

# HEINL RADIO BUSINESS LETTER

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## INDEX TO ISSUE OF SEPTEMBER 7, 1936

Most Rural Listeners Prefer Clear Channel Stations.....	2
First Television Receivers At London Radio Show.....	6
East Follows West As Yale Sells Grid Games.....	7
Labor Day Brings FCC's Vacation To An End.....	8
Flamm Sees Radio As Aid To Peace.....	9
Radio Used As Indicator Of Most Popular Song Hits.....	10
FTC Names New Firms In Radio Complaint.....	11
Annual Paley Award To Be Given Outstanding Amateur.....	12
NBC August Time Sales Up 69%.....	12
Campaign Called Disappointing To Broadcasters.....	12

No. 959

September 7, 1936

## MOST RURAL LISTENERS PREFER CLEAR CHANNEL STATIONS

More than 75 per cent of the nation's rural radio listeners would rather tune in their programs from powerful clear channel broadcasting stations than regional or local outlets, a long-delayed engineer report to the Federal Communications Commission disclosed late last week.

Spread over the last two years the survey was made to determine the relative value of clear channel operation and probably will guide the future policy of the FCC with regard to an expected reallocation of facilities in the 550-1600 kc. broadcasting band following a general public hearing beginning October 5.

The investigation was launched after demands had been made by broadcasting applicants that at least some of the 40 clear channels be broken up into regional and local wavelengths, thus providing additional facilities for an increase in the now 600 odd stations.

Originally set aside for exclusive operation of high-powered transmitters, with but one outlet to a channel, the clear channels have been made to carry two stations in most instances.

The engineering survey, conducted for the most part during the Winter and Spring of 1935, was divided into four parts. The first was a postcard inquiry made among rural listeners; the second part of the data was obtained by inspectors who engaged in personal interviews; the third part pertains to conductivity of the earth as determined on certain paths; and the fourth concerns the analyses of the continuous field recordings made of clear channel stations. The two latter surveys were very technical, and the results are understandable only to a radio technician.

The report presents data and analysis without drawing any conclusions or making any recommendations. No action by the FCC is anticipated until after the October broadcast band hearing.

The post card questionnaire study was made to determine the relative effectiveness of different classes of broadcast stations in rendering service to the rural sections of the United States. A secondary purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain data on the types of receivers used by rural listeners in order to arrive at a conclusion concerning their electrical characteristics and the degree of obsolescence. The study was conducted by mailing approximately 86,000 questionnaires direct to rural listeners whose names were obtained from the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and sending 30,000 more questionnaires to fourth class postmasters. The text of the questionnaire card and the questions asked on the reply card were as follows:

9/7/36

The Federal Communications Commission is conducting a survey of broadcasting to determine what stations serve rural and small urban areas. The purpose of the survey is to obtain data whereby the Commission may better regulate radio with respect to improving your broadcast reception. Your cooperation is respectfully requested in supplying certain information by completing the attached card. Fill in the blanks, tear off the card, drop it in the mail box. No stamps are necessary. (Kindly return the card even though you may not own a radio receiver).

- (1) Do you own a radio set? \_\_\_\_\_ Make \_\_\_\_\_  
 Model No. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of tubes \_\_\_\_\_  
 When purchased \_\_\_\_\_ Is it now in  
 operating condition? \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Name your favorite radio stations by call letters  
 in the order of your preference:  
 (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) What is your post-office address? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) This space is for any general comments on radio  
 broadcasting which you may care to make.

Of the 116,000 questionnaires sent out by the Commission, 46,586 were returned. The survey was started on February 1, 1935, and by March 1, 1935, practically all the cards had been returned. Of the total cards returned, upon tabulation it was found that 13,916 were not suitable for purposes of analysis either because the questionnaire was returned unanswered, the individual did not have a radio receiving set or his receiving set was not in operating condition. The total of questionnaires available for analysis was then 32,671. The information from these cards was tabulated to show the listener preference as to clear, regional and local channel broadcast stations, the year of manufacture of the receiver used by the listener, and the number of tubes employed. From this tabulation the following tables were prepared:

National Rural Listener Preference by Channels

<u>Station Classification</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number of Stations Licensed</u>
Clear Channel	76.3	95
Regional Channel	20.6	277
Local Channel	2.1	256
Foreign	1.0	

(Table showing listener preference by States carried in report but not reprinted here).



