

25th

ANNIVERSARY

MARCH 25, 1950

THE STATION LISTENERS BUILT!



Twenty-five Years in the Radio Business

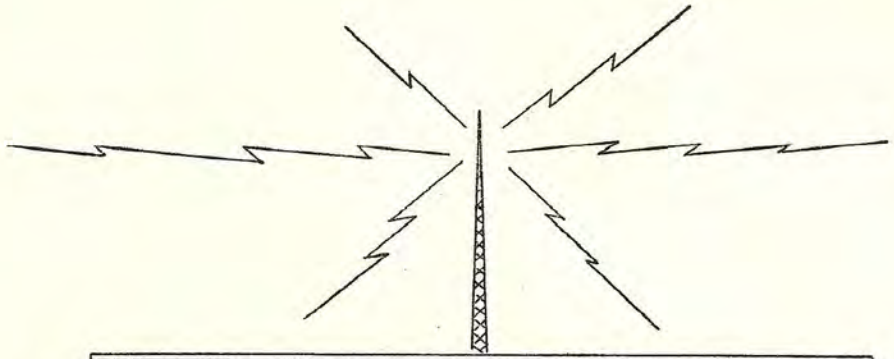
1925 ★ 1950

We think that twenty-five years in the business of broadcasting is sufficient to warrant a moment's pause—a backward glance at past accomplishments—a brief resume of present-day activities. That is why we have prepared this souvenir booklet for you—the folks who have helped so much to make us what we are today—

The Station Listeners Built!

GUNNAR O. WIIG,
General Manager

WHEC ★ ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



We who have been privileged to play a part in the development of Station WHEC, ever since its founding just a quarter of a century ago, are of the opinion that it is one of the *truly great* radio stations of America.

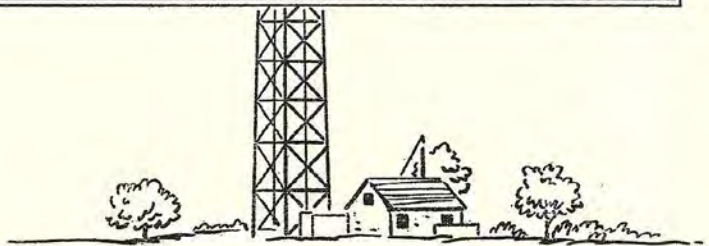
WHEC's accomplishments have not been won without a struggle. We have had to work hard. Sometimes we have had to fight. Always, we have had to keep alert to seize every opportunity to maintain and foster the *respect*, the strong *confidence*, the genuine *affection* of our community toward our Station.

Our efforts have been rewarded twofold:—first, by the *inner satisfaction* of knowing that we have not failed in our duties to our listeners and to our community; second, by the *outward manifestation* of the high regard in which we are held by the citizens of Rochester and the Rochester territory.

When a radio station *consistently*, year in and year out, over the course of many years, and in the face of every kind of competition, can maintain *constant listener-leadership* in its community—*there must be a reason for such popularity!*

There *is* a reason! There are *many* reasons! Some of these reasons are reflected in the pages that follow.

CLARENCE WHEELER
Vice-President
WHEC, INC.





IT is a few minutes before eight o'clock in the evening of March 25, 1925. A group of people has gathered in a small studio in Rochester's Hotel Seneca. The mayor is there—a State senator, a clergyman—an orchestra with soloists. Announcer Joseph F. Hitchcock steps to the microphone, as the hands of the clock point to 8, and says: "Tonight we are formally opening the new station of the Hickson Electric Company, Rochester's radio pioneer . . . Station WHEC . . . We want our listeners to feel that this station is their station. If you will let us know what kind of program you like to listen to, we will do our best to please you." Thus WHEC came into being.

Of course, it wasn't really as simple as that. We have not taken into account the early dreams and visions (and endless experimentation!) of Lawrence Hickson . . . the first feeble "broadcasts" of his first radio transmitter in October 1920, that reached to the township of Irondequoit—six miles away! . . . the short-lived but significant careers of Stations WABO and WHQ, forbears of WHEC . . . the securing of Rochester's first radio station license for WHQ in 1922 by Frank E. Gannett, now president of WHEC, Inc. . . . the disappointments, and setbacks that accompanied our early birth pangs!

