

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Biography of Warren P. Williamson Jr.

Personal Experience

O. H. 1320

WARREN P. WILLIAMSON JR.

Interviewed

by

Hugh G. Earnhart

on

September 30, 1988

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Biography of Warren P. Williamson Jr.

INTERVIEWEE: WARREN P. WILLIAMSON JR.

INTERVIEWER: Hugh G. Earnhart

SUBJECT: Youngstown, WWI, amateur radio, WKBN, CBS

DATE: September 30, 1988

E: This is an interview with Warren P. Williamson Jr. for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, by Hugh Earnhart, on September 30, 1988, in the offices of WKBN, at Sunset Boulevard, in Youngstown Ohio.

Warren, let's begin by talking about your family, where you grew up, where you spent your early childhood?

W: Well, do I start that by telling you the day I was born?

E: That is about as good a place as any?

W: I was born May 10, 1900. I was born on the corner of Warren Avenue and Market Street. Which, in today's view, would be across from South High School. I lived there during my early years. As a matter of fact, my first interest in radio developed while I was living on that corner. I was about twelve years old or thereabouts at that time. I was then, what you would call, an amateur radio enthusiast. Radio was just developing in those days and amateur radio was just signal transmission so to speak. There was no voice transmission in those days.

As it developed then, the earliest things that I recall as a young man, I was interested in electricity. Father was the general manager of the Youngstown Carriage and Wagon Company. That was an institution and substantial building that was at the corner of . . . Well, now where the Ohio Hotel is. Behind that was a

little operation of some . . . I don't remember any names now for all of this but they made electric lights. The kind of electric light that a physician uses or the small bulbs that you used to have. So I got several of those and got interested in that. I used to take the batteries off the front doorbell so I could light my electric lights. Of course, I always put them back because Father was not too pleased with the whole idea. Anyway that is where my interest in electricity first started; was that way. Then it later developed into amateur radio and well, that is now way back. I'm back now about 1912 and the days before television and such.

E: Did you get any encouragement along that line from your activities in school, teachers?

W: No, it was not in the school in those days. Amateur radio in those early days was not in schools in any respect. I got into some of it later on in Yale School, up on Ohio Avenue, where I was attending. It was not in the school house.

From that amateur radio developed, and finally I got into that and developed that over the years until I was . . . I went into the Army in World War I at eighteen. So, this would have been about sixteen, seventeen; in those years. In those years there was no voice transmission at all. As a matter of fact I can come up someday to a point where I heard the first voice on radio. Anyway, I developed in that and we had communications around the country with other amateurs. I don't mean just around town. I mean perhaps 100, or 200 miles away in those days with transmission equipment. First of it was in the home that was on the corner of Warren and Market Street. I had a spark coil, so to speak, which we used in those days to create the waves that transmitted. This spark coil was out of an old Ford spark plug set.

E: A model T?

W: Well, it was even before that; the earlier kind. I used that until I finally talked father into the idea that I should have a little more power. So, we bought some equipment from a person by the name of Patch over in New Castle. I had then a one half kilowatt transformer and so forth which delivered 13,200 volts ac. When I put that in mother's pantry, and she heard the noise from it, and saw the sparks flying from it, she decided I shouldn't be in the pantry. I was ushered out of the house. While in the pantry I should tell you something that has always amused me. As I would press the key for dots and dashes it would cause some interruption on the electric lines. Father and Mother

were sitting in the library one evening while I was running the transmitter. For no reason at all sparks started to fly out of the central lighting fixture in the room and drop a little hot copper down on the floor. Father then agreed that I ought to have my wireless transmitter outside of the house. Where to go was the question. There was an old chicken coop just behind the garage, so, he concluded that we ought to fix up the chicken coop for my experiments.

From that point on, I went further in amateur work to where I had a one kilowatt outfit with rotary gaps and fine equipment. As a matter of fact I was using that until World War I came along and the government was a little bit afraid of whether or not people would give information over some amateur radio station, or take it over and so forth. So, they issued an order and all amateur stations were disbanded and so forth. I took my equipment and took it out and put it up in the attic and went on from there.

E: What type of parents were your dad and mother? Were they cooperative? Were you the only child?