Year of Manufacture of Radio Receiver

<u>Year of Receiver</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1929 or earlier	26.1
1930	12.7
1931	10.1
1932	12.1
1933	13.8
1934	21.6
1935	3.6

Number of Tubes in Receiver

<u>Number of Tubes</u>	<u>Percent</u>
4 or less	5.6
5 to 7	69.9
8 or more	24.5

"The table of listener preference according to States gives an indication of the relative effectiveness of stations of the various classifications in rendering rural coverage in different States", the report points out, "and when compared with the station and frequency assignments within or adjacent to each State much interesting information results. In the thickly settled Eastern and Southern States, even though there are many broadcast stations of the regional and local classification operating, a high percentage of the rural listeners preferred service from clear channel stations.

"A tabulation of listener preference by stations and States indicated that the four stations most frequently named as the first choice of the listener were all clear channel stations in 31 States and that when a regional station appeared among the first four it was almost invariably a low frequency station as discussed in the previous paragraph.

"With only three exceptions, the first choice of the listeners in each State was a clear channel station.

"A clear channel station of 500 kw. power was the first choice of listeners in 13 States. The States showing this preference ranged from Michigan to Florida and from Virginia to Arkansas. In six additional States, among them Texas, this same station appeared as second choice.

"The first choices of listeners in the Territory of Alaska and the Territory of Hawaii were clear channel stations located in the Southern California area.

"The tabulation of the year of manufacture of the radio receivers indicates that approximately 75 percent of the receivers in use at the time of the survey were purchased between the years of 1930 and 1935, inclusive, and approximately 50 percent between



the years of 1932 and 1935. The low percentage of 1935 receivers is due to the fact that the survey was concluded by March 1, 1936, and consequently, a very small percentage of 1935 receiver sales were included. The analysis according to the number of tubes used by each receiver, which indicates 69.9 percent had from 5 to 7 tubes, may be taken as showing the average receiver to be a superheterodyne of fair quality. This belief is further strengthened by the fact that 75 percent of the receivers were manufactured subsequent to 1930."

Another part of the allocation survey was conducted by dispatching inspectors from the Field Section of the Commission's Engineering Department through various localities with field cars. On these trips rural listeners living within the primary service areas of several broadcast stations of the different classifications were interviewed for the purpose of determining the approximate limit of the night primary service areas. At the point where listeners reported to the inspectors that satisfactory service was no longer obtained, the day field intensity from the station was measured. The data concerning clear channel stations are insufficient, however, to be conclusive, the report states.

At the time the investigation was conducted by the inspectors, the listeners interviewed were also questioned concerning their choice as to stations and the information tabulated as was done in the questionnaires survey to indicate the preference as to clear, regional or local channel stations.

The close agreement between the data obtained by the inspectors, which indicated 75.1 percent of listeners preferred a clear channel station, agrees very well with the results of the questionnaire survey, which arrived at a figure of 76.3 percent for the same preference.

Seven sample field intensity records are included in the report and illustrate many of the phenomena encountered in connection with the reception of radio waves from distant broadcast stations. The records given are chosen so as to include a variety of conditions with respect to distance from the transmitter, frequency, season, types of fading, and kind of transmitting antenna. These records are explained briefly as follows:

"First record - WCAU, at a distance of 70 miles - illustrates the severe fading without appreciable change in average field strength which sets in just after sunset at this distance and season, and is due to interference between the ground wave and one or more sky waves. The steady ground wave (about 0.32 MV/M) may be seen on the record just prior to sunset.

"The second record - that of WGY, at a distance of 139 miles - shows a similar phenomenon with the added features of pre-sunset fading and a gradual increase of average field strength through the twilight period.

"The third record is of WBT at a distance of 526 miles. At this distance the fading is presumably due to ionosphere fluctuations only, and the relatively long period of fading on this frequency and at this distance is of interest.

"The fourth record is of WCFL and KGR. It is of interest to notice that the period of fading is about the same for each station, although the distances are 563 and 1263 miles, respectively.

"The fifth record is of WLS - WENR at a distance of 804 miles. This is given as one of the best examples of long period fading obtained during the survey.

"The sixth record is of KFI at a distance of 1175 miles and WOI at a distance of 269 miles. WOI goes off the air shortly after sunset at Ames, thus protecting the secondary service of KFI. The field intensity of KFI begins to increase at sunset at Grand Island, continuing this increase for over an hour after sunset at Los Angeles.

"The seventh record is of WOAI at a distance of 2163 miles. For this distance and frequency the period of fading is relatively short."