Station WHEC started off with three employees. It was on the air for three hours daily, and boasted of five daily programs. Its power was 500 watts, daytime, and 250 watts, nighttime—and its potential audience amounted to 5,000 listeners. But WHEC held true to Joe Hitchcock's promise to do its "best to please"—and the people of Rochester willingly accepted his invitation to make WHEC "their radio station."

By 1928, three years later, WHEC was broadcasting on an all-day schedule, nighttime power had been increased to 500 watts (thanks to a petition bearing the signatures of more than 50,000 loyal WHEC listeners!), the offices and transmitter had been moved to better quarters on the top floor of Rochester's Terminal Building,—and WHEC had scored its first sensational "scoop" with Gunnar Wiig's rapid-fire broadcasting of baseball games by wire reports, a then novel stunt that put WHEC on the inside track of sports where it remains today.



By the early part of 1929, the offices and studios of WHEC had been moved to the second and third floors of the Rochester Savings Bank Building and, from control room to filing room, the equipment was the best that money could buy. 30 employees were busy in 10 departments. The station was on the air 14 hours a day, broadcasting 30 daily programs. Two years later, the Federal Communications Commission increased WHEC's daytime power to 1,000 watts.

In 1932, WHEC passed one of its most important milestones—full-fledged affiliation with the Columbia Broadcasting System. This relationship still continues, making WHEC today Rochester's oldest station associated with one network.

And it was on October 29, 1932, that Frank E. Gannett, president of the Gannett Newspapers, Inc., purchased the controlling interest in WHEC from Lawrence Hickson upon the latter's retirement. Thus two great public servants—press and radio—joined forces. In 1937, a new completely modern broadcasting tower and transmitter plant were erected on Mt. Read Boulevard, and the entire studios and offices in the Rochester Savings Bank Building were renovated and modernized.

In 1940, WHEC became the 11th radio station in the United States to use Frequency Modulation in addition to its regular A.M. broadcasts.

Finally, in 1947, the day-and-night power of Station WHEC was upped to 5,000 watts by the F.C.C., and a new broadcasting tower and transmitter station were erected at an ideal location on the outskirts of the city on Winton Road South.

Today, on its 25th Anniversary, Station WHEC—powerful, vigorous, alert, financially sound, established in popularity, fully aware of its ever-increasing obligations to its community—is better able than ever before to serve, to educate and to entertain the people of the Rochester territory.



In the Community's Service

Twenty-five years ago, we asked ourselves a sixty-four-dollar question: What is the most important segment of our listening audience? Who is the person we are most obligated to serve and place?

We came up with a theoretical answer to that question, and proved it to be a fact. *The original, and all-time V.I.P. in our listening audience is the MAN-IN-THE-STREET!* We have consistently nodded to the classes, but *bowed* to the masses.

The Man-In-The-Street is the cornerstone of America. It is *he* who elects our national leaders—*he* who pays the bulk of the taxes—*he* who buys the biggest share of the nation's wares. We *respect* the Man In The Street—we *serve* him—and, as Mr. Hooper knows so well, we *please* him!



THE CHURCHES

Today, with all humanity seemingly poised at the very crossroads of Destiny, as never before, the Man-In-The-Street often seeks repose and spiritual sanctuary in Religion. WHEC maintains a strictly nonsectarian point of view, favors no particular creeds or credos, but recognizes this universal desire for spiritual sustenance.

Whenever religious groups—whether they be Protestant, Catholic or Jewish—have sought our help, they have not been denied it. Not only do we broadcast local interdenominational church services every Sunday, and the "Morning Meditation" program every weekday, but give generously of our time to the drive's and humanitarian appeals of such groups as the Federation of Churches and Council of Church Women, the Catholic Charities, the United Jewish Appeal—and many others. And, of course, we carry regularly the splendid network interdenominational program: "Church of the Air." When religious events of special interest occur, we arrange special programs to handle them.

