unique to WEAF; most stations felt their free broadcasts built goodwill for their products (including radio sets themselves), which then translated into consumer dollars that would help subsidize any radio programming.

The second Washington Radio Conference, called by Hoover in 1923, covered familiar ground, i.e. the growing congestion of the airwaves. Although no legislation
resulted from the first conference, Hoover again asked the assembled group for guidance. “In response, the Conference went on record as believing he had the authority to ‘regulate hours and wave lengths of operation of stations when such action is necessary to prevent interference detrimental to the public good’” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 121). With the approval of the industry but not Congress or the courts, Hoover proceeded to expand his two-tiered licensing class system. A third tier was added for broadcasting at 500-1,000 watts, primarily for large cities and regional areas, and with little to no interference. The “B” class could now broadcast at up to 500 watts, serving a regional area, and again, experience little interference. The third group were those who remained at 360 watts, “all serving limited local areas, sharing time as required, and in many cases restricted to the daytime hours to minimize the chronic interference … a place of howls and squeals and eternal misery, from which escape seemed difficult” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 122). This third class, by the way, is where most educational stations landed, contrasted with the group Barnouw labeled the “radio trust” (AT&T, Westinghouse, et al), who were well funded and well-equipped and had no trouble getting licensed in the top category. In fact, “an understanding had developed among GE, Westinghouse, and RCA under which each would operate three high-powered stations, jointly achieving almost national coverage and stimulating [radio] set sales coast to coast” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 123).

Set sales were impressive: in 1922, sales of radio sets reached $60,000,000, climbed to $136,000,000 in 1923 and reached $358,000,000 in 1924 (Barnouw, 1966, p. 125). Broadcasting costs were also on the rise, spurred by high lease rates for telephone lines that extended program hook-ups, and compensation for on-air talent or music
royalties. The question of who would pay for broadcasting first surfaced in 1921, but by 1924 it was “asked with increasing urgency” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 154). Several suggestions emerged in the industry and popular press: taxes on sales of radio sets, philanthropic support by wealthy individuals, or government financing either at the state or national levels, among others. One inventive station, WHB in Kansas City, Kansas, asked listeners to pay for virtual seating at a broadcast.

Ten dollars entitled the contributor to a box seat, five dollars to a loge seat, three dollars to a parquet seat, two dollars to a balcony seat, one dollar to a gallery seat – all equally mythical but bringing in some three thousand genuine dollars (Barnouw, 1966, p. 156).

The radio trust (AT&T, Westinghouse, et al) prospered through the sales of transmitters, sets and component parts, but under the surface there were conflicts. Earlier alliance agreements that stipulated which bits of the radio industry belonged to whom were starting to erode and, in 1924, the industry giants prepared to take their case to arbitration in order to sort out their differences. Just as they were preparing for battle with each other, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued its 1924 Report of the Federal Trade Commission on the Radio Industry, and AT&T, RCA, GE, Westinghouse, United Fruit and their subsidiaries were accused of monopolistic trade practices. Arbitration plans among the companies continued in near secrecy while the FTC conducted its investigation.

Educational and nonprofit stations, meanwhile, continued to struggle and compete for clear air in the 360-watt ghetto, winking in and out of existence. According to Barnouw, 151 colleges and universities were licensed in 1924 but 49 were gone
before the end of the year. In 1925 the situation worsened, when 25 more stations joined the airwaves but 37 failed (Barnouw, 1966, p. 161-162). Colleges had developed radio courses that helped with expenses, but other “costs” such as inexperienced faculty and disinterested administrations often meant that college radio service was lackluster at best. In 1924 when Hoover, at the urging of the mostly commercially-based attendees of the 4th radio conference, began to deny licenses to applicants on the grounds that there was no more space on the frequency, college and university stations became the target of buy-outs – as did smaller stations and stations owned by nonprofit groups (Barnouw, 1966, p. 174).

Another result of the 1924 radio conference was that Hoover began to be more proactive with licensing and frequency management, angering smaller stations that resented being shifted along the spectrum or being disciplined for drifting on the radio dial. Evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, whose station was closed by the Department of Commerce when she continued to turn up on unassigned frequencies, sent a telegram to Hoover in which she told him to “please order your minions of Satan to leave my station alone” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 180). Hoover was acting without Congressional warrant – despite repeatedly asking for guidance, and resentments lingered about what was perceived to be his high-handedness. Hoover knew he was skating on a legislative edge and welcomed litigation that would force the issue. A test case, *United States v. Zenith*, concluded that the Secretary of Commerce did indeed not have the powers Hoover had been using.

The result of the 1924 private arbitration hearings conducted between “radio trust” members (Westinghouse, GE, AT&T, et al) was the formation of a new company.
In 1926, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) was officially formed, and would be jointly owned by RCA (50%), GE (30%), and Westinghouse (20%) (Barnouw, 1966, p. 185), following the earlier model that had created RCA. The assets of the new company also included a clear channel (no interference and no sharing). By January 1927, NBC was operating two distinct networks of stations, the “red” network that was linked through former AT&T station WEAF, and a “blue” network that was a chain of stations linked through WJZ (a former Westinghouse property). AT&T historian William Banning indicates that the network names sprang from the red and blue pencils used on company maps to trace the development of the networks as they grew (Banning, 1946). At that time, 1927, there were five million homes tuned in to the airwaves.

Radio’s listening audience had continued to expand, purchasing sets and components in ever-increasing numbers. In 1925 listeners spent $430,000,000, $506,000,000 in 1926, $425,600,000 in 1927, and $650,550,000 in 1928.

NBC wasted no time before it began fostering an image of public-mindedness and service, creating an advisory Council whose purpose, according to an opening address by RCA founder Owen D. Young, was to help guide NBC programming. In reality, it was a public face, an institutional strategy to convince education critics and the government that NBC was taking its public service role seriously. Young noted that “the persons asked to serve on the Council had to be of such character and standing and so widely known that they would be accepted universally throughout the country as guarantors of the fairness with which the broadcasting facilities were handled” (NBC, 1926, p. 11). The first council included University of Virginia President Edward A.
Alderman (who chaired the council's first education committee), Walter Damrosch, New York Symphony Orchestra conductor (who would later create one of the most celebrated radio musical programs, "Music Appreciation Hour," 1928-1942), and Carnegie Foundation President Henry S. Pritchett.5

In 1926 when NBC began broadcasting on its clear channel6, other stations sought out their own clear airspace. After the Zenith decision invalidated the Commerce Secretary Hoover's ability to police or adjudicate the airwaves, stations began taking matters into their own hands, finding clear air where they could.

Within six months more than 200 new broadcasters began to operate, increasing the total wattage from 378,000 to 647,000, and many did not respect the frequencies being used by others. The ether had become chaotic. Congress then moved quickly, as Hoover imagined it would, to pass the Radio Act of 1927 (McChesney, 1993, p. 17).

The Radio Act of 1927 established a separate federal body, the Federal Radio Commission (FRC), to oversee administration of the airwaves, and also set a standard

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5 The remaining board members were attorney John W. Davis (co-author of the Clayton antitrust Act of 1914, Congressman, former U.S. Solicitor General); Kansas State Agricultural College President Francis D. Farrell; American Federation of Labor President William Green; RCA President James G. Harbord; attorney Charles E. Hughes (former member of the Supreme Court and Secretary of State); Reverend Charles F. MacFarland, general secretary for the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America; financier Dwight W. Morrow; attorney Morgan J. O'Brien; First National Bank (Los Angeles) President Henry M. Robinson; attorney Elihu Root (former Secretary of War and Secretary of State, U.S. Senator from 1909-1915); Sears Roebuck & Company President Julius Rosenwald; General Federation of Women's Clubs in America President Mary Sherman; Westinghouse Company board chairman Guy E. Tripp; and GE board chairman Owen D. Young (p. 204).

6 Although NBC came first, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) began broadcasts in 1927, and these were the only networks until the Mutual Broadcasting System came along in 1934.
against which license renewals could be measured (Head, 1956; Barnouw, 1966; McChesney, 1993). To continue to hold a license, a station had to demonstrate that it was operating in the "public interest, convenience or necessity" (Barnouw, 1966, p. 196). Passage of the Act and the creation of the FRC moved radio broadcasting into a different phase, bringing with it a different battle for dominance of the ether.

Commercial Interests Versus Educators and Nonprofits

In March 1927, as the Federal Radio Commission was being formed, there were 732 broadcasting stations in the United States: 100 were network affiliated, more than 600 remained independent, 90 were owned by educational institutions and offered everything from concerts to full college courses. Most of the stations were still not selling time for advertising (Barnouw, 1966, p. 209).

The newly formed FRC faced a daunting task: how to bring order to the chaos on the air. Despite administrative staffing and funding problems during its first two years of operation, efforts were made to address the issue of broadcast reform. In March 1928 the Commission issued General Order 32, which required 164 stations to justify their continued existence. "Because programming offered no objective standards, the FRC began to give special attention to technical standards, such as quality of equipment" (Barnouw, 1966, p. 216), which tended to favor stations with deep pockets. McChesney provided a harsher assessment of the FRC hearings, which resulted in 83 station closings, and which continued the precedent set by the Radio Act of 1912, where decisions were based on economic or political grounds.

All but a few of the fifty or so witnesses were representatives of commercial broadcasters, radio manufacturers, or some other commercial enterprise. The
agenda for the hearings was structured around engineering concerns and the sessions were dominated by the testimony of corporate-affiliated radio engineers (McChesney, 1993, p. 19).

There was a further shakeup in 1928 when the FRC announced General Order 40, which mandated 40 clear channels and 34 regional channels, and was ostensibly meant to distribute channels fairly evenly across the country. “A full 94 percent of the broadcasters had their frequency assignments altered by the reallocation. (The 6 percent that were unaffected were chain owned or affiliated stations on clear channels.)” (McChesney, 1993, p. 25). Station licenses at the time were for three months, and any station could challenge another for its assigned frequency at the end of the licensing period. “This head-to-head competition for scarce licenses created great antipathy between the contending applicants, particularly, as was often the case, when commercial broadcasters successfully challenged nonprofit broadcasters for the use of their frequencies” (McChesney, 1993, p. 27). The net result of the General Order 40 shuffle and resulting challenges was 100 fewer stations on the air by 1929 (McChesney, 1993, p. 27).

Educational stations were frequently among those closed or restricted to daytime hours, which severely limited their ability to reach the adult education audience sought by college and universities. In 1928 and 1929, a total of 36 college and university stations ceased broadcasting, while others had to be content with time-share arrangements – often with commercial stations who were able to snag the more lucrative evening hours, and who then went on to petition the FRC for more time

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7 For further comment on the basis of and effects of General Order 40, see McChesney, 1993, pages 24-26.
As a result, in addition to the financial woes caused by the Depression, small nonprofit and educational stations had to spend precious dollars justifying their continued existence at FRC hearings.

The situation was exacerbated by the FRC's peculiar view of program content. Commercial stations positioned themselves as serving the "general" public, crossing economic and class strata by offering a wide variety of programs, where education and nonprofit stations tended to attract listeners from particular niche groups. Because education and nonprofit programming was not seen to have universal appeal, it seemed to the FRC to represent only one perspective. The FRC felt that stations that broadcast a variety of types of material were serving the public good to a greater extent than stations that were narrowly focused. According to this logic commercial networks better served the public interest, convenience and necessity than educational or religious stations, and since the finite nature of the ether didn't permit every cause (or person or belief) to have a voice on the air, single-focus stations - according to the FRC - were actually transmitting a type of propaganda. "If a station's programming was intended for, or appealed to, only a portion of the audience, then the FRC considered that the balance of potential listeners were victims of discrimination" (Craig, 2000, p. 67). The FRC saw nonprofit broadcasters as propagandists who were "more interested in spreading their particular viewpoint than in reaching the broadcast [sic] possible audience with whatever programming was most attractive" (McChesney, 1993, p. 27). This equating of variety with public service was a strong support for commercial broadcasters.

As more and more education-owned stations fell by the wayside, an organization
was formed to champion their cause. This organization, the National Committee on Education by Radio (NCER), was formed in 1930 by representatives from the NEA [National Education Association], ACUBS [Association of College and University Broadcast Stations], the National University Extension Association, (NUEA), NASU [National Association of State Universities], the Jesuit Education Association, ALGCU [Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities], the National Catholic Education Association, the National Council of State Superintendents, and the American Council on Education, to fight for a non-commercial share of the airwaves (McChesney, 1993, p. 46.)

Chairman (Mr.) Joy Elmer Morgan, who was also the editor of the Journal of the National Education Association, identified the NCER mission as “conservation ... to save or to recover for the uses of education a fair share of the radio broadcasting frequencies” (Morgan, as quoted in Barnouw, 1966, p. 261). NCER was financed primarily by the Payne Fund, which was founded in 1925 as the National Committee for the Study of Juvenile Reading, and was formed to “initiate, assist, or conduct researches, surveys, experiments, and other projects from which may be developed increased understanding of youth and its needs and capacities for constructive participation in organized society.” It was most known for its groundbreaking studies on the effects of motion pictures on youth, published in the late 1920s-early 1930s, as well as a 1929 publication, *Radio in Education*.*

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*8 Payne Fund, [n.d.]. ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Program, A.L.A. Project, Financing – Payne Fund, 1932. For more information on the Payne Fund, see also *Children and the Movies: Media Influence and the Payne Fund Controversy*, by G.S. Jowett, I.C. Jarvie, and K. Fuller-Seeley; Cambridge University Press, 1996.) The Fund’s other notable venture was financial support of a propaganda campaign, from
Many members of the American Association of Adult Educators (AAAE) were also involved in the educator-broadcaster disputes, and were cynical about network cooperation with broadcasters. They were reluctant to invest any time discussing educational uses of radio "until a considerable group within the [broadcast] industry had indicated a willingness to cooperate and an interest in the further development of educational programs" (Tyson, 1930, p. 8).

In 1929-1930, the Carnegie Corporation of New York funded an AAAE study of the state of educational broadcasting. The director of the study, on loan from the Columbia University’s Extension Office, was Levering Tyson, who had been an early and eager advocate of radio education. The study, published as *Education Tunes In*, led to the 1930 formation of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE), funded by money from Carnegie money and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and was to be NCER’s philosophical opposite within the educational camp.

Tyson had strong feelings about educators’ lack of success in creating viable radio content.

Unless education does enter the lists and compete for its share of air time there is danger that it will be shut out, to a limited extent at least. No progress will be made by assuming that education has an inalienable right to part of the air. It will be found that business and industry have just as clear rights. Education will have to combat the attractiveness of other programs, and until that fact is definitely recognized, time will be wasted (Tyson, 1930, p. 51).

1931-1933, that involved a small California newspaper, the *Ventura Free Press*, and which was intended to foment popular opinion against commercial broadcasting (See McChesney, 1993, pp. 57-62.)
His stance was unpopular with a majority of the more vocal educational and nonprofit broadcasting critics. They felt he betrayed educational interests when he compromised with the networks, that he helped facilitate an unfair situation, and made it possible for the networks to use him and his new organization, NACRE, as evidence that dedicated noncommercial channels were not important. Any educational program NACRE helped put on the air became a weapon the networks used to undercut the position taken by NCER and its allies. If NACRE could work with broadcasters to get educational content on the air, anyone could – a sentiment that nullified educator arguments and made it seem as though there was no need to reserve any radio spectrum space for educational interests. There was another fundamental difference in approach between NCER and NACRE. According to Leach, NCER’s view of education by radio focused on vocational subjects, preparation for careers and jobs, as opposed to NACRE’s view that was much more liberal arts based (Leach, 1983).

NACRE’s stated goal was not to produce programs but rather to act as a sort of clearinghouse for educational broadcasting information, and as a go-between for the networks. According to director Tyson,

Such a national group, safeguarding the soundness of the educational material to be broadcast and taking into account the attitude of the American adult public toward ‘up-lift,’ could arrange programs that would be acceptable from both the broadcasting and educational points of view. It seems reasonable to hope that industry will recognize the advisability of putting such programs on the air, will readily see that it is good business to do so, and will provide the funds necessary to engage talent (Tyson, 1930, p. 76).
Whether traitor to education interests or network stooge, Tyson was determined to work with broadcasters rather than battling them for sole possession of either content or wavelengths; a stance that earned NACRE scorn on both sides of the argument. NCER and its allies cast NACRE as a deluded instrument of the networks and/or the devil’s minions. On the network side the comments were more moderate publicly, but privately there was little respect for Tyson and his organization. In fact, according to one report, NACRE was seen as NBC’s “educational ‘branch’” (McChesney, 1993, p. 53). Tyson was a man who, having accepted the status quo as unalterable if not necessarily the best possible system, was willing to confer public relations benefits upon the network in return for having educational programming broadcast. This was the explicit quid pro quo that both sides recognized from the outset (McChesney, 1993, p. 56).

While Tyson was trying to find ways to work with what he saw as a political reality – the increasing commercialization of radio – NCER and its allies fought for dedicated educational space on the spectrum. They had little success, routed at every turn by the combined forces of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), NBC and CBS. The battle was fought in the press, at conferences (MacLatchy, 1930; Tyler, 1934; NACRE, 1936), in Congress (Blakely, 1979; McChesney, 1993; Craig, 2000), and in book-length endorsements of what had become the “American” system of broadcasting (Tyson, 1930; Tyson & Waller, 1934; Tyson & Donovan, 1936). This phrase, the “American” system of broadcasting, first used by Senator Clarence C. Dill (author of the Radio Act of 1927 and a major player in broadcast politics through 1934),
"emphasize[d] the patriotic nature of for-profit, advertising-supported broadcasting," and was used often enough that when "commercial broadcasters pointedly referred to the status quo as the 'American Plan' or the 'American System' for broadcasting ... this became the generally accepted meaning of the terms. Any attempts to alter the commercial setup or to replace it with a government- or license-fee system were met with accusations of being un-American. This was a source of tremendous frustration for the broadcast reformers" (McChesney, 1993, p. 114).

Commercial spokesmen had an incomparable advantage. When they spoke of Walter Damrosch and his NBC *Music Appreciation Hour* or the CBS broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic, they were citing examples everyone knew or had heard of ... No interconnection linked the educational stations of Wisconsin, Ohio, and Illinois. If [educational] programs were mentioned, they were programs not known to the country at large .... Thus protesting educators were in effect talking about an abstraction, an idea. Commercial broadcasters were talking about a reality that was becoming a part of the nation's daily life (Barnouw, 1966, p. 279).

Power and money in the fight for spectrum rights resided chiefly in a group that McChesney called the "radio lobby" (p. 107), which included representatives of CBS, NBC, NAB, and affiliated groups such as AT&T and GE, among others. By the beginning of the 1930s, the fight between the radio lobby and nonprofit interests involved two issues of particular relevance to this study: (1) a growing public reaction against radio advertisement; and (2) the need to offer culturally and educationally uplifting programming, which was "of fundamental importance in keeping increased
governmental regulation or even radical reform at bay” (McChesney, 1993, p. 115-116).

The radio lobby was particularly adept at weakening or even subverting nonprofit arguments against the big business of radio by cultivating relationships with nationally respected educational and civic groups. Commercial interests contacted educational, religious, and civic groups, either directly or through NACRE, offering free airtime for public programming or organizational self-promotion, e.g. broadcasting institutional conferences (as they were to do for ALA.) NBC’s offer of free airtime for an ALA-sponsored children’s radio program is another instance of this strategy.

In addition to the direct appeal to institutions and organizations, networks influenced public and legislative consciousness through “an extensive public relations campaign on behalf of the status quo … pamphlets, articles, and books that extolled the virtues of private, commercial broadcasting for American society” (McChesney, 1993, p. 113). NBC President Aylesworth, for example, referred to radio as “a champion of progress,” bringing “complete security and universal happiness” to the American public (Aylesworth, as quoted in McChesney, 1993, p. 164). This energetic and efficient campaign was meant to prevent the federal government from intervening in the broadcasting situation. There was some reason for their concern; “the response to commercial broadcasting in these years [1930-1932] was far more negative than it would be thereafter, and the Radio Act of 1927 (see p. 32) was ample evidence that the government would step in when it felt the need. The FRC, Congress, and newspaper radio editors were inundated by letters protesting commercialized broadcasting” (McChesney, 1993, p. 122).

Reformers and the radio lobby played an uneven game of King of the Castle –
with Congress being the castle and commercial interests keeping the upper hand most of the time. Radio-related legislation was introduced in every session of Congress between the enactment of the Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934, but failed to pass into law due, particularly after 1929, to the dire economic straits of the country. Congress generally focused on legislation related to economic recovery, but when some piece of legislation did find sponsorship, the gloves came off and the war of words began.

In 1931 NCER asked Senator Simeon Fess (R-Ohio) to put forward a bill that called for 15% of existing radio channels to be given to educational institutions. Radio reformers swarmed to Washington to lobby for passage, while the NAB labeled the Fess Bill as “the most vicious piece of legislation before Congress” (“Fight Looms on Fess Bill,” *Broadcaster’s New Bulletin*, February 7, 1931, as quoted in McChesney, 1993, p. 129).

The year after the Fess Bill was introduced, James Couzens (R-Michigan) introduced Senate Resolution (SR) 129, that commented on Americans’ dislike of advertising, and requested that the FRC respond to questions specifically about governmental control of the spectrum, advertising, and whether Europe could provide any better approach. The resolution was promptly amended by Senator Dill to include questions requiring the FRC to “discuss its treatment of educational stations and to defend the level of educational programming on the commercial stations” (McChesney, 1993, p. 142).

At the same time in the House of Representatives, Representative Ewin Davis (D-Tennessee), introduced the Radio Omnibus Bill, which included a provision for
limiting advertising on the largest wattage stations, something that would directly affect
the networks and their affiliates. Dill went into action again, adding amendments that
mitigated the effects of the advertising provisions. In fact, he was able to prevent the
bill from coming up for public hearings (McChesney, 1993).

The report from Couzens’ SR 129, which required the FRC to study the amount
of time given to educational programming on commercial stations, was ready for
release in 1933. The report, entitled Commercial Radio Advertising, completely
validated advertising and commercial interests. As reported by Sol Taishoff in
Broadcasting, “the American system of broadcasting is predicated upon the use of radio
facilities as a medium for local and national advertising” and “the present attitude of
broadcasters, as indicated [in the report], justifies the commission in believing that
educational programs can be safely left to the voluntary gift of the use of facilities by
commercial stations” (McChesney, 1993, p. 148).

The Depression affected the business of radio in different ways, depending
mostly on the size of the operation. There were only 24 college/university stations
operating in 1933, and only two of them had full-time broadcasting licenses. Twelve of
them accepted advertising, paralleling their radio advertisements to the print ads that
appeared in scholarly publications. But response was swift and hostile from commercial
stations (Barnouw, 1966, p. 271-272). Small nonprofits and weaker stations had
difficulty sustaining their programming, and many had rosters of unpaid employees –
particularly in the sales department where jobs were commission-based. Networks and
advertisers experienced a dip in sales and profits in 1933 but otherwise showed few
economic effects. In fact, NBC partnered with John Rockefeller, Jr. to build modern
studio space, known as “Radio City,” in what became New York City’s Rockefeller Center, in the midst of the Depression. NBC moved in and started operations in the new space in 1933.

With the election of a Franklin D. Roosevelt, educators felt a renewed hope. It appeared that Roosevelt had no strong opinions about commercial broadcasting – at least none publicly expressed. “While the New Deal may have had ambitious plans in other areas, broadcasting does not appear to have been a special area of concern” (McChesney, 1993, p. 184). Roosevelt reorganized the Department of Commerce and abolished the FRC in the process, but made no permanent provision for broadcasting. In the summer of 1933, Roosevelt asked the Secretary of Commerce, Daniel C. Roper, to look at the possibility that radio be nationalized, but the subcommittee Roper formed to consider the question came back with a recommendation that the current system was fine. The Roper Report, which was a slim fourteen-page document that essentially affirmed private (commercial) control of the airwaves and called for the consolidation of all communications regulations into a single unit within the Department of Commerce, was a weak document that by its authors’ own admissions did not consider the question of radio broadcasting. The subcommittee did recommend the “consolidation of all communication regulator functions under one federal agency” and emphasized a need for a “national communications policy” (McChesney, 1993, p. 185). McChesney comments that the committee “met in complete secrecy during the fall and did not solicit any form of public testimony. Roper later would justify this secrecy by explaining that the committee was conducting a ‘study,’ not an ‘investigation,’ and therefore had not sought the opinions of ‘outsiders’” (McChesney, 1993, p. 186).
Not entirely content with the results, President Roosevelt pushed Roper to create an interdepartmental group that could recommend concrete suggestions for eventual broadcast legislation. Amid charges of partisanship and collusion with commercial radio interests, Roper changed his mind; he officially requested that a new group undertake the study. President Roosevelt approved the idea and created the Federal Committee to Study Radio Broadcasting (FCSRB), which included representatives from the FRC, the State Department, and the Office of Education, and was asked to provide the foundation for "permanent legislation for the regulation of broadcasting" (McChesney, 1993, p. 192-193).

Senator Dill and Representative Sam Rayburn (D-Texas) – representing broadcast interests – had hoped the Roper Report would end governmental study and that there would be no further consideration of a situation (commercial ownership) that was being resolved to the satisfaction of the people whose interests they represented. In order to quickly push the legislative process forward, they drafted legislation to consolidate the status quo without waiting for results from the FCSRB. In February 1934, Dill and Rayburn introduced legislation that drew heavily on the Radio Act of 1927, and eventually became the Communications Act of 1934. The bill included language that abolished the FRC and established a new commission, the Federal Communications Commission, to handle anything to do with communications in the United States. Roosevelt and the FRC came out in support of the bills drafted by the two men (McChesney, 1993).

An aborted attempt, known as the Harney Amendment in honor of the Catholic Paulist priest Father John B. Harney who had attempted to pressure the Senate
Committee on Interstate Commerce to include the amendment, was made to add language to the bill that would force 25% of all channels to go to nonprofit broadcasters. But when that failed, Senators Robert Wagner of New York and Henry Hatfield of West Virginia created the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment, which dictated that all radio licenses would be suspended and redistributed by the commission formed under the new legislation – with the understanding that 25% of the new stations would be assigned to "educational, religious, agricultural, labor, cooperative, and similar non-profit-making associations" (Barnouw, 1968, p. 24). Wagner and Hatfield went further, though, inadvertently providing a weapon that was immediately used against educational interests. The Wagner-Hatfield Amendment provided the option for nonprofits to sell time in order to finance operations, which Senator Dill quickly used to derail support for the bill. Wasn’t the consensus that there was already too much advertising in radio? How could additional advertising be justified? He further weakened the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment by proposing as a compromise, Section (307(c), known as the Harney Amendment, which directed the FCC to hold hearings on the idea of assigning a fixed percentage of stations to nonprofits. Thus, the immediate threat of reorganization or loss of stations by commercial broadcasters was removed. When the House and Senate bills met in committee for final resolution, the inclusion of Dill’s Section 307 (c) clause acted as a sop, and legislators agreed to drop most of the objections against commercial broadcasters from the language of the final version of the bill (McChesney, 1993).

The Communications Act of 1934 was signed into law on June 18, 1934.

“Senator Dill informed [NAB lobbyist] Henry Bellows over the telephone: ‘We have
been very generous to you fellows.’ Bellows would later comment: ‘When we read it, we found that every major point we [commercial broadcasters] had asked for was there’” (Bellows, as quoted in McChesney, 1993, p. 209). Hearings mandated by the Harney Amendment were held in the fall of 1934, but commercial broadcasting had solidified its hold on the airwaves and the fight for the ether was essentially over. Broadcasters no longer felt a keen threat of governmental intervention but their public relations campaigns were still in high gear because of mounting protests over advertising and program content. These subjects, advertising and programming, will be treated in later chapters.
CHAPTER 2: LIBRARIANS TAKE TO THE AIRWAVES

Public Libraries and their Interest in Radio

There have been public libraries in the United States since the Peterborough (NH) Public Library was established in 1833, but these institutions came into their own after the Civil War, in response to the idea that educated and literate citizens were vital for a strong democracy. Although Progressive Era changes in labor laws that meant minimum employment ages and mandatory schooling arrived around the turn of the 20th century, the majority of youth rarely made it to eighth grade before quitting to take their places in an economy that was moving rapidly from an agrarian model to an industrial model that required workers with new skills. Waves of immigrants were also entering the country, drawn by the seemingly limitless opportunities of America, and libraries became important acculturation points for new immigrants and their children.9 In 1876 librarians formed the American Library Association, to develop library services, define the profession, create library education, and to “promote library interests in the United States” (Thomison, 1978, p. xi).

As public libraries matured, specialties emerged that accommodated new demands made on the library by its growth and its patrons. Among these specialties was work with children. Although public libraries were conceived of initially as places for adult education, even the first – Peterborough – was established with the help of 150 juvenile books for 9- to 16-year olds (Jenkins, 2000). During the last two decades of the 1800s children’s librarians expanded their work with youth, drawing on the traditions of

9 See Jesse Shera, Foundations of the Public Library (1949, University of Chicago Press), and Sidney Ditzion, Arsenals of a Democratic Culture (1947, American Library Association) for a fuller discussion of the early development of American public libraries.

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teaching and social work among others to create a profession that was marked by outreach and innovation (McDowell, 2007). Children’s librarians took their books and services into urban settlement houses and rural areas, built collections, and created innovative programming that included games, clubs, storytelling, read-alouds and other literacy-related activities. They made a strong case for their work and in 1900 ALA established the Children’s Librarians’ Section. In 1915 a section was added for school librarians, and in 1930 ALA created the Young People’s Reading Round Table. For reasons that are unclear, in 1926 the ALA Executive Board also created a separate Committee on Library Work with Children.¹⁰

At the root of the profession of children’s librarianship was a love affair with books and reading, and the desire to connect children with the kind of literature that would help them grow into productive adults and good citizens. Librarians facilitated this process by working with publishers to create the “right” kind of books, by constructing lists of recommended books, and by contributing to journals such as the *Horn Book* (1924) that promoted a shared vision of literary merit (Hearne, “Matriarchy”, 1996; Jenkins, 1996; Eddy, 2006). As the opportunity arose to take their message to the airwaves, it was only natural that they would build their radio programming on the twin pillars of outreach and reading.

The American Library Association and its members were among early broadcasters, as evidenced by the 1922 conference where President Azariah S. Root temporarily turned over his presiding duties at the Third General Session so that he could give a radio talk on county libraries on a station operated by the *Detroit News*...
A year later, 1923, the Public Documents section heard a paper entitled, “The Radio and Library Extension Through Broadcasting of Document News,” in which author Charles Reeder noted that programs in Pittsburgh, Newark, Chicago, Dayton, Cincinnati, and Toledo covered material related to books and reading, “things which are dear to a librarian’s heart” (Reeder, 1923, Public Documents Round Table, p. 253). While only two instances of library-related programs are on the Reeder’s list of programs, an appeal for a building campaign in Cincinnati and children’s stories broadcast from the Toledo Bee newspaper plant, he felt that getting the library on the air was dependent “upon the initiative of the library people in asking for representation on the programs” (Reeder, 1923, p. 253). In this assumption he was to be proven only a little correct.

Still, in 1924, if ALA members were unable to get to the conference that year, an item in the official journal, the Bulletin of the American Library Association, alerted them to the fact that they could tune in their radios to “hear a few of the old familiar voices and pick up a key-note of the meeting” (A.L.A. News, 1924, p. 85). In 1926, Atlantic City Press station WPG broadcasted brief conference snippets each night during the week of the conference (Radio Program, 1926, p. 186). Details are scarce so it isn’t clear whether ALA requested the broadcasts or local stations contacted them.

Newspapers weren’t the only businesses to get into broadcasting. Facilities were owned by a diverse group that included department stores such as Fair Store, Bambergers, Gimbels, Wanamakers and Strawbridge & Clothiers (Barnouw, 1966, p. 100), hotels and newspapers from Atlanta to Spokane (p. 98), as well as a Chicago stockyard, a laundry in Los Angeles and even a marble company; all of whom saw radio
as a novel opportunity that would help them keep a loyal customer base.

The basis upon which AT&T [the first to host commercial sponsors] attempted to make toll broadcasting attractive was not that it would directly stimulate sales, but rather that it would bring ‘good will publicity’ to the sponsor and ‘humanize’ their relations with their customers (McChesney, 1993, p. 15).

Once these facilities were licensed, they needed content and, as popular radio developed in the mid- to late 1920s, there was time to fill but not much with which to fill it. Early broadcasts subsisted on local talent that was often undependable, and humorous stories emerged about how desperate announcers would do just about anything to avoid dead air. In one instance a station scheduled an afternoon of programming but, when “three performers in a row failed to appear at the studio, [the announcer] thrust his microphone out a window and declared, “Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the sounds of New York” (Kyvig, 2004, p. 78.)

Radio programming was a wonderful opportunity, at least from the point of view of some librarians. Reports in the *Library Journal* and *Bulletin of the American Library Association* describe programs of various types offered by libraries in Providence (RI), New York, Cincinnati (OH), Grand Rapids (MI), Chicago, St. Louis (MO), Des Moines (IA) and even smaller cities such as Appleton (WI). Library interest in radio broadcasting developed to the point that in 1926 ALA established the Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting (CLRB)\(^{11}\), whose task, according to Board minutes from November 29, was to “study broadcasting by libraries and similar

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\(^{11}\) Appendix B, p. 228-231, is a complete list of committee members for the ALA Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting, from 1926 through 1940.
agencies and to report to the council.\footnote{Executive Board Meeting, November 29-30, 1926. ALA 2/1/1, Box 3, Folder – American Library Association Executive Board Meeting, November 29-30, 1926, Transcript c.1, p. 6-7.} Among the first things the committee did was to put out a call in 1927 for information about library participation on the air, for “a list of the libraries broadcasting, a statement of the days and hours when the broadcasting is done, the name of the station, and the type of material broadcasted” (“Radio information requested,” *Library Journal*, 52, 1927, p. 526).

Librarians originally conceived of radio as a means of reaching thousands of non-users, to make them aware of the range of services and materials available at their local libraries. When they weren’t giving stories or book reviews over the air, public librarians also developed ancillary services that reflected traditional library roles: they created bibliographies, posted notices for programs of educational interest, and created book displays that extended the life of the radio program beyond its broadcast dates. In addition, network schedules were printed in the *Library Journal*. One instance of this ancillary type of library assistance was the work done by John Chancellor, director of the Adult Education Department at headquarters, who created bibliographies for the programs created and aired by the National League of Women Voters and NBC’s Walter Damrosch (Sayers, 1930). As noted in a report given by Frances Sayers at the Institute for Education by Radio conference in 1930,

> the librarian’s part in educational broadcasting is to extend to its utmost limits
> the service that the library is already equipped to give, and to look upon radio as
> a means of encouraging a wider use of books ... If the listener finds that the
> library has anticipated his interest, he will learn to think of listening and reading

Some librarians were skeptical about radio as a publicity tool and wondered whether libraries should be engaged in broadcasting at all. Respondents to the CLRB survey expressed the belief that freely offered time from the stations should not be refused, but it was “hard to get tangible results,” and many felt they were “unable to find conclusive evidence from any library that the radio brought returns commensurate with the effort” (Drury, 1930, p. 463). Others spoke to exuberant (sometimes unmanageable) public reaction, as in this comment:

If the idea of radio reviews can be tied up with purposeful reading, rather than the less valuable notion of getting the public to rush like a flock of sheep from one new book to another, we shall have accomplished something (Drury, “Radio Broadcasting Round Table, Bulletin, 1930, p. 463).

This difference of opinion appeared early in the literature and never completely disappeared. In a letter appearing in the April 15, 1928 issue of Library Journal, librarian Ethel Fair (who, ironically, became a member of the Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting in 1929) acknowledged the divide, noting that she had heard that many libraries tried broadcasting but were no longer doing it, because “there has been no impression made over the air” (Fair, 1928, p. 358). She pointed to a week’s programming related to books and reading, where only one program had a library connection. People were going other places to get information on books, perhaps because libraries were reluctant to give time and effort to developing and sustaining their own program. If radio was meant to help advertise library services, she pondered,
and if the association thought it important enough to create a special committee, she challenged her colleagues to consider whether “the work [is] not of sufficient importance to be carried out even at the sacrifice of some other work” (Fair, 1928, p. 358).

Charles Brown, at that time chair of the ALA Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting (CLRB), responded to Fair’s letter by noting that his own (academic) library in Iowa went on the air “not … to advertise the library, but to render a service to those who care to listen by informing them of interesting material in print which they may like to read” (Brown, 1928, p. 358.) Public service rather than benefit to the library made it less important, in his opinion, who was actually broadcasting; he cared only that radio was making it possible for more people than ever to get excited about reading. Brown was unknowingly making an argument very similar to NBC’s feelings about educators in general when he said:

I very much doubt whether the public is especially interested in hearing from librarians. They are interested in hearing discussions on books … I personally, would much prefer to have some person who can entertain give the radio talks on books … rather than listen to a librarian (who may be extremely dull), just because he is a librarian (Brown, 1928, p. 358).

In an attempt to help libraries who were interested in broadcasting but didn’t have time and/or staff to devote to it, the CLRB put out a call for libraries to send successful radio manuscripts to ALA where they could be distributed to other libraries as requested. The committee also began collecting best practices in preparation for what they called an “Outline” on library radio broadcasting (“Committee news notes,” 1928,
At the 1928 ALA annual conference, the CLRB defined its purpose in terms of three tasks: to assist libraries who were either currently broadcasting or planning to do so; to encourage more libraries to get on the airwaves; and to find ways to promote books and libraries in programs produced by non-librarians. The group decided to focus their energies on the first and third tasks since these ideas were directly tied to public library purpose, while it "might be injurious rather than helpful [to force libraries into broadcasting] unless the libraries are fitted for such work" (Brown, 1928, p. 619).

Librarians that did broadcast saw educational benefits. At the 1930 ALA annual conference, the CLRB recommended interacting with the technology in ways that complemented the educational and civic mission of the public library. "The library can collaborate and tie up the radio programs with the information in books; it can select from the programs and announce educational features; it can cooperate with the local station and with the national broadcasting offices" (Drury, 1930, p. 654).

In addition, library radio broadcasting "made friends for the library among people otherwise not reached," said Brown, and indicated that his own Iowa State College station once received more than 500 letters in one week. In fact, libraries were quite useful to broadcasting stations, commented 1929 ALA conference speaker and Des Moines (Iowa) librarian Forrest B. Spaulding, because in his case, "in the recent hearing of the reallocation of wave-lengths, the station cited the library programs in its appeal before the Federal Radio Commission" (Weston, 1929, p. 554).

In 1929, the ALA radio committee surveyed 550 public and academic libraries
about the type and extent of their current broadcasting. They received 94 replies, and
out of 25 libraries that had "sponsor[ed] a definite program at regular intervals, and on a
definite schedule," only 12 were still broadcasting those programs (Drury, 1930, p. 463). The other 13 were forced off the air because of various problems that included lack of staff time to prepare the program, the library program being reassigned to unproductive times when their target audience would be unlikely to hear them, their allotted time being sold by the radio station, or the station closing altogether. The report concluded that, "library radio broadcasting cannot be vital and far-reaching unless it can be properly financed and put on a national basis" (Drury, 1930, p. 463).

Children’s Librarians Take to the Air

As noted earlier, children’s librarians were on the air as early as 1922, when the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh broadcast stories for children on station KDKA. Their broadcasts had an immediate impact among their young patrons.

The boys who are used to coming to the little children’s story hour are hurrying to finish [building] their radio sets so that they can “listen in” and those who have them tell us, with great glee, that they have heard their own children’s librarian the other night ... Fairy tales and animal stories prove to be the most popular (Ahern, 1922, p. 502).

Library contributions to radio programming for children took many forms and appeared to stay consistent over time. Libraries provided storytellers, or recommended stories or books that the station then developed into dramatizations or skits, or suggested music the station could use with its own programs. Sometimes children’s librarians themselves would go to the studio and perform or, in rare cases, the
broadcasts would take place at the library. For other programs, children’s material was incorporated as a short segment in programs for adults or families (“Second Session,” 1933).

Programs themselves came in all shapes and sizes but most were remarkably similar to typical children’s programming in public libraries. A sampling from committee reports, library literature and books published about library radio broadcasting provides a sense of what was being broadcast.\(^{13}\)

- In 1924, Tacoma (WA) Public Library provided storytellers for a newspaper-owned radio station. The tellers came from among the ranks of the children’s staff and friends of the library. Librarians also recommended material for use by a ‘professional reader,’ hired by the station to do a children’s series. Tacoma also organized a contest for Children’s Book Week, where winners were chosen from book reviews submitted by children, and the children read their entries on the air (“Use of Radio,” 1924, p. 582).