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#### FIRST TELEVISION RECEIVERS AT LONDON RADIO SHOW

For the first time television receivers were on display and for sale at the annual Olympia Radio Exhibition which opened in London early in September under sponsorship of the Radio Manufacturers' Association. Demonstrations of the receivers are given twice daily with transmissions coming from the new BBC television station at Alexandra Palace. Programs consist of excerpts from talking movies, actual studio productions, and "shots" of open air scenes around the station.

"Much interest was shown in a new battery receiver which operates without an H.T. battery and obtains its power from a low-tension accumulator", the B.B.C reports. "Overseas visitors also were much impressed by the wide range of new short-wave and all-wave receivers suitable for the reception of the BBC Empire station.

"Experience has shown that overseas listeners need really sensitive receivers, and it is safe to say that this year the British manufacturer has studied the problem carefully, with the result that there were many sets on view at Radiolympia eminently suitable for use abroad. In the first place the designs of many new sets make use of every known development to ensure satisfactory operation in countries of humid climate. The cabinets of battery sets, in many cases, are airtight; and in main receivers, where adequate ventilation is essential, the coils, power and



output transformers, and the field coils of loudspeakers are all wax-impregnated to keep out the damp. Condensers have been specially treated with the same object in view, and even special high-tension batteries are being marketed for overseas use.

"The technical aspect has received equal consideration. The super-heterodyne circuit has been almost universally adopted, and many manufacturers have incorporated one well-designed high-frequency stage - a welcome trend. It is impossible in this short eye-witness account of Radiolympia to delve deeply into technicalities, but regarding the question of size (number of stages in the set) the new overseas models are very ambitious. There are literally dozens of six, seven, and eight-valve receivers, and many even larger. One manufacturer has produced a fourteen-valve A.C.-mains operated all-wave radiogram especially for overseas use; another has gone one better with a twenty-valve all-wave A.C. radiogram, with a fifteen-watt speech output, costing 120 guineas.

"Quality of reproduction has apparently received a deal of attention this year, judging by the extended audio-response curves claimed by some manufacturers for their sets. The tendency seems to be to incorporate larger power-output stages, and loudspeakers with bigger magnets and diaphragms.

"There is no revolutionary change in the price of receivers: all prices seem to have kept the same level as last year, but undoubtedly the sets are better."

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EAST FOLLOWS WEST AS YALE SELLS GRID GAMES

Taking a cue from the higher educational institutions on the Pacific Coast, Yale University last week startled the sporting and educational worlds by announcing that it was selling the broadcasting rights to a commercial sponsor, the Atlantic Refining Co., for \$20,000. The story was disclosed first in the New York Times.

While Yale's example was expected to break the ice of many other Eastern colleges and universities which have frowned upon such commercial invasion of an amateur sport, Princeton immediately stated that it would not follow Yale's lead.

Harvard's graduate manager of athletics, Bill Bingham, was quoted upon his return from the Olympic Games at Berlin, as saying that Harvard would be receptive to a commercial offer for broadcasting rights of its home gridiron contests.

"I don't think it is inconsistent", he said. "I think it's rather a dignified practice just like selling advertising for programs."



9/7/36

John Shepard, 3rd, President of the Yankee Network, who had a large hand in "selling" Yale, announced subsequently that he was looking for commercial sponsors for Brown University and Boston College.

The only taboo raised by Yale in offering its six home games for sponsorship was that no liquor dealer or distiller was acceptable.

The large oil companies appear to be taking the lead in sponsoring the college football games, both on the West Coast and over the country.

The Southern Football Conference announced it had lifted its ban on sponsorship of gridiron games of its members, leaving the decision in each case to the participating college or university.

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#### LABOR DAY BRINGS FCC'S VACATION TO AN END

Labor Day means just that for the members of the Federal Communications Commission as it marks the end of their Summer vacation, and as they have a heavy schedule of work awaiting them for the Fall. Having operated with only one or two Commissioners in attendance simultaneously for the last two months, the FCC has postponed all major activities and decisions until the famed Summer heat of Washington begins to subside.

The major tasks facing the Commission this Fall are:

A general hearing on the broadcast band 550 to 1600 kc. on October 5th with a reallocation of broadcasting facilities in prospect.

A decision on whether to approve any or all of ten applications for super-power permits from stations which want to emulate WLW, Cincinnati, and use 500,000 watts.

The so-called "Brooklyn case" controversy that has disturbed the FCC for more than two years and now has become emeshed in politics. A hearing has been scheduled for October 26th.