THE CITY

Our main "beat" is Main Street.—Like any other public-spirited citizen, Station WHEC co-operates to the fullest extent with local government. Numberless are the times that civic leaders have been given the freedom of the WHEC microphone for the purpose of delivering important messages to the people of Rochester.

Whenever emergencies arise, the facilities of WHEC stand ready, at any hour of the day or night, to be placed at the disposal of civic, county or State authorities. We do not hesitate to interrupt, or even cancel, a regular program in order to warn and inform our listeners.

We have helped the police to locate missing persons, to run down criminals, to instill respect for traffic rules and regulations.

We have helped the health authorities reach the ears of tens of thousands of Rochesterians when public health or safety has been threatened.

By means of a secret code, we co-operate with the Board of Education by announcing "no school today" when severe weather conditions bring gladness to young hearts.—In fact, dissemination of weather news is one of our regular daily chores.

It is impossible to estimate how many losses, how much misery, have been prevented by WHEC's quick and willing co-operation with the forces of civic government.

AT WAR ON THE HOME FRONT

The advent of World War II subjected WHEC to the most severe test of its history. With many key members of our staff called to the colors, and our personnel thus depleted, we willingly accepted the heavy burden of extensive wartime activities.

Looking back on those days, we wonder how we ever managed to crowd so many additional undertakings into an already-crowded schedule. There were the Bond Drives, the appeals for Red Cross Blood Donors, the Salvage Drives, the Labor Recruiting, the Civilian Defense enlistments, the endless information concerning Rationing and Nutrition, the Recruiting for the Armed Forces. Each got a *big* share of our time on the air! An especially effective wartime undertaking was our work in behalf of local factory morale. Through special arrangement with the Navy Department, WHEC sent three 5-minute newscasts a day by direct wire to eight of Rochester's huge war plants. These newscasts reached between forty and fifty thousand war workers daily, during morning and afternoon rest periods and the lunch hour. Injected into each newscast was an incentive message stressing the importance of these war workers staying on the job. This proved to be a forceful means of combatting absenteeism.

Also, inasmuch as many of the factories had installed Public Address systems, WHEC provided these plants with several segments of musical entertainment every day. The type of music was selected in accordance with the findings of governmental studies and surveys indicating the kind of music that was best suited for elevating factory morale. And there was the high-speed, intense work of producing programs for servicemen—programs locally and in many parts of the country.

And there was the NEWS coverage—doubling up, *tripling* up of our efforts to keep the folks on the home front well-informed concerning the tremendous events overseas. Emphasis was on news that affected Rochester and Rochesterians, but the big broad world picture was never neglected. What a kicking around our programs took—but "C'est la Guerre!" was the password!



Scores of letters, and more scores of word-of-mouth thanks, came to us during these war years from individuals and groups who, like ourselves, had placed the nation's welfare ahead of all selfish interests.

WHEC, CAMPAIGNER

WHEC does not play politics. It's a "registered Independent." But that doesn't prevent our active campaigning for projects that benefit our public. The commendable undertakings of any local or national organization or group can always count upon receiving powerful and enthusiastic support from WHEC.

Our records show that scores and scores of local and national institutions and organizations have been given FREE radio time by WHEC *during the past year*. It is particularly interesting to note that last year we aired 4,811 public service announcements! That's 400 a month! —More than 90 a week! —13 A DAY— *That's a gift of about \$72,000 worth of public service announcements a year at our local card rates!*

WHEC AND THE FARMER

The Man-In-The-Street is our favorite person, but we're also extremely interested in his rural counterpart, the Man-With-The-Hoe.