W: No, I had a brother three years older than I was. Father was a very understanding man. As a matter of fact, at this point in my lifetime, I look back over some of the things I did, and I wonder how my father ever put up with me, to tell you the truth. He understood things it seemed. He was a very busy man. Our transportation in the early days from our home on Warren Avenue and Market, for him to work, was by horse and buggy. This is back that early. I was just a youngster big enough to go out and about reach the shafts on the horses, and try to help them hitch up the buggy. That is how far back we are going. We are jumping around a little bit in time because after that I am talking about World War I.

E: That is okay. Was your mother the backbone in the family or would you say it was your father who ran the show?

W: Mother was Mary Thompson, her father was a mail carrier on Bryson Street in Youngstown. She and Father were married in 1898, I think. She was very much a leader, a religious person. As a matter of fact the family was pretty religious. Central Christian Church was Father's church. Trinity was Mother's church. Mother, of course, went to Trinity and then finally went over to Central Christian Church. I am just a young man in knickers in those days. So, she thought I should be a singer because she was musically inclined. At home she would play the piano and I was supposed to sing along with her. I was not too bad, I guess from what I know.

I sang from the pulpit of the Central Christian Church to the church people more times than one on some occasions of sort. So, I am a young man in knickers when I am singing. Knickers may not be know today but they were short pants with elastic at the knee.

E: Were you expected to go to Sunday School and to attend church every Sunday?

W: We went to Sunday School regularly, yes sir. As a matter of fact when I was baptized in Central Christian Church . . . I had a flashlight about the time I was baptized and that was not too good because I had the flashlight with me at the time. So, that is one of the things I look back and say, "How did Father ever put up with that sort of a young man," but he did.

E: What were Sundays like in the Williamson family at that time?

W: Well, we are back in horse and buggy days. We had a horse and buggy on Warren Avenue in a large barn with hay mounds inside. It was a farm. The old farm had been divided. Part of it had gone to one side of the family, which was east of Market Street to South Avenue. Father's part of it was from Market Street to Hillman Street. As a matter of fact, as I recall, the first baseball field of the Youngstown Baseball was at the corner of Hillman and Warren Avenue. There was a fence around it and as a youngster I used to walk up there and look through the side of the fence at the baseball games. Now, this is the earliest baseball, I think, in Youngstown. Baseball later went on out to Glenwood Avenue and then it went over on the North side.

E: Were all games played on Sunday?

W: Well, I can't answer you that. I am going back beyond the time, I can't . . . I would say mostly were weekend games. I don't think it was as well organized as that. That is where the first baseball field was that I know of at least. I am just a youngster big enough to peek through the hole.

E: Getting back to Sunday, you went to Sunday School and then you went to church. What did you do the rest of the Sunday?

W: On Sunday we . . . This is before Market Street bridge was in. We would go by buggy down South Avenue and across the bridge down there to go to Sunday School. We went by horse and buggy and came back. On Sunday afternoons we would go over into Mill Creek Park and go down, I recall going down there in the buggy and there

were young men at the springs, at the side of the road, who had tin cups. Father would give them \$.05 for a cup of water and at the same time they would water the horse in the trough at this particular spring. There were several of them in Mill Creek Park in those days. I remember particularly the tin cup and \$.05 for a tin cup of water. We were in a buggy and a horse.

E: Would you take like a picnic lunch to spend the afternoon there?

W: I don't recall in those very early days of that, no. It was merely a drive through the park.

E: Which would take a good part of the afternoon?

W: Yes, oh yes. Of course, it was nothing like Mill Creek Park today.

E: In the evening did you have church services you went to or was this family time?

W: No, I don't recall to much of the Sunday evening service because it was downtown. Which was a mile and half by a back road. We are back about 1910, I am talking about.

E: If we went by seasons and I would say as you were a youngster what occupied your summer? What types of things did you look forward to doing?

W: Well, that is interesting too. I am surprised to have my memory come back into some of this too. There were a number of us boys around Delason Avenue and Warren Avenue and we used to kick the can up the street and so on. We played Ducky on the Rock but I don't know of anybody that plays Ducky on the Rock anymore.

E: You will have to explain that to us. What is Ducky on the Rock?