- Fort Wayne (IN) broadcasted stories three nights a week in 1929. “Three types of stories were told, a continued story for younger children (such as Winnie-the-Pooh), a continued story for older children (Robin Hood), and an evening for request stories when any story in the Public Library was told when requested” (Weston, 1929, p. 344).

- Cleveland Public Library offered a show in 1933 known as “Everyman’s Treasure,” that twice a year solicited quiz questions from public school children, for a younger version of the show (Nunmaker, 1948).

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\(^{13}\) See Appendix E (p. 236) for a more information on library-produced radio programming between 1922 and 1956.
Broadcast Challenges

Library programming was not without problems, in spite of claims made by NBC President Merlin Aylesworth in 1930 that network doors were “wide open to those who would raise the level of national culture” (Barnouw, 1966, p. 262). As commercial radio became more entrenched and profitable, librarians found their programs shunted to undesirable time slots or bumped completely off the air. According to the 1929 CLRB survey,

Reasons given for the discontinuance of the broadcasting are the following: the crowding out of library programs in favor of commercial programs; the reorganization of stations; the allotting of inappropriate or unpopular hours to library programs, resulting in little response from the radio audience; the prevalence of programs in which only the recent books are reviewed, which brings about an over-stimulation of interest in books for which there is a natural demand, and the care involved in the preparation of programs and the procuring of speakers either on the staff or elsewhere who have the ability to broadcast.  

Although the issues stated above were reported in the library literature,

broadcast history literature attempted to explain what caused the difficulties educational

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14 F.W.K. Drury, notes attached to a letter to L. Tyson, January 4, 1929 [sic], NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs, p. 2. There is a date discrepancy on this F.W.K. Drury memo to Levering Tyson. It is dated January 4, 1929, and makes reference to surveys sent out on December 20 (presumably in 1928), but the survey is discussed at the 1930 conference. This means that it would have lain unused for a year if Drury’s date is correct. I surmise that the correspondence actually took place in January 1930, which would be consistent with the fact that Bertine Weston was acting secretary for the CLRB in 1929 and Drury didn’t come on until 1930.

15 “Use of Radio,” 1924, p. 581; Cannon, 1928, p. 154; F.K. Drury, notes attached to a letter to L. Tyson, January 4, 1929 [sic], NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs, p. 2.
and nonprofit programming experienced at a time when commercial stations were interested in developing fee-based programming. For example, Leach talks about educational stations that “were compelled to share time with commercial stations that wanted to buy them out,” and how other stations “suffered debilitating switches in power, frequency, or time assignments ordered by the FRC” (1983, p. 3). Barnouw notes that several stations, such as the University of Arkansas’s KFMQ, Nebraska Wesleyan University’s WCAJ, were swallowed by commercial interests. (Barnouw, E., 1966, p. 218). One extended example of this examination of causality is a chapter entitled “Relations with the National Broadcasting Company,” in *Four Years of Network Broadcasting*, authored by NACRE’s Committee on Civic Education (NACRE, 1936, pp. 49-72). This chapter detailed the organization’s struggles with network giant, NBC, that included time shifts, changes in local program carriers and even an abbreviated program time. The absence in the library press of any explanation or exploration of these issues indicates the profession’s detachment from the spectrum wars detailed in Chapter 1. Librarians didn’t discuss why these things happened, just that they happened and what the problems meant for their particular local library. For example, during the 1930 Radio Broadcasting Round Table, Drury reported that libraries had “discontinued broadcasting because of bad hours, because of being crowded out by commercial broadcasting,” but the response was a mild committee recommendation that an “inquiry be made as to cooperation between libraries and important stations and chain programs” (Drury, 1930, p. 653). The following year Levering Tyson (from NACRE) and CLRBC chair Luther Dickerson suggested to radio round table attendees that a national children’s radio program might be the antidote
(Drury, 1931, p. 587).

As broadcasting developed through the 1930s, getting permission for book dramatizations, which were very popular parts of children’s radio broadcasts, also became an issue. As more radio programs were created for children, there was greater use of published children’s literature – but not necessarily greater profits or even credit for authors or editors whose work was being used. For example, Frederic Melcher, publisher of *Publishers Weekly* and chair of the National Association of Book Publishers’ (NABP) Copyright Committee, expressed publishers’ concerns when he contacted New York Public Library Supervisor of Storytelling Mary Gould Davis about the proprieties of using copyrighted materials in connection with the proposed ALA national children’s hour. According to Melcher, broadcasting dramatizations of books most often did not lead to purchase, and authors were being shortchanged. NABP wanted to require publisher permission to use book content on any radio program, a fee for the use of the materials (similar to the royalties paid songwriters), and approval rights on broadcast materials so that the quality of the content was not compromised by broadcast. 16 Unfortunately, this meant that librarians rejected certain materials because they either could not afford the royalty imposed or they could not get permission for use. Children’s librarian-broadcaster Katherine Watson, for example, commented that there are many stories we have not been able to use such as “The Elephant’s Child,” by Kipling and “Winnie-the-Pooh,” by Milne and several others. Since this is not a commercial program we have not been able to pay the fee asked by the publisher (Watson, 1936, p. 823).

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16 Melcher, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committees, Miscellaneous, 1934.
There were unanticipated challenges as well; for instance, the learning curve for library staff as they became scriptwriters and radio actors. The departure of a single staff member could shut down a library show. As more libraries began broadcasting, ALA started a script exchange so that libraries across the country could have access to scripts that had been audience tested.

The Germ of an Idea

NACRE director Levering Tyson, whose background was in higher education and extension work, was nonetheless aware of a growing outcry related to the nature of children’s radio programming in the commercial sector, and he felt that his organization should undertake some effort to provide for youth. The NACRE programming model was to contact knowledgeable agencies or organizations to provide content that NACRE then shepherded onto the air via CBS and/or NBC. In regard to a children’s program, he contacted ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam in November 1930, to see if ALA might be interested in creating a children’s program under NACRE auspices. Milam suggested that Tyson poll children’s librarians for feedback about what was needed to get such a project started. Milam also made the point that he thought taking an individual rather than institutional approach might be better because, in spite of having organized a radio committee in 1926, Milam felt ALA lacked institutional experience with broadcasting. Taking Milam’s advice, he sent ALA an official request for help formulating a children’s program.

The [NACRE] Council had discovered from a variety of sources that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with many of the “Children’s Hour” programs on the air. This dissatisfaction is reflected to some extent right into the broadcasting
studios with the result that many broadcasters are beginning to realize that some of these “Children’s Hour” programs are pretty terrible things. Accordingly the time seems propitious for the presentation of some attractive suggestions ... After consulting with a number of interested people I propose to write to a group of children’s librarians requesting them as individuals to send the Council some suggestions to cover the whole problem.”

The “pretty terrible things” Tyson referred to included slang and bad grammar. There were also concerns that programs included inappropriate messages for children; for example one mother wrote a letter to the editor of the Washington Post complaining about the number of songs extolling the virtues of being a bum (“More Bum Songs,” August 26, 1928, p. S11).

With Milam’s approval, Tyson surveyed children’s librarians and found that they had many different ideas about quality children’s radio programs. Although the survey was sent to 18 librarians, there are only twelve completed surveys and letters from several other respondents in the archival records. Nonetheless, we can still get a sense of their thinking.

Storytelling and music were popular formats, along with comedy and drama, but children’s librarians were uniformly opposed to slapstick on the air. Ideal program length was 30 minutes, but there were differing opinions about whether programs air

17 L. Tyson, letter to C.H. Milam, December 11, 1930, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs; p. 1-2)
18 Loudun, 1928, p. 6; “Children Listeners Considered,” letter to the editor, August 19, 1928, p. R7), advertising (Phillips, 1929, p. 4; “Papal Encyclical,” 1930, p. 11), and jazz music (Heinl, 1929, p. 11.)
once a week or more often.19

According to Cleveland Public librarian Effie Power, one of the 18 survey respondents, a children’s program should be “entertainment of cultural and educational value – should develop literary taste, arouse children’s curiosity in right directions, stimulate and direct interest in current events, train their ears to appreciate good English and good intonation”20 – in short, everything the library hoped to accomplish regarding middle class American goals for acculturation and uplift.

Survey respondents were sensitive to the distinctions between pure entertainment and education, but felt that the most successful programs should be a blend of both. Programs should be uplifting but not have the feel of school or lecture; they should be “entertainment, primarily with a very well disguised educational value”; and they should reflect the wide-ranging interests of pre-adolescents. Emma Lee, children’s librarian at the Rosenberg Library in Galveston, Texas, stated in her letter about the survey that the program’s objective should be the “cultural enrichment of the child, either through instruction, interestingly presented or through entertainment, artistically presented.”21

The difficulty of creating that balance of entertainment and education was a lack of broadcast experience. One of the answer options under the question “Who should broadcast?” was “an experienced broadcaster with the children’s librarian’s point of view.” Cincinnati youth librarian Julia Carter responded with a question of her own, “Is

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19 Tyson, “Master Questionnaire,” 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, 1935.
20 Tyson, “Master Questionnaire,” 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, 1935.
21 E. Lee, letter to L. Tyson in response to the NACRE survey, April 6, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs, p. 1.
there such a person?[^22]

Children’s librarians were, in fact, an appropriate choice for NACRE’s collaborative efforts, as they were already active in the larger world of educational broadcasting. They participated as panelists at educational broadcasting conventions and consulted with other youth-serving organizations to elevate the quality and quantity of children’s radio programming. For example, Frances Clark Sayers, a member of the ALA Adult Education Division, spoke at the first Ohio State Institute of Radio Education in 1930, and Washington D.C. public librarian George Bowerman was one of several panelists at a 1934 conference organized by the National Council on Radio in Education (NCER). At the conference Bowerman spoke to ALA’s investment in children’s broadcast interests, on a panel with the title, “On Whom Rests the Responsibility for the Cultural Use of Radio?” ALA ‘loaned’ New York Public Library librarian Mary Frank to NACRE to help compile booklists (1932) for NACRE radio programs, and in 1933, Clare Lynch, librarian at advertising firm Young & Rubicam wrote ALA for a list of books they could use in creating a national program for 7-14 year olds.

ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam commented that

Children’s librarians have become rather important informal educators. Their interest and experience are not limited to one subject or one field but are as broad as the interests of children ... We believe that this experience should be used in developing a national radio program for children. On our initiative several national organizations have united in preparing a project for a series of

[^22]: J. Carter, response to the Tyson survey form, February 26, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs, p. 2.
experimental broadcasts to children which would draw upon that experience and
the experience of many other groups as well (Hyers, 1938, p. 82).

Tyson agreed with Milam's assessment of the talents of this group, and told

ALA Booklist children's book specialist Jesse Van Cleve that

children's librarians could be of a great deal of aid in this particular field
[children's radio programming], chiefly because of their knowledge of the kind
of thing that attracts children, and because of their story-telling ability or
knowledge of where good story-tellers can be secured. Accordingly, it seems
entirely in order to assemble information on the whole subject of children's
programs on the air from a group of children's librarians.23

In a fairly short time, from 1926 to 1930, ALA had moved from a scenario
where lone librarians were broadcasting in local isolation to creating an organizational
structure to facilitate library broadcasting. In addition, they collaborated with NACRE
to help capture the attributes of a quality children's radio program, and began discussing
the possibility of creating such a program in the future.

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23 L. Tyson, letter to J.G. Van Cleve, June 10, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder –
Radio, Children’s Program, 1935.
CHAPTER 3: NATIONAL CHILDREN’S RADIO HOUR: 1928-1931

NBC’s “Educational Broadcasting” Philosophy

By 1928 NBC’s Advisory Council, which had been created two years earlier, had organized into committees on agriculture, church activities, education, labor, music and women’s activities. The network was sending about sixteen hours of programming out over the air each day of the week. The bulk of the programs were musical and, other than the regularly scheduled religious program known as the Young People’s Conference, none was planned with youth in mind (Summers, 1958).

In his annual report to the Advisory Council, Edwin Alderman, President of the University of Virginia and chair of the NBC Council’s first committee on education, conveyed NBC’s plans for dealing with educational broadcasting (and educational broadcasters), a sore spot because of the ongoing wavelength wars. The networks held onto their place on the dial, but were left with the onus of public interest and necessity, which meant that they had to at least appear to support education by radio. Alderman felt that there were three distinct educational groups (high school/secondary, college-university, and adult education), each of which would require different on-air handling. It was “exceedingly important to secure the co-operation, advice and good will of the most representative groups of educators, and of the educational foundations ... to assure a fixed regularity and frequency to our educational programs” (Alderman, 1928, p. 25)

Among the groups specifically named by Alderman as important consultants or content producers, were ALA (particularly for addressing adult education needs), National Education Association (NEA), National Teachers’ Association, and the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE). Alderman invoked the need for assistance
from educators, stating an NBC educational policy that also became a justification of the amount of educational programs – or lack thereof – the network put on the air.

According to network thinking, content should come from the experts in the field rather than network staff or hired writers. However, it was critical that that content provided by educators meet NBC’s entertainment standards. NBC argued that there wasn’t more educational programming because educators had neglected to familiarize themselves with appropriate broadcasting techniques, and, thus, to provide the kind of entertaining educational programming the NBC audience wanted and deserved. The network very effectively shifted the onus for the lack of educational programming onto the educators themselves.

Another plank in NBC’s educational broadcasting platform was that “public service” meant whatever the bulk of its listeners wanted to hear. According to NBC, it was simply a hard truth that Americans wanted to be entertained rather than constantly bombarded with boring material that had simply been moved over without improvement from the classroom. It is important to note that references to ‘educational programming’ were references to adult radio programs.

“Children’s educational programming,” on the other hand, meant programs created specifically for broadcast into or through schools – although there was a sense that, because childhood and young adolescence was a time of nearly constant learning, all children’s programming was educational. Still, it wasn’t until 1929 that the president’s report to the NBC Advisory Council specifically mentioned children, and then was only to include a short list of national network programs produced for children. Among them there were two concerts conducted by NBC music consultant
and advisory council member Walter Damrosch, whose ongoing concerts were featured regularly in NBC's monthly educational bulletins. The three other programs listed under the heading "Education, Children's Programs," were "Jolly Bill and Jane" which aired Monday through Saturday from 5:30-6:00 pm, "The Children's Hour" airing Sunday mornings from 9:00-10:00 a.m., and a series created by RCA called the "RCA Educational Hour" that was broadcast Fridays between 11:00 a.m. and noon ("Advisory Council," 1929, p. 23) – but that was broadcast to the home rather than into schools where most children would be. There were no details in the bulletin about content or type of programming.

The NBC Advisory Council report gave fulsome praise for the network's generous donation of time to religious and educational interests, pointing out that this time could have been sold commercially but was instead given to noncommercial programming because of NBC's dedication to the public interest. This same message, commercial gain sacrificed for public service, was to appear frequently in NBC management's public reports.

According to the president's report to the council, programming in 1929 was only lacking in one area: education.

Already many of the problems of broadcasting have been solved. Advertisers quickly settled the financial question. Entertainers have achieved fame and fortune by furnishing amusement for millions of homes. Great musicians, freed at last from the limitations of the concert stage, have found in radio a national People's Theatre, and the works of the immortals belong no longer to the few. Government officials, statesmen, and political candidates have addressed the
whole people directly. The church has carried its message of faith far beyond its own doors. A death blow has been dealt to isolation and exclusiveness, whether geographical, cultural or social. Only education has lagged behind (Alderman, 1930, p. 27).

NBC Education Committee chair Edwin Alderman’s 1930 report to the Advisory Council, however, claimed that much of NBC’s current programming was actually educational in nature, and “where a broadcasting company promised to clear the road for such a program, even though it meant a financial sacrifice of several hundred thousand dollars, it could hardly be said it was failing to co-operate by putting squarely up to the educators the question of the program itself” (Alderman, 1930, p. 29). Alderman implied that if educators took too long to come to the networks with offerings, NBC might be forced to develop its own educational programs, a statement that may provide some explanation for why NBC Education Director Franklin Dunham was interested in talking with children’s librarians at the ALA 1931 annual conference later that year.

As we shall see, it is clear that for the networks that “Educational” programming was quite an elastic concept. It stretched and bent to suit many purposes and it meant different things to different people. Educator Win Bird pointed out in his 1939 book, *Educational Aims and Practices of the National and the Columbia Broadcasting Systems*, neither educators nor networks wanted to define ‘educational’ too narrowly. W.W. Charters, director of the Ohio State University’s Bureau of Educational Research and founder of the Institute of Education by Radio characterized an educational program as “one whose purpose is to raise standards of taste, to increase range of
valuable information, or to stimulate audiences to undertake worthwhile activities” (Tyson, 1930, p. 35). Judith Waller, NBC’s Midwest Education Director and a frequent broadcast consultant for ALA and its membership, described it as “any material or matter by educator or layman, which adds to the knowledge and culture of mankind and which nourishes the mind and helps us to think and understand” (Byrd, 1939, p. 15).

William Paley, CBS president, was careful to say that CBS “conceive[d] of education by radio not in the narrow classical sense, but in the broadest humanitarian meaning” (Byrd, p. 18). Educators took the high road, based on their traditional classroom experience, while networks often counted programs such as Amos ‘n’ Andy among their educational fare (Craig, 2000, p. 94).

**NACRE and ALA Develop a Project**

NACRE director Levering Tyson moved ahead with the survey of children’s librarians as described in Chapter 2 (p. 62-63). He saw the survey as laying the groundwork for a quality non-commercial children’s program, under NACRE auspices, to be done in collaboration with ALA. The goal was

Presentation of a program over let us say a period of three months, broadcasting to children, ages nine to twelve (the 4th, 5th and 6th grades) or broadcasting programs to the home, that is not into the schools … I would not want to go into this unless it had the full approval of the American Library Association, and I would like to have the whole job done in conjunction with the American Library Association, its Children’s Library Committee and its Radio Committee.²⁴

Milam was excited about the project and he sent Tyson a list of youth librarians

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²⁴ L. Tyson, letter to C.H. Milam, December 11, 1930, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs; p. 1-2.
that included representative from its Committee on Library Work with Children as well as other children's librarians with broadcasting experience. L.L. Dickerson, chair of the CLRBB and a member of the NACRE Library Advisory Committee, had been copied on Tyson's letter to Milam and contributed his own support to the idea, saying, "Your letter about the children's program is to the point in every detail. Go ahead. Everybody in our [library] Association will rise up and call you blessed."  

Milam's own endorsement was accompanied by that of Della McGregor, chair of the Section on Library Work with Children, who responded specifically for herself since the Section had not been formally approached. This distinction between McGregor's personal approval rather than the Section's approval was important for two reasons. First of all, children's librarians had had enough broadcasting experience to understand that having a plan didn't always mean stations and/or networks followed that plan. Section Chair Mary Gould Davis indicated as much to Milam in an early February 1930 letter, during which she told him that

the Section should not indorse a program unless they are absolutely sure that their suggestions for the stories will be carried out. And that means – as I have learned by hard experience – constant supervision. It will be a difficult thing to organize, but I do think that it will be tremendously worth while [sic].

Tyson administered his survey during late winter of 1930, to eighteen librarians

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25 L.L. Dickerson, letter to L. Tyson, December 20, 1930, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Dickerson, L.L., p. 2.
26 C.H. Milam, letter to L. Tyson, December 29, 1930, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children's Programs.
27 M.G. Davis, letter to C.H. Milam, February 4, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children's Programs.
recommended by ALA, and its nine questions covered various aspects of program purpose, length, frequency, broadcast time of day, content, and what lessons librarians had learned from their own experiences.

At ALA, Milam appeared to be unaware of the growing unrest within the ranks of the Section for Library Work with Children. There were two separate organizational bodies at ALA that had the authority to speak on behalf of children. The Section for Library Work with Children had been in existence since 1900, while the Committee on Library Work with Children was organized by the ALA Executive Board in 1926. Earlier in the year, in an attempt to clarify the situation and to suggest a possible resolution for the split, Children’s Section chair Mary Gould Davis wrote to ALA Committee on Committee’s chair H.O. Severance. She wanted to suggest a proposal that the Committee for Library Work with Children be reconstituted to be made up of

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28 Tyson sent the survey to Julia Carter, Cincinnati Public Library; Mary Gould Davis, New York Public Library; Gladys English, Los Angeles Public Library; Leone Furtney, Public Library of Cleveland Heights (Ohio); Alice Jordan, Boston Public Library; Elisabeth Knapp Detroit Public Library, Della McGregor, St. Paul Public Library (and chair of the Committee on Library Work with Children); Detroit Public Library; Anne Carroll Moore, New York Public Library; Ruth Overman, St. Louis Public Library; Effie Power, Cleveland Public Library; (Mrs.) Francis Clark Sayers, Adult Education Division, ALA; Carrie Scott, Indianapolis Public Library; Katherine Watson, Denver Public Library; and Mary Wilkinson, Baltimore Public Library. Tyson, L., letter to C.H. Milam, December 11, 1930, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Program. Per advice from L.L. Dickerson, he later sent it to Helen Martin, Chief Instructor in Children’s Work, Western Reserve University. Dickerson, L.L., letter to L. Tyson, January 12, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Program. Mary Gould Davis added the following names: Emma See, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, Texas; Marjorie Potter, Albany (NY) Public Library; and Lillian Smith, Toronto Public Library. Davis, M.G., letter to L. Tyson, February 4, 1931), NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Program, p. 2.

29 The Club of Children’s Librarians grew out of an informal conference meeting and was officially sanctioned by the ALA Board in 1900 as the Children’s Librarians’ Section. In 1929 the name was changed to the Section for Library Work with Children. Section for Library Work with Children. (1935). Bulletin of the American Library Association, 29(11), Handbook; p. H-34.
officers from the Section, along with several members appointed by the ALA President.

In her memo to Severance, which had been solicited via the normal organizational process of asking all chairs to periodically review their committee needs and purpose, Davis wrote that the Section understood that the Executive Board's reasons for establishing a committee when they already had a section devoted to children, were

that the Executive Board needed to assure a strong committee to work with; that the Section officers were too widely spread to give the A.L.A. officials sufficiently rapid action .... that the Executive Board might find it difficult to work with a committee not of its own choosing.30

Whatever the reasons, the Section now believed the Committee was usurping its role within the organization. Gould, in her letter to Severance, noted that many of those working now with children feel that the reasons advanced do not justify taking from the Section so many of its activities and responsibilities, leaving it only the awarding of The Newbery Medal and the planning of the program for the annual conference.31

The children's librarians who had been consulted by ALA and Tyson about a national children’s radio program included individual members of both the committee and the section; however the Section for Library Work with Children had never been formally asked to be involved, although Davis and former chair Della MacGregor had both been among the children’s librarians surveyed by Tyson earlier in the year.

30 M.G. Davis, letter to H.O. Severance, February 9, 1931, ALA 92/8/5, Box 1, Folder – Henry O. Severance Correspondence, 1929-31, p. 1.
MacGregor made the point in her response to Tyson that she was answering as an individual rather than on behalf of the Section. Both NACRE and, more importantly, ALA either missed the point or decided to ignore it, and the Section felt moved to take action at the upcoming conference.

By May of 1931 ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam had heard from the networks about their interest in a children's program, and he commented to Tyson that, “Some of the ‘hot shots’ from the commercial broadcasters seemed to have registered with me and I am wondering whether perhaps the A.L.A. couldn’t get on the air.”32 According to a May 29 memo from Milam to Tyson, Milam had talked about the possibility of a children’s radio program to Jesse Van Cleve of ALA’s *Booklist*, who had “some experience broadcasting and a lot of experience telling stories and making speeches.”33 ALA’s annual conference intervened and Van Cleve’s response was delayed until later in the summer.

The 1931 ALA conference at New Haven, Connecticut, was a rich one for librarians interested in broadcasting. Not one but two separate organizations units – the CLRB and the Section for Library Work with Children – arranged program content related to broadcasting. The CLRB round table (ALA conference sessions were often known as “round tables”) was attended by 34 people. The program began with a talk by Tyson (who appeared at Dickerson’s invitation) describing NACRE and its goals for getting educational programs on commercial networks. This was followed by a joint presentation by Dickerson and Tyson, who summarized the types of problems libraries

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32 C. H. Milam, letter to L. Tyson, May 29, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs.

33 Ibid.
experienced as they tried to broadcast on local stations and networks. Attendees heard that the major issues were “unsatisfactory hours, overstimulation of demand for new books mentioned, and undeveloped techniques in preparing programs” (Drury, 1931, p. 587). In a brief reference to the spring/early summer conversations earlier that year between NACRE and ALA, they mentioned that developing a national program would help alleviate some of the issues involved with local broadcasting. By providing a program sanctioned by top brass at the network, local libraries would benefit from the national broadcast and could supplement the listening experience rather than try to create it from scratch.

As was mentioned, the subject of children’s radio programming was also discussed at a conference session hosted by the Section for Library Work with Children. According to the official record of the meeting, Tyson led discussion on the question, “If you had to devise a radio program for children 9 to 10 years of age, the broadcast to be heard in the home and not in the school, what would be its object?” (Radio Program for Boys and Girls, 1931, p. 667). Specific responses were not included, rather the conference report was a general summary of the discussion.

Almost without exception, the librarians believed that the program should be primarily wholesome entertainment. The consensus of opinion was that music and storytelling should predominate although comedy and drama might well be included. There seemed to be general agreement that the children’s hours now on the air leave much to be desired (Radio Program for Boys and Girls, 1931, p. 667).

In addition to Tyson, there were two other speakers from outside the library
world. Alice Keith, broadcast director for the popular school-based educational program known as the "American School of the Air," provided a paper on correct broadcast technique. The other external speaker was Franklin Dunham, educational director from NBC’s New York office who, according to conference reports, was interested in talking to children’s librarians “not only for advice but also for some constructive means of presenting the type of hour that children’s librarians had in mind: one which would entertain a child and stimulate him to read” (“Radio Programs,” 1931, p. 668). Again, the historical record doesn’t reveal if Dunham’s invitation to speak was generated from the Section or from the network. Given Alderman’s comments at the NBC Advisory Council meeting about developing their own programming, and Dunham’s probable awareness of NACRE’s interest in collaborating with ALA to create a children’s radio program, it isn’t surprising that he would be at the session. NBC financed both his and Judith Waller’s membership in ALA as a business expense.

The final speaker on the program was ALA’s Jessie Van Cleve, who told the audience that the same principles librarians used to build regular library programs for children worked for quality radio programming as well (Radio Program for Boys and Girls, 1931, p. 668). She spoke generally about what such a program might include, and seemed to be testing ideas for her proposal for Milam with the children’s librarian group in New Haven. She felt that

The principles upon which to build a radio program for children could well be those upon which the librarian builds the reading program offered to children. The librarian endeavors to do two things: the first, to provide reading material on subjects that children as well as adults know they are interested in, and that
reading material written in a style that has a known appeal; second, to introduce new interests and styles of writing.\textsuperscript{34}

In an undated document in the ALA files, Van Cleve set out some ideas for the ALA-NACRE program. It would encompass “storytelling, music, drama, science, book talks, travel and art talks, poetry – in fact, all cultural and scientific topics in which children show ready interest when an intelligent and entertaining grown-up talks to them.” She cautioned that the educational content should not outweigh the entertainment, “They should not feel that they are being lectured at, instructed or condescendingly talked to.”\textsuperscript{35}

The conference was noteworthy for children’s librarians for another reason, the ongoing concerns about the jurisdictional issues of the Committee versus the Section for children. Youth librarians’ resentment – not at the radio project but at the larger organizational problem – culminated in a resolution created at the June (1931) New Haven conference and submitted to the Executive Secretary and the ALA Executive Board at the same fall 1931 board meeting where the proposed children’s program was under consideration. The resolution, as stated in the official conference record was

\textit{Resolved,} That the Section for Library Work with Children register a protest against the authorization by the American Library Association of projects relating to the work with children which have not received the sanction of the Executive Committee of the Section for Library Work with Children (Beust, 1931, p. 615).

Reform was also on CLRBC chair Dickerson’s mind as he wrote to Tyson about

\textsuperscript{34} Van Cleve, n.d. 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs. \textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
the committee’s upcoming work. He felt the ALA radio committee was weak and
needed members with children’s expertise – although he admitted that an unnamed
“we” felt some of the children’s librarians “were a bit too bound by traditional ideas and
too lacking in imagination to help on the larger radio project.”36 He hoped that the
responses to Tyson’s pilot study had revealed more suitable candidates for inclusion on
the ALA radio committee. But in spite of Dickerson’s concerns the CLRB as it was
already populated was able to refine its goals at the summer 1931 conference to include
four projects: (1) arranging for a publication promoting library-broadcaster cooperation;
(2) promoting books and libraries on as many radio programs as possible;
(3) creating an adult radio program about reading and libraries; and (4) creating a
children’s program “which represents the best thought and technique we are able to
bring to the subject” (Dickerson, 1931, p. 290).

Tyson continued throughout the summer of 1931 to feed ALA information about
NBC’s interest in the children’s project. He wrote to Dickerson in early July that the
subject had come up at a meeting of himself, Aylesworth, and NBC Vice President John
W. Elwood. “I am not exaggerating when I state that for this children’s program I
believe we can get half an hour every night of the week over the N.B.C.”37 The men
also discussed what programs NACRE could offer NBC for its fall lineup.

[Aylesworth] told me that he had cleared 8-8:30 p.m. on Saturday evenings ...
of commercial commitment and would turn over this period on a national hook-
up basis to the Council for the economics program [that NACRE had arranged

36 L.L. Dickerson, letter to L. Tyson, June 13, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder –
Dickerson, L.L., p. 2.
37 L. Tyson, letter to L.L. Dickerson, July 9, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio,
in consultation with the Brookings Institute of Economics and a year later with
the League for Industrial Democracy]. This represents actual time that can be
sold (and I don’t mean maybe) by the N.B.C. for upwards of $350,000.38

The children’s librarians’ resolution in New Haven changed Dickerson’s
approach to reconstituting the CLRB. In a July 13 letter to Tyson at NACRE, Dickerson
indicated that the New Haven experience made him think it was important that
officially or semi-officially our Radio Committee should be supplemented by a
very small committee or group of representative children’s librarians. This is for
two reasons; first, that we could the better make use of additional talent, and
second, that the children’s librarians would be recognized as a group.39

He went further in his next letter to Tyson, comment on the workload his newly re­
formed committee would be embracing.

We have two jobs in particular; the books and reading program and the
children’s program. In the case of the books and reading program ... once it is
started we should not have much work to do. In the case of the children’s
program, it seems to me that constant work will be required, even though we
could put a full-time person on the job.40

When the radio committee was reconstituted shortly thereafter, it was “loaded”
with children’s librarians. Chairman Dickerson put a brave face on it, suggesting both
curse and blessing. “This loads the Committee pretty heavily with children’s librarians,

38 L. Tyson, letter to L. L. Dickerson, July 9, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio,
39 L.L. Dickerson, letter to L. Tyson, July 13, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder –
Dickerson, L.L., p. 1.
40 L.L. Dickerson, letter to L. Tyson, July 14, 1931, ALA 24/2/6R, Box 4, Folder –
but of course that is because of a special radio project for children that we have before us.” He also gave a nod to the CLRBB’s other institutional responsibilities, commenting that “somewhere the colleges and universities will be coming into the radio program picture but I think we can just forget them for another year.”

The children’s section itself was well represented, by newly appointed chair Emma Lee, from the Galveston (TX) Public Library, immediate past chair Mary Gould Davis (from the New York Public Library), while Della McGregor, from the St. Paul (MN) Public Library represented ALA’s Committee on Library Work with Children. The fourth youth representative was Jesse Van Cleve, from headquarters staff. The three remaining members of the CLRBB were male and all, perhaps not coincidentally, held concurrent membership on the NACRE Library Cooperation Committee. They were Dickerson, Forrest B. Spaulding, from the Des Moines (IA) Public Library, and J.T. Jennings, Seattle (WA) Public Library and former president of ALA.

As Dickerson pondered his committee and its future projects, NBC president Aylesworth used his 1931 Annual Report to reiterate the network’s policy on educational broadcasting. Aylesworth reminded council members – and presumably a larger sphere of interested parties – that “any educational undertaking on a national scale should be prepared by or in conjunction with recognized educators of outstanding ability, rather than by the company itself” (Aylesworth, 1931, p. 7-8). Networks did not see themselves as content experts, so in that sense this approach to educational broadcasting was consistent with how they handled other ‘serious’ programming. However, this expert-broadcaster juxtaposition was both smart and convenient for NBC.

In spite of this dearth of offerings from educators, claimed Aylesworth, NBC continued to provide quality educational and cultural experiences for its listeners. The Damrosch music program sent nearly 50,000 copies of its Instructor’s Manual to schools, and NBC was working with the Radio Guild to air plays “of educational value” to high schools and colleges “as an extra-curricular course.” NBC was broadcasting “about twice as much” sustaining (network and/or station donated) programming as it was commercial programming that was paid for by sponsor advertisements, the implication being that the sustaining program was for the most part educational in nature (Aylesworth, 1931, p. 8-9).

In view of the tense political situation in Washington during the summer of 1931, when the Fess Bill requiring 15% of all radio channels be dedicated to nonprofits (Chapter 1, p. 42) was introduced in Congress, Milam was confident about ALA’s prospects of getting on the air via NBC. In a letter to faculty member Josephine Adams Rathbone at the Pratt Institute of Library Science, whose comments on the program he was soliciting, Milam indicated there was much more than a fair prospect that NBC will give a thirty-minute period daily to the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education for a children’s hour. That means in effect that the time will be given to the American Library Association. This is a marvelous opportunity and a whale of a challenge.42

Not having heard from Van Cleve following his first meetings with her in the spring about the project, Milam approached her again in late July, with the

understanding that the children’s program was expected to begin in the fall and run for several months. Van Cleve responded with cautious enthusiasm.

I have thought of little else, than the possible radio program for children ... I was rather overwhelmed with the idea of a daily childrens hour! ... too much has to be learned to undertake six programs a week, no matter who is in charge. Inevitably the best programs will be a matter of growth, the result of study and experience plus inspiration and talent. It would be a pity to ruin the undertaking by not having time to assimilate the facts learned with every program – not only in technique, but from the response of the audiences and the suggestions of critics. After three months time – (or even a month) you could build with so much more surety.\(^{43}\)

Van Cleve was writing from Baltimore and had planned a personal trip to New York prior to returning to ALA. Milam wrote her immediately, advising her to stay a few days longer in the city and interview appropriate people in both the library and broadcasting worlds about the upcoming project.\(^{44}\)

Milam recommended touching base with, among others, Anne Carroll Moore and Mary Gould Davis at New York Public, director Alice Martin of the “School of the Air” (a CBS-sponsored educational program broadcast into public schools), Curtis Lakeman (NACRE) and any members of the networks that Lakeman or Tyson thought appropriate. Van Cleve’s task, as Milam saw it, was to collect helpful information about ALA’s proposed program ideas, radio broadcasting techniques, finance and budget, and


publicity. This was Van Cleve’s chance to consult with knowledgeable experts before she created a program prototype. Dickerson followed up Milam’s advice with some of his own.

After you have done everything else that Mr. Milam suggests, I think it would be most profitable, not to say entertaining, to go to the National Broadcasting or Columbia studios and see a program broadcast ... Then if you can get in touch with an actual director of a radio program, I think you could informally get some practical ideas on program making and presentation. These people have a hard earned experience which should profit us.45

Van Cleve took Milam up on his suggestion, and her field notes are as much a reflection of each interviewee’s position on broadcasting as they are helpful suggestions for a successful venture. There are notes available about her visits with a librarian, and representatives of an educational group, a potential funder, and a network.

The librarian was Anne Carroll Moore, legendary head of children’s services at New York Public Library, who was “not wildly enthusiastic, with radio I mean, nor with this program,” and told Van Cleve that ALA “might build a perfect program and have it ruined in the broadcast.” Moore herself had not done any broadcasting, but she was familiar with the issues from conferences and the professional literature. She warned Van Cleve to begin slowly, with something – music, for example – that already had demonstrated radio appeal, and then “giv[e] the story end emphasis.”46

45 L.L. Dickerson, letter to J.G. Van Cleve, July 30, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio – Children’s Program, 1935.
The educational group representative was Curtis Lakeman, Tyson's assistant at NACRE, who worked primarily with adult education, but who caught on almost instantly to the children's program idea because of library experiences he had with his own child. Van Cleve, in attempting to explain the essence of the program, compared it to traditional library story times. Lakeman commented, "A few years ago I would not have known what you [were] talking about, but because of the library service that my little girl has experienced in New Rochelle I do know just what you mean."\(^{47}\) NACRE was well aware of the networks' demand for entertaining educational content and Van Cleve assured him that the proposed program, designed by librarians, would strive for educational content, entertainingly presented.

The potential funder was the Payne Fund, where she met with S. Howard Evans, who was at that time the assistant to the Fund president and was also a key player in the *Ventura Free Press* campaign being waged by the Fund against commercial broadcast interests (see Chapter 4, p. 96). The Payne Fund was known for its ongoing studies on the effects of and relationships between movies, radio and reading, and was deeply immersed (through NCER) in the battle for channel ownership between education/nonprofits and networks. As Lakeman told Milam and Tyson later, the enmity between NCER and NACRE prompted him to talk to politically naïve Van Cleve after her visit with Evans.

It was evident that she had no idea of the political situation that exists and I took occasion to tell her a good deal about Messrs. Morgan, Perry etc. and what they

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[NCER] are saying publicly and privately about us [NACRE] all over the
country ... It seemed to me wholly desirable that she should meet and talk with
everybody but I wanted her to do it in the future with her eyes wide open.\textsuperscript{48}

Van Cleve's naiveté was understandable given the fact that most librarians' approach to
radio had more to do with immediate use than concerns over the political struggles of
ethereal ownership and they were, for all intents and purposes, uninvolved in the
educator-nonprofit fight for space on the radio spectrum. However, ALA's alliance with
NACRE made them appear sympathetic to the commercial broadcasters' side of the
fight, and there were several times during the course of the children's national radio
hour project when ALA treaded softly around the Payne Fund and educational groups.

During Van Cleve's visit with Evans, he expressed concern that ALA might not
get airtime, but she told him ALA was optimistic time would be provided by a network.
He was also concerned about audience size, but Van Cleve pointed out that the program
would be promoted by librarians as well as groups such as the NEA and PTA, and that
it would stimulate interest in books in the home, school, library and even bookstores.
ALA felt the "time had come to give thought and study to the subject, to evolve an
intelligent plan and perhaps to build a tentative program," to which Mr. Evans replied,
"If you do nothing more than this it will be a very vital contribution."\textsuperscript{49}

The network official Van Cleve interviewed was NBC Vice President John
Elwood – in fact, she met with him twice during her New York visits. During one of
those visits she shared a chart (Figure 2, p. 86) she had prepared that expressed the

\textsuperscript{48} C. Lakeman, letter to C.H. Milam, September 10, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder –
\textsuperscript{49} J.G. Van Cleve, memo to file, n.d., ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children's
program in broad strokes, and she “inferred” from his reception that “it was this sort of a plan, with an objective that could be checked up, that he felt was lacking in previous and present children’s programs.”\(^\text{50}\) Incidentally, this was the only set of notes that included mention of the chart, so it remains unclear if Van Cleve developed this specifically for NBC or it was part of her other New York meetings.

**Figure 2: Proposed ALA Children's Radio Hour, 1931.**

Elwood stressed that programs had to earn their keep – either in goodwill or in

dollars, and measuring audience impact was important to any evaluation of the program. When Van Cleve asked about actual broadcast production issues such as talent, Elwood insisted that they weren't ready to address that aspect yet. He maintained that "A.L.A. could advance the cause and quality of children's reading more successfully" by "a definite plan on which to act, and an elastic tentative program, and a vision of its possibilities."  

Returning home to Chicago, Van Cleve considered issues that would have to be addressed if the show went forward. Should it be limited to literature-related presentations such as storytelling, dramatization and book reviews; or should it be unlimited in its scope so that it more faithfully reflected the full range of children's interests? What would such a program's administrative set-up look like, and who would be involved? Production and financing would also have to be considered.

She created a preliminary plan with potential topics such as sports, transportation, art, natural history, animals, exploration, holidays, cities and towns, and Indians of America. There were subtopics for categories such as sports (baseball, polo, hockey, fishing, mountain climbing and dancing), and transportation (famous boats, engines and trains, famous trails). Natural history could be done in connection with museums, art would require consultation with particular librarians known for their expertise in this area, and the exploration category would lend itself to an occasional visit by real youngsters with travel experience.