The whole problem of allocation of the ultra-high frequencies, concerning which a public hearing was held in mid-June, and a determination of the United States' recommendations to the Cairo International Radio Conference.

The October 5th hearing is expected to deal with all the major problems in the technique of broadcasting brought about by developments since the last general reallocation of 1928.

T.A.M. Craven, FCC Chief Engineer, has informed the Commission that radio "is at the cross-roads" and that new regulations and possibly a shifting of frequencies among the services are in order.

Explaining the purpose of the hearing recently the FCC said:

"As is well known in the industry, the existing practical allocations depart somewhat from the empirical standards which became the basis of regulations in 1929, and which have not been changed since that date. It is believed that at least one of the outcomes of the October 5 hearing will be to modify the regulations so that they will conform to the actual practice of today."

The proponents and opponents of super-power will be given an opportunity to debate, the FCC said, and the question of splitting up the clear channels further to provide additional facilities will be discussed.

As the policy of the FCC with regard to higher power will depend largely on the outcome of the broadcast band hearing, no date has been set for a hearing upon the ten applications for permits to use 500,000 watts transmitters.

The stations seeking the super power are: WHO KNX WJZ WGN KDKA WJR KFI WSM WHAS and WBZ.

The "Brooklyn case" hearing has been scheduled and postponed a half-dozen times since the FCC made a ruling last Winter only to retract it under political pressure.

Involved are the continued existence of WLTH, WARD and WVFW, which the FCC proposed to take off the air, an increase in time for WBBC and a proposed construction permit for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle to share the 1300 kc. channel with WBBC.

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#### FLAMM SEES RADIO AS AID TO PEACE

"Properly employed", radio could be a powerful bulwark for the preservation of peace in Europe, Donald Flamm, New York radio executive, declared last week as he sailed from Nice, France, for America aboard the Italian Liner "Rex", after a trip through England, France, Italy, and Switzerland.

"European statesmen", he said, "should realize that radio could be a powerful instrument for goodwill, instead of being used for dangerous propaganda of hatreds. Radio could easily dissipate many unfortunate disagreements among European nations."

Wireless in the United States has nothing to learn from Europe, Mr. Flamm said as a result of his European study, but he said that France and Germany, already making regular television broadcasts, lead in that field.

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9/7/36

## RADIO USED AS INDICATOR OF MOST POPULAR SONG HITS

The volume of sales of sheet music used to serve as an indicator of a song's popularity; now it's the number of times it is played over the air.

The American Society of Authors, Composers, and Publishers last week issued its annual analysis of the song hits of 1935 and the selections were based upon the frequency with which the compositions had been played over the major networks - NBC and CBS.

E. C. Mills, ASCAP General Manager, explained that the radio figures were most indicative of a song's general popularity. If it was going out over the air, he said, it was undoubtedly being danced to at restaurants, night clubs and tea rooms, crooned at private parties, strummed by ukulele players and hummed by casual strollers everywhere.

The total credits earned by a number, it was specified, represented the number of times it was transmitted by an individual station. Thus if there was a chain hook-up of eighty stations, eighty points would be scored.

A separate count of sheet music was provided for the first six songs. It did not parallel the radio tally. The first six were:

"When I Grow Too Old to Dream", by Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein, points 29,161; sheet sale, 550,000; "I'm in the Mood for Love", by Jimmy McHugh and Dorothy Fields, points 26,537; sheet sale, 200,000.

"In a Little Gypsy Tea Room", by Joe Burke and Edgar Leslie, points, 25,228; sheet sale, 311,000; "Lullaby of Broadway", by Harry Warren and Al Dubin, points, 24,864; sheet sale, 125,000.

"Cheek to Cheek" (often referred to as "I'm in Heaven") by Irving Berlin, points, 24,134; sheet sale, 250,000; "What's the Reason I'm Not Pleasin' You?" by Pinky Tomlin, Earl Hatch, Coy Poe and Jimmy Grier, points 23,944; sheet sale, 160,000.

Mr. Mills said no new musical trends were evidenced by the statistics; the love theme was still the old reliable, and Americans still liked good melody. The romantic songs were perhaps a little gentler, though, he conceded.

"They're not writing the 'Hot Lips' and so on that they used to write", he remarked. "They're all pretty nice, jolly, sweet, clean songs."

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## FTC NAMES NEW FIRMS IN RADIO COMPLAINT

The Federal Trade Commission has issued an amended and supplemental complaint charging Knight Electric Company, Inc., 16 Hudson Street, New York City, and associated companies, with unauthorized use of well known trade names and the appropriation of the reputation and good will of certain established companies, in the sale of radio receiving sets, tubes and accessories.