W: Ducky on the Rock is you have a large rock someplace, then you find one that is not quite as large as that, that you can handle yourself in your hand. You put your ducky on top of that rock and then everybody else has a ducky and they stand off so far from that rock and throw their ducky over to try to knock your ducky off the top of the rock. When you do that you are supposed to go grab your ducky and run back to the beginning of the line so that you are not having to keep your ducky on the rock. So, the next fellow puts his up there and everybody dobs at it, and you run back. I have not heard of ducky on the rock.

E: I haven't either, that is why I asked you to explain

it.

W: Now, we had a farm. A barn and hay mow's inside and everything on Warren Avenue because it was part of the farm. Back beyond that was an orchard, that orchard was full of apple trees and so forth. We youngsters, in those days, would climb the trees and eat the apples; green apples. We always took a handful of salt along with us. So, we ate a little green apple and we had salt too. We would get up and sit in the tree and eat green apples. Then we had a baseball diamond there and we played baseball. It was the kind of baseball that you count one, two, three. One is a batter, two is the catcher, three is the pitcher, four is first base, and so forth. Then, the game would go around. You were number one, you knock it out and you head off. If somebody catches your ball or causes you out for some reason, why then number two comes up to number one. You have a regular rotation game of baseball and we played that regularly. Also, we had fields of corn in there. We would pick the corn and boil it and we would have our parties way back in the woods behind there.

E: During the summer Warren, did you have specific chores that your parents expected you to do?

W: Oh yes, you bet your life I had something to do. That is one thing I had to do; mow the lawn and rake the leaves and do the various other things around the house. Our home at that time, Father's home, was on the corner. His father's home was next door. So, there were two substantial old homes on that corner for the family. It was my job to rake the leaves, to mow the grass.

E: Weed the garden?

W: I can't say that I ever weeded the garden. We had plenty of garden and we had grape arbors.

E: Did you get along well with your grandparents who lived next door?

W: Very much yes. Mother was a lady who liked to travel and did travel quite a little. When she traveled I always ate at grandmother's and so forth. Father had two sisters who did not marry and they were at home with grandmother. So, maybe I lived a good share of my time during the summer when mother might travel someplace; she went around the world and various other things of that nature. She enjoyed doing that sort of thing and father was busy at the carriage works and he was busy working all the time.

E: What was a typical day like at school then?

W: When I started to school I went to Delason Avenue School. I was there for a couple of years. About this time they built Garfield School down on Delason Avenue. Behind--which is now--the South High School was Garfield School. I went there. I think I got up to about the fourth grade down there. As I recall, the teacher was Miss Straman. A very lovely lady. Of course, we would have exercises outside and so forth.

I probably shouldn't tell this but it is worth while. In this particular case I guess Warren did something outside during the exercises or something that she didn't like. Anyway, Warren was called back into the school room. In that particular building the cloakroom was part of the regular room and it was along the edge of the room where the kids hung up their cloaks. Miss Straman didn't like, apparently, what Warren had done and so, she thought, maybe he ought to be spanked. I think in those days they did that in the schools. Well, we got into the cloakroom and Miss Straman said, "Hang on the hooks." You know, where the kids hang their hats. She wanted me to get my hands on the hooks while she hit me across the seat once or twice. I wouldn't do it. That was the beginning of the end of Warren in the public schools. Father and Mother, I guess, figured that I had better go someplace else. From that point on I went over to Yale School which was on Yale Avenue on the north side of town. As a matter of fact I remember about the fourth grade when the Titanic sunk. All of the whistles in the mills and so forth were blown at the time. What would that be, about 1912?

E: Yes.

W: Something like that and that was the sinking of the Titanic. It happened and I remember that in particular. Anyway, I stayed in Yale School until I graduated. The school moved from Yale Avenue out onto Ohio Avenue and took over the property that used to be the Youngstown Golf Club. I believe the golf club at this point moved out on Logan Avenue and became the Youngstown Country Club. Yale School took over the old club house and built an addition for the school right along the valley that crosses Ohio Avenue. I graduated from Yale School there because it had been turned from the country club into a school building. So, Yale School moved in and the country club moved on out to where they are today.

E: What was a typical day like? What time did school start? What types of subjects did you master?

W: Oh my! Are you sure that you are interested in all this sort of thing? This is a young man growing up?

E: That is right.