The program would present a new topic each day, and individual subjects would

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be developed over the course of a varied number of weeks. In some drafts there were
notes about potential partnerships with educational institutions such as the Field
Museum and the Natural History Museum (which were located along with ALA in
Chicago), and materials that would extend the experience beyond the broadcast itself.
Van Cleve envisioned the audience as between nine and twelve-years of age, although
she noted that it was likely some listeners (including adults) would fall outside that
range.

In-house discussions between Van Cleve and Milam about the children’s radio
hour program continued into the fall of 1931. According to a file memo Milam prepared
for himself, it would be offered three to four times a week to start, and would eventually
air daily, hopefully at an auspicious hour – but that was up to the whims of the
broadcaster. Its purpose was to “stimulate reading, broadly interpreted,” and it would
have to compete successfully with any commercial children’s program presently on the
air, the most famous example of which was “Little Orphan Annie.” Milam also noted
that there were presently no funds available to create such a program, but “the
opportunity for usefulness will be so great as to make financing possible.”

Still, Tyson was reluctant to take ALA’s outline to NBC until a more definite
plan – presumably in terms of financing and scripts – was in place. “I don’t think we
want to have a pow-wow with them now until we are ready to go to the bat with a lot of
definite aces in our hand and all the high trumps.” In this same letter Tyson reiterated
NACRE’s place in the project. His comments reflected NACRE’s role of handmaiden

53 C.H. Milam, memo to file, September 30, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio,
54 L. Tyson, letter to L.L. Dickerson, October 16, 1931, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder –
to the networks, and his sympathetic stance demonstrated quite clearly the philosophical differences between NACRE and NCER.

I am not interested in the Council's having its finger in every pie, but I am extremely interested for the good of the general cause that the Council be the organization to conduct negotiations with the broadcasters. One of the difficulties in the educational situation thus far has been that every conceivable association, council, club, lodge, grantee, etc., has bothered the life out of the broadcasting industry. It has tried to meet these demands, but I don't blame them for being bewildered over the complications arising out of so many organizations in the educational and related fields. They are coming more and more to look to us for appraisal of requests as they receive them and are telling almost everybody to present their requests through the Council. Therefore I think it is necessary that negotiations for broadcasting time for anything like the children's hour should come through the Council and not through the ALA. The ALA will not lose, the Council will not gain, but it will keep the general situation straight. Of course Elwood knows the ALA is entirely reliable and the official organization in this country representing libraries, but as the negotiations continue we shall be dealing with individuals in the NBC other than Elwood, and it is impossible for them to keep track of all these organizations.  

From Milam and Dickerson's perspective, the next step was to get the project approved by the ALA Executive Board as an official organizational project. Any thoughts of fundraising or hiring staff would have to wait until such institutional

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
permission was granted. Dickerson drafted a packet of information that was sent to
Milam, Tyson, Van Cleve and members of the CLRB. The packet included background
on the proposed project and the committee’s work thus far, specific information about
the administrative set up for the program, excerpts from Van Cleve’s work on content
and, for the first time, a budget. This packet, after committee revisions, would become
an agenda item for the fall ALA Executive Board meeting. The CLRB was finally ready
to commit the Association to the project, and the next step was official sanction so that
fundraising and – eventually – production could begin. Dickerson included an
introduction that emphasized the importance of the children’s program, within the
context of the CLRB’s work.

Without disregarding other studies and projects it is recommended that our
Committee endeavor to have broadcast a special children’s hour. I recommend
immediate action on such a project because: a. The possibilities of utilizing the
radio as a means of furthering all that library work with children represents can
hardly be ignored. Entering a vast number of homes as the radio does and daily
catching and holding the interest of children of the most impressionable age, it
must have an effect on the development of taste and habits on the emotional life
of the child. … To a children’s radio program should be applied the best thought
of those who are skilled in the technique of broadcasting, of children’s
librarians, of child psychologists, and of those organizations and institutions that
are engaged in progressive work in child study and welfare. Such programs are
not common to say the least. There appears to be an obvious place for such a
program in the broadcasts of the national chains, and such a program should
stimulate rather than retard anything being done by local libraries[.] b. There is a
fair prospect that the facilities of a national chain will be made available to the
A.L.A. for daily broadcasting if our Association presents a worthwhile and
workable children's hour project.56

The bulk of the packet was information about the program itself, to be sponsored
by the American Library Association, directed by the CLRB, and produced in
cooperation with NACRE and its Committee on Library Cooperation. The proposed
program details indicated that ALA planned to appoint up to twenty consultants,
drawing on librarians as well as representatives of NACRE, NEA, NCPT, publishers
and those in the book trade, the National Recreation Association, Boy and Girl Scouts,
Camp Fire Girls, and other organizations associated with youth, to act as an editorial
board for the program, which would be run by a permanent four-person staff. NACRE
would help ALA find funding and secure free airtime from the networks. Most
importantly, the project had to be financed by non-commercial sources. ALA was
adamant on this latter point, probably fearing loss of control over the content and/or
quality, and mindful of the public discontent over commercially broadcast
programming available at the time. This sentiment stayed with the project through its
end. The budget for the first year was indicated as being between $50,000 and $60,000
(Figure 3, p. 92), and the CLRB freely admitted to the Executive Board that no
funding was in sight.

Although the CLRB members supported the project, there was a lingering
tension among them concerning the role libraries should take with respect to radio

56 L.L. Dickerson, memo to the ALA Executive Board, October 8, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder - Children's Programs, p. 1-2.
broadcasting, something that paralleled the mixed feelings in the larger library world. CLRB committee member Emma Lee, for example, who was also children's section chair at the time the proposal was put before ALA's executive board, wrote Dickerson that she still found herself wondering "whether cooperation and advisory roles might not be better for the present, especially when there is so much unfinished work calling

Figure 3: Proposed Children's Hour Program Budget, 1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries of the Director and his staff</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies and miscellaneous</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence and postage</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel expense of staff, committees and advisors</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total estimated publicity expense</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Total budget as estimated above: $55,000. But this is a minimum for inaugurating the programs. Talent and studio expense in the rendering of the programs abs not been estimated. It may be possible to share some of this with the broadcasting studio.
for the energies of the Association." Even given her concerns, she assured Dickerson that he had her support should the proposal be adopted by the Executive Board.

Just a few days prior to the fall Executive Board meeting, Dickerson looked ahead to next steps in the process. With the children's radio project officially sanctioned by the ALA Board – something he felt reasonably sure would happen,

some lady ... [must] buckle down to the job, put her feet on the desk and do a lot of thinking, make and destroy a lot of preliminary outlines and plans, and finally bring forth something which we can take to the broadcasting company ... I am thinking of a quite definite plan for a series of programs that will extend over several months.  

On November 7, 1931, the ALA Executive Board considered the radio project. Discussion about the "Children's Radio Hour" was disconcertingly short:

President Rathbone: The third item is Children's Radio Hour.

Secretary Milam: This is an important matter. You have had the extensive report of the Committee on Radio Broadcasting sent to you several weeks ago. I wrote you more recently that the Committee had unanimously approved the recommendations and that they would be brought up here for a vote.

President Rathbone: This doesn't commit us to the expenditure of any money.

Secretary Milam: Until we get it.

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58 L.L. Dickerson, letter to L. Tyson, November 5, 1931, NACRE, Box 1, Folder – Children’s Programs.
Mr. Rush: Is this general approval?

Secretary Milam: No, specific approval and authorizing the Committee on Radio Broadcasting to proceed with further plans which would include either recommendations or action concerning the securing of funds and, following that, the recommendation to the Executive Board of a director if it secured the funds.

Mr. Wheeler: We have all had a copy of that report. I think everyone has been interested and even enthusiastic about the details worked out. It looks very promising and some of us feel it is one of the greatest opportunities we have had. We have no money obligated from us right now. I move we adopt and approve the Report of the Committee.59

Later that same session, the resolution from the Section on Library Work with Children came before the board. It was accepted and placed in the board file with no comment.

After a full year of planning and collaboration, 1931 closed on a high note, with the Executive Board approval of a new ALA project, a national children’s radio hour. There was a program outline, what looked like firm offers of airtime from the networks, and institutional commitment from both NACRE and ALA.

CHAPTER 4: NATIONAL CHILDREN’S RADIO HOUR: 1932-1933

In April 1932, ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam was invited to meet with Ella Crandall, Payne Fund secretary, to discuss financing for the radio program. Milam had sent program information ahead of time but when he arrived at the Payne Fund offices they had other ideas for the project. ALA should continue its plans for a radio program, but the focus should shift to motion picture appreciation. In one sense this came as no surprise since Milam was aware that the Payne Fund was nearing completion of its studies on the effects of motion pictures and films on youth, and they felt that radio would be a productive means of educating children to deal with those effects. After two full days of discussion, Milam convinced Crandall that the literature-based program was better suited to ALA reading and literacy objectives, but that ALA would take under advisement further Payne suggestions concerning listening and discussion groups that could be created and studied. 60

Political issues related to the ongoing educator-broadcaster turf wars surfaced at the meeting when Milam asked whether the Payne Fund would consider financing a program that would air over a commercial network such as NBC. This, Crandall conceded, would be a serious issue for the Fund, although they were sympathetic to ALA’s desire to pursue a national albeit commercial hookup rather than confine the proposed program to a local or regional education-affiliated station.

On April 16, at Crandall’s request, Milam set out what he saw as the non-negotiable attributes of the project. It would have as its objective, the improvement and extension of children’s reading

60 C.H. Milam, memo to file, April 18, 1932, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder –Financing –Payne Fund.
interests, broadly interpreted ... with many subjects which interest children –
music, plays, aviation, games, sports, historical events, current events, moving
pictures, etc. – and should in every case, directly or indirectly, relate these
subjects to reading ... [and would] compete with the programs now offered to
children which apparently have no standards to maintain ... we should be
enabled to draw upon the very best dramatic, musical and story-telling talent
available.\textsuperscript{61}

Milam further stipulated that ALA planned to have a contract with NBC
guaranteeing a secure broadcast time and day of the week, for a specific period of
weeks or months, and that ALA or its designees would control the program content.
Any other aspects of the program, Milam assured Crandall, were negotiable, but the
program would not go forward until there was sufficient funding for the full contracted
period.

The Payne Fund decided not to finance the program and Crandall told Milam
that ALA's plan for national program was "too ambitious for them at this time."\textsuperscript{62} It is
likely that the decision was influenced by ALA's collaboration with NACRE and,
through them, NBC. The Fund was also heavily invested in the anti-commercial station
campaign NACRE's philosophical rival NCER was coordinating through the \textit{Venture}
\textit{Free Press}. The object of the campaign was to foment dissatisfaction with commercial
networks through the help of newspapers who, in fact, felt some antipathy toward radio
broadcasting for cutting into their advertising revenues. During the worst years of the
Depression (the early 1930s) the Payne Fund donated more than $250,000 to broadcast

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid, p. 3.
reform, and between 1931 and 1933 in particular, they donated close to $50,000
(McChesney, 1993, p. 57-62). Still, the Payne Fund kept the door open for future work
with ALA and/or libraries, or for a project with a smaller scope.

ALA continued its close cooperation with NACRE, even arranging for the loan
of New York Public librarian Mary Frank to help them compile bibliographies for their
adult education programs. Frank reported to Milam that in her first three months at
NACRE she had completed a separate bibliography for each of the 30 broadcasts
related to “American Labor and the Nation,” NACRE’s series on NBC that chronicled
the development of the American labor movement. In addition, she had created a list
called “Radio and Reading,” which offered suggestions for summer reading.63

In a memo to Milam where she reported her work with NACRE, Frank talked
about ALA’s involvement with education by radio, saying that she felt the library had
been

assigned a leading place by the organizers of adult education. Educators at large,
publicists, university presidents, economists, psychologists and educational
directors of broadcasting companies are extending a comradely hand to the
public library, assuming that the library is one with them in the creative work of
organizing and directing a movement that has been given renewed impetus by
radio broadcasts.64

Evidence of this “comradely hand” appeared in the 1932 NBC Advisory Council
minutes, specifically within the Report for the Committee on Education, which noted

63 M. Frank, letter to C.H. Milam, June 20, 1932, ALA 30/59/1, Box 1, Bound Volume
64 Ibid.
that within the first ten weeks of the debut of the NACRE series, nearly 100,000
listeners requested the supporting materials jointly produced and disseminated by ALA
in cooperation with the University of Chicago. True to network rhetoric, though, the
compliment became another opportunity to reiterate NBC’s view of educator-
broadcaster collaboration.

These series of programs have conclusively demonstrated that when a
representative group of educators presents a program which is comprehensive,
purposeful and *designed for radio* [italics added], it will be acceptable not only
to the public and to the educators, but also to what some educators have termed
the ‘commercial’ broadcasting stations (Case, 1932, p. 26).

The network claimed 21% of their time was devoted to educational
broadcasting, although their definition of “educational” continued to be broad rather
than deep. Children were program subjects rather than objects; there was plenty *about*
children, offered by experts from the New York Academy of Medicine, President
Hoover’s educational committee, various colleges and universities, and the National
Education Association.

There was less *for* children. Walter Drey, a noted economist, educator and poet
of the 1930s, created a children’s program for New York City commercial station
WMCA. According to the press release that announced the program Drey stated that
good entertainment is always sound education, but conversely, sound education
is not always good entertainment ... If programs that have high educational
standards are actually labeled as ‘educational,’ the average child will turn off the
dials because he wants to use the radio like every other normal person, primarily
for entertainment, and not for education.

Drey felt that children's programs should be built on the concept of "vicarious heroism," which presented heroic individuals and encouraged children to live vicariously through them, a process he thought helped children develop character. He was firm on the differences between education and entertainment, and felt programming should tend toward the latter. "We Americans are a pretty fine sort of people, and the one thing we do resent is any form of busy-body who definitely tells us that he wants to improve us."65

Children's network fare in 1932 included variety shows such as the "Iodent [toothpaste] Boys Club" that offered sketches and music; the "Lady Next Door" (which became the Coast to Coast Bus), "Singing Lady" and the "Nestle Chocolateers" musical programs; and story-based programs such as "Land o' Make Believe" (which later became the very well known "Let's Pretend"66). In addition, there were plenty of programs either general in nature or created for adults that were also youth favorites. These included crime stories like the "Eno Crime Clues," "The Shadow" and "Sherlock Holmes," and adventure series like "Rin-Tin-Tin" and "Little Orphan Annie," all of which were notable for vivid sound effects, melodramatic musical scores, cliff-hanger endings, and opening jingles promoting their advertising sponsor's product.67

65 WMCA, Press Department [press release, n.d.]. NACRE, Box 4, Folder – Children's Programs, p. 3.
NBC continued to frame much of their programming as ‘educational,’ by publishing and sending their monthly educational bulletins in 1932 to 5,400 places that included schools, libraries and individual homes. The company itself had grown, and now employed 1,488 – not including the “talent” who performed before the microphone. New technical developments and improvements to existing facilities consumed much of the network’s attention, and there was mention of a new technology, ‘television’, that was not quite ready for the general public (Barnouw, 1968).

In addition to ongoing political struggles with educators and nonprofits, a negative public reaction to NBC programming had made its way into internal network reports. Executive Vice President Niles Trammell felt that “agitation [was] rapidly coming to a head among certain groups, parents’ and teachers’ associations principally, for a change in the type of children’s programs now being broadcast” (Carlson, “Confidential,” 1933, p. 2). Weekly Operations Department meetings at NBC now routinely discussed mounting protests, from parent groups and child advocacy organizations, about the levels of advertising and violent content in the mystery and thriller types of children’s programming. How would NBC diffuse the clamor, especially now, when so much company energy was focused on containing the threat posed by educational and nonprofit interests? Network response was almost offensive in its simplicity. Representatives from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) were invited popular and many individual shows as well as information about the “Golden Age of Radio” can be found at http://www.old-time.com/toc.html; for a scholarly look at similar material see http://www.midcoast.com/~lizmcl/links.html. Gerald Nachman’s 1998 book, Raised on Radio; New York: Pantheon Books, provides a nostalgic take on children’s programming, from a former listener’s experiences. Finally, Marilyn L. Boemer’s The Children’s Hour provides capsule descriptions of single episodes along with run dates and short historical commentary on selected programs.
to lunch at NBC to “thoroughly discuss” the situation and “effectively cope with the situation in order to prevent it assuming dangerous proportions” (Operating Committee, 1933, p. 2).

The 1933 NBC Advisory Council discussion of the issue was, unsurprisingly, defensive. Council members commented on “the enormous difficulty of providing programs suitable to the wide variety of existing tastes” and felt that “one need not listen to distasteful programs any more than one need read distasteful articles.” Too much was made, they thought, of “fan mail” and “not enough [of] the unexpressed views which might represent the feelings of the vast majority” (Memorandum, 1933, p. 13). One member went even further, saying people “had never learned to think, and need first to be trained into a capacity to think if their minds are to be made receptive to the best that education can offer” (Memorandum, 1933, p. 13).

That same 1933 meeting was also noteworthy for political comments made by both President Aylesworth, who reminded the group that the battle for the airwaves was not over, and by Chairman Owen Young, who divided his remarks between nostalgic reminders of the advisory group’s higher moral purpose and the ongoing threats to the “American” system of broadcasting. Young’s remarks appeared to be pitched to outside groups, for example, critics of commercial broadcasting. He asserted that comparisons between NBC operations and those across the sea (in particular the government-controlled BBC, which was often mentioned in juxtaposition with America’s commercial system) had generated much heat and little substance.

On a different subject, the advisory council was fulsome in its praise of NACRE’s efforts to build a bridge between broadcasters and educators. Aylesworth
even admitted that the company saw the logic in keeping educational programs on a regular schedule, and promised NACRE and NEA inviolate time slots through the summer of 1934. This was mere rhetoric since NACRE, at the time of Aylesworth’s guarantees, was in the midst of scheduling re-negotiations for its successful *You and Your Government* series, which had been shifted unceremoniously into a less desirable time slot and would be reduced from a 30-minute program to a 15-minute program in the fall of 1934 (National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, 1936).

The NBC education committee report, submitted by newly appointed chair Robert M. Hutchins, the controversial young president of the University of Chicago, lauded both NBC sustaining (network-produced) programs as well as those it aired from cooperating groups. According to the network, educators were finally beginning to see the value of radio (the commercial broadcasters’ way), and realized that if they offered well-constructed programs – as broadcasters had been advising them to do for years – they would be successful. Much was made in Hutchins’ report of the cooperation with NACRE and the NEA, and libraries were also acknowledged. “Libraries all over the country report to the office of the American Library Association an increased demand for books and other materials outlined for supplementary reading on the various series being broadcast” (National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, 1936, p. 45).

Hutchins, however, didn’t ignore the increasingly rancorous clashes between networks and educators.

At the same time [as] this evolution [in the quality and quantity of educational broadcasting done on commercial channels], proposals have been made … for a reservation of cleared channels for exclusive use of education to the amount of
15% of the entire portion of the radio spectrum [Fess Bill, see Chapter 1, p. 42] assigned to the United States under international agreement. Your Chairman believes that the Company must work toward a policy of treating educational programs in the same way as commercial programs as to hours, days, and the definiteness of all arrangements. If this policy can be arrived at – and I am told the Company is working toward that end – it is my opinion that during this period of technical and experimental development educators can do no better than to utilize, wherever possible, existing facilities (National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, 1936, p. 53).

At ALA, now that the children’s radio hour was officially sanctioned as an association project, Milam began looking for potential sponsors, both individual and corporate. Funding was essential to ALA’s ability to carry the project forward. “Even though there was every assurance that time would be allowed on the air in a national hookup,” wrote Van Cleve,

> a large sum of money would have to be obtained in order to carry out the plan. The salary of the program maker and director, clerical aid and publicity would require quite a budget and should the American Library Association sponsor such an undertaking it would certainly have to control it, for that reason finance its administration. We were very hopeful some months past that this might be accomplished but at present so far as I know the matter is still at a standstill.68

A note of discouragement was creeping into the dialog a year and a half after the program idea had been endorsed by the ALA Board, which was three years after the

idea was first discussed by Milam and Tyson. Van Cleve sent a memo to Carl Milam, dated May 2, 1933, expressing her discouragement.

I have been thinking that it is perhaps time to tell N.B.C. that the A.L.A. has no immediate prospects of undertaking a children’s program. The possibility of our doing it may be preventing them from developing a good program of their own or encouraging some other agency to do it. This, however, may not be a wise suggestion; I have not made it to anyone else.”

Two days later Milam responded briefly and to the point and, significantly, he didn’t try to reassure her. “I’ll think about your suggestion concerning N.B.C. and perhaps I can feel out [NBC vice president] Mr. Elwood when I see him.”

The program was obviously very much on Van Cleve’s mind, because she came up with a new funding idea even before Milam had had a chance to respond to her first statement. In a separate memo to Milam – dated the same day as her previous memo – she suggested creating a document that would “stir the imagination to its [the radio program’s] possibilities.” It could be sent to sympathetic organizations and associations willing to invest philosophically and financially in the project. She suggested prestigious groups such as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (NCPT), the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC), American Association of University Women (AAUW), the American Association of Museums (AAM), the National Recreation Association (NRA), among others, whose endorsement and support

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69 J.G. Van Cleve, memo to C.H. Milam, May 2, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July 1933.
70 C. H. Milam, memo to J.G. Van Cleve, May 4, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July 1933.
71 J.G. Van Cleve, memo to C.H. Milam, May 2, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July 1933.
might make the funding search quicker and more successful.

In the meantime plans were afoot in the Section for Library Work with Children for a major conference session focused solely on radio, no doubt exacerbated by a very inflammatory article that appeared in the May 1933 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*.

The article in question, “The Children’s Hour of Crime,” expressed the point of view of a father of young children who was outraged by the “four hours of lessons on the art of crime and higher skullduggery which pour from the radio stations each afternoon, almost without interruption, from Monday to Friday” (Mann, 1933, p. 313). Excerpts of his descriptions of various programs capture the general flavor of parental complaints that were making their way into the media and to network offices. In his comments below he discusses “Little Orphan Annie,” “Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders,” “Wheatenaville Sketches,” and “Detectives Black and Blue.”

[A] very popular crime program is ‘Little Orphan Annie,’ sponsored as I have said by the makers of Ovaltine ... Annie is an orphan ... she has been kidnapped, chloroformed, rendered unconscious by a deliberate blow on the head, held prisoner several times, pursued over the countryside by the law, imprisoned in barns and hovels and freight cars ... When I tuned in on the H-Bar-O Ranch program, sponsored by the H-O Oats Company, the sheriff had just been shot and almost killed. Bobby Benson, a supposedly sub-adolescent, is the envied hero ... Young Benson rides ponies, takes part in shoot-ups, speaks the lingo of cowboys, chases cattle rustlers, criminals, bandits ... The Wheatenaville program ... was concerned with the heartaches and jealousies of Uncle Billy and his sweetheart. The children had been subordinated to the post
fixers of romance … ‘Black and Blue,’ two bungling ungrammatical amateur detectives from another 100-per-cent crime program in the interest of Iodent tooth paste. They have been involved in kidnapping, attempted murder, arson, revenge motives, court scenes, bribed juries, and even a Shanghai gesture. I personally banned them on the day when one of the characters was sick from veal hash and the other said, ‘You shouldn’t ought to have did it (Mann, 1933, p. 314-315).

NBC had fought back by turning their educational bulletins into slick public relations tools. They evolved from simple lists of program dates, times and stations, to lengthier and glossier pieces that included commentary designed to bolster positive public opinion. Two items from the May 1933 Educational Bulletin capture the corporate rhetoric meant to contain or redirect controversy. In 1933 NBC sent education director Franklin Dunham to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (NCPT) conference, to defend NBC juvenile program choices. Rather than acknowledge NCPT complaints, the bulletin briefly mentioned NCPT in this way: “One of the activities of this splendid body of school enthusiasts has been the cultivation of listeners for fine radio programs both in school and home” (National Broadcasting Company, “Educational Bulletin,” 1933, p. 1). Another item on the front page directed attention to the “popular Children’s Programs which are designed to interest and entertain the youthful listeners of America in their recreation hours.” Lest NBC be accused of ignoring education, the bulletin editors added that “many educational programs … also are followed with enthusiasm and delight by these same youngsters” (National Broadcasting Company, “Educational Bulletin,” 1933, p. 1).
Another network response to parental criticism was to send network executives on the road. In particular Waller and Dunham, NBC’s two educational directors (for the Midwest and Central divisions, respectively), attended conferences, joined organizations, and presented at conferences as often as invitations arrived. In 1933 NBC sent Dunham to the NCPT conference to reassure educators and parents that NBC was concerned about children, but they were adamant that youth – like adults – were looking for entertainment during the evening hours. Dunham reminded attendees that the networks were not the only ones responsible for radio’s influence on children, and he cleverly used his own children to make the point.

Do we allow them to listen to every program on the air between 5 and 9? No. In the first place they must exercise choice at any given period and in the second place, we exercise some choice ourselves … We encourage our children to listen to the best. If there are programs falling far short of the best, we discourage them by a twist of the dial” (Dunham, “All Radio,” 1933, p. 1-2).

He pointed out that several of the writers of both adult and children’s programs were well-respected authors, and he praised their work. He reminded the audience that children enjoyed mysteries, and mysteries were good for helping them develop reasoning skills. He acknowledged the networks’ responsibility to create suitable content for children, but his final remarks came straight from the company line. The good listener, he said, directed his neighbors toward quality programs, and “thereby add[ed] to the general good of the community by helping his neighbor to encourage honest, worthy effort wherever he finds it – in contacts – in everyday life – and on the radio” (Dunham, “All Radio,” 1933, p. 1).
In May of 1933 Dorothy Gordon, a long-time radio performer, contacted ALA to offer her services as a conference speaker in order to promote dialog on the subject of children’s programming. “I do not know whether the wave of protest against many of the children’s programs now on the air has reached Chicago,” she wrote to Jesse Van Cleve.

Here in the East it is very apparent that parents and educators are beginning to realize that something definite must be done to counteract the continuance of programs that are almost a menace to the child … What do you think of devoting an entire meeting to ‘The Child and the Radio’ at the American Library Association Conference in October? Surely no group is better fitted to handle that subject than the Children’s Librarians who are in constant touch with the child and most concerned with his spiritual and cultural growth.⁷²

Van Cleve’s response was polite and noncommittal. She told Gordon about the proposed children’s hour and assured her that “all are alert to this subject and it is, as you say, a very timely topic and one about which something should be done in the near future.” She also privately expressed a Midwesterner’s disdain for Gordon’s statements about “the East.” A penciled note on the bottom of Gordon’s letter commented, “Just why all waves should be thought to originate in N.Y. is beyond me.”⁷³

Even with greater publicity of radio’s programming weaknesses, there was still a difference of opinion with the library profession about the amount of time and effort being expended on the children’s radio hour project. Early reservations about the

feasibility and advisability of librarians broadcasting (Chapter 2, p. 53) were still extant. For example, Cora M. Beatty, head of the ALA Membership Services Department, had written to Carl Milam that

such programs [as the children’s radio project] would be in the interests of reading and of library use, and of course as such not without value. However, I do seriously question the propriety of A.L.A. taking action which would lead to an increase at this time in the heavy demands on libraries already overworked, under-staffed and under-financed.”74

Beatty was no doubt referring to the effects of the Depression, which had had quite an impact on public libraries and from which recovery was still a distant hope for many in 1933. In 1932 more than 3,000 members hadn’t paid their dues. Headquarters staff had experienced salary and hours cuts, as did many librarians in public libraries. The ALA budget had risen to nearly $400,000 in 1926, but had fallen to $232,000 in 1933 (Thomison, 1978, p. 123).

According to her memo to Milam, she had hoped that ALA would move in the direction of a program that would generate public and financial support for libraries in general. Soon after Beatty’s prompt, Milam wrote Tyson with three potential ideas for library-connected series.

One idea is a series of talks or conversations on the work of libraries – how the library serves the parent education groups or the President of the N.C.P.T.; the library as an agency for the diffusion of ideas on current questions ... Another idea is a series of talks by distinguished writers somewhat in the nature of

confessions and particularly telling which of their own books they value most highly – with a sufficient librarian participation or planning of each program to protect the library against unreasonable demands for many copies of an individual title ... A third suggestion is for a series of radio addresses on ‘Book Favorites of Mine,’ by nationally known authors and other people of prominence, also written with some appropriate library tie-up.75

Milam’s letter to Tyson also included news of a recent meeting with museum workers where the topic of radio programming had come up, and the talk turned to children. Milam reported that “enough was said ... to lead me to invite museum workers interested in children’s programs to join the A.L.A. Committee in its efforts.”76

More importantly, just as soon as Milam had finished inviting museum workers to join the ALA project, Judith Waller, NBC’s Midwest director of education and a trusted ally at the network, “completely knocked the props out from under me by telling me it was all done, that she had submitted just such a program to the powers that be and that NBC would inaugurate it in the fall.”77

Waller’s statement was, at best, wishful thinking. She had apparently presented her program (Figure 4, p. 111) to NBC brass sometime before NBC Programming Vice President John Elwood spoke to Milam at a late spring dinner party (date unspecified) given by Tyson, where Elwood “raised a row with me because we [ALA] had not been ready to go ahead[,] and asked whether we could undertake even one good program a

75 C.H. Milam, letter to L. Tyson, June 19, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Program, A.L.A. Project, Miscellaneous, Jan-July 1933.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
month.  

There is a later document, dated September 18, 1933, that mentions a conversation between Waller and Henry Field (of the Field Museum in Chicago), in which Field says that Waller approached him in March 1933 to design a children’s program for NBC.  

Figure 4: Waller’s 1933 Proposed Outline for an NBC Children’s Program.

![Diagram of Waller's 1933 Proposed Outline for an NBC Children's Program]

The program outline that seems to have resulted from that discussion was sent to NBC

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78 Ibid.
79 H. Field, letter sent to F. Dunham, September 18, 1933, NACRE Box 4, Folder – Children’s Programs.
in September (see Figure 5, p. 123), so the program under discussion in June wasn’t nearly as developed as Waller makes it sound.\footnote{H. Field, “Children’s Radio Program for 1933-34, September 19, 1933, p. 5. NACRE Box 4, Folder – Children’s Programs.}

In any event, whatever documentation Waller provided in the spring of 1933, NBC didn’t seem as keen on her program as she thought. Milam was unaware of Waller’s conversations with Field and knew only what she had said during the museum meeting, so he was uncertain about whether ALA should go forward or consider the children’s radio project at an end.

Tyson’s response was encouraging in regard to ALA’s plans for the children’s radio program. He had been in Elwood’s office when Waller’s program was brought to his attention, and he was, by Tyson’s account, dismissive of it.

N.B.C. would like to inaugurate a good children’s program just as soon as it is ready – you know that. If the project you described [the ALA children’s radio program] were ready for the fall Miss Waller would never hear about her suggestion again … The tragedy about the whole situation is that the ideas we discussed in the last few years on this subject are better than anything proposed by the broadcasters. If money were available we could do a gorgeous job, speaking both in the broadcasting and in the ‘educational’ sense. Where is the money coming from? I wouldn’t want her [Waller] to think I didn’t like her proposal. It was good and the best thing that has come out of the broadcasting industry thus far, but it isn’t nearly what can be done with a national children’s
Unfortunately for Milam and ALA, Tyson was less encouraging – in fact, discouraging on at least one possible topic of potential library programs.

I am not particularly intrigued with a series of talks or conversations on the work of libraries .... You might be able to make such a series extremely interesting, but it doesn’t sound so at this distance. You compare such a series to the National Education Association program, and I admit the analogy, but I don’t think the clientele for a library series is as large as the clientele for the N.E.A. series .... There is a great deal of sentimental appeal to the public as a whole about schools and education in general. There is not the same mass of appeal in respect to the library.\textsuperscript{82}

Tyson, like the networks, appeared to feel that libraries weren’t particularly relevant to the daily lives of most Americans, and that educational programs needed a broader base of potential listeners, e.g. children, vocational subjects, medical problems, homemaking or housekeeping tips. This stance, the need for a broad listener base, echoed network concerns, but is surprising when heard from an educator himself. This shortsighted public understanding of library offerings had handicapped and would continue to handicap ALA whenever its leaders tried to promote radio programs.

Planning for the fall 1933 ALA annual conference session continued within the Children’s Section, where Alice Jordan, children’s department head at Boston Public Library and experienced librarian-broadcaster, wrote to section chair McGregor to

\textsuperscript{81} L. Tyson, letter to C.H. Milam, June 25, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July 1933.
\textsuperscript{82} L. Tyson, letter to C.H. Milam, June 25, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Radio, Folder – Children’s Program, A.L.A. Project, Miscellaneous, Jan-July 1933.
affirm the importance of holding a session on radio at the upcoming conference. In her letter, Jordan referred to the absence of any official ALA policy on the state of children’s radio programming as a “policy of drifting” rather than taking some sort of stand in relation to current radio programs. She wondered “whatever came of the plan for a radio hour which was proposed in the Bulletin of the A.L.A. for December 1931. It does not,” she commented, “appear to have had much effect upon the problem.”

Correspondence between Section leadership flew back and forth over the summer of 1933 and, as fall approached, settled into a discussion about a joint session with the CLRB at the fall 1933 conference. Mary Gould Davis, former section chair, commented to her successor Della McGregor that she thought it would be wiser to keep the session under the auspices of the Section rather than the radio committee because “we [the Section] stand for a definite policy, a definite tradition. I have not felt – yet that the A.L.A. Radio Committee does. It has taken no stand as far as I know.” Davis was referring to the children’s librarians’ traditional protective stance towards children, and their concerns over the state of commercial radio programming for children.

Section chair McGregor contacted the CLRB chair, Luther Dickerson, and invited his participation in the proposed program.

Because of the experiences of your Executive Committee over a period of years in the planning and perfecting of library radio programs, the Executive Committee of our group feels it would like to benefit from your experience before making definite recommendations for the development of better

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84 M.G. Davis, letter to D. McGregor, August 18, 1933, ALA 24/50/6, Box 1, Folder - Radio, 1933.
children’s programs and closer cooperation with both local and national radio broadcasting representatives.\textsuperscript{85}

An ironic twist of conference scheduling at ALA headquarters put the proposed children’s section radio program in the same time slot as the CLRB round table (program). With Milam’s blessing, the program became a joint one, co-sponsored by the CLRB and the Section for Library Work with Children, presided over by Children’s Section chair/CLRB member Mary Gould Davis. Outgoing Section Chair McGregor and CLRB chair Dickerson collaborated on the program, with McGregor polling children’s members to find successful librarian-broadcasters to present at the session, and Dickerson suggesting speakers who would bring in the national perspective.

As summer was ending, Van Cleve had pulled together a document that could be sent to civic and educational organizations that might be interested in ALA’s national children’s radio program. The form letter, customized for each organizational recipient, outlined ALA’s national children’s radio program idea and the hoped-for contributions from cooperating agencies.

We think the objectives of such a program might be to give impetus to healthy, active occupations and pursuits and to promote intellectual and emotional development … the program should be truly recreation but of a type that will be provocative of intellectual and cultural development … appropriately sponsored by several national organizations whose programs of work include some aspect of children’s welfare, possibly through a joint committee composed of one representative from each organization. Large responsibilities would of necessity

\textsuperscript{85} D. McGregor, letter to L.L. Dickerson, August 22, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Program, A.L.A. Project, Miscellaneous, January-July 1933.
be placed on this committee, which might in turn delegate a considerable amount of its authority to a full-time director of its own choosing. The annual cost of an enterprise of this sort might easily amount to several thousand dollars ... As no one of the interested organizations is likely to have sufficient funds for this purpose, it will apparently be necessary to assume at the start that the plan is impossible unless special funds can be obtained ... the purpose of this letter is to inquire whether you think [you] might be interested in canvassing with us and a few other organizations the possibilities of some such scheme as is suggested above, without committing the organizations to anything, of course."

Some of Milam’s residual frustration laced his excitement over the possibility of adding partners and stepping up the project. He wrote to CLRB chair Dickerson that

We have loafed along on this radio job for two or three years without getting anywhere. My thought is that perhaps we can get somewhere if we get several other organizations to join us."  

Broadcast politics were an issue here, and NACRE’s prominent involvement might have inhibited ALA’s coalition-building efforts, so although NACRE was not included on the mailing list, NCPT (an NCER supporter) was. Still, Tyson knew about the plans and Milam assured Dickerson that “Tyson has endorsed the idea but has not seen the letter. I thought it best not to involve his organization in this first

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86 C.H. Milam, form letter sent to coalition members, various dates in August/September, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Organizations Cooperating, 1933.
87 C.H. Milam, letter to L.L. Dickerson, September 6, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July-1933.
Other solicitations were in process as well. When newspapers published the obituary for Detroit millionaire Horace Rackham and indicated that his wife would create a philanthropic fund in his honor, Milam contacted Detroit Public Library children's chief, Jessie Tompkins, to ask if ALA should approach Rackham's widow about the ALA radio project. Tompkins thought the idea was eminently suitable and urged Milam to hurry because the "trustees of the fund [were] receiving scores of pleas for inclusion in its benefits." Other names were occasionally suggested to ALA: Mrs. Dwight Morrow, who might give in memory of the Lindbergh baby, and Mrs. Catherine Spalding Hickox, who had recently lost a child and might be sympathetic to the cause.

Children's Section leadership was hard at work on their radio conference session and was intent on doing more than "contribut[ing] pleasantries and descriptive criticism," which, thought Section chair McGregor, "has been about all that has been accomplished by people who have taken the matter under advisement." When she wrote to Judith Waller, NBC's Central Division Education Director, about speaking at the joint program, she was direct in her characterization of the joint session's intent.

As a group, while we are very much in sympathy with the point-of-view and the criticism reflected in the [Scribner's] article, we feel that before we are able to offer any definite contributions for improving a program that we must have a

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88 Ibid.
89 J. Tompkins, letter to C.H. Milam, September 1, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder Financing - Rackham Foundation, 1933.
90 E.H. Dixon, memo to C.H. Milam, September 8, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder Financing - Rackham Foundation, 1933.
91 D. McGregor, letter to L.L. Dickerson, September 15, 1933, ALA 24/50/6, Box 1, Folder - Radio, 1933.

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good deal more information at hand in regard to the pitfalls and problems involved in the development and broadcasting of successful Radio programs.\textsuperscript{92}

As the Section continued program planning, Van Cleve's suggestion earlier in 1933, to involve other organizations in the ALA children's radio project, had resulted in a letter that was sent out in late August and early September to selected groups. By the end of September, ALA had heard from the NCPT, GFWC, NRA, and the Child Study Association (CSA), among others, all of whom expressed interested in the coalition idea. They also uniformly indicated that financial support was out of the question.

The NCPT response included a report from their own radio committee, who were preparing to work with NBC and other broadcasters to provide recommended materials for broadcast, help publicize quality programs, and create guidelines for children's programming. Interestingly, several of these objectives found their way into a plan developed in late 1934 by an ALA coalition whose existence was rooted in the solicitation letters just discussed. At about this same time Julia Wright Merrill, head of the ALA Public Library Division and also a member of NCPT's board of directors, reported to Milam that NBC and CBS had offered the NCPT program time and a 12-part series on parent education was to begin in January 1934.\textsuperscript{93} It must have been galling to Milam to read that NCPT planned to begin broadcasting, joining the NEA and the CSA, when ALA was finding it so difficult to move its program forward. The correspondence doesn't indicate how either the NEA or the NCPT planned to fund their

\textsuperscript{92} D. McGregor, letter to J. Waller, September 15, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children's Program, A.L.A. Project, Miscellaneous, January-July 1933.
\textsuperscript{93} J.W. Merrill, memo to C.H. Milam and attachment entitled “N.C.P.T. Radio Broadcasting Plans,” September 25, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Organizations Cooperating, 1933.
programs, and it is possible the network intended to sponsored them.

Coalition-building work was set aside for the Fifty-fifth Annual Conference, which took place in October 1933, in Chicago, Illinois. The radio session jointly planned by the Section for Library Work with Children and the CLRB had come to marvelous fruition. Speakers at the October 17, 1933 session included broadcaster-librarians, members of the CLRB, Mrs. John S. Fox from the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers, publisher Frederic Melcher, on-air personality Dorothy Gordon (who had previously offered to speak at the conference), NACRE director Levering Tyson, and NBC’s Judith Waller. Joint session chair Davis indicated that the purpose of the session was to address two questions.