In behalf of the Farmer, we have presented, for more than seven years of consecutive weekday mornings our 6:40 a.m. "Market News," direct from the Rochester Public Market with Mr. Charles Hellman, at the "mike." "Market News" gives farmers the latest price reports on their various crops, timely bulletins from the State Agricultural Experiment Station at Cornell University dealing with almost every phase of the farmer's life, answers to the thousand-and-one problems that face the Western New York farmer. Another local program of special interest to our rural listeners—farmers in particular—is the "County Editor's Chair," a collective Sunday morning report gleaned from the country newspapers of the seven counties surrounding Rochester. Our news editor, Ralph Knox, handles this broadcast with Warren Doremus. The Farmer and WHEC are the best of friends!

WHEC AND EDUCATION

It goes without saying that any radio station must constitute itself a source of general education for its mass of listeners. News programs fall under this general head, but our news coverage is so extensive that we have chosen to deal with it under a separate section. Nor will we mention the many fine, educational network shows that are carried regularly over WHEC. It is to Bill Adams, our Program Manager, that major credit is due under this category.

For years, we have worked in such close conjunction with the Board



of Education that certain members of the Board are almost like members of our staff. With their help, we have been able to produce a number of programs of an educational nature for Rochester boys and girls. Students of Rochester's public, private and parochial schools take part.

Two of these programs are tape-recorded (for later broadcast) before large audiences of pupils, and parents as well, in the assembly halls of the various schools, thus becoming, in a sense, a regular part of the schools' curricula.

But our educational activities have not been restricted to youngsters; we have also produced a splendid program, in conjunction with Rochester's Junior Chamber of Commerce, in which young Rochester business men join in round-table discussions over current civic problems.



WHEC AND THE NEWS

The fact that, at this writing, Station WHEC offers its listeners *an even 100 news programs a week* (17 hours and 25 minutes of news per week!) is proof that we regard very seriously our obligation to keep our audiences well-informed. But the whole story is not one of *quantity*, but of *quality*. Our approach to the news is from the standpoint, first and foremost, of factuality rather than interpretation.

We respect the intelligence of our listeners to the extent that, given the *facts*, we leave the *interpretation* up to them.

When we *do* offer programs that seek to *analyze* the news, we make sure that such analyses are in the hands of news commentators of *broad experience* and *keen judgment*. No regular announcer is *ever* allowed to embellish *any* newscast with *his own opinions!*

We also feel that complete coverage of *local* news is of great importance—that the people of this territory are, naturally, more concerned with the news that affects *them*. We have therefore injected a strong local slant into practically every one of our news broadcasts. And, in the personality of Al Sigl, who broadcasts eleven times a week *exclusively* over WHEC, we have a loved and respected local figure whose years, and accomplishments, and benefactions have made him a very cornerstone of the City of Rochester.

BATTER UP!

22 years ago, Station WHEC surprised Rochester sportsfans with something that was radically new and different in sportscasting.—We've been surprising them ever since. It was our present General Manager, Gunnar O. Wiig, who, in 1928, undertook for the first time in Rochester the rapid-fire broadcasting of the out-of-town games of the Rochester International League baseball team by wire reports. Gunnar proved to everybody that radio *could* provide the next-best thrill to actually

going to the ballgame. Practically overnight, Gunnar Wiig and Station WHEC became famous among sportsfans!

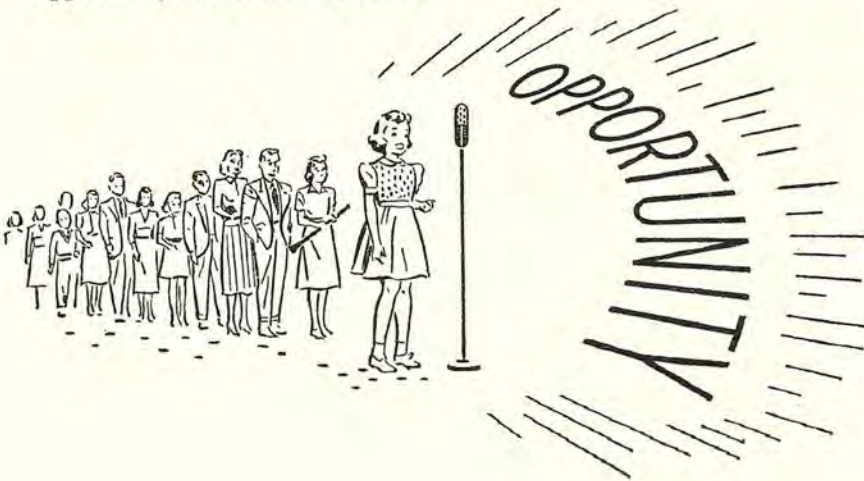
There was no let-up after this flying start. WHEC literally plunged into the broad field of sports—all sports—each one in its season.