W: Well, I used to . . . When I went to school I had to go across town. I would take the streetcar down Market street to the square and I would transfer onto an Elm Street streetcar and go out Elm to . . . I can't remember the name but where it turns down--Thornton, I think--over the hill, or did turn down over the hill, to Logan Avenue. Then I walked from that point over to the school house which was up on Ohio Avenue. That was alright for awhile. Father was an understanding person and the next thing I needed was transportation of some sort to get to school. I am in about the seventh or eighth grade now. This was the early days of motorcycles. Mr.--I can't think of his name--had the Pope Motorcycle Company just at the head of Market Street Bridge on Ridge Avenue on the right, on the corner there. I don't think of the street but it is right there. He sold Pope Motorcycles and brother Joe had one. One of his friends Garnet Howard also had one. So, Warren had to have a motorcycle and used it to get back and forth to school. It was a one cylinder Pope motorcycle with a V-belt drive and a clutch on it. I rode back and forth to school on my Pope motorcycle. That wasn't too much fun in the wintertime but anyway it served the purpose.

E: Did you keep that all through high school?

W: No, no I lived just across the street from the high school. About this time South High had been built. South High was built on part of the old family farm too.

E: Was it?

W: The farm ran to South Avenue. Horace Williamson had the farm on the east side of Market Street. He had an interest in a lady by the name of Ida Osborn and Ida Osborn lived out at Osborn Grove. Which was out by Florida Avenue on Market Street. He built himself a fine home there on Market Street at Warren Avenue to marry Ida Osborn. Well, about the time he was ready to move in, Ida decided she didn't want to get married. So, the home was over there and vacant. Bales Campbell came along. Bales Campbell occupied the new house and sold off lots for Horace in the various parts of his farm. This was the development of the south side, the earliest development. As time went on, and the south side developed, they felt they needed a high school. So, they took over this property and built South High School there. About this time I graduated from Yale

School, and later attended South High School. I was never much of a student. I was too busy doing other things. Some of them I can repeat and others I can't. I went to South High School, but I am also interested in amateur radio too about this time. Anyway Horace's house was moved over onto the corner of Delason Avenue and Market Street became Youngstown's Southside Library. The first Southside Library they had was the old Horace Williamson home that had been moved off of the property so South High School could be built.

E: Did you as a student go into South High School when it was practically brand new?

W: No, my brother Joe did. My brother, who is Joseph Williamson, went into it when it was brand new. I didn't get into it right exactly at that time.

E: You know there was the other school, or the Rayen School as they referred to it . . .

W: South High opened in 1911.

E: Yes. The only high school we had in the whole system was . . .

W: Was Rayen.

E: The Rayen School as the old timers refer to it. Of course, when South was built, obviously there was a major or an automatic rivalry.

W: Yes, certainly there was.

E: Did you share in that rivalry as a student?

W: I went to South High School and they played football. In that respect I shared in it. There wasn't much rivalry as far as I was concerned in that particular case. South High developed, or was opened, in 1911. In this year see I am twelve or thirteen and a half years old and I am fooling with amateur radio across the street. I am more interested in that than I am going to school. I never was a student as such.

E: You mentioned earlier there were other things you were more interested in doing than going to school or doing your school work. You want to comment on some of those things you did?

W: Well, I don't know. There are a lot of things I did I don't want to comment on. I can tell you that.

E: Statute of limitation has run out Warren.

W: Well, I kind of lost my thought as to where I was in this discussion we are having.

E: Things you would rather do than school.

W: I was not a good student. I got up to about the time I was a junior in South High School and I am still interested in amateur radio. Father and Mother had the feeling that maybe Warren was not associating with boys that were the best for him to associate. He might get into trouble. So, they decided that I ought to go someplace else and get me away from the crew. I went to Valparaiso, Indiana and started school there for awhile. I was not the best student in any of the classes there. There was also a school there that taught wireless; Dodges. Now, I had trouble picking up that name; Mr. Dodge. So, I decided that I ought to go to Dodges Institute of Telegraphy. I went down there. Of course, I was reasonably good because of my amateur work.