The first is: ‘How can we so conform to the technique of a broadcasting studio that our sharing of books with boys and girls is as real and effective as it is in our children’s departments?’ Second, ‘How can we make the experience of each of us common to us all’ (Second Session, 1933, p. 794)?

Experienced children’s librarian-broadcasters described their successful library radio interaction. Mary Duncan Carter, for example, from Montreal’s McGill University Library School spoke about beginning with book reviews and then developing a children’s story hour that included “travel trips, and folk tales and fairy tales were told of the countries visited” (Ibid). According to children’s librarian Elizabeth Briggs, Cleveland (OH) Public Library started in radio’s early days by broadcasting stories themselves, but had discovered that it was more beneficial to lend their professional help to programs with commercial sponsorship. Briggs also mentioned partnering with Cleveland College to produce a series for parents about bringing literature and music
into the home. Both Briggs and Agatha Shea, from Chicago Public Library, mentioned working with public schools, and in the case of Chicago they created monthly programs at two levels: fourth through sixth grade and seventh through ninth grades (Ibid, p. 796).

Other children's librarians on the program included Erdean F. McCloud from Fort Wayne (IN) Public Library, who briefly described a survey done by her library that linked poor quality radio programs to the reading of "the cheapest magazines in which there is neither 'information, vocabulary, nor beauty" (Ibid, p. 797); Ruth O. Bostwick, St. Louis (MO) Public Library, who felt that their best efforts were directed at parents rather than children; Mary Frances Cox, Carnegie Library of Atlanta (GA), who reported working with their local Junior League; Katherine Watson, Denver (CO) Public Library, who mentioned the volume of mail they received from all over the United States and Canada; and Marian Fiery, Enoch Pratt Free Library, who suggested that "the only way we can possibly compete with commercial programs is to concentrate on the entertainment value of the program we give" (Ibid, p. 798).

Some presenters were critical in their remarks, for example Bostwick indicated that the "problem of radio broadcasting by libraries can be traced to the libraries' inability to pay for their time on the air, thereby forcing them to accept any period [of the broadcast day]" (Ibid, p. 797). McCloud, according to the official conference record, "closed with a plea for some concerted, swift action on the part of the section to support a real children's radio hour" (Ibid, p. 797).

There were several speakers from the national perspective as well. Frederic G. Melcher, publisher of Publishers Weekly and chair of the National Association of Book Publishers' (NABP) Copyright Committee, spoke to the issue of using copyrighted
materials on library programs, and Dorothy Gordon pushed librarians to “work out a
series of broadcasts for children and offer them for sale to some commercial sponsor ... for I think it is the only way for you to get any appreciable control over radio programs for children, and the children of the country need you” (Ibid, p. 799).

Indianapolis (IN) Public Library director Luther Dickerson, who was not a member of the CLRB during 1933 but who was still involved in the national children’s radio hour planning, spoke about that program to the youth librarians who attended the session, and a brief but telling line was included in the report of the meeting. “There was a time about a year ago when it seemed that it might be financed” (Ibid, p. 794). Still, he appeared to be optimistic about the program’s prospects, and alluded to Van Cleve’s earlier idea to contact organizations with similar missions. He told the group that Milam had been in touch with the NRA, NCPT, GFWC, Girl Scouts, and the CSA, and they all reported dissatisfaction with children’s radio programs. It was his hope, according to the conference record, that “the combined efforts of such organizations with the American Library Association may in the near future finance a good children’s program” (Ibid).

Judith Waller, representing the networks, was forceful in her comments to the assembled group.

I doubt if any of you would agree [with each other] on the kind of program you want if you were put to the test. There were five members of the parent-teacher association who called on the broadcasting station last spring, and not one of them agreed with any other on what a good or a bad program is ... I think the answer is parental guidance and not a question of what is put on the radio ...
You would be surprised how many good children’s programs there are if you took the trouble to look them up, but the children would not agree that they were the interesting and good children’s programs. The advertiser is just as anxious as we are to give children the entertainment you think they should have, and if you will give us a program that children will listen to, you won’t have to buy the time on any broadcasting station. But we have not yet had one good suggestion from any library, school, or parent-teacher association that we could work out and know it would interest a children’s radio audience … Children want action, entertainment, and dramatization; they don’t want stories told or read to them over the radio (Ibid, p. 799).

Waller’s comments were odd, given the success stories she had just heard from fellow panelists, NBC affiliate WEAF’s popular “Fairy Tales” program (as advertised in their educational bulletin), and rival network CBS’s success with the acclaimed “Let’s Pretend,” which was nothing more or less than the dramatization of fairytales. Her remarks also appear to indicate that she didn’t believe a sound children’s program would ever emerge from the conflicting opinions expressed by people working outside the broadcast industry. What is interesting is that Waller never mentions that she had been working with museum curator Henry Field since March on a children’s program (Figure 5, p. 123) that had been submitted to NBC brass less than a month earlier.94

The last program speaker was Van Cleve, who appeared unmoved by Waller’s expression of the networks’ doubts about the entertainment value of storytelling. Meeting notes indicate Van Cleve urged attendees to

94 H. Field, letter to F. Dunham, September 18, 1933, NACRE Box 4, Folder – Children’s Programs.
hold to the idea of better radio programs for children, comparing it with the
efforts made by children's librarians to get the best books into the hands of boys
and girls. Just as children have been educated to love and appreciate the best in
books, so too there is the hope that through the radio they may be led to an
appreciation of the best in literature, in art, and in music” (Second Session,
1933, p. 800).

After the annual conference concluded, Milam again took up the coalition idea
and suggested to Mary Gould Davis, CLRB/children's section member and New York
Public Library children's librarian, that she host a small meeting of civic and
educational groups that had indicated interest in supporting ALA's proposed children's
radio program. In order not to lose any further momentum, he suggested that the

Figure 5: Excerpt from Henry Field's 1933 Children's Radio Program Proposal.
meeting take place within a month and supplied the beginnings of a guest list. Here, again, the ethereal turf wars were a factor. Milam cautioned that, because of the ongoing NCER-NACRE animosity, and the fact that the chief NCER spokesperson was Joy Elmer Morgan, prominent member of NEA and editor of its journal, perhaps NEA should be excluded at this early meeting of the minds.95 Tyson and Davis also collaborated on the invitation list.

Eight organizations, AAM, AAUW, Association of the Junior Leagues of America, Camp Fire Girls, Child Development Institute, CSA, NRA, and NACRE, sent representatives to the coalition meeting, which took place on November 14, 1933. The meeting was brief, only 90 minutes and, as it was summarized by Davis for NCPT (which had been unable to send a representative to the meeting), had the following outcomes: ALA had received endorsements from the NRA and AAM; ALA was asked to continue to lead what was now considered to be a joint project; and each interested organization was asked to send Milam information about their own children’s radio programs.96

Back in Chicago after the successful coalition meeting, Milam reported similar outcomes in a letter M.S. Dudgeon, who is identified in the letter as the chair of the CLRB although the ALA Handbook for 1933 leaves the chair position vacant.

In order to get a fresh start on the children’s radio program proposals, which have been hanging fire for about two years because we were unable to secure

95 C.H. Milam, letter to M.G. Davis, November 1, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July-1933).
funds, I wrote to several executives of national organizations likely to be interested asking their cooperation … the general idea was endorsed and I was instructed [by participants at the November 1933 meeting] to appoint a special committee to prepare a statement of the project … My thought is that if we prepare as good a plan as we ought to be able to prepare with the cooperation of all these organizations (and several others which were invited but not able to be represented) and if we get the backing of all or most of these organizations, we shall be able to make a strong appeal to one of the foundations for the necessary funds. I hope you approve the steps I have taken.97

The special committee Milam appointed was comprised of Sidonie Gruenberg, director of the CSA, Frederick Redefer, from the Progressive Education Association (PEA), and Mary Gould Davis, who – along with Milam – would represent ALA interests. Tyson suggested that Child Study Association (CSA) Director Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg chair of the committee, a shrewd move that helped validate the group’s work on the broader public stage. It also helped allay any NBC fears about working with inexperienced educators. The CSA had a successful track record at NBC, having done several adult series on child psychology and parenting topics. Gruenberg had also published bibliographies and articles on child development as well as children and radio.

As 1933 closed, other educational and civic groups, among them CSA, NEA and NCPT, managed to deliver noncommercial programs to the radio audience, but ALA looked in vain in 1932 and 1933 for noncommercial program sponsors and eventually

97 C.H. Milam, letter to M.S. Dudgeon, December 5, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous January-July-1933.
decided the job of funding the national children’s radio program required the broader support of national organizations with similar feelings about the current crop of children’s radio offerings. As their national organization cultivated relationships with potential collaborators and funders, local librarians broadcasted when opportunities arose, educated each other at conferences, and a few people – both within the children’s section and the larger ALA membership – felt that ALA was being left behind as more public voices expressed concern about the state of children’s education by commercial radio.
CHAPTER 5: NATIONAL CHILDREN’S RADIO HOUR: 1934

The year 1934 was a pivotal one for the ALA national children’s radio program because the program’s fate hinged in part on major developments occurring that year within the larger radio broadcasting arena. The struggle between nonprofits (including educators) and commercial interests for spectrum control was entering its final phase and all the networks’ political wrangling paid off in the June passage of the Communications Act of 1934. As mentioned in Chapter 1 there were attempts during the early spring of that year to add legislative language that would save at least a small piece of the airwaves for education, but efforts such as the Wagner-Hatfield Amendment and the Harney Amendment (Chapter 1, p. 46) ultimately had little impact on the outcome as written by the networks and their congressional friends.

It might seem that networks would have freedom to broadcast whatever they liked, coming off their great political success, but they now found their time occupied with complaints from their listening public, and they found themselves nipped at by the beast they had helped create. It was still important that networks present an image of public-mindedness rather than greed since license renewal still depended on at least the perception that stations were operated for the public good.

Listener complaints about advertising and programming had prompted NBC to make organizational changes in the past, such as the formation of new departments in 1932 for women’s (Hilmes, 1997, p. 150) and 1933 for children’s interests. Now NBC added a continuity department, whose task it was to prevent objectionable material from reaching the air (Craig, 2000, p. 269). The Radio Act of 1927 clause about serving the

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98 “Distinguished Group,” 1933, NACRE, Box 4 – Children’s Programs.
public interest, convenience or necessity, meant stations could lose their licenses if they ignored – or even appeared to ignore – that part of the licensing agreement. They lived in fear of the FCC “raised eyebrow,” where a significant number of complaints against any station might invoke an immediate hearing on its application for renewal (Barnouw, 1968, p. 27).

Where educators and nonprofits were concerned, broadcasters had (pre-1934) worked sporadically with them – most usually when it suited their political agenda. For example in 1931 when the Fess Bill (Chapter 1, p. 42) was under discussion in Congress, networks shored up their civic image by creating educational offerings such as the *American School of the Air* and the *University of Chicago Round Table* (which involved a panel of scholars and experts discussing world affairs). Notably, it was also during the Fess Bill period when NBC (through NACRE) strongly encouraged ALA to bring them a quality children’s program (Barnouw, 1968, p. 27). But in 1934, following the enactment of the Communications Act, networks felt less compelled to accommodate educators and nonprofits, and that change in attitude had serious implications for broadcasters’ relationships with special interest groups such as NACRE – and, by extension, educational groups such as ALA.

**NBC and its Listeners**

NBC President Aylesworth’s reports to the network’s advisory council continued the confident tone and rhetorical cast of his earlier ones. Radio, he declaimed in 1934, was

indispensable to the conduct of American life ... In no country in the world do we find a freedom of expression, a constant striving for the presentation of both
sides of national, state or even community issues, a willingness to perform unselfishly a public service, exceeding our own in excellence."\textsuperscript{99}

Aylesworth justified NBC's handling of education by stating that the programs "which are of greatest value are those that definitely serve the most immediate need."\textsuperscript{100} Education by radio would "widen mental horizons, increase individual capacities for self-improvement and tend to be of the greatest ultimate service to the community."\textsuperscript{101}

Robert Hutchins' second report as the NBC Advisory Council Education Committee chair was a far more balanced account of network education activities than had been seen from his predecessor, Edwin Alderman. Hutchins reiterated familiar issues but placed blame equally at the door of broadcaster and educator alike. Broadcasters were chastised for not funding more educational programming and for their tendency to bounce educational programs around to different time slots. Why, questioned Hutchins, should educational institutions fund stations and/or programs if the audiences for the programs were so small, and the likelihood of schedule changes made it unlikely that any sustained educational effect would come from the work?

Educators on the other hand were taken to task in Hutchins' report for their inability or reluctance to adapt to radio broadcasting techniques. Whether he meant to or not, he echoed the old argument of too much education/not enough entertainment to make educational programs palatable to the American public.

May we not in the more serious field of education develop the equivalent of Amos 'n' Andy in the field of entertainment, lifting men hitherto unknown to

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, p. 13.
prominence because of their ability not only to present facts in their correct light and interpretations and predictions that will prove accurate, but also to hold their listeners’ attention by their radio presence.\textsuperscript{102}

Concern about education versus entertainment programming became significantly less important – most especially to commercial broadcasters – on June 18, 1934, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Communications Act of 1934 into law. In spite of unsuccessful efforts by broadcast reformers to insert language that protected broadcasting opportunities for nonprofits and educators, the Act replicated much of the Radio Act of 1927. The significant change was that the FRC was abolished and a new oversight body, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was established. Earlier provisions from the 1927 legislation related to station licensing and (stations) acting in the public interest remained the same. For networks this law validated the commercial ownership of the air and, they felt, freed them to a large extent from educators’ demands.

From the NBC perspective, this changed their relationship with NACRE and Levering Tyson, a welcome step in view of the anti-commercial rhetoric that was seen in certain of Tyson’s public statements. In one particular instance, in a speech at the 1934 Ohio State University Institute on Education by Radio, Tyson commented that “the profit motive, more insidious than the mere idea of competition, has been in the saddle,” and he believed the government would be “derelict in its duty if it does not provide opportunity to use broadcasting facilities for the public service motive at least

on a fifty-fifty basis with the profit-making motive."{103} NBC Vice President John Royal was quick to alert Aylesworth.

As a matter of public relations I think it is a very serious situation ... For a long time he has been pretending to be friendly to radio, and now he openly takes off the mask and shows just how he feels. How can we work with such a person? We have tried to do everything possible to cooperate with him. We have given him millions of dollars' worth of time, and have made tremendous sacrifices in order to cooperate with him. I don't think he is honest and in my opinion he has been double-crossing us for some time.{104}

From NBC’s perspective, if there was a traitor in their midst, the timing couldn't have been better. NBC had spent time and effort successfully cultivating leading civic and social organizations, and had hosted shows from many of them, including ALA’s coalition members the CSA, NCPT, and NEA. Then, too, the business of broadcasting had gelled, and administrative structures within the networks were now able to take on many of the seeking and finding duties that originally belonged to NACRE.

The Act thwarted the political incursions of the educators and nonprofit groups, but networks did not completely escape accountability for what went on the air. The listening audience was becoming quite vocal about their discontent with certain aspects of current programming. Two issues in particular had emerged as problematic: advertising and children’s programming (which will be considered in the next chapter.) Complaints were coming from many different parts of society, and Stole indicates that

{103} F.E. Mason, letter to E.W. Harden, July 25, 1934, NBCW, Box 30, Folder - Correspondence, National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, 1934.
{104} J. Royal, memo to M.H. Aylesworth, May 29, 1934, NBCW, Box 30, Folder 16 - Correspondence, National Advisory Council on Radio in Education, 1934.
there were "several groups all claiming to represent consumer interests," among them such respected organizations as the GFWC, AAUW, the American Home Economics Association, the National League of Women Voters, and the AMA (Stole, 1998, p. 43).

Radio advertisements in 1922 had been low-key sponsorship statements, for example, ‘brought to you by the X Company,’ or naming a show after the sponsor as in the ‘Eveready Hour’ or the ‘Iodent Boys Club.’ By 1934 it had become a full-fledged and very profitable business that included copywriters, production companies and advertising agencies that

fanned the flames of public discontent with advertising. Radio advertising blared into people’s living rooms in a manner that struck many as offensive. Moreover, radio advertising, with no written record to which consumers could refer, was regarded as potentially far more fraudulent than print copy … This discontent escalated into large-scale debates and public hearings (Stole, 1998, p. 49).

In addition to what many listeners saw as too much advertising in 15- and 30-minute programs, there were particular problems with children’s programs and the pressure to buy the sponsor’s product. Advertisers pulled out all the stops for the Wheaties® commercial where “children were told that one of the characters named in the broadcast required medical attention and that proceeds from the sale of the

105 For more information on advertising history see Susan Smulyan, (Selling Radio, 1994) and Kathy Newman (Radio Active, 2004). Donald Guimary looks at the formation of citizen activist groups in his 1975 title, Citizens’ Groups and Broadcasting. For insights from the 1930s on advertising and children, see Ruth Brindze’s Not to be Broadcast (1937) and E. Evalyn Grumbine’s Reaching Juvenile Markets (1938). Dissertations from Cynthia Meyers (Admen and the Shaping of American Commercial Broadcasting, 1926-50, 2005), and Inger L. Stole (Selling Advertising, 1998) were helpful as well, and the master’s thesis from Michael J. Cohen (Radio Broadcasting and Children, 1985) had particularly interesting lists of advertising premiums offered by various commercial programs.
processed cereal would be used to defray these charges: (Brindze, 1937, p. 230). In this case, the ads caught the FTC’s attention and were quickly discontinued.

Often the merchandise that children received, after pressuring their parents into buying certain products and canvassing neighbors for stray box tops, was cheap or ill-made. The infamous 1933 Scribner’s article described a premium associated with the Bobby Benson B-Bar-B Riders radio show.

The bait of this program is a yellow bandana of calico sent through the mail for membership. The yellow comes out on the child’s neck. One corner of the kerchief dipped in a glass of water turned the liquid a lemon yellow color. To obtain the remaining 9 pieces of the cowboy outfit, the child must send 9 boxtops and $3.60, or 87 boxtops alone. At 20 portions to the box, it would take a child five years, eating oatmeal every day, to save 87 package tops (Mann, 1933, p. 314)!

Networks were caught squarely in the middle, between agitated listeners threatening to unplug their sets and advertising agencies and sponsors dangling hefty potential ad revenues. NBC tried first to address the problem by sending network representatives out to provide the network’s side of the story in the press and at conferences, and by targeted publicity pieces such as their monthly educational bulletins. But, according to a 1934 NBC interdepartmental memo,

A systematic plan of disseminating information about these important [cultural and educational] contributions toward public service has not been established … Certain hostile groups, disgruntled individuals, and publications of a controversial character continue to criticize radio. It is reasonable to assume that
the cumulative effect of this criticism may become dangerous.  

The memo advocated a series of steps ranging from responding to erroneous or critical newspaper or magazine articles, to continued cultivation of politicians and to identification within the organization itself of the most appropriate person to forward on the network’s behalf.

On the academic front, Azriel Eisenberg, a doctoral student at Columbia Teachers College, undertook a study of New York children and their interaction with radio. His dissertation, entitled, “Children’s Preferences and Reactions in Radio Programs, A Study of the New York Metropolitan Area,” gathered more than 3,000 student and 1500 parent responses to his survey, and was augmented by interviews with children, teachers, student statements (called ‘compositions’), and even IQ information (Eisenberg, 1937).

His questions, which were answered by 1,747 boys and 1,598 girls in grades five through eight, went well beyond simply asking what children listened to and when. He was interested in the effects of listening, and asked children if there were programs that kept them up at night (25% said the “Witch’s Tales”) or gave them nightmares (24% said “Eno Crime Clues,”) He asked if they thought that listening to the radio made them do anything – good (44% thought so) or bad (34%), and if they learned new things…

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107 The dates given for Eisenberg’s dissertation and the extracted statistics in the next paragraph might be confusing. Eisenberg collected his data in 1934, and then, according to the ProQuest Digital Dissertations database, his dissertation was published in 1937. But he had apparently been able to publish the same material in book form the year before. Thus, the book has an earlier copyright date (1936) than the completed dissertation (1937). The statistics quoted above are from Eisenberg’s book rather than his dissertation, although they are the same in both cases.

108 Eisenberg, p. 108 (Table 16) and 109 (Table 17).
by listening (52%). Their top five favorite programs, as reported on the 1934 survey, were Eddie Cantor (variety), Joe Penner (variety), Buck Rogers (science fiction serial), Bobby Benson (adventure serial), Eno Crime Clues (mystery/crime serial), and Myrt and Marge (soap opera/drama.) Little Orphan Annie comes in at number eight on the list.\textsuperscript{109}

He asked what books they would like to see dramatized on the radio and 30% of all the female respondents and 1% of male respondents for a combined significant 17% share of the total responses pushed \textit{Little Women} to the top of the list. The next four titles, with 3% total response each, were \textit{Alice in Wonderland}, \textit{Tom Sawyer}, \textit{Treasure Island}, and the \textit{Tarzan Series} (Eisenberg, 1936, p. 96, Table 9). The children felt that radio helped them with their studies (Eisenberg, 1936, p. 115, Table 19), particularly in history, geography and music; they learned helpful things from programming, such as good health habits and “desirable character and personality traits.”\textsuperscript{110}

Eisenberg noted, as others did later (Clark, 1938; O’Day, 1939; Ziegler, 1939), that radio program preferences differed between boys and girls, and that even within the sexes, their preferences changed with age. His conclusions also appeared to reinforce parental concerns, as he found that “nearly three-fourths of the dreams recorded in the [survey] interview are of the nightmare type … The most offensive programs in this regard are those that dramatize stories of crime and terrifying adventure.”\textsuperscript{111} However, he qualified his findings about nightmares by saying that many of the programs children found upsetting were, in fact, not written for them, and that the problem then becomes a

\textsuperscript{109} Eisenberg, 1936, p. 82, Table 6.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, p. 115, Table 19.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid, p. 190.
matter of parental intervention or a network decision to move them to a later time of
day.

In the course of writing up the results of his studies, Eisenberg contacted
Levering Tyson at NACRE, to acquaint him with the scope of his research, and this
contact resulted in Eisenberg’s attendance at an ALA coalition meeting later in the fall
of 1934.\(^{112}\)

**ALA and its Coalition**

In March, 1934, the small subcommittee (Gruenberg, Redefer and Gould),
which had been formed nearly four months earlier at the November 1933 ALA coalition
meeting in New York, was ready to send Milam draft document. The document was
entitled, “A Proposal for *A Central Clearing House* to coordinate the work of National
Organizations interested in *Radio Programs for Children*” (underlining in the original).
It organized the work of the committee under four headings: an explanation of the plan,
the circumstances from which the plan emerged, projects to be undertaken, and
administrative details that included office set-up and a budget.

Section III of the report laid out the tasks before this new group, as follows:

I. To collect the necessary data and prepare a survey of … (a) Status
(money, time, etc.) of current radio programs for children. (b) Current
attitudes toward radio for children, (protests, resolutions, etc.)

II. To evaluate current radio programs for children and to give publicity
to such evaluations in the publications of cooperating national
associations.

\(^{112}\) Eisenberg, A.L., letter to L. Tyson, June 29, 1934, NACRE, Box 7, Folder –
Children’s Programs.
III. To organize and present nationally and locally experimental programs with the cooperation of national associations, independently where necessary, for the purpose of developing types of programs that appeal that are educationally sound and that are not in use currently.

IV. To study and test with the assistance of national associations the effects of current radio programs for children and of the experimental programs developed.

V. To give advisory service to broadcasting companies and commercial interests in planning of radio programs.

VI. To give advisory service to constituent organizations in planning national and local programs.

VII. To act as a clearing house [sic] of information in connection with radio programs for children.\footnote{113}

Milam was aghast when he read the list of projects. "Frankly and confidentially," he wrote to Tyson, "it looks to me as if our committee had got out of hand."\footnote{114} Considering that ALA had gone into the November meeting soliciting help for a very specific program, this laundry list of projects – all of which ALA probably approved of in principle – was overwhelming. In addition, the children’s radio hour program, a very specific idea, was now vaguely characterized as either national or local, and perhaps done by a group of national associations or one organization working

\footnote{113}{"Proposal for a Central Clearing House," March 19, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Program, A.L.A. Projects, Committee – Gruenberg, Sidonie M. (Mrs.), Jan-Jul, 1934, p. 5-7.}
\footnote{114}{C.H. Milam, letter to L. Tyson, March 22, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee, Miscellaneous, 1934.}
alone. Based on phrases such as “this new body should be given a name descriptive of the proposed program,” “this national advisory board would elect an executive committee.” The absence of any nod to NACRE led Milam to wonder in a letter to Tyson if Gruenberg might be talking about “the setting up of a new organization which would take over full responsibility for radio programs for children.”

The report was clearly not acceptable to Milam and was returned for revision. During this period Milam, Redefer, Gruenberg and Tyson had an opportunity to discuss the children’s radio program with NBC Education Director Dunham, who told the group that NBC “would produce the program if it were presented to NBC in producable [sic] form.” Other comments from their short meeting with Dunham refer to script preparation and talent costs, and seem to indicate that NBC wanted ready-for-air scripts, something that ALA had been unwilling to pursue until there was funding to hire a full-time person to handle the program.

By late June the proposal looked quite different from Gruenberg’s first draft, more like ALA’s original vision, and very much like a compromise between competing interests. In this version, its objectives were grouped under two categories, Primary (items 1 and 2) and secondary (items 3-5), and identified as:

1. To plan and present nationally one or more experimental radio programs for children covering a wide range of children’s interests.

116 C.H. Milam, letter to L. Tyson, March 22, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee, Miscellaneous, 1934.
117 C.H. Milam, letter to M.G. Davis, May 28, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee, Miscellaneous, 1934.
We are convinced that programs which are educationally sound can be presented in such a way as to command the interest of children, that many new forms of children's radio programs should be developed and tested, and that if worthwhile programs are successfully demonstrated all broadcasting to children will be improved.

(2) To evaluate the programs presented.

(3) To act as a clearing house for information on radio programs for children.

(4) To give advisory service to organizations, institutions, broadcasting companies and commercial interests in planning national and local programs for children.

(5) To evaluate current radio programs for children and give publicity to such evaluations in the publications of cooperating national associations.\textsuperscript{118}

The budget, which assumed that the first year would be “concentrated on objectives one and two, that is on the presentation of a radio program” was estimated to be $65,000 for 12 months’ worth of 30-minute programs to be broadcast five days a week.\textsuperscript{119}

The revised draft was sent to the attendees at the November 1933 meeting, who represented a variety of civic and educational organizations (see Chapter 4, p. 124).\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{118}“Radio Broadcasting for Children,” June 22, 1934, NACRE, Box 7, Folder – Children’s Programs.

\textsuperscript{119}Ibid, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{120}“List of persons,” [n.d.], ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Organizations Cooperating, 1934.
Feedback was positive and many of the organizations were excited by the proposal but there was one common concern. The NRA, for example, felt that "work should not be started until the full amount needed for a certain period of time is definitely pledged"; the Metropolitan Museum of Art hoped "someone [would] be found to give financial backing for this scheme"; the Junior League thought "the estimated budget ... quite high, but I dare say the expert advice you have solicited is more enlightened on this subject than I am." The strongest – and most succinct statement came from the Girl Scouts assistant director, Esther Price, who bluntly stated that "the raising of [a] $65,000 budget by ten organizations would be the worst obstacle at the present time."

Ironically, later that summer William Beal, of NBC's Continuity Department, asked the American Library Association for help with a new noncommercial children's program it hoped to air on its KDKA (Pittsburgh) station in the fall. There is no indication in the correspondence if Beal knew that, in 1922, KDKA had broadcasted children's stories in collaboration with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (Chapter 2, p. 56) - or that ALA was at that very moment trying to put together a program of its own for NBC.

Beal's 15-minute program would run for two months initially. NBC wanted recommendations for books for the program, and - more importantly, it wanted to use the name of the American Library Association in broadcasts and under

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121 H. Braucher, letter to C.H. Milam, June 26, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder — Organizations Cooperating, 1934.
122 H. Elliott, letter to C.H. Milam, July 16, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder — Organizations Cooperating, 1934.
123 H. Adamowska, letter to C.H. Milam, August 20, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder — Organizations Cooperating, 1934.
124 E.G. Price, letter to C.H. Milam, July 9, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder — Organizations Cooperating, 1934.

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approved lists that we shall probably publish in a booklet to be used in conjunction with the broadcasts ... We feel that worthwhile literature can be popularized in a program on the air if the approach is clever and light. Any suggestions you may have will be greatly appreciated."125

In view of the fact that ALA still seemed to have no prospects for funding its own program, and its partners had shown themselves willing to endorse the idea but unable to provide financial support for it, this might have been good opportunity for ALA to promote its library agenda since Beal’s program promoted books and reading, and was interested in trying to extend learning beyond the 15-minute listening experience. The program was being developed in cooperation with the PTA, and ALA had been approached (according to Beal) at the behest of some unnamed person or persons in the Department of Education at Pittsburgh University. Unfortunately, there is no official record of any agreement with NBC, or even any discussion on the matter, but given the ALA conservative stance on endorsements, it is unlikely that ALA did anything beyond providing lists of books — a typical response to such requests. It is highly unlikely they would lend their name without having any say in the program content.

Because coalition comments on the revisions were supportive and suggested no changes to content, but because all of them saw financing as the obstacle, the subcommittee felt ready to take the proposal to a larger group of sympathetic organizations — and, pending the larger group’s endorsement, on to funders themselves.

To that end, ALA and the coalition subcommittee made plans for a November

125 W. Beal, letter to ALA ("Dear Sirs"), August 10, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder — Miscellaneous, 1934.
22nd 1934 meeting that was to be held at New York City’s Town Hall Club, and that was designed to gather as large and respected a support base as possible prior to approaching foundations or granting agencies for funding. Invitations were sent to those already involved in the project as well as additional youth-related and radio-related organizations, networks, and influential individuals. More than fifty people, representing thirty-two different organizations attended the meeting.¹²⁶

The minutes from the meeting indicate that the large group agreed with ALA’s view of the coalition priorities.

Primary Objective: to plan and present nationally one or more experimental programs for children and young people ...

Secondary Objectives: to act as a clearing house for information on programs. To give advisory service to organizations, institutions, broadcasting companies and commercial interests in planning national and local programs for young people. To evaluate programs now being presented, and to give publicity to such evaluations in the publications of the cooperating organizations.¹²⁷

Despite chairing a group led by ALA, corresponding with Milam about the proposal, and having participated in the Town Hall Meeting where the larger group affirmed program first and clearing house second, Gruenberg remained convinced of the priority of the clearing house. In an interview in the December 1, 1934 issue of Broadcasting, she announced the formation of a joint committee initiated by the American Library

¹²⁶ See Appendix C, p. 232, for a complete list of the organizations and their representatives who attended the 1934 Town Hall meeting.
¹²⁷ “Proposed Clearing House, Notes from the meeting,” December 13, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee – Gruenberg, Sidonie M. (Mrs.), 1934 Jul.-Dec.
Association in 1933, and representing also the Progressive Education Association and the Child Study Association, with herself as chairman. ‘Its purpose,’ she said, ‘is to establish some sort of central agency on all matters pertaining to radio broadcasts for children and to bring together the interested public, as represented by parents’ groups, educational organizations and the commercial interests. After considering many possibilities this committee came to the conclusion that a ‘clearing house’ offered the simplest and most effective means of cooperation (“Let Children Choose”, 1934, p. 40).

This interview should have prepared him, but when Milam received the meeting notes and a packet of materials from Gruenberg’s office that were to be sent to Town Hall attendees as a follow-up to that meeting, he jumped. Gruenberg had done it again. Although the meeting notes clearly specified the primary objective was the experimental program, and the clearing house was only a secondary objective, Gruenberg had included in the packet a draft form letter telling meeting attendees that “as soon as a sufficient number of organizations have signified their general approval and willingness to cooperate, the clearing house proposal [would] be presented to an educational foundation which might be willing to finance such a project.”

Milam fired off a telegram asking that the materials be held, and contacted Levering Tyson to complain (again) about the situation.

I am afraid I am putting myself in the position of trying to tell this Committee what to do, but I honestly feel that if Mrs. Gruenberg were allowed to go ahead

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128 S.M. Gruenberg, “Letter to those present on the 22nd”, December 13, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee – Gruenberg, Sidonie M. (Mrs.), 1934, July-December.
on the basis of the present proposal as prepared by her secretaries we should be worse off than if we had never started. Please tell me if you think I am ‘all wet.’

Milam’s response to Gruenberg was only a bit more restrained.

The statement of the project does not seem to me to be adequate or to have the emphasis in the right place ... The emphasis seems to be on investigation and advisory services, whereas in my opinion it should be on the presentation of a program. The program was the point of emphasis at the first meeting in New York. It was stated as the primary objective in the redraft of the Committee’s first report which I prepared, which was approved by the Committee, which was sent to representatives of thirteen national organizations and which was tentatively approved by several of them ... If I had any intimation that what I am proposing in the above paragraphs is contrary to the convictions of your Committee, I should be perfectly content to throw this letter away and keep silent, for I have no desire to tell you what you should say ... A copy of this letter is being sent to Mr. Tyson, whose advice I am sure all of us will appreciate.

Tyson sounded a conciliatory note. “I know you are both really thinking the same way and yet so far the documentary evidence in the situation has made you both

129 C.H. Milam, letter to L. Tyson, December 17, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee, Miscellaneous, 1934.
130 C.H. Milam, letter to S.M. Gruenberg, December 17, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Gruenberg, Sidonie M. (Mrs.), 1934, July-December.
think you are crossing wires one with the other. I am satisfied this ain’t the case.”

Perhaps, he suggested, it had to do with the fact that funding for the program was nonexistent, and organizing the clearing house might accomplish at least one of the group’s goals. Only a few days later, Gruenberg sent her own letter to Milam, agreeing that there was a misunderstanding, and indicating the packet of materials would be revised. Once that was done, the packet would be sent to coalition members for their official institutional endorsement.

Although Milam was determined to create an actual ALA children’s radio program, the clearinghouse idea was popular with new groups looking for ways to improve children’s programming because there was no central group or agency collecting the burgeoning materials related to children and radio programming. In fact, ALA’s extended coalition was diverse in its members (who were from faith, education, and civic organizations) and national in scope, putting it in a position to be that group. Milam’s (and, hence, ALA’s) single-minded insistence on the program rather than the clearing house probably compromised its ability to impact the children’s programming situation.

At ALA, Mary Gould Davis informed the CLRB that progress had been made on the children’s program “inasmuch as other national organizations have been interested in the project.” But they were no closer to any sort of program script, no funding was in sight, and three years down the road with the network door closing, ALA was still fighting for its national children’s radio hour.

131 L. Tyson, letter to C.H. Milam, December 20, 1934, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee, Miscellaneous, 1934.
CHAPTER 6: NATIONAL CHILDREN’S RADIO HOUR: 1935

Children’s programming continued to generate protests in 1935, from parents and other adults concerned for children who listened to too much radio or to programming that was considered inappropriate for them.

Radio changed what was available in terms of information and reduced parental control over information sources. Before the advent of radio a parent could restrict a child’s information consumption by simply withholding money from the child. Radio, however, was essentially free and readily available in the home. These key differences gave radio access to children in a way that had not been previously possible. It gave broadcasters a responsibility toward children that they may not have understood (Cohen, 1985, p. 5).

Programs continued to be fraught with slang, violence and aggressive advertising considered unsuited to the tender ears of the young. Members of national youth-related organizations, such as the Child Study Association and the National Parent-Teacher Congress addressed their concerns at conferences and wrote articles and books about the dangers of some radio programs. A sampling of articles from the time include Literary Digest’s “Mothers Fight the Radio Bogies” (March 18, 1933), New Republic’s “Nertz to Hertz” (April 4, 1934), and News Week’s “Hand that Rocks the Cradle Shakes Warning Finger at Radio: Women’s National Radio Committee” (July 13, 1935).

The latest advertising gimmick was the cliffhanger ending, leaving listeners in doubt about whether the hero would live until the following week when the adventure could be continued. Children purportedly woke with nightmares or were unable to get to
sleep. They were convinced that the people on the radio were real and were concerned their beloved favorites would be unable to escape whatever the writers had dreamed up that week. Parents “were startled to find their children awakening at night, screaming with terror in nightmares ... caused by ... the overloaded sensationalism, mystery, murder, and suspense in the programs the children had heard earlier in the day” (Gordon, 1942, p. 42).

As listener complaints increased, there was a concomitant increase in internal network discussions about policy. Executive Vice President Richard C. Patterson, Jr. issued a memo to advertisers and advertising agencies that reminded them of the company’s efforts to avoid controversy, and let them know that loopholes were being closed. Scripts had to be sent to the NBC Continuity Department for review before broadcast and NBC “reserve[d] the right to refuse our facilities to any artists who do not adhere strictly to the program continuity submitted to and approved by this Department and who use extemporaneous material of a distasteful or libelous nature; and we recommend that your arrangements with artists cover this contingency.”

In January 1935, NACRE’s Levering Tyson received a questionnaire from Elizabeth Olmsted, of Evanston, Illinois, who was gathering information about children’s radio programs with an eye to creating some sort of agency to help improve them. Tyson was a major figure at the nexus of education and radio, and the ALA national children’s radio program was the only juvenile effort NACRE undertook. As a result, his response to Olmsted’s questions expressed his view of the evolution of the debates over radio program as well as the progress of efforts to improve it. He warning

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133 R.C. Patterson, unaddressed memo, [n.d., penciled “1935”], NBCLC, Folder 359 – Policy, Program Policy, 1934-37.
Olmsted that he planned to be quite open in his responses and hoped she would not quote him publicly. Snippets from his response capture the tenor of his thoughts at the beginning of 1935:

- “Four or five years ago it was my opinion that certain types of so-called children’s programs were one of radio’s major crimes … If the children listen in large numbers to programs of a type that you and I might catalogue as obnoxious, who are we to say that the children may not be right? At any rate I am led to be very careful in any pronouncement against this new phenomenon no matter how objectionable I personally might think some of these radio programs are” (p. 1).
- Comparing adult and children’s programs, he was “impressed with the enormous amount of valuable material [for adults] that is going on the air but presented in extremely unattractive fashion. In the case of the Children’s programs … a lot of what I have considered inconsequential material has gone on the air but presented in most attractive ways” (p. 2).
- “I am thoroughly convinced that ninety-five percent of the ‘American Radio Audience’ are thoroughly satisfied with American radio – please note that I do not say the American public I say the American radio audience” (p. 2).
- In regard to program content, he says, “Certainly everything that can be considered for child development through any medium, the motion picture, books and magazines, etc., is equally as pertinent. We are just faced with a new instrumentality which makes its presence felt on the child mind. To this extent, at least, I do not believe radio presents problems different from any other medium … the places to look for ‘material for clean, fine, interesting children’s programs’ are
exactly the same places you would look for clean, fine, interesting motion picture material and material for clean, fine, interesting books” (p. 3).

- Concerning translating classic children’s literature to radio, “won’t our problem be considerably simplified if as radio develops we will have a radio Peter Pan or a radio Alice or a radio Heidi? Of course we are developing that way now. We have our Buck Rogers just as in the adult and children’s field we have Amos and Andy. They are the radio pioneers that are the precursors of the radio Alices, the radio Peter Pans to come, although some people would rank them right with the radio Alices. ... The largest development is still to come when radio itself develops its own types” (p. 4).  

ALA continued to seek funding for its program, and Milam approached the Payne fund again to see if their interest in the situation had changed since 1932. Mrs. Chester Bolton, a major contributor to the Payne Fund, responded to Milam’s inquiry with interest but regretted that they still could not help. She compared the ALA radio program to the Payne Fund’s idea of starting a girls’ magazine.

We discovered that the completion of the outlines and the setting up of a proposal was just the beginning of the problem. The personnel which was to formulate the materials became all important. The question of the actual content which should go into a program was also important. In fact we found our efforts actually to do the constructive job of the production of a magazine for girls so difficult that we have rather fully decided to withdraw our efforts in that

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134 L. Tyson, letter to Elizabeth Olmsted, January 29, 1935, NACRE, Box 10, Folder – Children’s Programs.
field.\textsuperscript{135}

This précis of the Fund’s unsuccessful foray into publishing echoed ALA’s difficulties setting up its children’s radio hour. Four years after the project began, even with additional organizational support, there was still no script, only a general program plan, and no funding in sight. In fact, the competing visions of ALA collaborators still threatened to lead the association away from the radio program, particularly given the interest in the clearinghouse aspect of the project.