Today our sports staff is headed by Lowell MacMillan who, without any doubt, is the best-known, most-respected and most capable radio sportscaster in all Western New York. Mac knows the players, the managers, and officials and, what's more important, they all know *him*—and *like* him, too!

Because of MacMillan's broad acquaintance in the world of sport he not infrequently gets tips that enable him to scoop the other radio stations and the newspapers as well. Moreover, whenever key figures in the world of sport come to Rochester they seem naturally to gravitate to Lowell MacMillan and the WHEC microphone. A list of guest speakers heard on his 6:15 p.m. sportscast reads like a "blue book of the sports world!"

ENTERTAINMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

WHEC has a bi-lateral purpose in building local shows of a purely entertaining nature. First and foremost (as always!) we seek to offer something truly worthwhile to our listeners; secondly (and it's a *close* second!) we endeavor to offer the golden key of opportunity to local talent. In *both* respects we can claim substantial success! In fact, one of our programs in this category has the distinction of being the oldest show on the Rochester air, both in years of consecutive broadcasts and in length of continuous original sponsorship! Some of the performers that WHEC has discovered in Rochester's rich top-soil of talent have gone on to professional achievement as a direct result of their initial opportunity over this radio station.



A Word About Our Personnel

All too frequently, the staff members of a radio station are no more than "voices," as far as the public is concerned. This is not the case at WHEC. Our staff members are not mere *voicies* but *people*—living, breathing, flesh-and-blood folks whom most Rochesterians recognize at sight, and greet with a "Hi, Joe!" when they pass them on the street.

Moreover, our staff members are all born-and-bred *Rochesterians*, or residents of long standing. They're local property owners. They're active in civic affairs. They have the very same problems that *other* Rochesterians have. Instead of being concealed behind a hazy cloud of mysterious professional "glamour," they are trained and instructed to keep themselves on a level—a *friendly* level—with the Man-in-the-Street. They would no more *talk down* to an audience than they would *look down* upon a friend.

Members of our staff hold key positions in the Rochester Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, the Rochester Ad Club, the Rochester Civic Music Association and many other local organizations. They have many extra-curricular demands upon their time and talents, and they meet these obligations with willing enthusiasm.

The group of 40 men and women that make up the WHEC staff is one of the *most familiar* groups in the City of Rochester!

Their popularity is exceeded only by their *capability* to meet the requirements of their various positions. Each one is trained with the utmost care to do his job in the best possible manner. Each is instilled with a firm belief in the importance of his job,—a deepseated feeling of responsibility to his community.

A factor of special importance not only to Station WHEC but also to sponsors of its programs is our minimum turn-over in personnel. Our Vice President and our General Manager have both been with us for more than 20 years; our Business Manager ditto; our Chief Engineer 21 years,—and this long-time stability and loyalty continues right down the line. We have indeed been fortunate in avoiding the on-again-off-again personnel situation that has hampered so many station operations and dismayed so many sponsors elsewhere.



It Pays To Advertise

Why do so many network programs enjoy a much better Hooperating over Station WHEC than they do elsewhere? How has WHEC managed *consistently* to attract the greatest number of listeners in Rochester? Why do so many sponsors remain loyal to WHEC (in many cases *exclusively!*) for years, and years, and YEARS? The answer is an easy one:—WHEC advertises itself and its programs, both locally and nationally, more extensively than does any other Rochester station! It leaves no promotion stone unturned! Its coat is always off, its sleeves are always rolled up,—and its feet are never on top of (in fact, seldom *under!*) the desk!