After I had been at Dodges for awhile I went to . . . I went to Chicago and took a U.S. Government examination for a first class wireless operator. I had a motorcycle out there too, as I remember. Father, how he put up with me I don't know. Anyway, I went out to Chicago and passed the examination. It seems there was some company who had a ship, out of Chicago. They wanted an operator and I was fully licensed to operate a wireless station on any ship, for I had a 1st Commercial Government license as a radio operator. Mr. Dodge told them yes, he had an operator. I guess he made arrangements with them for me. He called me in one day and he said, "Williamson, I've got a ship here and a job for you out of Chicago." I said, "Well Mr. Dodge, I don't want a job. I don't want any ship." We went on after that for awhile. Next thing I know it was only a couple of days that I had a call from Father. Father said, "Son, I think you better come home." Apparently Mr. Dodge must have said that his son was playing around or doing something. Anyway, Father said, "Come home." I packed up and went home. When I got home, the next thing I got interested in was getting in the Army.

This was World War I and in 1918 I was eighteen years old about this time. I went into the Army and was a wireless operator. During the seventh service southern battalion signal corps down in . . . Well, I went to El Paso first and then went to a little town by the name of Pecos, Texas. We were a part of the military intelligence department and were checking all of the radio stations along the Mexican border. That was the source that the Germans were using to get their information into the United States. We knew every radio station, where it was along the border, and we copied everything

they sent. I went into the Army in that purpose in World War I and spent about a year and a half at it until the war was over.

E: When you went into the service did you get any additional training in telegraphy?

W: I can't say that I got additional training in telegraphy because our operation in those days was strictly to copy the Mexican stations. We had some of the earliest vacuum tubes and equipment in those days. I remember we had the first direction finders--the loops antenna you know. We would put the loop on a station in Mexico. For their operating hours we would keep a loop on it. We knew exactly where every transmission was from and we copied all of the code words. This is all dots and dashes, remember this.

E: That is right. What types of things, messages, were these Mexican . . .

W: Mostly code, coded messages.

E: Yes. What were they saying?

W: We don't know, they were coding. They weren't saying anything. Now, there is no voice transmission here. It is all code.

E: Yes, I understand. It is all in code, then what did you do with it?

W: We would send it to Washington.

E: What would they do with it? Did they have a system to decode it?

W: They had a system to decode it, no doubt. There must have been at least, I think, four or five of our operations along the Mexican border, from California on, clear down to the Gulf, who were copying what they said and sending it to Washington. We didn't know whatever happened to it after that.

I have something now that comes to memory that is very interesting. One morning I was on watch listening to a station that was transmitting code. For no reason at all a voice came on the air. This lady had picked up her telephone and called her butcher and ordered her meat for the day and hung up her telephone. Now, this is the first voice transmission I ever heard. It came in over our system, which was essentially for dots and dashes. I have asked a number of people why this happened. The explanation of it was that the telephone to her home had a grounding system on it on the their

- telephone lines. That grounding system was arching and creating a continuous wave and she, by using the telephone, modulated that continuous wave. We were close enough to that energy that we heard it or I heard it.
- E: Any of those stations shutting down?
- W: No, we didn't know much after that. It was not too long after that that the war ended. Then, we were disbanded and so forth. I was seventh service signal corps southern battalion out of Fort Worth, I think it was. My serial number was 33-72-830. That was my number in the signal corps.
- E: Those eighteen months or so that you spent in the Army, do you recall how you felt about it at the time? Did you enjoy it at the time, the new experience to be in another part of the country?
- W: Well, we lived in tents out in the edge of town in Pecos, Texas. They had the usual floor boards and floor sides and a tent on top. We enjoyed it. It was that stage, time in life, when I was eighteen years old. After I got out of that I went back home and, of course, Father and Mother felt that son ought to have an education. They decided they would send me off to school. I went to Boston and went with the idea of going into tech. I got into Boston, and Mother went along. She went to the art museum and took some courses. I went to the Chauncey Hall School down on Copley Square. How I am remembering this, I don't know. On Copley Square and I wasn't much of a student either. I had been in the Army and so forth.
- E: How long did Mother hang around here to make sure that Warren got an education?
- W: That is right. That was their one object and Warren wasn't to much of a student.
- E: He would rather be doing some radio work?
- W: Yes, that is true. Well, that gets into a long story now. I came back from Boston and thought that I ought to go to school. I went up and because I had been in the Army I got into the University of Michigan. I spent two years at the University of Michigan. I didn't do too bad there because I had had all the fooling around that I wanted to do. I was willing to spend a little time studying. I didn't do too bad. I finally joined Acacia fraternity. I felt that I would like to go another place too so I went up to Madison, Wisconsin. It seems that I was beginning to think about finding somebody to live with, a wife. I had traveled around the country after I had left Boston. I

came home and another fellow, Dal Nute, and I took an old car. We spent about a year and a half all through the west. We traveled most of the national parks. I was about twenty years old at that time. Anyway we drove 17,500 miles and lived out for a year and a half. We traveled all the national parks that we could. We cooked and we carried rifles and pistols. Nobody paid any attention to that. That was a good experience. I was beginning to worry about getting married and having a family now. I am about twenty-one.