In January 1935 ALA began to see responses from attendees of the November 1934 Town Hall meeting. Most indicated they were in favor of the proposal for the program and clearing house, but Margaret Grimshaw, Executive Secretary of the Girl Scouts Program Division, felt that the clearing house duplicated many of the functions of the newly created Radio Institute for the Audible Arts.\textsuperscript{136}

This organization, which had been established in 1935 by the Philco Radio and Television corporation, was actually a publicity vehicle created by the legendary public relations wizard Edward Bernays. At the time, however, the Institute’s publicized purpose was to encourage excellence in radio production and programming.\textsuperscript{137} The institute was discontinued in 1936.

E. Urner Goodman, the Program Division Director for the Boy Scouts was concerned that the objectives (in their current order of program first and clearinghouse second) didn’t necessarily support the goal of improving children’s radio, and he

\textsuperscript{135} F.P. Bolton, letter to C.H. Milam, January 11, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Committee, Miscellaneous, 1935.
\textsuperscript{136} M.M. Grimshaw, letter to S.M. Gruenberg, January 24, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
worried about

the greatest amount of time and energy being given to the production of one or
two programs which obviously will consume time, energy and money and which
will force into the background the wider field of service in the way of improving
existing programs listened to by children. It is our fear that the proposed Central
Agency, therefore, will not be a clearing house, but a Production Agency, which
will of necessity defeat its own greater purpose.138

Milam kept the ALA radio committee (the CLRB) informed of the work of the
coalition and its subcommittee. Although ALA – through Milam – was leading the
program-clearing house project, ALA the organization was also a participant in it, and
so it would also be expected to give an institutional endorsement of the proposal, and
put forward names of individuals to serve on an executive steering committee that was
to lead the clearing house once funding was found. The proposal that Milam and Davis
brought to from the coalition subcommittee to the CLRB in 1935 was greatly changed
from the original 1931 proposal for a children’s radio program that the ALA board had
approved. In four years of collaboration with external groups, the program focus had
shifted from “reading, broadly interpreted” to programs generally “covering a wide
range of interests.” Language related to audience reaction was much stronger; the
program was meant to “provoke an active response, intellectual or physical, or both.”139
The biggest difference, of course, was the addition of the clearing house objective,
which had threatened to derail the program itself.

138 E.U. Goodman, letter to S.M. Gruenberg, February 5, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4,
Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
139 C.H. Milam, memo to the CLRB, February 6, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To
Be Filed, 1935.
Nonetheless, the CLRB approved the proposal as it had been written by the subcommittee and eventually approved by Milam and, on March 11, 1935, ALA Executive Board members received a cover letter from Milam that contained the official language of the CLRB endorsement, a copy of the proposal, and a request for a vote in favor of ALA’s further involvement with the project as it now stood. The Executive Board passed a resolution (by correspondence) “expressing its interest in a Central Agency on Radio Programs for Young People and its willingness to cooperate in such an agency when established.”

Back in July 1934, the Child Study Association had been contacted by Lucy Milligan, from the National Music League, who indicated that a new group was forming to represent women’s concerns about children’s radio programming because, “it has been suggested that if a large national committee were organized, representing all the important women’s organizations, much could be done to raise the standard of radio entertainment.” The unnamed group’s objectives were to “represent the viewpoint of the women of the country”; set up an annual award for quality radio programming; create a contest for high school students to design the award itself, and to work with “existing agencies” to create better quality programming.

That group became the Women’s National Radio Committee (WNRC) and was led by Mrs. Harold Vincent (Lucy) Milligan and noted opera star Yolanda Mero (sometimes seen as Mero-Irion), who also funded its first year (Spring, 1992, p. 113). The WNRC was an organization that was (according to its letterhead) made up of 19

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141 L. Milligan, letter to S.M. Gruenberg, July 20, 1934, NACRE, Box 7, Children’s Programs.
(although Spring calls it 28) affiliated organizations including among others, the AAUW and GFWC (both ALA coalition members), as well as the American Legion Auxiliary, Catholic Daughters of America, the Medical Women's National Association, the (Mormon) National Woman's Relief Society, National Council of Jewish Women, and the National Federation of Music Clubs. ALA was connected to the WNRC not as an organization but through the person of Mary Gould Davis, who was named on WNRC letterhead as chairman of children's radio.

The WNRC's sole purpose was to clean up children's radio and they had a focused approach to that purpose: they would evaluate programs, and each year award a medal (designed by high school boys and girls) to "the best program presented by the broadcasting systems."\(^{142}\) In addition, they had funding for an office staff that would carry forward the council's work on improving children's radio programs when its leadership was away at their day jobs in other organizations.

WNRC created a positive - rather than negative - campaign, in hopes that it might do more to move networks toward quality broadcasting. By February 1935, plans were in the works for a massive listening campaign that would culminate in a spring announcement of national awards for awards in four categories: Commercial (Advertising Programs) [programs supported by ads] – Musical; Non-Musical Advertising Programs; Sustaining Programs [not supported by paid ads, rather supported by the networks themselves] – Musical; and Sustaining – Non-Musical.

Judging instructions directed listeners to consider, among other things, program consistency, announcer/host skills, amount and type of commercials, quality of

\(^{142}\) L. Milligan, letter to Mrs. E.D. Martin, July 20, 1934, NACRE, Box 7, Folder – Children's Programs.
production and appropriateness of material.

WNRC was immediately visible on the national scene. Its leaders were invited to speak at a March 25th FCC-sponsored conference attended by industry and government heavy-hitters Anning Prall (chair of the FCC), A. Truman Ward (president, National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)), Philip Loucks (managing director of the NAB), Aylesworth and Dunham from NBC, Frederic Willis (assistant to the president of CBS), and Sol Taishoff (editor of Broadcasting). At the conference WNRC representative Lucy Milligan suggested that child psychologists be hired by the networks to oversee children's programs and CBS promptly hired Dr. Arthur Jersild, a noted child psychologist. NBC took no action.

WNRC members worked with the FCC and the Federal Trade Commission to try to force an objectionable program ("Dick Tracy") off the air, but although they were successful in removing it from commercial New York City radio station WMCA, it merely migrated to another New York City station, WOR (Brindze, 1937, p. 224-225).

They staged their first national radio program awards show, and this massing of female opinion, at a time when women were the official spokespersons for goodness and morality, had heft and weight. On April 10, 1935, both NBC and CBS aired the proceedings of the first WNRC Awards luncheon. In a very short time the group had garnered national attention, and Anning S. Prall, chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, presented the awards himself.

While the WNRC was readying their positive approach to program improvement, NBC was still seeing plenty of negative feedback from listeners, and was still seeking ways to improve company performance. NBC Vice President Rosenblum
advocated putting educational, religious and public affairs programs under one person, who would then balance them with the remainder of the network schedule. He called children’s programs such a hot potato “that the protests from women’s groups had convinced many advertising agencies that the safest course was to avoid sponsoring any children’s programs at all,” and, in fact, Cohen noted that children’s programs had decreased by half from 1934 to 1935 (1977, p. 81).

According to Dorothy Gordon,

Parent protests, combined with rising advertising revenues, placed broadcasters in the enviable position of being able to eliminate any program that did not show a profit. Sustaining programs may have been great in terms of winning awards and approval from parents and educators, but they did nothing for the balance sheet (Gordon, 1942, p. 70).

In reality this meant that children, who were still tuning in by the millions, listened to whatever was playing – regardless of whether it was a program for adults or children. Eisenberg had demonstrated this in his 1934 survey, in which children named “Myrt and Marge”, a soap opera about two chorus girls, as among their top five favorite programs.

NBC Women’s Division Director Margaret Cuthbert was very frank in her suggestions to NBC Vice President John Royal. Programs, she thought, should be built by a committee “composed of the best brains from the sales department – program –

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143 D. Rosenblum, memo to R.C. Patterson, Jr., April 16, 1935, NBCLC, Folder 476 – Public Service Programs, 1933-40 Comparison NBC-CBS.
production – continuity – and the music department," and sustaining programs should develop an audience and then be sold off to commercial interests. She felt that NBC needed to rethink its position in regard to public and government influences.

It is the goodwill of the public that we are after – not just the administration. The vote comes from the people, just as organized propaganda, when it reaches a high level of efficiency, comes from the people and must be taken seriously."

Cuthbert had a plan for harnessing the consider power of female public opinion and putting it to work for NBC rather than against it.

If we ask the representative women’s organizations to select their representatives to act in an advisory capacity, and these organizations know that through their own appointees they can get through to the Women’s Affairs Department of the N.B.C. and get real consideration, we will establish their confidence. We, the N.B.C., want credit for this … the N.B.C. should stand for fair play and get the good will of the women … We should not use Mrs. Milligan or Mrs. Machol as an expedient to tide over this wave of criticism brought into the open by the Women’s National Radio Committee."

Milligan and Machol, leaders of the WNRC and the Society for Ethical Culture respectively, stood for something more than themselves in this quote; they represented the powerful female lobby made up of an increasing number of well-respected national women’s organizations that were becoming so powerful the networks felt the need to

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146 M. Cuthbert, memo to J.F. Royal, September 27, 1935, NBCW, Box 42, Folder 66 – Correspondence, Women’s National Radio Committee, 1935.
placate them.

In spite of audience dissatisfaction, NBC President Aylesworth’s report in 1935 was confident, directed and assured as he announced that the education question had been settled. The FCC rejection of a plan to devote channels to education was the “most significant statement ever made of the aims, purposes, and methods of radio broadcasting as conducted on the basis of competitive, private initiative.” He went on to say that “any system of allocation of wave lengths which considers the desires and special objectives of individual organizations rather than the wishes of the people as a whole would serve no useful purpose, and would impair the service which the American people are now receiving” (National Broadcasting Company, 1935, p. 11-12). NBC statistics indicated that 3.5% (493 of 14,149 hours) of NBC programs from January to December of 1934 were children’s programs. According to these figures, the 493 hours were 24% of the network’s total educational broadcasts (National Broadcasting Company, 1935, p. 29).

Aylesworth continued to be disdainful of educators, who didn’t learn “the requirements of radio and radio showmanship to make their programs interesting to the radio audience” (National Broadcasting Company, 1935, p. 12). NBC would soon produce its own programs and had built up the children’s department for just that purpose. Parents and educators had made their attempts but had been unable to produce anything worthwhile, something he felt sure NBC could do much better on its own, now that it would no longer be caught between what the “small select group of individuals, either in public or quasi-public positions, thinks it should have, or … what [the public] wants.” NBC’s constant refrain, that it only aired what the public wanted, had taken
We believe in the American system – to give the listening audience a wide range of programs, prepared with the best judgment and skill available, and leave it to the listeners to exercise difference in taste by the simple expedient of turning the dials on their receiving sets (National Broadcasting Company, 1935, p. 16).

At ALA the radio project was at a standstill because there was no sign of a patron for the program. L.L. Dickerson, no longer the chair of the CLRB but still interested in the project, spoke informally to Merle Sidener, the president of the Board of School Commissioners and, more importantly, the head of the Sidener, Van Riper and Keeling advertising agency. Sidener was puzzled about why ALA wouldn’t at least consider commercial sponsorship from someone with an acceptable product and/or willingness to cooperate with ALA concerns. In his eyes, the project was too big for ALA, even with help, and ALA would do more good for children by going with a commercial sponsor rather than risk losing the program altogether. John Chancellor, Adult Education Specialist, agreed and felt that ALA

ought not to be too fussy about avoidance of commercial sponsorship as long as the commercial people issue stuff that is up to our standards and not too blatant in their advertising … I think it is as much our job to influence the more prevalent commercial radio programs for the good as it is to try to set up something independently.147

Dickerson wrote at length to CLRB committee chair Ralph Ulveling about Ulveling’s suggested that, rather than have ALA sponsor a program already produced,

147 J. Chancellor, letter to L.L. Dickerson, July 25, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous, 1935.
perhaps ALA could lend a staff person to help a commercial interest structure a program. Dickerson wanted to take it one step further. Perhaps, he thought, ALA should reactivate Van Cleve’s early outline for a children’s program, thoroughly flesh out several episodes and provide skeletal material for six to ten month’s more programs, and take it to an advertising agency for commercial consideration.

In other words, we should do everything in the way of a program that we would if we were sponsoring it ourselves … The agency would gain from the library profession the advice of people particularly skilled; and while the sponsor of this program could not use the name of this association, our organization as well as many others concerned with youth and child study could bring a tremendous amount of free advertising and a national wide good will … If, after rough drafts of the plan have been made and these were worked over by a professional radio program builder, it should be found that things might not click, then it could be dropped without embarrassment and without cost to anybody.”

True to ALA past behavior, though, these conversations stayed talk, no action followed.

There were times, while presumably waiting for ALA to come forward with its children’s program, that NBC found it convenient – or expedient – to reach out to librarians, as in 1934 when ALA was approached to lend its bibliographies and its name to the program being developed in cooperation with the PTA (Chapter 5, p. 140). In 1935 NBC offered ALA another opportunity to co-sponsor a program, this time a once a week afternoon booktalking program for children, being developed with the Women’s Radio Guild, and featuring experienced broadcaster Harry Hansen.

148 L.L. Dickerson, letter to R.A. Ulveling, August 22, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - To Be Filed, 1935.
The program, scheduled for thirteen weeks, would bring with it a ready-made juvenile audience because it would be broadcast into schools twice a month during its run. The deal included the chance for library announcements to be appended to the broadcast on days when ALA was the sponsor. But CLRB member Dickerson thought the NBC proposal had little to offer ALA since Hansen was already doing booktalks on the air. In his opinion,

what use then merely to add the A.L.A. tag to something that is already being done ... [and] 'late afternoon' is not a good time for programs such as we are interested in ... It looks like the old story of relegating books and libraries to the less desirable hours."

Dickerson added that Hansen was a talented book talker, but his talks were aimed at adults rather than children. As far as the type of program, "I have nothing to add because we have talked over, under and above this subject while I get ignoranter and ignoranter." ALA apparently passed on this offer as well.

In addition to bitter feelings between nonprofits and networks, the end of the airwaves battle, signaled by the passage of the Communications Act of 1934, left other debris. Levering Tyson acknowledged this when he commented on the WNRC grant application prepared for the Carnegie Corporation of New York. He approved of the group’s activities and felt it was vital to quality programming that the WNRC continue to operate. He worried, though, that the application might be seen by Carnegie as another 'reform' attempt, which he knew would be unsuccessful. The only way to make

149 L.L. Dickerson, letter to R.A. Ulveling, August 22, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
150 Ibid.
progress with broadcasters and advertising agencies at this point was to “continually
work with [them], and persuade them, or if need be, shame them, into adopting more
intelligent practices.”\textsuperscript{151} Granted, that was the public stance Tyson had taken from the
beginning, but he knew the Communications Act of 1934 had completely closed the
door on reformist movements. He knew the WNRC’s strength came from the moral
fiber of women (guardians of house and home), along with the fact that in their first
year they had managed to accomplish so much.

The WNRC grant proposal asked for $100,000 for a three-year period, to “raise
the standard of radio programs, thereby developing higher cultural and educational
standards among the masses who are influenced by radio.”\textsuperscript{152} WNRC intended,
according to their application, to continue the awards program they had inaugurated
earlier in 1935, and to expand their base of listener groups, which were connected to the
national women’s associations that made up the WNRC membership. Through these
listening groups, the WNRC would be able to collect local information about the 400
independent (non-network) stations, and use that information to influence what went on
the air. The WNRC also planned to enhance the listening groups by training group
leaders to conduct discussions based on educational programming, thus training a new
corps of grassroots intellectuals, who would, in turn, pressure networks and independent
stations to provide higher quality programming.

In a letter to the Dr. Frederick Keppel, President of the Carnegie Corporation of
New York, WNRC president Lucy Milligan gave her thoughts about radio’s

\textsuperscript{151} L. Tyson, letter to Mrs. H.V. (Lucy) Milligan, August 5, 1935, NACRE, Box 12,
Folder – Women’s National Radio Committee.
\textsuperscript{152} L. Milligan, letter to L. Tyson, July 15, 1935, NACRE, Box 12, Folder – Women’s
National Radio Committee.
People who are unable to read or write can learn by listening. It is because radio can be so valuable in teaching the illiterate, as well as in supplementing the education of those who have not been able to obtain much formal learning, that the Women’s National Radio Committee feels it is so important to improve radio programs. After we have done this, we want to tax our ingenuity, so that this form of education is used as widely as possible ... We have the machinery, the support of the women’s groups, but lack the money to place that machinery in motion most effectively.\textsuperscript{153}

It appeared that the WNRC – with its focused mission of reforming rather than performing broadcasting – would succeed where ALA and its coalition were falling apart. Sidonie Gruenberg, a year after the 1934 Town Hall meeting, finally sent ALA the responses to the coalition’s request for support. Of the nearly 50 organizations (see Appendix C) that attended the meeting, 17 indicated official organizational cooperation, and 19 indicated interest but “for various reasons of policy were unable to promise official cooperation.”\textsuperscript{154} There are appear to be 13 agencies unaccounted for, and the letter from Hettie Harris, Gruenberg’s secretary, listed only a few of the 17 who agreed to help: ALA, CSA, PEA, the Association of Junior Leagues of America, Boy Scouts of America, Campfire Girls, Child Development Institute, International Council of Religious Education, Jewish Welfare Board, National Music League, Parents League of New York, and the United Parents Association.

\textsuperscript{153} L. Milligan, letter to F.A. Keppel, October 25, 1935, NACRE, Box 12, Folder – Women’s National Radio Committee.

\textsuperscript{154} H. Harris, letter to C.H. Milam, November 25, 1935, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
During a year when network interests triumphed in Congress and commercial broadcasters began to lessen their cooperation with educators, when ALA managed to bring together more than 50 representatives of national organizations interested in helping solve the children’s radio programming ‘problem,’ and when the WNRC leapt into prominence, the ALA national children’s radio program had reached the end of its fourth year without any visible sign of progress.
CHAPTER 7: NATIONAL CHILDREN’S RADIO HOUR: 1936

In a 1936 letter to Mrs. B.F. Langworthy, president of the NCPT, Carl Milam described the connections he saw between libraries and radio. Both enterprises were based on voluntary involvement, where “success depends on [the] ability to arouse and hold the interest of its patrons. The educational program of each is informal without enrollment, grades or credits.” In Milam’s view they also served the same publics, “all elements of the population, and as many people as possible.” These similarities made librarians and broadcasters important to each other and Milam felt that close cooperation benefited both. The difference between the two was that the library’s areas of interest, “broadcasting about books, promoting reading following educational broadcasts, and children’s radio programs” was, of necessity, narrower than radio broadcasters.

Part of the point of Milam’s correspondence was to bring Langworthy up to date on the children’s radio program. “On [ALA’s] initiative several national organizations have united in preparing a project for a series of experimental broadcasts to children which would draw upon [children’s librarians’] experience and the experience of many other groups as well.” Milam had taken the project to the General Education Board (GEB), a Rockefeller philanthropy established in 1903 to help rural southern schools, but was unable to capture their interest in the project because the program would have been on a commercial network and “the G.E.B. does not like the idea of carrying on relatively expensive experiments which will later be used by a profit organization.”

155 C.H. Milam, letter to Mrs. B.F. Langworthy, March 18, 1936, ALA24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
156 Ibid.
The idea of going to the GEB to fund a radio project was not farfetched since they had been involved in radio since the 1920s, and saw it as a means of providing cultural opportunities for isolated populations. In the 1930s the GEB became interested in radio and high schools, seeing radio as a chance to "provide the means and opportunity to change how the young were socialized in and out of school" (Richardson and Johanningmeier, 2006, p. 3).

Milam's message to Langworthy was very clear about the participatory nature of ALA's project and their willingness to consider suggestions, especially from organizations such as the NCPT who had produced successful series for both the Columbia and National broadcasting networks. "The A.L.A. has no vested interest and makes no particular claims with respect to its rights in this matter. What we want is a setup which will bring to bear, on the preparation and conduct of a series of children's programs, the advice of the children's librarians, parents, teachers, psychologists, recreation people and broadcasters. Have you or your associates any suggestions as to how we might accomplish that purpose?"\textsuperscript{157}

In March, subcommittee chair Sidonie Gruenberg drafted a letter to the coalition organizations who had agreed to proceed to the next steps in the radio program-clearinghouse project. The subcommittee had met several times since the November Town Hall meeting and, according to Gruenberg, individual group members were having an impact on the children's radio programming situation.

Contacts with parents, educators and radio stations have had direct and indirect influence on the prevalent attitudes as well as on the actual product ... there are

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
signs of awareness on the part of the radio stations of their responsibility in the matter of children’s programs; and of a better understanding, on the part of parents, educators, and others concerned, of the needs of children and of the criteria on which programs should be judged. The current criticisms are more constructive – the merely negative note has largely disappeared. We believe we are justified in the assumption that these constructive efforts on the part of both the critics and the criticized have resulted from the initial efforts of the Committee and their ramifications through the many interested agencies. A step forward has been made and plans for the next steps are ready to be put into action, when and if funds become available for this purpose.  

Gruenberg contacted the Carnegie Corporation of New York to discover if they would be interested in funding the coalition program-clearing house project. After preliminary conversations, Dr. Frederick Keppel, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, urged the group to put in a proposal rather quickly, saying that he was at that moment “evaluating $1,500,000 worth of radio projects.”

The proposal for Carnegie was cobbled together from existing materials and submitted on April 15, 1936. Gruenberg’s cover letter explained that the request “for the establishment of a Clearing House on Radio Programs for Children and Young People” included funds for both an experimental program (listed first) and an agency that would work with existing programs. According to Gruenberg,

a Clearing House might be organized as an independent agency; or it might be

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158 S.M. Gruenberg, attachment entitled “Draft,” attached to a letter to C.H. Milam, March 25, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
159 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
set up as part of some existing organization, which already offers advisory service on matters pertaining to radio, and thus has a background for furthering experimentation in this field.\textsuperscript{161}

As was often the case with Gruenberg's communications, the letter is vague and suggestive; she offers no specific extant groups who might take the clearinghouse under its wing but, after WNRC's visibility in the press, it is possible she might have been thinking of them and not ALA.

That spring ALA had what was potentially a third offer to collaborate with another organization, to put a children's radio show on the air. Mrs. John S. Fox, chair of the NCPT radio committee, contacted Milam to discuss an offer NBC made to them, in providing "not only the time but the expense of broadcast for children, presumably a daily series over a considerable length of time."\textsuperscript{162} It is not clear whether this is ongoing discussion about the Harry Hansen booktalking show that the CLRB discussed in 1935, or if it is a different show. The memo that Milam wrote for his files makes no reference to Hansen or booktalks or any aspect of the previous program, which seems to indicate that this offer was a new one. Responding to Mrs. Fox, Milam noted in his memo that collaboration might be possible "under certain circumstances" and only with a "definite proposal containing the conditions on which the organizations could afford to accept such N.B.C. financing." Milam and Fox made plans to touch base later in the spring of the year.\textsuperscript{163} It is interesting that the last two offers – the Hansen show in 1935 (from NBC) and this one in 1936 (from NCPT and NBC) – came to ALA through venues

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} C.H. Milam, memorandum to file, April 28, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
other than NACRE.

Then, in April 1936, there was one last rather grand opportunity for ALA to get its ‘own’ show on the air. On April 24, 1936, Levering Tyson at NACRE received a letter from Thomas L. Stix, who was acting as the agent for a children’s radio program idea created by Hendrik Van Loon, whose book *The Story of Mankind* had received the first Newbery Medal awarded in 1922.

Stix was looking for funding for Van Loon’s program, which would be multiple 15-minute segments exploring American History, tentatively titled, “Bells, Drums and Gongs.” His route to NACRE (and from there to ALA) was roundabout. He started with the Carnegie Corporation, who informed him they didn’t make individual grants and suggested that he work through either ALA or NACRE.

When Tyson saw Stix’ program prospectus (Appendix G), he immediately got in touch with Milam and suggested that he see Stix right away. Milam was impressed, as were other members of the inner circle, and a special meeting was quickly arranged for the upcoming ALA annual conference in June, in Richmond, Virginia. A flurry of cables criss-crossed the country inviting selected individuals to meet with the ALA radio committee and Stix, and to look at the program written by Hendrik Willem Van Loon, voiced by stage actor Burke Boyce, and directed by the experienced theater director Earle Larrimore.

Milam and coalition subcommittee member Redefer felt the Stix prospectus would make a valuable addition to ALA’s Carnegie grant application. Redefer saw profit as well as promise in the program.

I sincerely believe that such a program would receive the sponsorship of a
commercial group in a short time and by its sale funds could be used to continue the clearing house independent of foundation support over a further period of time, and for sponsorship of similar ventures in the children’s radio field.\textsuperscript{164}

Frederick Keppel (from the Carnegie Corporation of New York) was invited to join the group and a copy of the program proposal was appended to the Carnegie grant application.

In the meantime, only ten days after Milam first saw Stix and discussed his prospectus, ALA radio committee chair Ralph Ulveling sent a memo to the ALA Executive Board asking for the Board’s official sanction to proceed.

A radio program has been presented to this committee for consideration. To this time we have had no program that we felt could be recommended. The one submitted at this meeting, however, incorporates ideas we have considered as fundamental for any radio program for children. The stimulation of reading and the possibility of a close tie-up with agencies that provide books are inherent in it. Likewise it measures up in quality and listener appeal ... Because the A.L.A. Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting and the committee representing co-operating organizations feel that this project will have a far-reaching effect both on libraries and radio we recommend its approval by the Executive Board. We further urge that action be taken as soon as possible so that if it is approved and if funds for its promotion can be assured that the program may be on the air

\textsuperscript{164} F.L. Redefer, letter to C.H. Milam, May 11, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Stix, Thomas, 1936.
early in July or at the latest, before the summer ends.\textsuperscript{165}

Stix was an experienced salesman and knew what buttons to push: both books and radio programs were enjoyed in the home; there was much current dissatisfaction – on the part of both the public and the networks themselves – with the quality of current children’s programs; and it was important to approach the networks through their educational departments who were even now groping for some such program without knowing exactly what to do or where to turn ... they would be more than pleased to have a fine program to point to as one of their contributions to the advancement of education and culture in the public interest.\textsuperscript{166}

Moreover, according to Stix, there should be radio sets installed in school libraries, so that if the program aired during the school day, the broadcasts could be accompanied by librarian-led discussions. ALA should present “not another children’s program, but the children’s program – the one outstanding program – as a standard.” The program should include historical dramatizations, which had been part of ALA’s earliest conversations about the program, “with their color, heroism and glamour – are extremely popular with children.” Stories would follow the common man (rather than kings or generals) and would be about signals (“from the whistle of a chum calling outside the house after supper ... to the short-wave Navy signals that can be picked up by the family radio”) that all children knew and understood.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{165} R.A. Ulveling, letter to the ALA Executive Board, May 14, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
\textsuperscript{166} T.L. Stix, [n.d.] “A presentation of a proposed radio program,” NACRE, Box 14, Folder – Stix, Thomas L., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, p. 8-9.
Stix reminded his potential investors that Van Loon’s *Story of Mankind*, which won the first Newbery ever awarded, in 1922, was still popular and widely recognized for its scholarship, and “what Dr. van Loon has done in ‘The Story of Mankind’ ... he can do in this radio series.” The American Library Association would be mentioned at the start of every program, and each episode would motivate listeners to head for their local public or school libraries to read beyond the short facts so dramatically presented in the programs. Tie-ins included scripts for drama groups, giveaways distributed through libraries, and the ultimate contest prize, two trips around the world – one paid for by Dr. Van Loon and both of which included introductions to important people in each country. Stix even raised the possibility that movie companies would be interested in producing the short programs on film, which would yield even greater profit for use on other educational programs. It was a masterful presentation and even anticipated potential concerns about the glorification of war and the use of a theatrical director (Earle Larimore) rather than the more ordinary radio program directors who might be suggested by the network. The estimated cost of the program, presented five times a week for six months, was $110,500 – not including airtime that, it was presumed, would be donated by NBC.

In the midst of this great excitement, there were still issues that needed to be resolved. Gruenberg received a response to the joint committee’s Carnegie application and the news was not good. Carnegie Corporation trustees turned down ALA and its allies, but it was no reflection on ALA or its plan since the Corporation had decided not to fund any radio projects through at least the fall of 1936. ALA’s proposal would be

held for consideration when Carnegie decided to resume funding in the radio area.

This was a blow to ALA and its friends, and Milam was concerned that Stix would take the program to someone else. Stix was willing to wait if Milam could reassure him that the prospectus would definitely be funded in the future. Of course, Milam could make no such promise, but reiterated how interested ALA was in the program. Gruenberg sent word that Carnegie would consider radio projects in its next fiscal year, which started in October, 1936, but still, there were no guarantees.

The remainder of 1936 was spent canvassing for potential “angels.” Milam started with Van Cleve, asking “do you know of anybody who has $80,000.00 which he might be willing to release for this undertaking?” Van Cleve’s response, “I know of no one.”

Milam solicited suggestions from within the library world, putting together a potential list of Chicago area donors with ALA headquarters staff members Cora Beatty (head of Membership Organization and Information) and Esther Dixon (head of Special Membership and Endowment) that included John Stuart, head of Quaker Oats Company, and R. Douglas Stuart, first vice president of Quaker oats and – perhaps as important – president of the Chicago Council of Boy Scouts in America. There were indirect referrals solicited as well, such as Rabbi Louis Mann, who was asked for letters of introduction to philanthropist Max Adler, musician Max Epstein, and Mrs. Levy Meyer (widow of a famous Chicago attorney). Some contacts started with local librarians such as Annie Cutter of the Cleveland Public Library and Ralph Munn in Pittsburgh, who were asked if they knew of any potential funders for the proposal.

Responses were discouraging. The program merit was undisputed, but either the project was outside the scope of the people approached, or they knew of no one ALA should ask. Frank Buttram, a friend of Milam and president of the Oklahoma City First National Bank, responded that “I am sure you will realize that there are a great many more worthy projects close at home than the local people can take care of.”\textsuperscript{170}

In even stronger language, Ralph Munn, immediate past president of ALA and director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh told Milam, “this is where I fail you completely.”

I do not agree that it is in any way essential that your children’s radio program be put on as a non-commercial feature. The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra concerts are sponsored … the March of Time has its commercial plug; and many other splendid programs are presented with the advertising features which to my mind are taken as a matter of course and are fully acceptable to the listening public … Since I am not myself impressed with the importance of your cause I am not willing to try to help raise funds for it. I should really begrudge you any money that might be taken out of Pittsburgh just to keep the program non-commercial.\textsuperscript{171}

In spite of the fact that R. Douglas Stewart, vice president in charge of advertising for Quaker Oats, was approached as much for his connection to the Boy Scouts as his place at Quaker Oats – and not at all in the nature of a commercial pitch – he responded only on the company’s behalf, “We are sorry we are not able to use this,

\textsuperscript{170} F. Buttram, letter to C.H. Milam, July 17, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Stix, Thomas, 1936.
\textsuperscript{171} R. Munn, letter to C.H. Milam, June 26, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Stix, Thomas – 1936.
Stix offered a few names to Milam in a letter of August 3, 1936. He thought, perhaps,

Julius Fleishman, Jr., of Cincinnati ... a fabulously rich young man, with a social conscience, and I believe he is at least moderately interested in books, children, etc. ... There is also his sister, Mrs. Henry Yeiser, of Cincinnati, who is equally rich.¹⁷³

This type of correspondence went back and forth between members of the inner circle, but these contacts came to naught.

In addition to continued issues with funding, there were problems with the program itself. The mood was euphoric, ALA had found its program, but not everyone felt it was ready to go on the air. Several youth librarians felt that the program content didn’t match the suggested audience age. It was to air during the time of day most likely to attract younger children (approximate ages 9-12), and it was called a ‘children’s program,’ but at least some of the material – references to Cervantes, for example – was over their heads.

Langworthy, president of the NCPT, saw the proposal and agreed that there were issues with the age of the intended audience. She also felt the program glorified war, and the story arc (in which each significant event would be developed over a series of programs) was much too long for such a focus. For example, nine episodes dealing

¹⁷² R.D. Stewart, letter to C.H. Milam, July 8, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Stix, Thomas, 1936.
ALAs JC, Judith Waller, who voiced quite a few concerns about the program. She reiterated the librarians’ comments about audience age versus content age and felt that the subject of war was unlikely to be able to hold children’s attention for very long. It would be difficult to build programs with any other focus than war, and the theme was too narrow for future program growth. In terms of production, she said that the budget was exorbitant, and ‘radio’ talent and direction were often more effective on the air than ‘stage’ actors and directors, and could be bought for less money. In fact, it was unlikely NBC would ever consider a sustaining program at this budget level, and would look for a commercial sponsor right away. Privately Waller went even further and advised ALA to shop around for other scripts before leaping onto the first one, saying she “did not want to appear to be marketing NBC wares, but there were scripts or records which she would be glad to have [ALA] read or hear.”  

Waller indicated that Stix had approached NBC before he brought the program to NACRE and ALA, and NBC turned him down.

ALA stuck with the program and Milam arranged an early August meet with Stix, Van Loon, Boyce, Waller, Robert Lester from the Carnegie Corporation, Van Cleve and Davis. The criticisms, “too much war, too high priced,” were negotiated and the group agreed that several segments would be recorded.¹⁷⁶

A week later, when Milam heard from Keppel, he suggested a meeting with Van

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¹⁷⁴ J.G. Van Cleve, memo to C.H. Milam, June 18, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, To Be Filed, 1935.
¹⁷⁵ J.G. Van Cleve, memo to C.H. Milam, August 6, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
¹⁷⁶ C.H. Milam, letter to F.P. Keppel, August 6, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Stix, Thomas, 1936.
Loon, saying that the author had a sincere desire to help American youth, and that it might be productive for the two to discuss Van Loon’s ideas. Keppel passed along Robert Lester’s comments in response. Lester, who had attended the meeting to negotiate script changes, said,

To me, the project is out of our range, and less important to the library world than a dozen other projects costing far less. Van Loon and Milam will understand a friendly talk, but most of the others would probably regard such as a definite expression of Corporation interest, and the choking off will be all the harder.¹⁷⁷

By the end of August 1936, and despite continuing funding issues, Stix and company recorded two segments, one on the Spanish Armada and the second on the Declaration of Independence. NBC donated studio time and production facilities for the taping.

The first to actually hear the tapes was a group of librarians and interested individuals who assembled at the New York Public Library, on October 1, 1936. Stix estimated the group at fifty to sixty people, “among them Mr. Lester, Mr. Tyson, Miss Flexner, Miss Davis, of course, and a number of other librarians. The reception was frankly enthusiastic.”¹⁷⁸ Milam had been unable to attend, but Stix mentioned that “the gossip after the meeting [was] that Mr. Lester’s point of view was simply that the decision would be fairly well up to the librarians as to whether they preferred the money for this project or for some other project or projects.” Stix was, he reported to Milam,

¹⁷⁷ F. Keppel, letter to C.H. Milam, August 13, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
¹⁷⁸ T. Stix, letter to C.H. Milam, October 1, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
very encouraged. Milam knew better, from his communications with Keppel and Lester, and he cautioned Stix to be patient.

I think you misunderstood Mr. Lester. The Carnegie Corporation is not in the habit of offering us a lump sum of seventy-five or one hundred thousand dollars telling us we may use it any way we like. The practice is, as a matter of fact, almost the opposite of that. We submit several projects and get approval of one or two. While no decision has yet come from New York, the intimations are increasingly discouraging with reference to the financing of radio programs. I’ll try to get something definite just as soon as possible.179

Although the children’s program was stalled, the ALA Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting tried to move ahead with other projects, but their work progressed slowly on all fronts.

With radio broadcasting reaching its maturity as a specialized art, the competition for listeners’ attention has become so keen that efforts to promote libraries and the reading of books through this medium can no longer compete successfully for attention on an unskilled basis. The polished, studied appeal of the commercial sponsor has set a standard which we must attain or fail in our efforts (Ulveling, 1936, p. 408).

In spite of this constraint, the committee worked on several goals: (1) creating a national series of book discussions; (2) organizing “subsidized demonstrations” (Ulveling, 1936, p. 408) that would help local libraries put programs on the air; and (3) promoting ways to disseminate information about educational broadcasts that they felt

179 C.H. Milam, letter to T.L. Stix, October, 12, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
“may do as much to promote cultural self-development and intelligent understanding of our national problems as any programs which libraries might hope to sponsor.” The committee’s understanding of its role was evolving, as well. “For some time this committee has felt that it could make itself of more permanent help by setting standards than by bringing together data on selected library broadcasting experiences which have been of doubtful value.” The group felt there was much yet to be done, in spite of “little in the way of tangible results” (Ulveling, 1936, p. 408).

These tangible results were a problem in the field, too. Librarians who were broadcasting were hard pressed to measure the success of their broadcasts, although one version of listener response could be a real problem for them. When radio stations asked librarians to do book talks, they generally wanted them to discuss the most current and most popular titles, which created a rush to the library that was frustrating for staff and patron alike, particularly when the library had insufficient copies to fill the momentary demand. Barbara Abbott, librarian at Needham (Mass.) Free Public Library, advocated shifting from booktalks to highlighting service to the community, observing that “it is there that you let non-borrowers know what you are prepared to offer.”

In late 1936 ALA was able to piggyback on a series of broadcasts created by the U.S. Office of Education, entitled, “Education in the News,” that aired on both NBC and CBS. Five minutes of each broadcast was devoted to how libraries serve communities, based on actual information drawn from ALA files, and was supplemented by a ‘How Your Library Can Serve You’ leaflet that listeners could request. This appears to be the only instance of cooperative programming in which

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180 B. Abbott, letter to J. Chancellor, May 4, 1936, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Miscellaneous, 1936.
ALA participated through 1936, after turning down offers from NCPT and the Women’s Radio Guild.

The promise of the national children’s radio hour remained unfulfilled. Finally, on December 8, 1936, the children’s radio experiment died with a whimper rather than a bang. ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam notified Thomas Stix that the Carnegie Corporation would not now or in the future fund radio programs. ALA felt it had exhausted its patience and resources trying to find funding that simply did not appear. Milam broke the news to Stix, saying

So that is that. I fear this means that the A.L.A. is out of the picture so far as any sponsorship of the Van Loon program is concerned unless my Board would be willing to work with a commercial sponsor of your selection.\(^1\)

Stix never approached ALA with any commercial offers, and the two 15-minute segments that were produced went un-aired.

\(^1\) C.H. Milam, letter to T.L. Stix, December 8, 1936, 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – To Be Filed, 1935.
CHAPTER 8: LIBRARY RADIO BROADCASTING AFTER 1936

At the 1937 ALA conference in New York, Mary Gould Davis reported to the CLRB that advertising agencies were in possession of great chunks of airtime and it was “difficult to convince [them] of the value of educational programs.” She said the children’s radio hour was “waiting for a subsidy” (Hyers, 1937, p. 805), a status it would retain forevermore. Even so, discussants at the CLRB business meeting confirmed their belief that it was important to support educational broadcasting by familiar means, book lists, displays and “radio book shelves,” listening posts and program announcements, but felt it was also important to get on the air at every opportunity while experimentation was still possible. Earlier that fall, a CLRB committee report had indicated that

while it is certain that the radio education problem has become more complex than ever with the return of big money in radio advertising, the Library Radio Broadcasting Committee is neither discouraged nor pessimistic about the future of library-radio relationships. Although the year has brought forth no startling achievements in the way of national library programs, there are assuring signs on the horizon that education on the air has crashed the gates of broadcasting lanes, and has advanced down the path of listeners’ favor; and that educators are willing to go more than half way in linking programs with library opportunities (Hyers, 1937, p. 579).

Perhaps the reason for this perceived willingness to listen to educators was that listener protests over network programming decency and children’s programs continued to increase during 1936 and 1937. Letters indicating dissatisfaction were received by

Between the dark and the daylight,
There comes from the radio tower
A series of gentle broadcasts
That are known as the Children’s Hour.

And the girls and the boys are gathered
To listen with bated breath
To educational programs
Of Murder and Sudden Death.

Then the air is athrob with sirens,
As the ears of the Little Ones
Tune in to the soothing echoes
Of “gats” and of Tommy-guns.

And the eyes of the kids are popping,
As they listen and wait perplexed
By the educational problem
Of who will be rubbed out next.

Grave Alice and Laughing Allegra
And Harry and Dick and Tom
Hear music of sawed-off shotguns,
Accompanied by a bomb;

And quiver and shake and shiver
At the tender and pleasant quirks
Of a gang of affable yeggman
Giving the “punk” the Works!

And they listen in awesome silence
To the talk of some mobster group,
And they’re opening up a bank vault
With nitroglycerine “soup!”