The original complaint in this case, issued in December, 1935, charged Knight Electric Company, Inc., with appropriating the names "Majestic International", "Victor International", "Victor Radio Stores", and "Edison Radio Stores", without the authority of the owners of such names, namely, Grigsby-Grunow Co., RCA Victor Co., and Thomas A. Edison, Inc.

The amended and supplemental complaint names as respondents several additional companies and individuals and alleges the use on name plates attached to radio products sold by them of other names and letters or symbols in addition to those mentioned in the original complaint. Among these are trade names containing the names Marconi, Edison, Bell, Victor, Majestic and Brunswick, the name Brunswick being the property of Brunswick Radio Corporation, and symbols and letters alleged to simulate the letters "RCA and "GE" as owned by Radio Corporation of America and General Electric Co., respectively.

Besides Knight Electric Co., Inc., the amended complaint names the following companies engaged as essentially a single business in manufacturing and assembling radio sets, tubes, and like products: Temple Electric Corp., Acme Radio Corp., Pirate Radio Corp., Gillet Radio Corp., Radio Products Corp., and Franklin Sales and Distributing Co., Inc., all of 16 Hudson Street, New York City.

The following officers of these companies are named as respondents: Eric Houser, President, Director and Agent of the several companies; David I. Morrison, A. M. Frank, Leon C. Sacks, Charles Johannes, Morris A. Weiner, Otto Dreher, Charles Dreher, Ruth Wasserman, J. R. Rosenberg, and S. Buchman.

Radio Dealers named as respondents are, Harvard Radio Tube Testing Stations of Pa., Inc., 208 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia; Ross Distributing Co., 2020 Chancellor St., Philadelphia; Sun Radio and Service Supply Corp., 938 F St., N.W., Washington, D. C.; Schiller Brothers, Inc., 922 F St., N. W., Washington, D. C., Robbins Radio Co., and Ambassador Radio Co., 940 F St., N. W., Washington, D. C., and Call Radio Co., 636 H St., N. E., Washington, D. C.

Five manufacturers and dealers in name plates and escutcheons for use on radio sets are named respondents - Metal Etching Corp., 1001 Essex St., Brooklyn, N.Y.; Etched Products Corp., 3901 Queens Blvd., Long Island City, N. Y.; Electro Chemical and Engraving Co., 1100 Brook Ave., New York City; Premier Metal Etching Co., 2103 - 44th Ave., Long Island City, N. Y.; and Crowe Nameplate and Manufacturing Co., Chicago, Ill.

The amended complaint fixes Friday, October 9th as the final date for the respondents to show cause why the Commission should not enter against them an order to cease and desist from the violations of law charged in the complaint.

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## ANNUAL PALEY AWARD TO BE GIVEN OUTSTANDING AMATEUR

On September 6, at the National Amateur Radio Show held in conjunction with the American Radio Relay League's Central Division Convention, announcement was made that William S. Paley, President of the Columbia Broadcasting System, has offered a permanent award to be presented annually to that individual who through amateur radio, in the opinion of an impartial Board of Awards, has contributed most usefully to the American people, either in research, technical development or operating achievement.

Mr. Paley designated the American Radio Relay League as the permanent custodians of the award. Upon it will be engraved each year the name of the winner of the award. A smaller replica will be presented to the individual selected as the winner, by an impartial Board of experienced authorities on amateur radio activities.

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## MBS AUGUST TIME SALES UP 69%

The Mutual Broadcasting System's total billings for the month of August, 1936, were \$122,065.31, it was announced last week. This includes the billing of basic and associated stations and marks an increase of 69% over August, 1935. The total billings for August, 1935, were \$72,075.69.

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## CAMPAIGN CALLED DISAPPOINTING TO BROADCASTERS

"The broadcasting trade is complaining that the politicians are holding down on their radio budgets", writes Paul Mallon, Washington columnist, in his syndicated column. "No long-term contracts are being made. Both Farley and Hamilton are buying only single-period time.

"At this rate, neither the Republicans nor Democrats will spend the millions of dollars planned by each for this type of promotion.

"But this rate will not last. The Republicans are getting ready a more extensive final radio campaign than has ever been attempted in politics before. Democrats have heard about it, but do not know the details.

"The broadcasting companies probably would not mourn much if the national committee fail to run up big bills, as both are considered very slow pay. Some of the bills of the campaign four years ago are said not to have been settled yet."

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