Oh, sweet is the noise of battle
To children’s listening ears,
As the guns of detectives answer
The guns of the racketeers;

And these educational programs
Will make the youngsters cower,
And the night will be filled with nightmares
Induced by the Children’s Hour (Braley, 1937, p. 42)!

Phrases such as “detrimental to the mental welfare of the children”\(^\text{182}\) and “childhood has been exploited on a large scale”\(^\text{183}\) elicited carefully worded responses from NBC. Network department heads canvassed their employees for ways to improve NBC’s standing in the public eye, and received suggestions for everything from “Youth Speaks”, a program on which college freshmen would discuss current events, to increasing the number of times announcers spoke the network name during broadcasts. Other suggestions included changing the length of advertisements and giving greater scrutiny to potential contest ideas. Staff in the sales department felt that certain hours were inefficiently programmed and the network would get more mileage in the morning and in the late evening hours by changing current program selections.\(^\text{184}\) Ironically, children’s programming was rarely mentioned. Data that had been collected on children’s programs was ignored.

Librarians knew about the listener protests that appeared in editorials and articles in the popular press, and those who knew of the national children’s radio program knew what a contribution it would have made. Los Angeles Public librarian Faith Holmes Hyers made an oblique reference to the project’s status as she urged

\(^{182}\) M. Babcock, letter to P. Carlin, May 24, 1937, NBCLC, Folder 431 – Programs Criticism, 1937.
\(^{183}\) D.B. Cloward, letter to G.H. Payne, November 1, 1937, NBCLC, Folder 431 – Programs Criticism, 1937.
\(^{184}\) C. Morgan, memo to J.F. Royal, July 6, 1937, NBCLC, Folder 431 – Programs Criticism, 1937.
librarians to broadcast whenever possible with whatever local resources they had at hand.

Granted that really fine programs for girls and boys cannot be put on without commercial subsidy; granted that the great radio companies and the agents placing commercial programs have not yet come to grips with the needs of children; and granted that there is a professional group ready to work for the best children's interests when the radio companies see fit to use them. Nevertheless, the libraries who are utilizing the present period of insufficient and unsatisfactory programs for children to supply something wholesome and entertaining, and to build up a listening audience, are wasting neither their time nor their efforts. Backyard gardens thrive and enrich their communities while legislatures haggle over state parks. Children breathe in enchantment as they listen to stories the country over that are told by story-tellers who fall far short of the skill and charm of Miss Shedlock [a renown storyteller of the time]. And while we wait for the perfect national programs for children to be evolved, many a library might be further enriching its community and interesting new borrowers in what it has for them by offering a weekly book talk or story hour (Hyers, 1938, p. 81).

Julia Sauer, the Rochester (NY) public librarian most involved with the very successful School of the Air, saw radio as a golden opportunity for getting at children and young people through the very technology that was taking them away from reading. Let us be grateful, then, for this new means of reaching children that is offered to us at a time when reading has more competitors than ever before. Let us use
it sincerely, master its technique, and make it a forceful factor in our publicity programs (Sauer, 1938, p. 99).

In addition to creating program content and having librarians act as on-air talent, libraries continued their ancillary support. They found stories and music for stations to use with children’s and adult programs, and recommended local storytellers.

Figure 6: An excerpt from the 1938 FREC Catalogue of the Educational Radio Script Exchange, showing “Treasures Next Door,” an ALA-created series that appeared in several editions of the catalogue.
Librarians created bibliographies and displays to support national and local programming. In San Francisco in 1938, for example, the editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* used a Children’s Book Week bibliography prepared by a librarian as his source of booktalks, and the Chronicle then printed 60,000 copies and distributed them all over the state (Lewis, 1941).

Continuing education opportunities for current and would-be librarian broadcasters were still offered at conferences. They were meant to showcase best practices and keep experimenters current with latest developments, as exemplified by the CLRB sessions reported in the 1938 ALA *Bulletin*:

Mr. Kohlstedt's programs given by librarians to demonstrate actual library broadcasts drew an interested audience each afternoon in the Little Theater of the Auditorium ... each one was in the form of an interview. These daily programs and the excellent presentation of NBC's drama programs ... as well as Dr. Dunham's encouraging talk to librarian-broadcasters, made up the committee's program (Hyers, 1938, p. 655).

The coalition that ALA built during 1933 and 1934 was gone, although Mary Gould Davis continued to represent library interests on the WNRC until 1939, when Lucy Milligan left the leadership of that group to form a new group, the Radio Council on Children’s Programs, under the auspices of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). Davis was part of the Radio Council until 1941.

Four years and many audience protests after Margaret Cuthbert originally suggested that NBC create its own women’s group (Chapter 6, p. 156), the commercial sector finally had a plan to harness the power of the women’s groups for its own
purposes. It began with an appeal to the WNRC, in 1938, for help formulating the NAB broadcasting code of conduct. The next year (1939) Milligan was invited to “submit a budget for a central office – with an executive secretary and a staff – in either New York or Washington.” The result was the formation in 1939 of the Radio Council on Children’s Programs, discussed later in this chapter.

Davis’ work with Milligan and the WNRC made it natural that she would be asked to represent library interests on the new formed Radio Council on Children’s Programs. ALA’s dilemma, as had been the case with the WNRC, was whether Davis should officially represent the association, or join as an individual and simply keep ALA informed. The new council’s purpose was unclear in the beginning and ALA was leery of being roped into a situation with broadcasters where ALA would essentially be endorsing programming over which they had limited, if any, control. ALA had already learned this lesson, commented PLA chief Julia Wright Merrill during headquarters discussions about the Council offer, where “A.L.A. might find itself in the position it was once in regard to motion pictures when we were widely quoted as officially sponsoring certain films because our representative sat in a large group.”

The Radio Council on Children’s Programs was one of a number of “consulting council” that sprang up in various parts of the country, and “made audience studies, established production committees, developed study courses in radio, promoted better programs, and established educational programs” (Saettler, 2004, p. 221).

Davis, herself, was uncomfortable about continuing with the group and went so

185 M.G. Davis, memo to C.H. Milam, October 21, 1939, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs.
186 J.W. Merrill, memo to C.H. Milam, October 26, 1939, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs.
far as asking Milam if anyone else was interested in taking her place. There were hasty conferences at ALA headquarters between Milam, Chancellor, Merrill and Division of Library Services to Children and Young People (DLCYP) Director Mildred Batchelder. Should ALA become an official part of this group? Should Davis be encouraged to stay and act as informal liaison between ALA and the group? Was there anyone else better suited to the task? Judith Waller, ALA contact at NBC, was asked to comment and the results were reported by Batchelder in a memo to Milam. The Radio Council on Children’s Programs would be an eight-member committee,

of which Mrs. Milligan is chairman and on which Alice Keliher [a noted child development educator] and Arthur Pryor [well-known conductor and composer] are two members, has been established to clear children’s programs. Miss Davis has been asked to be one of the eight, to represent the A.L.A … Funds for the work of the committee have been made available by the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Association of Manufacturers and Mrs. Singer of the United Parents’ Association of New York City. Miss Cuthbert of N.B.C. reports to Miss Waller that all children’s programs for national chains will be cleared by the various advertising agencies responsible for them through this new committee setup before they go on the air. It is Miss Waller’s personal opinion that it would be desirable for A.L.A. to be represented. A87

Ultimately, Davis was asked to continue as an individual rather than an institutional representative. She was reappointed to the Library Radio Broadcasting Committee so that she could effectively act as liaison between ALA and the Radio

A87 M. Batchelder, memo to C.H. Milam, J. Chancellor and J. W. Merrill, October 30, 1939, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs.
Council.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the local broadcasts that continued after the demise of the national children’s radio show, and that were described in the professional literature were success stories.

- The Lowell (MA) assistant librarian indicated that in 1939 “the average daily circulation in the Children’s Room used to be eighty-one and last week it jumped to 556” (Coffyn, 1939, p. 518);

- Kansas City librarian Gwendolyn Green commented that

  One librarian found that a local dentist who specialized in work with children turned on the radio in his waiting room to hear story hour then could scarcely get his patients into the chair for their appointments until the story was over;\textsuperscript{188}

- A 1939 survey of St. Louis radio listeners indicated that

  On November 25, 1938 ... our children’s broadcast, from 4:30 to 4:45 p.m., was being received by 19 per cent of all the radio listeners of Greater Kansas City, and 25 per cent of the local group, while simultaneous broadcasts included, ‘Let’s Pretend’ over KMBC, and the ‘Lone Ranger’ over the Mutual Network. At the same time the Columbia chain station was holding only 15 percent of the listeners in Greater Kansas City and only 10 per cent of our local group (Kohlstedt, 1940, p. 366-367);

\textsuperscript{188} G. Green, untitled attachment to a letter to M. L. Batchelder, July 30, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, p. 2 of attachment.
• Superior Public Library in Wisconsin aired five-minute book reviews
  (Kohlstedt, 1940, p. 367);
• St. Louis (Missouri) Public Library created short teasers for library materials
and services. The full script for one such announcement went,

  For boys and their fathers who are interested in boat races in the park,
  there are books on model boat building in the children's rooms of the
  Public Library and its branches. Do your children have library cards?
  They are free to St. Louisans (Kohlstedt, 1940, p. 367);
• In Kansas City, radio station KCKN surveyed 50,000 people, asking if their
  radio was on, and to what station was it tuned. Replies were tabulated and
results indicated that of all fifteen minute programs from 12:00 noon to 6:00
  evening, any day of the week, the period having the greatest percentage of
  listeners over KCKN was from 4:30 to 4:45 on Mondays - the Public Library
  Storyhour.189

  In the late 1930s books began to be published about library involvement with
radio and they often included sample scripts. Julia Sauer, children's department head at
Rochester (New York) Public Library, published Radio Roads to Reading (1939). It
included 20 scripts for what she called "book reviews," for junior and senior high
school students, that are more like short adaptations and modern booktalks. Sauer
covered a range of literature, from Laura Ingalls Wilder’s Little House in the Big Woods
to Beowulf and a talk on Emily Dickinson. Marie Loizeaux’ Library on the Air (1940),
provided 35 actual scripts, for a range of shows, from general library programs about

189 G.Green, attachment to a letter to M.L. Batchelder, July 30, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box
staffing and services, to more specific subjects such as author visits or genre or hobby reading. The next books about radio appeared much later: children’s librarian Katherine W. Watson published *Radio Plays for Children* in 1947, and Frances Nunmaker included several scripts – not just for children – in her 1948 title, *The Library Broadcasts*. This seems to indicate that librarian-broadcasters continued utilizing the radio well past the end of the children’s radio hour project.

Staffing, stations and funding for local broadcasts continued to be scarce, but libraries continued to collaborate with other entities – from radio stations and networks that donated time for programs, to civic groups that donated both time and people. In 1941 the Oklahoma City Public Library and Junior League teamed up to present adaptations of children’s books that were based on scripts prepared by the Pittsburgh Junior League. The series, heard by 6,000 people, was originally scheduled for 15 weeks but was so successful it was extended to 20 weeks. According to Junior Leaguer Mary Elizabeth Brittain, who wrote about the program for *Library Journal*,

> Because we wanted to give the children good entertainment and at the same time encourage their interest in reading the books used on the series, we did not attempt to review the whole book on a fifteen-minute broadcast, but only to give an interesting and exciting part of the book in radio play form. At the end of each program it was suggested to the listening audience that if they had enjoyed the story the book could be borrowed at the Carnegie Library. Listening posts were established at the Carnegie and branch libraries, where the children could come and enjoy the program and, if they wished, borrow the book to read at home. Posters illustrating the book to be broadcast each week, which resulted
from a participating program in the public schools, were placed in the readingooms and served to remind the children of the broadcasts. Mrs. Hough
[children's librarian] prepared a suggested reading list of books similar in
interest to follow each play (Brittain, 1941, p. 806-807).

Beginning in 1936 and continuing into the early 1940s, the Federal Radio
Education Committee (FREC) within the Office of Education supported a national
script exchange that included the ALA – created literature-based radio series “Treasures
Next Door,” which dramatized classic American literary works. Figure 6 (p. 184) is the
page describing the series, and from which interested nonprofit groups (including
libraries) could order one or more of the scripts.

The Van Loon’s program, “Bells, Drums and Gongs,” surfaced again in 1941
when Van Loon gave the Radio Council on Children’s Programs permission to offer
thirty-nine 30-minute transcriptions (recordings of live broadcasts) of the program to
NBC. ALA children’s section chief Batchelder, learned of the offer through Davis, still
the unofficial ALA liaison to the WNRC. “The extent of the interest of the broadcasters
in buying the records will determine the continuation or dropping of the project.”190
NBC ultimately rejected the offer and the programs remained unheard.

By 1942 the CLRB had merged with another ALA committee, the Visual
Methods Committee, to form the Audio-Visual Committee. That same year, ironically,
the ALA Division of Library Service to Children and Young People (DLCYP) finally
created its own Radio Committee. Its efforts were reminiscent of the efforts of ALA’s
radio committee, from 1926. The DLCYP group, chaired by Mary Gould Davis,

190 M. Batchelder, letter to Mrs. White, March 17, 1941, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder –
Radio, Children’s Programs, 1941.
concentrated on gathering and analyzing information on the present state of
broadcasts and recorded programs for children and young people ... to weigh
and judge programs ... and take an active part in this new [emphasis added]
media that affects the lives and thoughts of the children whom we serve (Davis,

Only a few years later in 1946, the DLCYP committee became the Radio
Broadcasts and Recordings Committee, and the committee’s purpose shifted to
evaluation and recommendation of existing network radio programs as well as
consideration of pre-recorded material. Transcriptions, recorded copies of live
programs, were becoming increasingly popular because of the flexibility they provided.
They were more convenient to produce and could be circulated among several libraries,
reducing the need for individual libraries to find talent and production facilities, and
greatly reducing the overall cost. In addition, libraries in diverse parts of the country
could share and preserve common cultural experiences. Children’s librarians, for
example, were excited about the possibility of recording folk and fairy tales for use
during story times.

Children’s librarians continued working with radio well into the 1950s, and
some of the programs experienced notable success. Margaret Scoggin, coordinator of
young adult services at New York Public Library put teens on the air each Saturday
morning in 1956, on a program entitled, “Young Book Reviewers,” during which young
adults discussed books and occasionally interviewed authors. “We do not ‘warm up’ or
discuss the book,” Scoggin said. “We learned in the first year that rehearsals killed the
spontaneity of the broadcast and that we do better without them” (Scoggin, 1956, p.
In 1957 children's author Ruth Harshaw took the very popular and well-respected “Carnival of Books” to Europe for a series of visits with authors (Harshaw, 1957). This was not a library-based program, although many librarians contributed book titles for use by Harshaw, and WMAQ indicated the program was produced “in cooperation with the American Library Association,” (“WMAQ’s Carnival,” p. 117). Not coincidentally, the program was produced at WMAQ, in Chicago, where Judith Waller was the NBC Midwest Director of Education. “Carnival” won a Peabody Award for excellence in radio broadcasting in 1962 (“WMAQ’s Carnival,” 1963, p. 116).

Librarians as broadcasters were in business before, during and after ALA embraced the idea of producing a national children's radio hour. ALA’s attempt to formulate the radio program illustrates some of the standard pitfalls of organizational work, as well as a lack of commitment (and perhaps belief in the importance of) the actual national program. These ideas will be further discussed in the next chapter.
At a 1934 educational radio conference George Bowerman (a librarian at the Washington D.C. public library) described librarians’ approach to broadcasting as ‘opportunistic’ (Bowerman, 1934, p. 60), by which he meant that librarians took occasions to broadcast when the offers were presented to them, but they didn’t trouble themselves with the spectrum turf wars. Broadcasting was something different and apart from their usual practice, it involved different techniques from previous publicity tools, it helped them reach into homes previously closed by education or indifference, and it fell into their laps. When broadcasting opportunities lessened – and in some cases stopped altogether – the change didn’t materially affect the practice of librarianship. Along the way, though, broadcasting generated plenty of discussion about its potential as an outreach tool and what the library’s role in relation to broadcasting – and in a broader sense, technology – might or could be.

To understand this project my research questions were designed to examine and map the national children’s radio program project from its appearance in 1930 to its fade in 1936 (questions one through four), and to get at the meaning and implications of this project and ALA’s part in it (question five). In a later part of this chapter I reconsider the tensions mentioned in Chapter 1, between local and national initiatives, commercial and nonprofit broadcasters, programming and clearinghouse, and the constraints and opportunities inherent in technology.

Research Questions

(1) What cultural and institutional factors led ALA (as an organization) to undertake the national children’s radio program?
(2) Why did the radio networks seek library involvement, and why did they ultimately let it go?

(3) What sustained ALA efforts despite a lack of progress?

(4) Why did the project fail, given the apparent public and network support, as well as ALA’s other successful radio experience?

(5) What, if anything, does this bring to our understanding of ALA’s involvement with emerging mass communications, in particular as the involvement relates to traditional library roles? Were librarians stepping outside their perceived role as providers of content created by others in order to create their own content?

Discussion

Libraries, particularly public libraries, are creatures of their particular and specific habitat. Tuned to local and regional interests, they create and promote collections and services tailored to the users they serve. On a broader scale, the American Library Association is also a product of its environment and serves the interests of librarians and librarianship on a national and international level. When radio broadcasters knocked at the organization’s door in the early 1930s, and asked if they were interested in free airtime, it was no surprise that ALA jumped at the opportunity to take the library agenda (of literacy and information dissemination) to the nation. Radio was a powerful publicity mechanism, a way to promote reading and library services on a scale previously unimaginable. Here was a way to extend the library’s outreach efforts, to augment the extension work being done to make library services available to the broadest possible audience. A national presence might also mitigate some of the difficulties libraries were having with local broadcasters and could also provide a
template for librarians reluctant to create their own local shows.

The association was also part of the American scene where a belief in "expert" opinions, a continuation of the turn of the century faith in progressive thinking, meant that ALA and its group of dedicated children's librarians were considered authorities on children and child development, and they had already built a reputation as those best qualified to monitor children's media consumption. Dime novels, series books and pre-Hays Code commercial films had sensitized the public to the potential for "harm" in various forms of entertainment and parents and educators were on their guard against future threats. As radio developed and new commercial advertising techniques added concerns about language and slang to issues of violence and tastelessness, librarians were seen as strong advocates of traditional mainstream values and upholders of good taste.

Personal relationships also played a part in ALA's invitation to broadcast. Carl Milam and Luther Dickerson, two major participants in the radio project, were members of NACRE's library committee, so NACRE's Levering Tyson knew them and it would have been natural to approach ALA as a source of educational radio programming. Then, too, ALA was developing a reputation in adult education circles for the readers advisor work done in the late 1920s. Milam represented ALA as a member of the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE), the same group that sponsored the Tyson study that resulted in the formation of NACRE.

Radio broadcasting was a rough and ready industry in its early days, and the politics of setting up the commercial system of broadcasting had left broadcasters with social debts they felt they needed to satisfy, if only to accrue public goodwill and avoid
governmental scrutiny and censure. From 1930 to 1934 in particular they felt vulnerable to governmental interference and went to great lengths to be seen as investors in the social good. One of the ways they did this was to cultivate respected institutions and groups whose programs would stand as testimony should broadcasters be taken to task by legislators or critics. The American Library Association was perceived to be similar to the National Education Association (NEA) and the various child psychology groups such as the Child Study Association of America (CSA), and was, like them, approached by the networks.

However, once the Communications Act of 1934 consolidated the commercial networks’ hold on their ethereal positions, they felt less pressed to find ways to accommodate educator and nonprofit concerns, and their offers of airtime to ALA became more or less perfunctory. They were still open to a viable ALA program but they were building a children’s department of their own that would oversee in-house program production and would lessen any need for outside assistance.

Since ALA’s involvement was predicated on a combination of (1) confidence in the public libraries’ role in society, (2) a strong core of children’s professionals within the association, and (3) network opportunity as perceived by the association, it is unsurprising they stayed with the project after hitting roadblocks. The first two of the three factors remained unchanged on the library side over the course of the project, and these factors were coupled with the idea that radio was an important outreach tool. The opportunity to make libraries a household presence, and the desire to extend national library programming, helped sustain ALA’s efforts, from 1930 until 1936, even in the face of a national economy that made it unlikely they would be able to find funding.
ALA leadership also seemed to feel constantly on the verge of getting the program produced. NBC executives continuously dangled free airtime and questioned ALA about how soon the children’s program would be available; ideas for programs and personalities never stopped; eventually, what looked like a ‘perfect’ program (from Newbery winner and experienced writer/broadcaster Van Loon) was brought to ALA’s door. Members and staff also knew that the issue of good programming for children remained unsettled, and that complaints from parents and educators were continuing to escalate rather than lessen. In spite of all of this, ALA was unable to find a noncommercial way to finance the children’s radio hour and in 1936, after six years of effort, let the project die.

Was the national children’s radio project a failure? In one sense, ALA did not succeed in producing a program for children and so it could be called a failure, particularly given the circumstances of the program proposal’s unexamined disappearance. In spite of a continuing public outcry about radio violence and advertising, and no change in the library’s perception of itself as social arbiter, ALA simply stopped pursuing the national children’s program. Libraries didn’t withdraw from broadcasting altogether: individual librarians still went on the air when opportunities came along, and libraries still provided ancillary support (publicity, bibliographies) for programming – at the local and national level – but fundraising efforts ceased and the program faded.

Yet in another sense this project helped ALA and librarians refine their ideas of what librarians and libraries are – and are not. Librarians and ALA staff continued to work with radio in the role traditionally assumed by libraries, as support for and in
support of providing information and literacy. Rather than continue to try to work outside their professional area of expertise, libraries kept to their roots. They promoted existing programs, created reading lists and offered discussion groups to extend the educational experiences of radio broadcasts; libraries also provided listening stations where those without radio sets (access) could be part of the audience experience. They even began collecting and storing the fruits of broadcasting labors – the transcriptions and recordings that are still part of library collections today.

Perhaps ALA felt it could relinquish the project because there were others who were better equipped to take up the work, and whose efforts they felt they could support. The WNRC leadership had been successful at getting the attention and cooperation of the networks, and in the course of one year had arguably more direct impact on children’s programming than ALA had in the six years of its project. They were able to focus their energy, there was agreement among members as to what actions should be taken – unlike the ALA-built coalition where there was a split vision and little coordinated effort.

The Women’s National Radio Committee (WNRC) had an office staff, so while its members were working within their own organizations, the work of the WNRC itself could also proceed. For ALA, administrative support would come when the grant proposal was funded, but in the meantime progress slowed and even halted for months at a time while key project members were focusing on other things. One very clear instance of this is the time it took for Sidonie Gruenberg (committee chair and director of the Child Study Association) to collect and compile allies’ reaction to the draft proposal for the program and clearinghouse. The proposal was presented to the group in
November 1934 and Gruenberg finally reported back to Carl Milam at ALA in November of 1935.

The profession made use of radio in so far as it supported library mission and goals. Frances Clark Sayers, speaking at the first Radio Institute, commented, “It is a question in the minds of many librarians whether the place of the library in radio education does not lie beyond the microphone. The radio is the impetus, the instigator, the arouser of curiosity, but the library can contribute great gifts as the sustaining power, the means whereby the mind is led on to an achieved goal” (MacLatchy, 1930, p. 185).

**Tensions Revisited**

I indicated in Chapter 1 that there were certain tensions that emerged in the course of the national children’s radio program project that helped explain why ALA was unsuccessful at putting a library-sponsored children’s program on the air: (1) noncommercial versus commercial broadcasting; (2) local efforts versus national initiatives; (3) rewards versus demands of using technology as an outreach tool; and (4) programming versus clearinghouse.

During the years of the spectrum turf wars (particularly 1927-1934), commercial interests ran hot and cold on working with educators – primarily prompted by the amount of political pressure they were feeling at any given moment. Even as they gave the appearance of cooperation, they were controlling a large part of the content that actually made it to the air. Their weapon of choice was to create a distinction between entertainment and education, and they defined education in ways that let them justify that distinction. The result was that they short-circuited the development of quality
programs while they were building a bulwark against educators who, they felt, simply transferred their message from podium to microphone. Rather than look to organizations that included programming as part of their regular functions, such as libraries, networks looked to Hollywood, the stage, and eventually to advertising agencies, who in turn looked to the entertainment arts for performers and content.

There were plenty of library programs that had proven their ability to attract listeners, in fact, the difference between local library efforts and the national initiative is striking. Why was programming at the local level so much more successful than at the national level? There were certainly commonalities between local and national efforts: the impetus to get the right books to the right readers, the desire to promote library services, and the belief that education and outreach were important library functions.

But there were differences as well. Consider, for example, the issue of scale, particularly in connection with program production. On the local level, librarians went to their own shelves, chose books, stories, music and songs that they had previously used with patrons they knew well; or they recommended performers with whom they were familiar. The much larger scale of a national production required a concomitant increase in everything: more opinions about what it should include, more – and more expensive – performers and more pressure to get it exactly right since they were national demonstrations of what libraries had to offer.

Then, in specific connection with ALA’s proposed children’s program, when ALA added partners to help generate funding for its national children’s radio show, the additional voices, coming from outside the profession and having different institutional
emphases, bifurcated the project vision and made it harder to concentrate on broadcasting a quality children's radio program.

Another difference was the amount of time and commitment librarians were able to bring to broadcasting projects, a larger issue that is inherent in organizational work. Individual librarians certainly had to balance the demands of their usual tasks (reference, programming, collection development et al) with the new demands generated by broadcasting (e.g., script and materials preparation, rehearsal, obtaining permissions), but volunteer work on broadcasting at the national level brought with it additional complications of geography and coordination. There had to be considerable occupational commitment to a project for it to succeed given the twice-yearly meetings, intermittent correspondence, home commitments and other volunteer work within the organization that ALA members demonstrated. The children's radio project was a tremendous opportunity, but it was competing with other projects that were more institutionally compelling. Financial issues related to the Depression and the tailing off of the Carnegie funds, for example, or concerns related to training the next generation of library professionals, or even the negotiation of professional boundaries as interest groups within ALA became sections and divisions.

The fragmented focus at the national level, where library practitioners were preoccupied with their own local projects, and the association's top leaders were concerned about many issues of competing importance, resulted in discontinuity that was manifested over and over. Each time groups met at conferences or meetings to discuss the children's radio project or the program-clearinghouse proposal, it was as if
they were beginning from scratch, rebuilding understanding and assembling the same questions to be answered before progress could be made.

The WNRC is an interesting foil for the situation at ALA. Both groups were interested in improving children's radio programs, while ALA had the added impetus of wanting to stimulate reading. The WNRC had a central staff, as did ALA, but since the WNRC was for all intents a single-focus entity, the staff could move the organization's agenda ahead even when member-leaders were distracted by concerns within their own organizations. ALA staff, on the other hand, had divisions and members unconcerned with the radio project, who had separate initiatives to maintain, so that even ALA headquarters staff was as likely as their members to work on the children's radio program only intermittently. The WNRC worked within its resources, relying on member organizations to provide the foot soldiers for the initiative, while ALA was tied to the notion of additional funding and staff for program completion. The outcomes are also different: WNRC was able to create visibility and have some impact on the networks, while ALA eventually lost interest in a complicated project and move on.

Libraries originally became interested in radio because they saw great potential for outreach, for contacting people who were previously unaware of the growing range of materials and services available in ever-increasing numbers of public libraries. The Depression intensified the desire to reach the masses, since public libraries could offer vocational help to displaced workers, and often simply provided shelter from heat and cold.

But in spite of the drive to reach as many citizens as possible, there were always librarians who questioned whether the investment in radio was a good one. Preparing
scripts, becoming conversant in broadcasting technique, actually going to stations to
give the program, these all took time away from increasingly busy libraries, who were
experiencing staffing shortages and cutbacks in operating hours as a result of
Depression-era budget. The return on investment seemed sadly lacking to many, who
complained about a lack of response from their local library broadcasts.

What this professional split meant for the association was that the national
children’s radio program never rose to the prominence on the ALA agenda it needed to
be successful. There were too many libraries who didn’t broadcast, and too many
competing issues (of more paramount importance to members) to devote more time to
children’s radio.

Finally, there was the conflict between ALA’s commitment to produce a
children’s program as opposed to falling back on the clearing house objective when it
appeared that program funding was scarce. This is a particularly interesting issue since
the clearing house intersects with more traditional library information conservancy and
advocacy roles.

It is difficult to understand why ALA was so completely committed to the idea
of producing a program. In fact, it is unclear whether that firm stance belonged to ALA
or primarily – perhaps solely, to Carl Milam. Certainly, other key individuals attached
to the radio project liked the idea of the program, but they were willing to compromise
on certain things. Mary Gould Davis, for example, was on the small subcommittee that
proposed a clearing house in the first place; Luther Dickerson was willing to consider
creating a program and selling it to a commercial sponsor, and John Chancellor was
willing to discuss commercial sponsorship of ALA’s original children’s program as outlined by Jessie Van Cleve.

What is even more intriguing is that the clearing house objective was actually closer to ‘traditional’ library roles of collecting and dissemination information, and in other circumstances seems like something ALA would agree with in principle. The clearinghouse would have let ALA continue its advocacy efforts for better children’s radio programs without having the onus of creating one from scratch.

This rigid stance, program or nothing, was a critical factor in the project’s failure. If ALA (Milam?) had been willing to compromise, it is possible that the program would eventually have come to fruition.

**Phases of Librarians’ “Technology” Engagement**

As the study evolved, I was struck by the similarities between how librarians in the 1990s approached the Internet and how librarians of the 1930s worked with radio. One could argue that there is a particular progression of phases that describe how librarians respond to and adopt or reject technology.

In both cases librarians were initially attracted to the technology’s capacity for publicizing the library and its services, and the outcomes of early discussions involved simple messages about locations, hours and basic services. As librarians grew more comfortable with the technology, professional conversations evolved to include educational opportunities that might be inherent in it. Then the offerings became interactive: broadcaster-librarians created programming that solicited responses to contests about favorite books and authors, and invited listeners to request stories and tell the library that they heard the program.
Librarians working with the Internet added lists of links (webliographies) to basic World Wide Web pages. Content in both cases became more sophisticated; librarian-broadcasters added sound effects, scavenger hunts, and music to their basic programs, while innovative Internet librarians added summer reading trivia contests, and one library, the Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenburg (NC) created something called StoryPlace that was full of interactive online stories.\footnote{According to their Web site, the Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenburg County debuted the StoryPlace in 2000. For more information, see www.storyplace.org/about.asp.}

Librarians in both instances then assembled recommended lists of resources to extend the technology experience, resources based on the librarian’s perceived ‘expert’ (collection building) abilities. Broadcaster-librarians created bibliographies and lists of recommended (non-library) educational programs, while Internet librarians provided lists of ‘safe’ homework links and pointed patrons in the direction of quality educational information on the rapidly expanding Internet. Along the way, both groups provided community access to the technology for those who didn’t have it at home. Libraries became listening centers and, later, provided computers that let children and adults access the wonders of the Internet and the World Wide Web.

This reflection led me to formulate a series of descriptive and overlapping phases that capture the experience as outlined above.

- Discussion
  - As librarians come into contact with new technology they decide if it is appropriate for or useful for promoting literacy and libraries. If there are clear opportunities for transmitting library-related information or materials...
via the technology, librarians do so. As is true of any technology innovation, there are different rates of engagement, from librarians and cybrarians who quickly see the potential of the new tools and leap ahead, to those who are reluctant to use it.

- Exploration
  
  o As librarians explore the usefulness of the technology, they begin very simple use, usually offering limited information such as library locations, hours, and a list of basic services. Unique capabilities inherent in the technology are ignored or remain unused until librarians have had some success interacting with it.

- Mediation
  
  o Librarians transfer their profession-specific skills to the new medium. They become content evaluators and mediators for material appearing on the new technology. They publish lists of recommended sources and resources; they evaluate non-library offerings and act as gatekeepers for ‘safety and decency’ standards. They may offer programs or begin using the unique features of the technology, but only as those features help promote education and literacy.

- Access
  
  o Librarians acknowledge that the technology has economic and social dimensions, and offer access for those who otherwise may not be able to participate or utilize it.
These phases hold true for both library broadcasting and Internet adoption, and there are implications for training and technology use. Understanding this progression, early adopters (within the profession), trainers, and administrators can more effectively introduce new technology to librarians, or can encourage reluctant users to more quickly engage with it. Since technological innovations are occurring more rapidly than in the past, this becomes more rather than less important.

**Unanswered Questions**

The study of history can be maddening, since loose ends and unanswered questions are inevitable as one attempts to understand events of the past through the existing and often incomplete historical record. This study was no exception and there are several questions that either emerged as I read the historical record, or remain after having examined the fragmentary evidence. Why, for instance, did ALA continue to reject opportunities to co-sponsor programs with organizations whose goals were similar and/or whose content they could respect? NCPT was an ALA coalition member, there was a committee at ALA specifically created to work with them, and yet ALA turned down two offers from this group.

An associated question is why ALA would continue to stand firmly against the idea of commercial sponsorship. Why couldn't they, as Luther Dickerson suggests in 1936, create the program completely – script and all – and shop it around to commercial sponsors with the understanding that ALA would retain artistic control?

Then there is the mystery of ALA's relationship with the WNRC. WNRC wasn't sponsored by or associated with any commercial entity; it shared a similar goal (of improving children's radio) with ALA; it was made up of organizations who were
well respected in the community. But ALA leaders preferred to have unofficial representation through Mary Gould Davis. The step they were reluctant to take was to ask the ALA Executive Board to approve Davis’ membership as ALA’s representative to the group, not something that on its face seems particularly fraught or onerous. That they hesitated to push institutional membership on the 1939 Council on Radio Programs for Children is a little more understandable, given that that groups funding was coming at least in part from the National Association of Broadcasters, whose agenda and approach was very different from that of ALA. ALA’s concern, voiced by Merrill (Chapter 8, p. 186), was that ALA would find itself unknowingly endorsing commercial programs without having any say about content.

**Future Areas of Research**

There are several avenues of research that have emerged from this historical investigation, particularly in the areas of children’s services and librarians’ engagement with technology. One of the issues I grappled with was whether my dissertation should focus on children’s librarians’ response to technology, given that the program was aimed at children. Upon consideration it seemed that the story of the children’s national radio project that most interested me was actually the story of institutions and organizations, not the story of children or childhood, or even children’s library services. Having started an investigation of youth librarians’ use of technology in the form of radio, it would be productive to follow their interactions with television and now with newer technology, i.e. Second Life and Facebook. Do the newer technologies still reflect the same sequence of phases, or how the nature of their engagement may have changed?
On a larger scale, there is an opportunity here to create a record of the migration of librarians, specifically youth librarians, through various technologies, to trace their engagement, to see whether the profession changed or is now changing, and to chart a missing or invisible dimension of youth work.

It would also be interesting to take the phases and consider them in the context of a single library or a small group of public libraries. The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, the Rochester Public Library and the Denver Public Library were among the most visible libraries broadcasting; staff wrote major articles and books, and were associated with the CLRB and the children's radio project. What was the nature of their experiences with broadcasting and how do they compare with each other, as well as with the ALA experience?

Then there is the school library experience of broadcasting. Does the educational setting have any impact on the librarian-broadcaster experience? How did programming develop, what connections to external agencies developed with school broadcasts, and are there different phases of adoption for school librarians?

A researcher could also look at the library-radio experience from the perspective of the literature. Perhaps there are sample scripts squirreled away in libraries across the country that tell us more about how libraries reached out to patrons through the radio. For children's librarians, how did they choose literature and how was it changed for broadcast? Did librarians write original stories for this medium? What do the adaptations tell us about library practice and the creation of childhood as a social construct?

Another challenging issue arising from my research involves an investigation of
the relationship between technology adoption and client group. Is it accurate to say that client group expectations drive library technology adoption? For example, are young adult librarians more likely to quickly embrace newer technologies because their client group involves so many early adopters? Is this another instance of library response to community needs? Or, rather than “technology,” does this happen in relation to mass media, or popular culture? What concept is at the heart of this connection?

Finally, another aspect of the project that deserves more thought is the absence of children as a subject of discussion during the early days of radio programming. As noted in the study, early programs were more often about children (as subjects) than for them (as an audience). Reading both broadcasting and library literature, it isn’t so much a matter of actively considering then excluding them but rather that they are simply absent. What is striking is that radio was developing at the end of an era where social and civic groups had made children the focus of national attention and even legislation, so why weren’t concerns of children an earlier part of broadcasting and programming discussions?

When ALA became involved with broadcasting, its reasons were consistent with its purpose: to promote librarianship and to facilitate its practice. The first instances of ALA broadcasts were conference sessions; ideas for radio programs were always related to books, reading and advocacy for libraries, and conference sessions and articles in the Association’s publication – the Bulletin of the American Library Association – were offered as best practice models for emulation and encouragement. The national children’s radio program was undertaken with similar ideas in mind: to raise awareness of libraries and their services, to help mitigate some of the problems
local libraries experienced while trying to broadcast, and to provide a program model
for both internal (librarian) and external (popular) audiences. Difficulties arose in
connection with the external (non-library) audience.

In the case of the children’s radio program, ALA’s ‘opportunistic’ approach was
either naïve or narrow. When ALA took its expertise with children and programming to
the external audience, they paid little attention to the commercial broadcasting arena
they were entering. ALA representatives were either uninformed, as when Van Cleve
had to be schooled about potential political conflicts between the Payne Fund and
NACRE, or deliberately uninterested, as when Bowerman told a national group of
educators at a 1934 radio conference that ALA had “not taken any position as to
whether there should be governmental control of radio as the ultimate best method of
handling the problem [of spectrum ownership]” (Bowerman, 1934, p. 60).

ALA leadership was uninformed about what was going to be involved in
creating a national radio program, taking a sort of Judy Garland-Mickey Rooney-esque
“hey, let’s put on a radio program” approach to the actual requirements of broadcasting.
They had the promise of network support, and there was plenty of opportunity to flesh
out the proposed program while they waited for funding to appear, yet they failed to
create scripts for programs for which they were the acknowledged content experts.

This attitude extended to their interactions with external audiences. Throughout
the arc of the program project there are instances when both networks and NACRE
indicated their belief that libraries were not relevant to the majority of Americans.
Apparently unaware of the surge in library usage during the Depression, unaware of the
types of services and materials that were developing as public libraries developed in
response to community and broader societal changes, Levering Tyson told Carl Milam that one of his program suggestions (for adults) lacked the mass appeal (Chapter 4, p. 113) of programs on education. In another instance, Milam reported back to Van Cleve that coalition subcommittee members felt that a section of her original program plans was “too library-like” to be interesting (Milam, personal communication, December 15, 1933, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Cooperating Organizations, 1934). A third instance is when Waller told the conference audience that children weren’t interested in hearing or reading stories, they wanted action and adventure (Chapter 4, p. 122). ALA appeared to accept these statements without challenge and without attempting to educate even their allies.

Public librarians continue to be an opportunistic tribe, still experimenting with the latest technology in the service of reading and knowledge dissemination, still looking for new ways to reach the broadest possible audience. This study of the national children’s radio hour has yielded a preliminary description of the phases that librarians move through as they engage with successive technological waves. However, there is still work to be done to validate those dimensions of engagement. We need to think critically about our interaction with technology, how our attitudes and approaches may impact our patrons, and how to get the most out of each opportunity for our patrons and our profession.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Collection Abbreviations

ALA 2/1/1  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 2/1/1 – Executive Board and Executive Director, President, Transcripts of Proceedings, 1909-1946, 1951-, Executive Board Transcripts and Minutes, 1920-1973, June 1924-November 1926.

ALA 2/1/1A  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 2/1/1 – Executive Board and Executive Director, President, Transcripts of Proceedings, 1909-1946, 1951-, Executive board transcripts and minutes, 1920-1973, November 1931-October 1937.

ALA 24/2/6  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 24/2/6 – Executive Secretary, Children’s Services Division, Subject and Committee File, 1920-1970, Radio, Children’s Program, A.L.A. Project.

ALA 24/2/6R  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 24/2/6 – Executive Secretary, Children’s Services Division, Subject and Committee File, 1920-1970, Radio – Workshops, 1926-36, 1940-45.

ALA 24/50/6  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 24/50/6 – Children’s Services Division, Work with Children, Subject File, 1932-1933.

ALA 30/59/1  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 30/59/1 – Reference and Adult Services Division, Radio Broadcasting Committee, Correspondence Files, 1930-1941.

ALA 92/8/5  American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois; Series 92/8/5 – Special Committees, Committee on Committees, Correspondence, 1929-1940, Correspondence, 1929-35.

NACRE  National Advisory Council on Radio in Education Records, Inc. (NACRE), historical records at the Manuscripts & Archives Division, New York Public Library.

NBCLC  National Broadcasting Company History files at the Library of
Archival Materials and Manuscripts

Advisory Council of the National Broadcasting Company, Message from the Chairman, the President's Report and Resume of Programs, Committee Reports, Third Meeting, 1929. 1929. NBCLC 566, Box A+B Bound NBC Advisory Council Reports, NBC, February 18, 1927-February 28, 1941.


Memorandum of minutes of the advisory council of the National Broadcasting Company, Seventh meeting, February 1, 1933. (1933). NBCLC 566, Box A+B Bound NBC Advisory Council Reports, National Broadcasting Company, advisory council reports, Volume VII.


Stix, T.L. [n.d.] *A presentation of a proposed radio program “Bells, Drums and Gongs” specially prepared for the American Library Association.* NACRE Box 14, Folder – Stix, Thomas L.

**Articles, Dissertations and Monographs**


APPENDIX A: CHRONOLOGY OF SELECTED LIBRARY AND BROADCAST EVENTS

1912 – Radio Act of 1912 enacted
1920 – Westinghouse station KDKA (Pittsburgh) licensed
1922 – Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh broadcasts children’s radio program through KDKA
First National Radio Conference convened by Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover
University of Nebraska offers college credit courses via radio
AT&T station WEAF (New York) broadcasts first paid advertisement
National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) formed
1923 – Hoover convenes 2nd Washington Radio Conference
Hoover reassigns frequencies into 3 sections
1924 – ALA broadcasts selected annual conference talks
AT&T creates first coast-to-coast hook-up; 26 stations linked across the country
FTC lodges formal complaint against AT&T, RCA, GE, Westinghouse, United Fruit and subsidiaries
Hoover convenes 3rd National Radio Conference
1925 – 128 colleges and universities have stations
Hoover convenes 4th National Radio Conference
Department of Commerce says all frequencies in use, stops issuing broadcasting licenses
1926 – ALA created the Committee on Library Radio Broadcasting (CLRB)
American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) formed
National Broadcasting Company (NBC) begins operations
1927 – CLRB surveys 550 public and university libraries on their broadcasting efforts
Radio Act of 1927 enacted
733 stations share 90 frequencies; 95 of them are college/university stations
NBC has 28 affiliates
CBS has 16 affiliates
Payne Fund established
Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) begins operations
NBC creates an Advisory Council
Zenith produces radios that use house current (rather than batteries)
Philco sells first car radios
1928 – Davis Amendment proposes equalizing stations across five geographic zones
General Order 40 – the FRC reallocation of stations across zones and frequencies
NAB establishes a committee to work with American Association of Advertising Agencies to establish a code (and to promote on-air advertising)
National Association of Broadcasters forms a committee to create code of ethics
1929 – Advisory Committee on Education by Radio (Wilbur Committee) begins work
Wall Street Crash of 1929
Hoover enters White House
“Amos ‘n Andy” debuts on NBC (after airing in Chicago on WMAQ)
1930 – 54 colleges/universities have radio stations
   National Committee on Education by Radio (NCER) formed
   National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE) formed
   Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting (aka Crossley ratings) begin
   “American School of the Air” debuts on CBS
   “Let’s Pretend” debuts on CBS (under name “Adventures of Helen and Mary”)
   “Rin Tin Tin Thrillers” debuts on NBC-Blue

1931 – ALA Executive Board approves the National Children’s Radio Hour project
   NBC and CBS account for nearly 70% of broadcasting
   Payne Fund gives $200,000 to NCER
   Fess Bill (15% of channels reserved for education) introduced in Congress
   NCER begins publication of weekly bulletin entitled Education by Radio
   Ventura Free Press anti-commercialism radio campaign begins
   Broadcasting, a national magazine devoted to commercial radio interests, begins
   “Eno Crime Club” debuts on CBS
   “Little Orphan Annie” debuts on NBC

1932 – Senate Resolution (SR) 129 proposed
   Commercial Radio Advertising report released by FRC
   “Bobby Benson and the B-Bar-B Riders” debuts on CBS
   “Buck Rogers in the 25th Century” debuts on CBS
   “Charlie Chan” debuts on NBC-Blue
   “Dr. Doolittle” debuts on NBC-Blue
   “The Singing Lady” debuts on NBC-Blue

1933 – ALA convenes small group to discuss creating a coalition for children’s radio project
   Roper Committee formed to complete
   Tugwell Bill (related to truth in advertising) introduced in Congress
   Roosevelt elected
   “The Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen” debuts (syndicated, no network designated)
   “Jack Armstrong, All American Boy” debuts on CBS

1934 – ALA convenes 32 organizations to discuss its National Children’s Radio Hour idea
   Communications Act of 1934 enacted
   Wagner-Hatfield hearings held by FCC
   National advertising revenues approach $75 million
   65 college/university stations in operation
   Mutual Broadcasting System begins operations
   “Chandu, the Magician” debuts on Mutual
   “The Lone Ranger” debuts on NBC-Blue

1935 – ALA declines the opportunity to co-sponsor (with the Women’s Radio Guild) children’s booktalks done by Harry Hansen for NBC
   58 of 62 stations broadcasting at 5,000 watts or higher were networked affiliated
   Federal Radio Education Committee (FREC) established by FCC
“Dick Tracy” debuts on Mutual (moved to NBC in 1937)
“Flash Gordon” debuts on Mutual (moved to NBC-Blue in 1939)
1936 – Stix brings Van Loon program, “Drums, Bells and Gongs”, to ALA
“Gangbusters” debuts on CBS
“Wilderness Road” debuts on CBS
1937 – NBC hires retiring Yale president James R. Angell as a “educational counselor”
Committee on Civic Education by Radio (committee of NACRE) and American
Political Science Association release study – Four Years of Network
Broadcasting – which criticized the networks for their treatment of
educational
programming
NACRE ceases operations
“Terry and the Pirates” debuts on NBC
1938 – “The Green Hornet” debuts on Mutual
1939 – NAB creates their first Broadcast Code
1940 – “Superman” debuts on Mutual
1941 – CLRB merges with Visual Methods committee to become Audio-Visual
Committee
NCER ceases operations
Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor and the United States official enters World War II
APPENDIX B: COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY RADIO BROADCASTING, MEMBERS FROM 1926-1940

1926
• Mission statement: To study broadcasting by libraries and similar agencies.¹⁹²
• Charles H. Brown, Iowa State College Library, Chair and sole member

1927
• Charles H. Brown, Librarian, Iowa State College Library, Chair
• George E. Chase, Los Angeles (no affiliation provided)
• Alice B. Coy, Publications Editor, Cincinnati (Ohio) Public Library
• M. Florence Cufflin, Librarian, South Boston Branch of the Boston Public Library
• Bertha Doane, Librarian, Cabanne Branch of the St. Louis (Mo.) Public Library
• Louise Prouty, Vice-Librarian, Cleveland (Ohio), Public Library
• Edith Tobitt

1928
• Charles H. Brown, Chair
• George E. Chase
• Alice B. Coy
• M. Florence Cufflin
• Bertha Doane
• Louise Prouty
• Bertine E. Weston, Managing Editor, Library Journal

1929
• Luther L. Dickerson, Librarian, Indianapolis Public Library, Chair
• Alice B. Coy
• M. Florence Cufflin
• Bertha Doane
• Ethel M. Fair, Director of the Library School, New Jersey College for Women
• Frieda H. Grannell, Reference Librarian, Los Angeles Public Library
• Louise Prouty

1930
• Luther L. Dickerson, Chair (Board on Library and Adult Education)
• Alice B. Coy
• M. Florence Cufflin
• Bertha Doane
• Ethel M. Fair
• Frieda H. Grannell
• Louise Prouty

¹⁹² Mission statement remained unchanged until 1941 when this committee merged with the Visual Methods Committee.
1931

- Luther L. Dickerson, Chair (Board on Library and Adult Education)
- Mary Gould Davis, Supervisor of Storytelling, New York Public Library (Committee on Library Work for Children)
- Judson Toll Jennings, Librarian, Seattle (Wash.) Public Library (NACRE Committee on Library Cooperation)
- Emma Lee, Children’s Librarian, Rosenberg Public Library, Galveston, Texas (Committee on Library Work for Children; Cooperation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers)
- Della McGregor, Chief of the Juvenile Division, St. Paul (Minnesota) Public Library (Chair, Committee on Library Work for Children; Cooperation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers)
- Forrest B. Spaulding, Librarian, Des Moines (Iowa) Public Library (NACRE Committee on Library Cooperation)
- Jessie Gay Van Cleve, *Booklist*, ALA Headquarters

1932

- Luther L. Dickerson, Chair (Board on the Library and Adult Education)
- Mary Gould Davis
- Pearl I. Field, Librarian, Henry E. Legler Regional Branch, Chicago Public Library
- Judson T. Jennings
- Della McGregor (Committee on Library Work for Children; Cooperation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers)
- Jessie E. Tompkins, Chief of the Children’s Department, (Chair, Committee on Library Work with Children; Cooperation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers)

1933

- (no chair appointed)
- George F. Bowerman, Librarian, Washington D.C. Public Library
- Mary Gould Davis
- Mary Frank
- Nathan R. Levin, Assistant Librarian, Chicago Public Library
- Isabel McLaughlin, First Assistant, Sumner Branch, Minneapolis (Minn.), Public Library
- Jessie E. Tompkins

1934

- Ralph A. Ulveling, Assistant Librarian, Detroit (Mich.) Public Library, Chair
- George F. Bowerman
- Mary Gould Davis
- Luther L. Dickerson
- Faith Holmes Hyers, Publicist, Los Angeles Public Library
- John Adams Lowe, Director, Rochester (NY) Public Library
- Isabel McLaughlin
- Levering Tyson, NACRE
1935
• Ralph A. Ulveling, Chair (Board on the Library and Adult Education)
• George F. Bowerman
• Mary Gould Davis
• Luther L. Dickerson
• Faith Holmes Hyers
• Isabel McLaughlin
• Levering Tyson

1936
• Ralph Ulveling, Chair
• George F. Bowerman
• Mary Gould Davis
• Luther L. Dickerson
• Faith Holmes Hyers
• Isabel McLaughlin
• Levering Tyson

1937
• Faith Holmes Hyers, Chair
• Barbara Abbott, Librarian, Free Public Library, Needham, Massachusetts
• Eunice Coston, Cataloger, Carnegie Library of Atlanta, Georgia
• Elizabeth Hickenlooper, Librarian, Felipe de Neve Branch, Los Angeles Public Library
• Donald W. Kohlstedt, Librarian, Kansas City (KS) Public Library
• Julia L. Sauer, Head of the Children’s Department, Rochester (NY) Public Library
• Winifred A. Sutherland, Special Assistant in Adult Education, Albany (NY) Public Library
• Rozetta L. Thurston, Librarian, Fort Collins (Colo.) Public Library
• Katherine Watson, Head of the Children’s Department, Denver Public Library
• Bertine E. Weston

1938
• Faith Holmes Hyers, Chair
• Barbara Abbott, Librarian
• Eunice Coston
• Donald Kohlstedt
• Julia L. Sauer
• Winifred A. Sutherland
• Rozetta L. Thurston
• Bertine E. Weston
1939

- Faith Holmes Hyers, Chair
- Barbara Abbott
- Eunice Coston
- William Stanley Hoole, Director and Professor of Reading, Birmingham-Southern College
- Winifred Sutherland Kermani, Special Assistant in Adult Education, Albany (NY) Public Library
- Donald Kohlstedt
- Janie Gall Lawrence, Assistant in the Children’s Department, Denver (Colo.) Public Library
- Irene Hall Peterson, Head Assistant in the Civics Department, Chicago Public Library
- Julia L. Sauer

1940

- Donald W. Kohlstedt, Chair
- Elizabeth Boudreau,
- Mary Gould Davis
- Charles Flanigan, Assistant at the Loan Desk, Buffalo (NY) Public Library
- Mona Harrop, Assistant for Editorial Work, Cincinnati (Ohio) Public Library
- William Hoole
- Irene Peterson
- Julia L. Sauer
- Harriet Sawyer, Principal, St. Louis Library School at the St. Louis (Mo.) Public Library

The CLRB merged with the Visual Methods Committee and in 1941 became the Audio-Visual Committee.
APPENDIX C: LIST OF ATTENDEES (AND THEIR AFFILIATIONS)
FOR 1933 AND 1934 MEETINGS

American Library Association Preliminary Meeting on November 14, 1933
• Association of the Junior Leagues of America – Helenka Adamowska (attended both meetings)
• Camp Fire Girls (attended both meetings) – Ruth Pierpoint Stephens
• Child Development Institute – Arthur T. Jersild
• Child Study Association of America (CSA, attended both meetings) – Zilpha C. Franklin
• Girl Scouts (attended both meetings, different representative) – Mrs. Kenneth M. Wilson
• National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE, attended both meetings) – Levering Tyson
• National Recreation Association (NRA, attended both meetings) – Howard Braucher
• Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (attended both meetings) – Huger Elliott

Invited but unable to send representatives:
• General Federation of Women’s Clubs
• National Congress of Parents and Teachers (NCPT)

American Library Association Town Hall Club Meeting, November 22, 1934
• American Association for Adult Education (AAAE) – Morse Cartwright
• Association of the Junior Leagues of America – Helenka Adamowska, Children’s Theatre Department
• Boy Scouts of America – Dr. James E. West
• Camp Fire Girls – Ruth Pierpont Stephens
• Child Study Association of America (CSA) – Zilpha C. Franklin, Mrs. Howard S. Gans, Mrs. Everett Dean Martin, Mrs. Fred M. Stein, Mrs. Hugh Grant Straus
• Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) – Helen Johnson
• Committee on Civic Education by Radio (CCER) – Doris Darmstadter
• Eisenberg, I.L. (survey of New York children’s programming)
• Federal Council of Churches – Inez M. Cavert
• Federation of Music Clubs – Mrs. Edgar S. Kelley
• Fox Meadow School – Mrs. Alma Marks Ernst
• Girl Scouts Federation – Mrs. M.L. Thompson
• Girl Scouts, Inc. – Margaret Grimshaw, Lou Rogers
• Horace Mann School – Dr. Ina C. Sartorius
• International Council of Religion Education – Mary Alice Jones
• Jewish Welfare Board – Dr. Mordecai Soltes, Janet Weisman
• Lincoln School – Dr. Lester Dix
• Machol, Claudia (Mrs.) – affiliated with the Society for Ethical Culture

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• Mann, Arthur (author of the infamous 1933 Scribner’s radio article entitled, “The Children’s Hour of Crime, see Chapter 4, p. 107-108)
• Metropolitan Museum of Art – Huger Elliott
• Motion Picture Research Council – William H. Short
• National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE) - Levering Tyson
• National Broadcasting Company (NBC) – Franklin Dunham, John Martin
• National Congress of Parents & Teachers (NCPT) – John W. Faust, Mrs. Tristram Metcalfe
• National Council of Jewish Women – Mrs. Frances G. Pollak
• National Council of Parent Education – Ralph Bridgman
• National Education Association (NEA) – Florence Hale
• National Music League – Mrs. Lucy (Harold) Vincent Milligan (also represented the WNRC)
• National Music Supervisors Conference – Osborne McConathy
• National Recreation Association (NRA) – Howard Braucher
• Parents League – Mrs. Sherman Haight, Mrs. William Barclay Parsons, Jr.
• The Parents’ Magazine – Mrs. Harold Littledale
• Roosevelt, Mrs. Archibald (no affiliation reported)
• Survey Associates – Beulah Amidon
• United Parents Association – Mrs. Henry Pascal, Mrs. Robert V. Russell, Mrs. A.D. Whitman
• Women's National Radio Committee (WNRC) – Luella S. Laudin, Mme. Yolanda Mero, Mrs. Lucy (Harold) Vincent Milligan
• Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) – A.J. Gregg, Henriette Harrison, E.A. Hungerford
• Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) – Dr. Janet Nelson

Sent regrets but indicated interest
• American Association of University Women (AAUW) – Mrs. F.C. Houdlette
• Belmont, Mrs. August
• Catholic University of America – Father Paul Hanly Furfey
• Child Development Institute, Teacher’s College of Columbia University (attended 1933 meeting) – Dr. Arthur T. Jersild
• Detroit (MI) Public Library – Ralph Ulveling
• Ethical Culture Schools – Dr. V.T. Thayer
• International Federation of Home and School – Mrs. A.H. Reeve
• Elizabeth McCormick Fund – Mary Murphy
• Merrill Palmer School – Edna Noble White
• National Broadcasting Company (NBC) – Judith Waller
• National Congress of Parents and Teachers (NCPT) – Mrs. F.M. Hosmer, Mrs. B.F. Langworthy
• National Music League – Mrs. Frederick Steinway
• Payne Fund – Ella Phillips Crandall, Armstrong Perry
• YMCA (International) – E.R. Leibert
• YWCA – Mrs. William Henry Hays

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APPENDIX D: VAN CLEVE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM OUTLINE, 1931

Dear Sirs,

I believe carefully planned story telling has a place; I should like to see it continued in such a manner as to really reveal it so a constant set is made in some way among the boys as the story tellers, as well as the stories they told were told in history and literature. With this in mind I suggest a series of talking stories, as an example each week for as long a period as they prove successful.

Billy Furnace

The historic setting briefly described the inn, castle or village green where the ballad is supposed to be sung - appropriate music - the ballad story told as through to the climax. Many lullabies for example - and as a conclusion a folk song or folk ballad, folk food and other ballads.

Little Different Stories

Built on the propounded idea, the propounders and break his heart and when the children pass into it marvelous dreams are apportioned before their eyes and the story tellers with occasional aids introduced with poetry or appropriate song.

Novelties - the story of the origin and development of games, famous songs and folk songs with folk ballads for example, a short story or incident that points the atmosphere of the game, tale by famous writer or playwright.

Dramatic

Role-play famous stories, Song, Chorus, Reading, Rapping, Mountain Climbing, Sunday and More - Young George, 1-9-29

Transportation

Music with famous boats, engines and trains, famous trips, famous cities.

Art Programs

Art classes with Miss Doherty of Cleveland, Festival of St. Louis, Chamber of Fine Arts.

Natural History in Stories

Consult with Birds and Natural History Muscians.

Animals - their habits, How to catch them - the story tellers among the boys it would be interesting to point some towards under hunting (4 Clubs)

Exploration

With an occasional young traveler could be featured -

Holidays

Fishing and breeding.

Sincerely yours

[Signature]

237
A mix-up to a series of talks about the various tribes would be a
pleasant way showing the location of various tribes.

OBJECTIVE OF PROGRAM

Description Questionnaire sent by Dr. T. York to Children's Libraries

Medication commonplace, developing standards that will create a demand for the
best type of radio program - R.D. Jordan

Entertainment or cultural and educational value - should develop literary taste,
awaken children's curiosity in right directions, stimulate and direct interest
in current events, train their ears to appreciate good English and good literature.
- S.H. Power

To broaden child's interests through artistic entertainment - Ruth German

Appreciation: literature, music
Information: about everything
Enrichement or enrichment - Goodbye English

Entertainment through the several arts, music, dance, literature. - Martha Bowers

To give pleasure of a quality that produces increasing and not diminishing
interest in the way of stimulating listeners to seek further for themselves
these ideas of music, stories, etc., introduced to children on radio program.
- William Smith

Exactly speaking the objective of the radio program for children could
well be to stimulate children's reading.
APPENDIX E: COMPILATION OF CHILDREN'S RADIO PROGRAMS PRODUCED BY PUBLIC LIBRARIES, 1922-1936

This is a selected list of library radio programs that appeared in the literature, from the first documented program through the end of the national children’s radio program project. A second table lists selected programs through 1956. In both cases, the column, “Year,” indicates the first appearance in the literature, not necessarily the actual start date of the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Libraries, Libraries: Pittsburg, PA; M.E. Abem</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td>Toledo, MO</td>
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<td>Newark, NJ</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>Toledio, OH</td>
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<td>Seattle, WA</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>Clevela, OH</td>
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<td>Tacoma, WA</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Children’s programs on Tuesday at Children’s Book Week</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Children’s programs on Tuesday at Children’s Book Week</td>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Libraries/ Librarians</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Cooperating Agency</th>
<th>Station/ Network</th>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Libraries, Librarians</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
<td>Cooperating Agency</td>
<td>Station/Network</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Chicago; Agatha Shea, Director of Children's Work for Branches; Vivian G. Harsh, George C. Hall Branch Librarian</td>
<td>&quot;An experiment in connection with WMAQ's &quot;Summer School of the Air&quot;&quot;; also, mentions a separate program involving Chicago Daily News literary editor Sterling North, but gives no details</td>
<td>Chicago Daily News</td>
<td>WMAQ</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour&quot;, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Project, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Cleveland, OH; Elizabeth D. Briggs</td>
<td>Children's librarians told stories; later stories were told by professional broadcaster; the library also consulted with children's commercial programs, used Dr. Doolittle stories; also included children's content during a 15-minute adult program</td>
<td>Cleveland Publicity Department</td>
<td>Second Session. Section for Library Work with Children. Proceedings of the American Library Association, Chicago, Illinois, 1933. Bulletin of the American Library Association, 27(13), 795.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Libraries, Librarians</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
<td>Cooperating Agency</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Duluth, MN; Edna G. Moore, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Flint, MI; William Webb, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
<td></td>
<td>WFDF</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Fond du Lac, WI; Leila Jones, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Fort Wayne, IN; Margaret M. Coleric, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
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<td>WOWO</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Grand Rapids, MI; S.H. Ranck, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
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<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Mansfield, OH; Mildred W. Sandee, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
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<td>WJW</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children's radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder - Radio, Children's Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Libraries, Librarians</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Minneapolis, MN; Gratia Countryman, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
<td></td>
<td>WCCO</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children’s radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Montreal (Canada), McGill University; Mary Duncan Carter, Assistant Director, University Library School</td>
<td>Book reviews, later she did a children’s story hour in the form of trips to various countries. She included folk and fairy tales.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Second Session. Section for Library Work with Children. Proceedings of the American Library Association, Chicago, Illinois, 1933. Bulletin of the American Library Association, 27(13), 794.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh</td>
<td>No details</td>
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<td>KDKA</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children’s radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs,</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Libraries, Librarians</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
<td>Cooperating Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>(PA); Louise Guiraud, Children's Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
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<td>A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Salt Lake City (UT) Free Public Library, John D. Spencer Branch; Ruth Taylor, Librarian</td>
<td>Pitched their talks to parents rather than children because the station's donated time was during the school day; created short 3-minute “snappy messages” which were aired irregularly</td>
<td></td>
<td>KMOX</td>
<td>Recent experiments with children’s radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Wichita Falls, TX; Kemp Public Library; Lucia F. Powell, Librarian</td>
<td>No details</td>
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<td>Recent experiments with children’s radio hour, June 15, 1933; ALA 24/2/6, Box 4, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs, A.L.A. Project, Misc. January-July, 1933.</td>
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<td>1934</td>
<td>Queens Borough Public Library</td>
<td>The bookmobile, called the Book Bus, was equipped with a radio, through which stories are broadcast – both on a local radio station and to children waiting around the bus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fair, E. 1934. Circulation and upkeep of the Queens Borough book bus, in <em>Countrywide Library Service</em>, p. 186.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Denver, CO; Mrs. Katherine Watson, Children’s Department Head</td>
<td>“Once Upon a Time” – Saturday mornings at 9:15 a.m.; scripts sent by station KOA to NBC Continuity Department for approval. Programs included telling a story, reading a letter or letters, biographical info about authors or famous people (e.g. American presidents), short talks, fairytales, plays (acted in by children from various schools), once a month they have a guest speaker - including children. One program included a letter from author Laura E. Richards, written especially for the program, and then her poetry was read on the air.</td>
<td>KOA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Watson, K. 1936. Once-upon-a-time radio program. <em>Library Journal</em>, November 1, 1936, 822-823.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Libraries, Librarians</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>&quot;Radio Book Club&quot; - book dramatizations by students from local drama school; One series was called the &quot;Book Detective,&quot; and clues for the title of the book for next week's program were found at the library. The first three children who reported the title had their names read on the radio program.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hyers, F. 1938. <em>Library and the radio.</em> Chicago: University of Chicago Press; p. 80.</td>
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**Noteworthy Children's Programs Airing After 1936**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Libraries, Librarians</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Cooperating Agency</th>
<th>Station/ Network</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Wichita, KS</td>
<td>Evening program broadcast from 7-7:15 p.m. After the program went off the air, parents and teachers pushed for its return.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hyers, F.H. 1938. <em>The library broadcasts.</em> Chicago: University of Chicago Press; p. 79.</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>Cuyahoga</td>
<td>“Book Caravans” — both juvenile and adult; did both books and current events; two program titles listed in the article were “Summer Reading Clubs for Boys and Girls”; “Art of Story-telling”</td>
<td>Hart, C.M., 1930. “Book Caravans” radio program. Library Journal, September 15, 1938, 694.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>County (Ohio)</td>
<td>Mrs. Margaret W. Thayer</td>
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<td>“Book Caravans” — both juvenile and adult; did both books and current events; two program titles listed in the article were “Summer Reading Clubs for Boys and Girls”; “Art of Story-telling”</td>
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<td>1938</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>“To demonstrate the art of storytelling in its natural relationship to music.” Wednesdays from 5:30-6:00 p.m. Mentions specifically stories by Carl Sandburg, “The Chinese Fairytale” from Laurence Housman’s Moonshine and Clover; “Oranges and Lemons” from Eleanor Farjeon’s Italian Peepshow; “The Man with the Bag” from Padraic Colum’s The Big Tree of Bunlady. A longer list of programs was published in Library Journal, on October 15, 1938, p. 93; information includes story, source and teller.</td>
<td>WQXR New York story-telling. 1938. Library Journal; September 15, 1938.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mary Gould</td>
<td>Davis, director; Miss Elizabeth Culbert and Mrs. Eugenia Garson, tellers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Director;</td>
<td>Miss Elizabeth Culbert and Mrs. Eugenia Garson, tellers</td>
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<td>“Book Caravans” — both juvenile and adult; did both books and current events; two program titles listed in the article were “Summer Reading Clubs for Boys and Girls”; “Art of Story-telling”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Created theme song for a weekly 30-minute program; includes stories and music</td>
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<td></td>
<td>KS</td>
<td>The library provided a children's program from 4:30 to 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td>KOHLSTEDE, D.W. 1940. Is library radio broadcasting worth while.” Library Journal, 65, 366-367.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activity Description</td>
<td>Key Sources</td>
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<td>1940</td>
<td>Kansas City, KS</td>
<td>Predecessor had held contests to gauge number of listeners, but many responses were coming from outside the library service area, so she 1. started offering choices of stories heard on the program at school visits 2. invited local schools to present book sharing, original plays or music on her program</td>
<td>G. Green, letter to M. Batchelder, July 30, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>&quot;Ancient Order of Bookworms&quot; – summer reading series offered by library</td>
<td>D. Lewis, letter to M. Batchelder, March 24, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>&quot;Reading for Fun&quot; – Wednesdays at 4:30 during school year</td>
<td>M. Batchelder, letter to G. Greene, June 6, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Waco, TX</td>
<td>&quot;From Library Shelves&quot; – weekly program done by the Waco PL children’s dept</td>
<td>M. Batchelder, letter to G. Greene, June 6, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Salem, OR, Elizabeth Carey</td>
<td>&quot;stories from Pinocchio (From Oregon State Library Letter, January, 1940).&quot;</td>
<td>M. Batchelder, letter to G. Greene, June 6, 1940, ALA 24/2/6, Box 4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Fort Worth, TX</td>
<td>Library broadcasts its regular story hour, from the library</td>
<td>Sauer, J.L. 1941. Library radio programs for children [Audio-Visual Committee report, unpublished]. ALA 24/2/6, Box 14, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs; p. 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Junior League prepares original scripts</td>
<td>Sauer, J.L. 1941. Library radio programs for children [Audio-Visual Committee report, unpublished]. ALA 24/2/6, Box 14, Folder – Radio, Children’s Programs; p. 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Carnegie Library of Oklahoma City, OK; Mrs. Ann Hough</td>
<td>&quot;Junior Bookshelf on the Air,&quot; broadcast on Saturdays at 9:30 a.m., but they plan to move to 5:30 p.m. which they say is better</td>
<td>Britton, M.E. 1941. Junior Bookshelf on the air. Library Journal, 66 (October 1, 1941), 806.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Radio Station</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>“Young Book Reviewers” airs from 9:30-10:00 a.m. each Saturday during the school year; for 14-16 year olds; mentioned <em>Cry the Beloved Country</em>, <em>Diary of Anne Frank</em>, <em>Jane Eyre</em>, <em>Green Mansions</em>, and <em>Hamlet</em>. The discussants and interviewers (for special author visits) are teens themselves.</td>
<td>WMCA</td>
<td>Scoggin, M.C. 1956. Young book reviewers. <em>Library Journal/Junior Libraries</em> section, October 15, 1956, p. 84 (Junior Libraries), p. 2416 (Library Journal).</td>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Toledo, OH; Mott Branch; Marianne Hough, Children's Librarian</td>
<td>Weekly 15-minute storytelling programs based on American tall tales such as Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan, John Henry, were broadcast into the public schools; the local radio station recorded the programs and rebroadcast them during the week.</td>
<td>Local public schools; WTDS (school FM station); WSPD (local AM station)</td>
<td>Tall tales program aided by Toledo Public Library, ”<em>Library Journal</em>, January 15, 1952, 136.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Library Executives of California (50 cooperating libraries)</td>
<td>Book reviews; family program – covered both adult and children’s books; specifically named Munro Leaf’s <em>Arithmetic Can Be Fun</em></td>
<td>KCBS</td>
<td>Kearney, H.A. The family reads.” <em>Library Journal</em>, May 1, 1954, 848.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Carnival of Books” was a sustaining program for station WMAQ, presented “in cooperation with the American Library Association.” On-air personality Ruth Harshaw presented the 15-minute programs, some were broadcast live from ALA conferences. The article includes a list of programs that includes book titles.</td>
<td>WMAQ</td>
<td>Harshaw, R. “When Carnival of Books went to Europe.” <em>Bulletin of the American Library Association</em>, 51 (February 1957), 117-123.</td>
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**The Little House in the Big Woods and What Came After**

SCRIPT FOR FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE BROADCAST

The air mail brings news today of a family who traveled over five states—at least five—in a covered wagon! If you have ever thought it would be fun to pack everything you owned in a huge covered wagon and set out toward the west—then the stories written by Laura Ingalls Wilder are just the books for you.

And if you like to read books in a series—to read about the same people in one book after another—that’s another reason for getting these stories, because to read all about them you will have to read three books.

Now the Ingalls family lived in a little log house in a big woods. That’s the name of the first book, *The Little House in the Big Woods*. There were five of them, besides Jack, their dog. There were Pa and Ma (and in those days even very well brought up children called their parents “Pa” and “Ma”); there was Mary, a rather goody-goody little girl whom you won’t like very much; there was a tiny baby named Carrie; and there was Laura. Now Laura was all the boy that Pa had. And she was a girl any boy would have been proud to own as a sister.

The little log house stood in the big woods of Wisconsin. There were trees all around. To the north as far as a man could go in a day, in a week, in a whole month, there was nothing but woods. No houses. No roads. No people. Only trees and the wild animals—wolves and bears; huge wild cats; muskrats and otter...
and foxes. All around the little house there was a crooked rail fence. It kept the bears and deer away. But the wolves came closer. Once Pa carried Laura to the window in the middle of the night and let her look out at the wolves who sat just outside. They looked like shaggy dogs. They pointed their noses at the moon and howled. Inside, Jack paced up and down, growling and showing his teeth. He would have liked a chance at those wolves.

Several miles to the south there were a few scattered log houses. Laura's grandma and grandpa lived in one. Uncle Henry and his family lived in another. It was great fun when Pa hitched up the horses and took them all in the big wagon, or the sleigh in winter time, to a dance at Grandma's or to a quilting party. It happened only once or twice a year. All the rest of the time they lived alone in the little house in the big woods.

After a time other people began to move into the big woods. The path before their door became a road. Almost every day a big covered wagon would go lumbering past. Some of them stopped. Other clearings were made nearby. Other log houses appeared. Pa began to talk of moving out west into the Indian country. He liked to be where wild animals lived without being afraid. He talked to Ma about the level lands of the West—the prairies where there were no trees; and where only Indians lived. Ma didn't want to go. She didn't want to leave Grandma and Grandpa or their own comfortable little house, but she was willing to do whatever Pa thought best.

So the little house was sold. The cow and the calf were sold. Pa made great hoops of hickory boughs and fastened them to the big wagon. Ma stretched heavy canvas over them and they had a sure enough covered wagon. They packed everything they owned into it except the bed, the chairs and the tables. Pa could always make more of those. Very early one morning Pa packed Mary and Laura and Ma and the baby into it, too. They were ready to start. Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle Henry and the cousins had all driven up to see them off. Pa was joking and gay, but poor Ma looked back for a long, long time.

It was fun at first—like a long endless picnic—camping out in a new spot each night. They crossed the Mississippi River and they were in the state of Minnesota. They crossed Iowa and Missouri and into Kansas. They crossed more creeks and rivers than they could count. Sometimes they stuck fast in the mud. Sometimes they drove onto a raft and were ferried across. But always—all the way—Jack trotted along beneath the wagon and kept watch over them while they slept.

In Kansas they saw nothing but rippling grass and the enormous sky. It curved down over them like a huge bowl. Late one afternoon Pa pointed off into the distance.

"See those trees ahead?" he said. "That means we're coming to a creek. In this country trees mean water."

"The creek's pretty high," said Pa when they came to it at last. "But I guess we can make it all right. If we cross it now, we'll cover a few more miles before we camp for the night."

"Whatever you say, Charles," said Ma, but she looked worried.

Pet and Patty, the horses, stepped in cautiously. The rushing water made a scary noise.

"Oh Pa," Laura said, "can't Jack ride in the wagon?"

Pa didn't answer, but Ma said that Jack would be all right. He could swim.

The wagon moved slowly in the mud; water began to splash around the wheels. The splashing grew louder. Then all at once the wagon lifted and swayed. It was
off the ground! It was floating! Mary hid her face, but Laura loved the feel of it.

"Lie down flat, both of you," Ma said quickly.

[Fade-in of rushing water continuing until dialogue begins]

Suddenly Pa spoke very sharply. "Take the reins, Caroline," he said to Ma. There was a splash! Laura lifted her head just enough to see Ma holding the reins. Pa swimming to the horses' heads. He clutched Pet's bridle and steadied her as he swam alongside. Ma's face was white and scared, but Laura could hear Pa's voice urging the horses on and encouraging them. For a long time the wagon swayed and swung in midstream. Then the horses began to gain on the current. The bank came nearer. The front wheels struck ground.

Now listen:

[Bumping, thudding, scraping sound as horses drag the wagon on to the bank of the creek.]

Pa: [to horses] Hi Patty! Hi Pet! Get up! Get up! Whooppy-daisy! Good girls! You've made it!

Ma: [thankfully] Oh, Charles! We're safe!

Pa: There, there, Caroline. We're safe all right, thanks to a good tight wagon box well fastened to the running gear. I never saw a creek rise so fast in my life. Pet and Patty are good swimmers!

Ma: Yes, but I guess they wouldn't have made it if you hadn't helped them and known what to do!

Pa: It might have gone hard with us, Caroline, if you'd been too frightened to drive or if the girls had bothered you instead of lying still in the wagon.

Laura: The river would have rolled us over and over and carried us all away and nobody'd ever know what became of us, would they, Pa?

Pa: Well, "All's well that ends well."

Laura: [suddenly] Oh, Pa! Where's Jack?

Pa: [in great concern] Where is he? I thought he could swim it as well as the horses. But I don't see him anywhere.

Laura: He'll think we didn't care for him and we do!

Pa: I wouldn't have done such a thing to Jack—not for a million dollars. I didn't know that creek was going to rise right when we were in midstream! I'll go along the bank and call him.

[Exit Pa. Sound of Pa in distance calling up and down "Jack, Jack, here boy," alternately whistling.]

Laura: [sobbing] I can't bear to have Jack drowned, Ma. I can't bear it! He's followed us all the way from Wisconsin. And he was too tired to swim. I knew he was.

Ma: Hush, Laura, it can't be helped now. We all feel bad to lose Jack and—

Laura: [interrupting] We should have taken him into the wagon. He'd never know now how we wanted him!

[Laurea's sobbing continues as Ma speaks.]

Ma: [a little sternly] Laura! Pa was trying to save the horses. They were tired, too. Now you must hush!

[Pa's whistling comes closer]

Your pa's coming. Don't make him feel any worse than he does.

[Laurea's sobs sound more muffled as Pa enters.]

Pa: [in great concern] It's no use, I'm afraid. There's nothing to do but go on. Pet and Patty are rested now.

Ma: Couldn't we camp early today, Charles? We're all tuckered out.
PA: Well, maybe so! Let's see—[looks around] We better get out of the river bottoms though. Maybe up there on that bluff at the top of the trail there. That's a likely spot.

MA: We might go farther and fare worse.

PA: Climb in girls, and we'll start. Ready?

LAUR: [beseechingly] Oh, Pa, I hate to leave the creek—and—and you do think Jack has gone to heaven, don't you? He was such a good dog. He can go to heaven, can't he?

PA: [firmly and cheerfully] Yes, Laura, he can. God that doesn't forget the sparrows, won't leave a good dog like Jack out in the cold. [sadly] But what we'll do in a wild country without our good watch dog, I don't know. Come Pet! Come Patty! Giddap! [clucking to horses]

[Sound of rumbling wagon wheels fading in and out]

When they reached the high ground, Pa found a good place to stop. They made camp as usual; Pet and Patty were unharnessed and put on picket lines. Pa built the camp fire and brought water from the creek, Laura ground the coffee beans. Ma mixed up some little corn meal cakes and fried the meat. While they were eating, the purple shadows began to close around them. Soon the vast prairie was dark, and so still that you could hear Pet and Patty crunching the grass. The fire was cozy, Pa lighted his pipe. He stretched out comfortably while Ma washed the plates and the spider. They all pretended to be cheerful, but not one of them could forget Jack. Suddenly from the dark prairie came the long wailing sound of wolves.

LISTEN:

[Sound of wolves howling in distance]

PA: Wolves, all right. Half a mile away, I'd judge. I wish—

LAGR: [fearfully] I know what you were going to say, Pa. You were wishing for Jack! Even back in the Big Woods when the wolves howled we always knew Jack wouldn't let them hurt us.

MA: [cheerfully] Now, Laura. Pa will take care of us. And it's bed time for you girls, too. Here, let me help unbuckle you!

LAGR: Ma! Look! There! I see something! There—beyond the fire! Its two green eyes shining! See, Ma?

MA: Yes, I see. Don't be scared. Your pa has his gun all ready.

LAGR: [excited] It's a wolf, Pa, I know it is!

PA: I see it. But it can't be a wolf. Listen to the horses! They're eating as steadily as ever.

MA: If it was a wolf, they'd be restless, wouldn't they, Charles?

PA: They always are if a wolf's anywhere about. Why the creature doesn't move! I'm going to walk toward it.

MA: Don't Charles—

LAGR: Ma, see! It's crawling toward Pa! See?

PA: [shouting] Look out!

LAGR: Why—[screams]

MA: [scream]

MA: [scream]

JACK: [happy barking] Wow! Wow!

LAGR: [It's Jack!]

PA: [all together] Well I'm beat!

MA: [So am I.]

LAGR: He's found his way home. Oh, Jack!

JACK: [barking throughout]

MA: We're glad you're back, boy. But you don't need to wake the baby.

JACK: Woof!
LAURA: Poor Jack! See how red his eyes are, Pa? Is that from being tired? And he's all coated with mud.

PA: No knowing how far he was carried downstream before he could get to shore. [leaving] And then when he did get here, Laura called him a wolf!

LAURA: You know I didn't mean it, don't you, Jack?

JACK: [sleepily] Woof!

LAURA: There! He's thumping his tail. Look, Ma, how he stretched out on my blanket! Can he sleep here tonight? Please, Ma.

MA: Well, for this one night! I declare, I'm glad he's back.

LAURA: Goody, Ma.

PA: We can all turn in now and sleep in peace, even if the wolves do howl. If they come any closer, old Jack will give the alarm. Won't you, boy?

JACK: [barking]

[ Fade-out barking]

It was soon after this that Pa found the very spot he wanted for their new home. It was on the open prairie near the creek where the trees grew. They had to have wood for fuel, and logs for a house. For days Pa chopped logs and drove back and forth until there were enough for a house. It was long hard work. At last the little house on the prairie was finished. They moved in and soon Ma had it cheerful and homelike and almost pretty. Ma was wonderful.

They still hadn't seen any Indians even though they were in Indian territory. Laura was disappointed. But not for long. Indians came pouring back from their hunting grounds elsewhere. Their camps filled the creek bottoms. Far into the night their weird drumming and weird cries kept the Ingalls family awake. The hair on Jack's back stood up straight most of the time. Jack didn't like Indians. And these Indians were angry. They were angry because white settlers were moving into their prairies and pushing them farther west, away from their good hunting grounds. And they had a right to be angry.

Mr. Ingalls was worried. He was a good man. He didn't want land that belonged to the red men. But he had been told that the government in Washington was going to open this land for white settlers and provide other lands for the Indians. It was all a mistake. This time the Indians were to be allowed to stay, and the white settlers driven off. Soldiers appeared to carry out the orders from Washington.

"We'll not wait to be driven out like outlaws," said Pa. "We'll go tomorrow." The canvas top was put back on the wagon. Their belongings were loaded. All the food that Ma could cook was packed.

So the family left the little house on the prairie. For a second time they started out with old Jack running beneath the wagon. The third book in the series, called On the Banks of Plum Creek will tell you how they traveled back across the states into Minnesota and built a third house. Pa raised a wonderful wheat crop that was going to make them rich. Then one day clouds of grasshoppers settled upon them and ate the wheat to the last green shoot. But the Ingalls family lived through the plague of grasshoppers. They were happy and prosperous in the end.

These stories are all true. They are published by Harper and Brothers. The author who wrote them, Mrs. Laura Ingalls Wilder, was Laura herself in the books. And your teacher will be interested to know that it was Laura's own little girl—years later—who wrote that other splendid story of pioneer days for grown-ups called Let the Hurricane Roar.
To Read in Connection with the Broadcast

Another Book by Mrs. Wilcox

Farmer boy

Other Good Stories of Pioneer Days

Brink Caddie Woodhawn
Dawson Nuggets of Singing Creek
Keipe Diana's Quest
Moyes The Willow Whistle
Parker Pioneer Stories
When You and I Were Young Script, 1940

WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG

Written by Ernest Coomer, Carnegie Library, Atlanta, Georgia, as one of a series of broadcasts to familiarize the public with the work of various departments of the library. In each case as many books were selected as might serve to illustrate the sources of readers.

There is one experience, at least, that is common to all of us. We all, at one time or another, have been children. And, as Kingsley said:

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green,
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every boy a queen.

Then they, for beer and boote, lad,
And round the world away.

Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every day his day.

History is constantly repeating itself. That the child is father to the man is an aphorism that is forever being proved true. Go into any group of children or their haunts and you find they are doing pretty much what you did as a child. (I haven't checked up lately on the popularity of mud pies but it would be a great surprise to learn that they had gone entirely out of style among the sub-sub-debs.)

Anyway, to test this theory, just drop into the children's room of the library and peep over the shoulders of the youngsters and see what they are reading. Yes,
Mr. Businessman, they still read Tom Sawyer; and Mrs. Clubwoman, you can be assured the girls still laugh and cry over Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy in Little Women. And the naughty antics of Helen's Babies are as entertaining to the boys and girls of today as they were to those of yesterday.

The greatest difference for most of us is that we had to forage for our reading when we were children. Nowadays the specially trained children's librarian hand picks the collection of children's books and only the cream of the publishers' output is selected for the modern child's reading. Good print, illustrations by famous artists, attractive make-up—all these, as well as literary quality, are given careful consideration before the book is allowed on the public library shelves.

And it does make a difference. For instance, Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, is a delight. The old copy we were brought up on seems a dowdy affair in comparison. And the sad looking old Arabian Nights we read into bits, pales into insignificance when we see the gorgeous Dulac illustrations of Ali Baba and the forty thieves, of the fisherman and the genie, of magnificent castles and magic horses. Of course, if you had imagination, you had your own mental picture to illustrate the stories you read and there may be something to say in favor of developing just that spark of imagination.

Speaking of illustrations, some of the books do have the same pictures we had in our copies, Alice in Won-

When you and I were Young
LIBRARY ON THE AIR

no Youth's Companion to punctuate the week. That is, from our viewpoint, but there is the American Boy, which is merged and which is read with the same relish by thousands of children today. The American Girl is popular, too, while Child Life, Popular Mechanics, and Radio News are widely read. There is a new child's magazine, too, which has real literary flavor, called Story Parade, which is already being sold in nine foreign countries.

School work, which used to be a dull enough affair at times in our faraway youth, in these halcyon days is wrapped in brighter colors. Can't you remember the big geography which was supposed to represent all knowledge of the rest of the world? It had maps in blue and red and orange and it had funny little photographic illustrations sandwiched in between the columns—and that was geography! Now, such books as Walter Cole's beautifully illustrated A B C Book of People, with its colored drawings of the Arab, the Eskimo, and the Scotch Highlander, or the Story about Ping, Ping being a duck and the story about China, these read along with geography make it a pleasure rather than a task.

And history! Dates meant history to us and seemed entirely unnecessary. But now teachers come in from the schools and bring groups of children with them to select stories about the middle ages, the period they are studying in school, and they bear off The Shadow of the Sword and The Boy Knight of Rheims, able to visualize the life of the middle ages because of the story attached.

WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG

In the same way, nature study is made a real thing when they take them on their hikes through the woods Green Magic or The Astonishing Ant.

But not only do the children come to the library for their books. The library goes to the school with a truck load of books every once in so often, as Mrs. Huggles used to say. Here they are left for the teacher to lend to the pupils; books to read for fun and books to help them in their school work. Pictures, too, from the picture collection are lent to the teacher to make the lessons more graphic. The picture collection, incidentally, is made up of pictures culled from books and magazines, from book jackets or any other source that comes under the eagle eye of the librarian, and is used for many different purposes.

Hand-in-hand with work with the school goes instruction to the children in the way to use the library. Classes are held in the fall and again in the spring for pupils of the fifth and sixth grades to teach them how to use the card catalog, how to find books on the shelves, and how to look up a subject in the World Book or other encyclopedias. These lessons are continued through junior high school and by the time the older boys and girls leave this department for the adult department in the middle of the ninth grade they are adepts at using the library.

The movies affect the reading of the children as they do that of grown-ups. Alice in Wonderland in the moving picture was so exactly like our childhood con-
ception of the book that it made even more vivid those classic characters, the Duchess and the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare, while any child would understand more than ever before such delightful foolery as:

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things;
Of shoes, and ships, and sealing wax,
Of cabbages and kings;
And why the sea is boiling hot,
And whether pigs have wings."

If you go into the children's room today you will hear requests for *Little Lord Fauntleroy* because they have just seen the movie. You will also hear mothers asking what movies in town are suitable for Junior and little Betty, for the librarians in the boys' and girls' department are working with the Better Films Committee and furnish critical comment on the current moving pictures.

When *Little Women* was filmed the reaction of the audience was proof positive of its familiarity with the book. And the audible sobs and sniffles bore testimony that the remonstrated emotions were genuine ones. Yet the emotion created by *Little Women* was of a different order from that engendered by that queen of all sob-sisters, the writer of *Frisco Dinsmore*. Did you, too, weep over the difficulties of that noble little darling, Elsie? Did you wish that your father would order you, at the age of eight, to play secular music on Sunday and that you would have the strength of character to defy him and sit on the piano stool till you fainted and were borne away in his repentant arms? And oh! did you follow Elsie until she was a great-grandmother, through it all remaining a paragon of all the virtues? No doubt you did, for all the Sunday School libraries, at least, had all fifty of those pious books.

The modern child whose reading is done from the public library will lack the dubious thrill of following Elsie from the cradle to the grave. She will also avoid the dangers of Elsie's morbid psychology and the false impression of daily living which it creates. An equally false impression of life is, of course, the inevitable result of reading the thirty-six thrillers in the *Tarzan* series. The imagination of the boy is over stimulated by the atmosphere of excitement in which the impossible and improbable superman lived and breathed, and, alas! thrived. So the children's librarians of today give the boys Kipling's *Jungle Books*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, or *North to the Orient*, and the girls *Caddie Woodlawn*, or *Away Goes Sally*, which have entirely normal situations—no super-nobility and no super-beings.

The modern child's reading interests have, naturally, been influenced by modern inventions. Boys ask for books on aviation, the radio, and electricity; girls want stories of modern life. But through it all the old favorites such as *The Dog of Flanders*, *Heidi*, and *Little Black Sambo* remain in demand with the new generation.

The same glamor that makes us perfectly sure our frock when we were eight was the loveliest we
ever had; that makes memories of our playhouses the
most charming—with its familiar Old King Cole, Little
Tommy Tucker, The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe,
-Treasure Island—with its robust "Yo ho ho and a bottle
of rum," books create a bond in common between the
child of yesterday, the child of today, and the child of
tomorrow.
Libraries and the Radio.

Radio is a proven agent for sales. Its vast selling power has been turned to the advantage of many things, from automobiles to tooth paste and broadcasts, as you know, range from the presentation of opera and symphony to the dramatization of cartoon strips. But the reason why radio is effective in all these fields and over all this wide variety of subjects is its personal, intimate appeal to the listener. Radio programs have come to be accepted by the American public not only as programs but as something very personal and very vital — something with which they have a direct contact and in which they have a home and personal interest.

As far as the libraries are concerned radio has not only a vast mass appeal, but there is a very genuine relationship which would be of additional advantage. Radio and books have one very great point in common. They are both enjoyed at their maximum in the privacy of one's own home. That is a very important jumping off place. The movies take you away from home. So does the theatre. So do lectures, church socials, women's clubs, lodge meetings, boy scouts, girl scouts, or a concert. The radio keeps you at home. Such a program as we are suggesting in this presentation is also an invitation to read.
Children's or Adult Program.

If you decide to do radio work for the libraries, you must first decide whether your original program is to be designed for children or for adults. We believe firmly that the original choice should be for a children's program. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Children are better and more frequent radio listeners.
2. They are more influenced by what the radio tells them.
3. We believe that a proper children's program can form the reading habit. It would certainly be easier to help children form the reading habit than adults, and in working on this as a basis, you are laying the groundwork for continued good reading.
4. They are more energetic and enthusiastic and will give you a greater return for your investment.
5. Radio networks are comparatively well satisfied with the adult programs which they have on the air at present, but are very much dissatisfied with the children's programs, and would certainly cooperate to the fullest extent in working out all details on an unusually fine children's program.
6. A children's program can become a vital part of community life in less time than an adult program, because children as a group are more accessible.
7. We believe that a children's program such as this, well conceived and properly produced, could be sold to an outside sponsor much more readily than an adult program. In this connection we feel certain that once a children's program were established such a sponsor would not interfere at all in the actual work of the program.

Approach to the Radio Companies.

The approach to the radio companies should be through their educational departments. They are even now groping for some such program without knowing exactly what to do or where to turn, and with the present communications investigation pending in Washington they would be more than pleased to have a fine program to point to as one of their contributions to the advancement of education and culture in the public interest. At this time we believe that the radio companies could be counted on to give free time for twenty-six weeks to the libraries of this country, provided that they were assured that the program which would be put on in that time would be as good or better than the regular entertainment which now goes out over their networks.

The increased availability of time, due to the coming of summer, will make the radio companies attentive to your presentation at this present moment. The impending investigation at Washington, which we mentioned above, would make it advantageous to go to work as soon as possible on this idea.
4.

Frequency of Program.

A program for children should be put on three or five times a week. It has been satisfactorily proven that a less frequent presentation of children's programs does not produce the best results. The final determining factors of whether such a program should be on three or five times a week must be your own budget and the willingness of the radio station to give you time.

5.

Guarantee of Time.

It is essential in talking to the radio company to stress that although the time is being given free, that the time be held inviolate, and time should not be sold for a commercial program. In other words, that the time which is decided upon shall be held exclusively for this program.

It is a proven fact that programs which are presented over a period of time on the same days and at the same hours each week automatically attract to themselves a very large audience.
Hour of Program.

There are two possible choice times to put on this program—first, the five to seven belt, the regular children's hour on the radio; second, during the day.

It would seem to us advisable to start this program in the five to seven belt for the late spring and summer, with the possibility of broadcasting this program during school hours in the fall, although this time is advisable only if the cooperation of a sufficient number of schools can be obtained.

If this program is to be on during the five to seven time, it would be advantageous to have radio in the children's reading rooms of libraries, so that they can listen to the chosen quarter hour and perhaps discuss it with the librarians. It goes without saying that the librarians could have advance copies of the script, so as to better inform themselves for the discussion of the day.

Possibility of Obtaining a Commercial Sponsor.

The question of the possibility of obtaining a commercial sponsor for the program which you put on should be considered before you go on the air for even the first time. If your program is interesting and exciting, and draws a sufficiently large audience you can certainly sell it to a desirable sponsor, with the very definite understanding that the libraries of America shall be tied in to the program, and that the libraries and not the sponsor should be responsible for the proper production of this program.

The obtaining of a sponsor is very important for two reasons. First, it will relieve the organization of the expenditure of money for the program. Second, and even more important, it will prove to other commercial sponsors that good children's programs on the air are practical, feasible, and to their advantage, both commercially as well as intellectually.
The One Outstanding Children's Program.

The one thing that is absolutely essential in this work is that the libraries of America should put on not another children's program, but the children's program — the one outstanding program — as a standard. They must set a standard of excellence of writing, direction, and acting not found in other children's shows. More will be expected of this program than any other, and for that reason your selection of a radio program is of much greater importance than the ordinary commercial which has as its only object the production of sales.

The Program.

The program that we suggest is entitled "Bells, Drums, and Songs," by Hendrik Willem van Loon, especially conceived for the libraries, and adapted for the radio by Ryno Bynoe.

It is the story of the signals that have foretold the great events of history — The Liberty Bell, the Songs of P一致好评, the Bells of the Spanish Armada, the Bells of Bethlehem, the Drums of Hawaii. Each of these items might take from three to fifteen fifteen-minute programs to tell. It is again a proven fact known to all radio executives that historical dramatizations -- with their color, heroism and glamour -- are extremely popular with children. The history and authenticity will be welcomed for by Dr. van Loon. The interest and excitement that a child's point of view will be insured by Mr. Bynoe, who for eight years was the head of the continuity department of the National Broadcasting Company.

From the time when a lantern was hung for Paul Revere as a signal that the American Revolution had begun, all through the history of mankind, signals have played their part. There is romance, drama, and action in them. Every child knows and understands what they mean — from the whistle of a train calling outside the house after supper for Johnny to come out and join the bunch, to the short-wave Navy signals that can be picked up by the family radio.

In each story we would follow the adventures of some one man or woman, boy or girl, who played his part on that particular stage of history, not the king or general or admiral who has
his picture in the history books, but some human, real person — and enough "down to earth" so that the children listening-in could put themselves in his place and live his adventures with him.

It is useless to try to explain how exciting and how thrilling these programs can be — how much they can add to the genuine interest and knowledge of the child. The story of civilization hardly sounds like a best seller, though the fact remains that Dr. van Loon's "Story of Mankind," published fifteen years ago this month, is still being sold, still being read all over the world, and within the last month its seventy-ninth translation was contracted for. "Geography" is hardly a subject which would apparently intrigue the reading public, but in Dr. van Loon's expert hands it became one of the most popular books of the last five years, and has not only sold upwards of half a million copies, but has vitally changed the teaching of geography in the schools throughout the world. What Dr. van Loon has done in "The Story of Mankind," what he has done in "Geography," he can do in this radio series "Bells, Drums, and Gongs."

List of the Proposed Series.

We are herewith listing thirty-two suggestions by Dr. van Loon. Each of these historical events will take from one to three weeks to complete on the air. Dr. van Loon says there are literally hundreds of others, and he assures us that such a program could go on for years.

The programs listed are not in order. The order should be determined so that advance publicity could be worked out. The figure opposite each suggestion is the number of broadcasts which this particular episode will require. The broadcasts listed below are only a small proportion of those available, would extend for seventy-seven weeks, on a three time a week basis.

These programs will be presented in such a way so that no one hearing them will believe that this is the sponsorship of the glorification of war.

# Broadcasts

The Bells of St. Stephen's in Vienna - The siege of Vienna by the Turks. 1683. 9
The Siege of Leyden - The bells of the besieged city as the waters slowly approached over the lands to bring the relief after months of famine. 6
The Drums of Lucknow - The relief by Havelock. 1857. 9
The Bells of Bethlehem - The story of the Crusades. 12
The Bells of Normandy - The story of William the Conqueror and the Battle of Hastings. 3
The Bells of Calais - The English campaign in 1346 and the defeat of the English by the Falais. 3
The Bells of Concord - The beginning of the American Revolution. 9
10 (Cont'd)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broadcasts</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bells of Brussels - The Battle of Waterloo</td>
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<td>the threatening approach of Napoleon and his</td>
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<td>final defeat.</td>
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<td>The Bells of Reims - the story of Joan of Arc</td>
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<td>The Bells of Lagrange - The war of liberation</td>
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<td>against the French in the fourteenth century.</td>
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<td>and the war of freedom against the Turks.</td>
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The Story of Roland - The invasion of Spain and the expedition against the Moors by Charlemagne. 6
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The Continuity of Programs.

The continuity of the average children’s program is its story, based very much on the comic strip idea of the continuity interest in characters. It is for this reason that stories like “Tom Sawyer,” “Treasure Island,” etc., are not particularly good for radio. The story finishes too quickly. It would be foolish and inaccurate to try to introduce fictitious children’s characters into the great events told in the series “Bells, Drums, and Gongs,” but nevertheless it is essential to have a central figure who will draw these children back again and again, will make them look forward to the next story when one story has been completed. Dr. van Loon himself solved that. He would write a two minute introduction for the program each time, telling in his own manner why this particular incident, which may have taken place fifty years ago or a thousand is of interest to us today.

It is the story of the past with the significance of the present. After all, to quote Dr. van Loon, the story of the Crusades was not the story of Ivanhoe, and Gauve-de-licon, and the Saracens, but an epoch in history, comparable in duration of time to the epoch in American history from the birth of George Washington to Mr. Hoover’s administration. The Crusades are perhaps best comparable to the Italian-Ethiopian situation of today. The Crusades were the agrarian movement of their time.

From a technical radio point of view this program also has the value of being held together by a basic recurrent idea - the bells, drums and gongs. With the device of holding together these historical episodes through the thought of these signals we have something running through the whole series which becomes familiar, and through its familiarity attractive to the radio audience. There is also in the use of these signals the very important advantage of sound effect, which will serve as a distinguishing feature of the program every time it is on the air, in the same way as practically every popular radio program has its own identification. Radio experience has shown that such distinguishing sounds and identifications add materially in building up and holding a regular audience.
The Basic Personnel.

Having conceived this idea it is essential that the personnel that is to carry it out be up to the high standard which you have set.

Burke Boyle, as I said before, was for eight years head of the continuity department of the National Broadcasting Company, and he has written literally hundreds of excellent scripts. By education, training and background he is the ideal man to put Dr. van Loon's basic ideas into dramatic radio form.

The direction of the program must be as fine and as well conceived as the basic idea and the script. Dr. Earle Larrimore, for years one of the most important figures in the Theatre Guild, and a director of great experience, is our choice for the person to do this work best. The direction should be the direction of the theatre in its best traditions, rather than the direction of an ordinary radio program which is too often "just put on."

Who's Who.

A summary of the accomplishments of those three main figures who will be so largely responsible for "Heims, Dreams, and Songs," is given below:


Very little need be said of Dr. van Loon's radio series. His program at the National Broadcasting Company was one of the outstanding features of last year.
Barke Boyce - Harvard 1922, M. A. 1933, instructor in English at Harvard for two years. Instructor in English at Radcliffe for two years. Went to Paris on the Olympic fencing team in 1924. Tourd France and England in 1924. Studied particularly the historical and literary places of interest. Has lived in London and Paris. Went on a cruise around the world - sent by G. P. Putnam. Wrote a book about this trip, which was published by Putnam. Served before the mast and on the bridge on army transport ship during and after war sailing to France and West Indies. Guest lecturer at Rollins College. Lectured on radio writing, dramatics and advertising at N. Y. U., Women's Press Club, etc. Author of two books - AROUND THE WORLD and X-7 SPY STORIES. Short stories published in America, England, France and India. A steady contributor to the New Yorker before going into radio. Represented in a recent New Yorker Anthology.

Radio Experience: For eight years was head of the National Broadcasting Company continuity department. Designed to do freelance writing. During eight years averaged a half-hour script once a week on the air, besides supervising and planning the majority of N. B. C.'s sustaining script features. A member for eight years of N. B. C.'s commercial and sustaining program board. Dramatized X-7 radio scripts for past four years at N. B. C. - a most popular sustaining feature, and one of the few sustaining shows listed on Crosby reports. Originated and wrote first musical dramatic show on the air, WATERING HOLE. Has written commercial shows for Lucky Strike, City Service, Westinghouse, Durant, Tootiet, Plymouth, American Red Cross. Featured special feature shows such as RISE OF THE SUN, HISTORY OF THE SECOND

Earle Larimore - has had a long, successful stage career. He was one of the original members of the permanent acting company of the Theatre Guild. He has very definite ideas about the radio. As a man brought up on the stage, he realizes the definite necessity for good theatre in radio drama. He has been working on radio direction as well as radio acting for the past year. His stage career includes literally everything from ABIE'S IRISH ROSE to MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA. Among his outstanding productions are: MOTHER OF MURDOCH'S DAUGHTER, SECOND MAN, STRANGE INTERLUDE, MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA, DAYS WITHOUT END, DARK VICTORY, THE SILVER CORD, DOCTOR'S DELIMMA, VOLUNTEER, HOTEL UNIVERSAL, GOOD EARTH, R. U. R., NORTHERN IN THE COUNTRY. On the radio he has made guest star appearances on the Lux, Castoria and Bond Bread shows.
Direction.

We feel that radio direction in the past has often been lacking, and it is for this reason that Mr. Larimore's interpretation becomes doubly important. Too frequently radio shows are put on by reading the script, showing the script to the sound effects men, going through it a few times with simple directions to the cast concerning the interpretation, and one of the main duties of the director seems to be the accurate timing of the show. Now, timing is very important, of course. But that is a detail which, with sufficient rehearsing and sufficient intelligent thought, can take care of itself almost mechanically.

Mr. Larimore feels that actors in a radio show should know their characters intimately, should know all about the person they are playing, and should be able to give that knowledge to the audience; that sound effects should not just be an indication of an entrance or an exit, but the spirit of the action. In other words, there are many ways in which a door may be opened, and the opening of that door should reflect the spirit, the feeling, the character of the actor who is making that entrance. Under Mr. Larimore's guidance the sound effect man would cease to be just an expert mechanic but an actor himself, who, by unspoken effects, adds to the drama, in exactly the same way as a great scenic designer adds to the production of a theatrical performance.

In a word, Mr. Larimore feels that radio, too, can and should be three-dimensional, and that the flatness of the average dramatic program can be given depth by intelligent acting.

are established stage actors. It is his idea that scripts must be sent out a week or ten days before the show is produced, to the actors, so that they can read and study their parts before the first rehearsal. Now in radio today it is the rule rather than the exception that an actor sees the script in the rehearsal, which may actually expand up until the broadcast. After all radio acting should not be a test of sight reading, like the boy or girl in a Latin examination. It should be a well studied production.
An Unusual Cast.

It would seem that with the basic idea, the script and direction so well insured that the cast be chosen with great care. We are in a position to suggest important people from the theatre, who have expressed willingness to cooperate on such a program.

Our connection with the Actors' Equity is such that we could select our casts from the best Broadway talent at unbelievably small cost.

The Cost.

The cost of this program three times a week would be approximately $2,750. This includes author, script writer, actors and director. Should the program be put on five times a week the cost would be approximately $4,250. We do not believe that it would be wise to contemplate less than a six months period for this program.

The actual cost of producing a radio performance is the only figure which we would like to quote here, as the cost of give-aways, posters for libraries, and special library information would depend upon the plan which the American Library Association would organize to take care of this work.

A six months program, three times a week, would then cost $71,500. A six months program, five times a week, would then cost $110,500.
The tie-up with libraries is simple. In the libraries throughout the country every new series of "Halls, Drums, and Songs" should be posted, and the same notices posted in the schools. Books on the subject which is to be produced should be gathered together for the children and made available. We believe that such a program will stimulate a real thirst for reading, in the way in which movies created interest in "A Tale of Two Cities," but to a much greater extent. These programs will be in the form of a teaser. They will whet the appetite of the younger, but not satisfy him. He will want to know more about Drake and Queen Elizabeth. He will want to know more about this strange man, Jefferson, who played the fiddle and wrote the Constitution. He will want to know the whys and wherefores that will be indicated in the program, and your announcement at the end of each program will tell where these answers can be found — in the libraries, of course.

The Give-away Idea.

Since everyone who puts on a radio program is very anxious to know how great a listening audience he is commanding, we suggest a give-away for each series - perhaps a map — perhaps a drawing of Dr. van Loon's, done in his own inimitable fashion. It is difficult to describe it for you. It would be much simpler if you would look at the attached map, taken from the jacket of "Ships and How They Sailed The Seven Seas."

There are three possible methods of distributing the give-away:

1. The give-away could be sent to anyone who requests it.
2. The give-away could be sent to anyone who will send in four tents in stamps to cover postage.
3. The most effective way would be to announce that the give-away is available, without charge, at the local library (or any other institution cooperating).

The last method would eliminate the largest expense, that of individual mailing, and, much more important, it would bring children into the libraries, whom seldom ever visit them.
A Contest.

Would you like a contest? Dr. van Loon suggests that for the best essay of the year, on a subject to be agreed upon, the winning boy and the winning girl shall be given a trip around the world under adequate guidance, and if this program is accepted by the American Library Association, Dr. van Loon will pay for one of the passages, and see to it that the winners meet the leading figures in many countries.

Van Loon and Publicity.

One of the truly important features of any program is the publicity which it can attract. A program of this kind would bring an infinitely greater amount of publicity than any other children's program. We can hardly conceive of a paper which would not write about it specially. We can hardly conceive of a magazine or newspaper that pretends to be even vaguely interested in radio which would not be delighted to reproduce Dr. van Loon's map. It is almost impossible for the layman to understand how much publicity Dr. van Loon commands. We are presenting herewith a very inadequate scrap book of the publicity which he received during the last few months.
International Good Will.

Has it occurred to you in going through this presentation that here is a program not only for the children of America but for the children of the world? Dr. van Loon is the best translated American author, for the simple reason that his works are universal in their interest and appeal. Since these programs deal not only with America but with the world in general, just so these programs are of interest to the world. We do not doubt that these broadcasts would be used throughout the world, if they would be translated and presented wherever radio is interested in the better presenta-
tion of children's programs.

"Bells, Drums, and Songs" and Drama Groups.

If you so desire, "Bells, Drums, and Songs" could very readily be used for dramatizations by school or drama groups. In dramatizations of this kind, of course, three or more episodes could be worked together to give a complete picture.
"Bells, Drums, and Songs," and the Novels.

It would seem entirely possible and even probable that once this program were established, the moving picture companies would be vying with one another for the privilege of making shorts of these historical events. If this were done, of course, the entire program would probably prove an actual profit to the libraries.

In accordance with the modern idea of education, Dr. van Loon has planned these programs with the complete elimination of the "educational bugaboo," and with the very definite idea of making it fun to learn. No child in listening to these programs would feel that he is having education forced down his throat. He would be living again in the days when Drake sailed the seven seas, when Galileo suffered untold hardships for an idea, when the length of Cleopatra's nose changed the history of empires.
Summary.

There are four features which any program which the libraries of America put on the radio should have. These varied requirements are extremely difficult to attain.

1. The program must be of interest to children.
2. The program must have dignity and nobility, or your organization cannot sponsor it.
3. It should have the possibility of sale to a potential commercial sponsor.
4. Most important, it must stimulate the interest of the audience in reading.

Not only does this program meet these four points, but it does more than that. Not only will children be reading books, but they will be reading books that for years have stood on library shelves unread, because through this program interest in books of the dim past will be re-awakened. Books that were only looked at occasionally, then just for reference for a school assignment, will again become vital, will take their place where they belong, not in the shelves, but in the hearts of the children.
The Program.

But all this is simply an introduction. Turn the page. Here is a script - "The Bells of the Spanish Armada."

Or Better Still:

Don't read this script. Unless you are what amounts to a professional radio script reader you will find it extremely difficult to get the full flavor of this program. Will you reserve judgment and allow us to audition "The Bells of the Spanish Armada" for you.
THE BATTLE OF THE SPANISH ARMADA

Introduction.

This is a story about ships.

A whole Army of ships.

The greatest and most powerful Army of its kind that you, or I, or anybody else, has ever heard of.

And because navies are built for the purpose of fighting, there is going to be a good deal of fighting in this story before we get through. There were two reasons for this fighting. One was because America was discovered. The other was because a man wanted to get rich. Behind it all lay the question of who was going to control the seven seas — England or Spain.

These two countries in the last years of the sixteenth century were the two leading powers of the world in politics and commerce. Both had their eyes on the new world. Both claimed large areas of the coast of untold treasure and the Fountain of Youth. In addition, King Philip of Spain thought it would also be a good idea if Queen Elizabeth of England were to become his wife. This would unite both countries under the House of Tudor, and at the same time it would give King Philip the use of English ships and ports with which to teach a lesson to those troublesome Englishmen whom he claimed as his subjects.

But Queen Bess had other ideas, and she kept King Philip dangling around her answer while her English ships made ravages raids on his treasure galleons from the New World that at last he decided that if he could not win her by wooing, he'd win her by war. As a result of that war, you and I are the owners of
Introduction - Cont'd.

an Anglo-Saxon democracy today instead of belonging to an off-shoot of the old medieval Spanish Empire.

Now all these things were common gossip in those days, just as we talk in this year of 1956 about Her Deus and Achilles and the German occupation of the Rhineland -- and Queen Bess and King Philip were just as familiar figures to the lost citizens of England and the good citizens of Spain as people like Captain Anthony Penn, and Mussolini, and Herr Hitler are to us. And they knew trouble was coming, but they didn't quite know how or when.

For instance, there was an English ship captain unloading his ship at a Spanish port. And there were two Spanish courtiers trying to guess which way the cat -- or should we say King Philip -- would jump. And as the captain is busy with his ship, and as the two courtiers have more time to be sociable, we're going to meet the courtiers first.

ANNOUNCER:

(DOWNSTAIRS DECAY OF GUITAR STRINGING
CASSIETTES, AND LIGHT BACKGROUND CHATTER. GUITAR FADING OUT AFTER WE GET INTO THE DIALOGUE)

DON JOSE: No, no, you're wrong, Don Fernando. It will be even better. I talked to the cousin of the master builder yesterday... Pedro, more wine...

PEDRO: (THE MOST...DIZZY) Si, sehor.

DON FERNANDO: But it stands to reason, my dear friend, that when a king builds a new palace he makes it more comfortable than the old one.

JOSE: What king?

FERNANDO: Any king.

JOSE: His Majesty is not "any king"...Have you ever seen him care about comfort? Have you ever seen him even as much as notice whether the palace is hot or whether it is cold.

FERNANDO: No.

JOSE: So I say the new palace will be even better than the old one -- and King Philip will never know the difference.

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FERNANDO: It is very discouraging, Don José.

JOSE: (CHEERFULLY) Very.

FERNANDO: To have a king who never thinks of being uncomfortable, or sick, or tired. It isn't fair to the rest of us. We have to live in the same palace with him.

JOSE: He is thankful we've got a palace, Fernando. Suppose you were one of his soldiers, with no pay for more than a year! Or one of his ship-captains, with your vessel rotting at the wharf! Or one of his merchants, starved and bankrupt! Would you?...

(Door opens...and the Gueite and voices)

CERVANTES: [FABLES, A GUEST, PAPER VOICE] Good day, master Pedro, good day.

PEDRO: A table, sir; some wine, sir.

CERVANTES: Only for a moment. I'm on my way to the palace.

FERNANDO: Don Miguel de Cervantes...That strange-looking fellow who's written that strange book...Don Quixote.

JOSE: Cervantes...Isn't he the one who was captured by the Moors and held prisoner so many years?

FERNANDO: The same.

JOSE: We'll have him over. He may carry news...[LODORI]...Don Miguel de Cervantes....

CERVANTES: Will you join us?

FERNANDO: We are members of the royal court. You go to the palace.

CERVANTES: Having just returned from a trip on His Majesty's service.

JOSE: To gather material for your books.

CERVANTES: Your Excellency is kind. I was collecting taxes for His Majesty.

JOSE: Writing books would be easier, I dare say.

CERVANTES: Your Excellency, this business of getting money out of His Majesty's subjects is like the foolish dentists who sat in front of the Sultan's palace. They got the teeth out—but it took a lot of hard pulling, and half the time the patient died.

JOSE: Is it as bad as all that?

CERVANTES: It is even worse. I am going to report as much to His Majesty.

FERNANDO: You will not find him in Madrid. King Philip has gone to his new palace in the hills....

CERVANTES: But the new palace is not finished.

FERNANDO: The church is finished. His Majesty has gone there to pray.

CERVANTES: That it may please the Lord to strengthen his treasure.
JOHN: Master Cervantes, you are pleased to smile. But the decision in which His Majesty prays for guidance is no laughing matter... Don Fernando will agree.

FERNANDO: You will it be a laughing matter for England and Holland if His Majesty gives orders that they be conquered.

CERVANTES: Conquer England and Holland! Does King Philip still carry that idea with him?

FEN: [COMING IN] Your wins, Master Cervantes.

CERVANTES: Thank you... but gentlemen, the English and Huguenots make dangerous enemies. I have seen them fight the Moors. They die fighting...

FEN: So can we.

CERVANTES: Excellencies, your health... [PAUSE]...but is it necessary to make a conquest of England and Holland?

FEN: For the glory of Spain.

CERVANTES: Nothing will bring these heretics to reason but the sword.

FEN: [PAUSE] Our sword was praised long ago. And suppose they also draw the sword?

CERVANTES: We must think of our countrymen. My good Master Cervantes, subjects obey... Write your Don Quixote. Leave words to the King...

FEN: To which I say "amen." But I have crossed our southern provinces. The people are restless. The gold from the...
To all our subjects, greetings. We, Philip of Spain, by grace of God, this day declare war against England and Holland; and summon all our loyal subjects to strive mightily for the glory of Spain. We will build a fleet -- a Great Armada -- the greatest the world has ever seen. Toward its building all good Spaniards will devote their strength, their treasures, and the lives of themselves and their children. We call for engineers, shipbuilders, carpenters, sailors, pilots, soldiers, sailors, officers, navigators. We call for wood and iron and hemp and flax. Special taxes will be levied all over the land to provide for the Great Armada. It will sail the seven seas invincible, in the name of God and Spain....

[AS WE READ, RINGING UP THE BELL IN A FURIOUS THUNDER!
LOCAL BIBLE, THEN FALL TO THE GROUND!]

MILES: Soft, friends, someone at the door, look to your swords. Yes, enter.

JIM: (RATHER YOUNG) Captain Miles, the roads are blocked.

MILES: Bolt the door.

JIM: Captain Miles, I heard tell the Spanish Armada will have a
hundred ships -- more than a hundred, with three thousand
muskets and twenty thousand soldiers.

MILES: The soldiers will get from the garrisons of Holland
when they reach our shores.

MILES: And King Philip bottles us up here so we cannot carry the
news. The fiend take him.

MILES: Je -- the roads to the border and the channels of the sea-
ports both blocked. But the Estates must be warned.

MILES: So must our Queen -- and England. Yet if no man can get
out of Spain with the word --

MILES: It will take two years to build the Armada, Cap'n.

MILES: And how long do you think it will take England and Holland
to build fleets to match it? Every day wasted is like a drop
of life-blood spent.

MILES: My ship was ready to sail.

MILES: No was mine.

JIM: Let's run for it then, Cap'n.

HANS: Well, no, that you cannot do. The moment you hoist sail, you
should be surrounded and taken prisoner. Then you would
never get out to take the warning home.

MILES: Cap'n Huns, how many Spanish ships in this port?

HANS: Right.

MILES: It would be two against eight.

HANS: I have seen worse odds.

MILES: So have I. And if one of us should hold the channel
while the other --

HANS: I have thought of that, too. Better one of us dies than both
stay here prisoners.

MILES: 'Tis blood, it's to save our countries, Captain. The cities
from pillage, the women from slavery in the wilds of San
Diego, the children from the galleys.

MILES: We all of us know that.

HANS: So you are a brave man, Captain Huns. My ship will block the
harbor while you escape...

HANS: I am sorry, Mr. Huns. I claim that honor for myself.
Walt—"quiet...you'll bring the city around our ears...
captain, we'll throw dice. two out of three.

Miles: fair and good. the loser has the honor of placing his ship
in the channel.

Miles: the winner carries the news of his death to his wife.

Miles: to be burned at the stake.

Miles: you are right. I prefer drowning.

Miles: no...you throw first, captain...God grant I lose.

Miles: thank you...the dice rattle and roll...pair of treys.

OFFSHORE FROM THE WIND

Miles: quiet, all of you...shh!...[he rolls the dice]

Miles: fair of fours...captain Miles--throw again. a high
throw, man, in the fiend's name.

Miles: [rolls] six...six -- and a four.

offshore (murmurs)

Miles: sounds, the dice have the plague in 'em...stand behind
me, Cap'n, and conjure me up some ill luck. that I
should set a man to die for me...I'll not do it...

Hans: it was our bargain, captain Miles. throw the dice.
God be with you, Captain Hans---

(A SHOT)

HANS: The challenge. We are seen. The Spaniard will be on us.
Drop anchor and stand to your guns.

(DRAWING CANON, SHOTS OF MEN)

DUTCH VOICE: Captain, they're coming -- they're coming. The whole fleet of 'em!

VOICE: (OFF, SHOOTING) In the name of King Philip, surrender!

HANS: (BEDING). Never... Come and take us...

(DRAWING CANON)

DUTCH VOICE: They're standing about to board us!

(DRAWING CANON, WITH SPLINTERING WOOD)

HANS: (FIVE QQUET FIRE) Keep the decks, master boatswain... Hold them as long as you can. I am going below to the powder magazine... God be with us all...

(SHOTS AND FIGHTING... AN EXPLOSION... MUSIC AND BELLS UP LOUD FOR A FEW SECONDS... THEN FADE OUT)

(PRIMO, AND MUSIQUE OF A CAFE BACKGROUND)

PRIMO: Your table, master Cervantes? This way, sir, this way.
And wine? Si, senor...

JOSE: Master Cervantes, welcome...It has been a long time since we met in this inn.

CERVANTES: Don Jose -- Excellency --

JOSE: In fact, we came near never meeting again. I have been close to death since we last spoke.

CERVANTES: An illness?

JOSE: An illness of news. You heard of the escape of the English ship from the port.

CERVANTES: Yes. By now the news of the Armada has reached London.

JOSE: It was I who had to tell His Majesty.

CERVANTES: Not a pleasant task.

JOSE: He raged like a madman. He ordered all the crews of the Spanish ships in the harbor to be hanged. When I told him it could not be done he offered to hang me.

CERVANTES: But repeated?

JOSE: The crews could not be hanged because they were all dead. The Dutchman blew his ship up in the channel when they came to take him -- and killed them all. Oh, we have been busy, I can tell you.

CERVANTES: And I, too.

JOSE: Indeed! Busy with what, master Cervantes? More taxes for the war?

CERVANTES: No -- with another chapter for my book.

JOSE: You have written another chapter for your book? We must drink to its success....Pedro....wine.
AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Cindy Welch was born in Murray, Utah, on June 29, 1957. She graduated from the University of Kentucky in 1979 with a degree in business administration. After working for several years as an administrator at Pikeville College in eastern Kentucky, she returned to college and in 1988 finished a Masters degree in adult and higher education, with an emphasis in counseling. She then joined the administration at Prestonsburg (KY) Community College, and spent three years as registrar. In the process she became intrigued by the notion of working in libraries, and so went back to college once again, this time completing a Master’s degree in library and information science in 1991 from the University of Kentucky. After graduation she worked in both adult and youth services in public libraries in North Carolina and Illinois, and then in 2002 became the deputy director of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. Two years later she determined to follow her dream of training the next generation of library professionals and entered the doctoral program at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Following the completion of her doctoral degree, Welch will begin an appointment as Assistant Professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, where she will train the next generation of youth services and school media librarians.