E: Who is funding all this?

W: Well, I had got some money out of the Army that I had saved. That put me on the trip and we drove an old EMF 30 that Father gave me. We went west and I wired houses for Leroy C. Hooker in Los Angeles during the wintertime. I saved my money, so did my partner. If we went broke I used the telegraph and usually father helped.

After that was over I came back home and my cousin Randall Detchon said to me, "Well, why don't you go up to Ashtabula with me." He had been up there to a wedding; best man or some such thing as that. We drove up to Ashtabula. Of course, as I said, I had been looking for the right girl all the time.

E: You looked in California and all the way across the country.

W: I am looking for the right girl.

E: Haven't found the right one yet?

W: Not yet I haven't. So, I go up to Ashtabula and walk into a home of one of my wife's relatives. I'm talking about a wife I don't have yet. Anyway, I'm walking up to the house and there sitting in a porch swing was Isabel De Nio. When I saw her she was it. We were married later and that begins a . . .

E: How did you get introduced to her? You had a lot of courage and fortitude but certainly in that matter I think you hesitated a little bit didn't you?

W: I remember she was up there visiting with somebody else and her home was New Castle, Pennsylvania. She was visiting with another boy and he was out playing golf. So, she and I got acquainted. I decided I was going to see her again. I contacted her in New Castle. She had gone back home and she later became a secretary for the China Company over there.

E: Shenango?

W: No, it wasn't Shenango.

E: New Castle China?

W: No, it wasn't china. They made toilet properties; toilet seats, sinks, and such. About this time I thought that I ought to go back to school. Of course, I would love to have Isabel back to school with me. I went to the University of Wisconsin and that didn't last very long either.

While I was in Madison we decided that we ought to get married, so I checked the county record file there. I found I couldn't get married in Madison without spending a week before hand. I didn't like that. So, I invited her to come to Wisconsin for the University's "Jay Hop," and met Isabel in Chicago. We went over to a restaurant, some cafeteria place. We decided we were going to get married. I got a pamphlet, one of these catalogs or pamphlets that they have; "What to do while in Chicago." We looked up a good church out on Michigan Avenue. We both got into a cab and went out there. Of course, I went over and got a license first.

E: You had the presence of mind to do that. (laughter)

W: Yes, I had the presence of mind to get the license to get married. We went out to this church, which was a Methodist church. Of course, they didn't know we were coming but when we got there I went in and asked them if we could be married. They agreed to marry us and the minister was there and so forth. We went in and as I remember we didn't even take our galoshes off. It was snowing in the middle of the winter and we didn't take our galoshes off when we were in there. So, we were in and got married and that is when Father said, "Well, now that you have taken on this kind of a responsibility, come home and go to work."

So, Warren came home and went to work. He went to work for the Republic Iron and Steel Company in Center Street, in the employment office. That was a great experience too because I learned how to play checkers and sleep sitting up. That is what it was in the employment office of the Republic Iron and Steel Company at Center Street. I was there for awhile.

Then I had to have a place to live. "Osborn Grove" then, of the lady I mentioned that Horace Williamson didn't marry, was a farm on Market Street. It was being developed. My father then was in the real estate business. I got a second floor apartment at 125 West Boston Avenue. We lived there for awhile and I worked in the mill. Finally, we decided that we didn't have

enough space for the youngster that was coming along. We moved out to Auburndale Avenue and rented a house out there that was owned by the U.S. Steel Company out on West Federal Street. Anyway, it was one of their houses that they had built for their employees, which they hadn't rented. I rented it and we moved in. It was new and a fine house. That is where the first broadcast from WKBN was made from the livingroom of that home at 26 Auburndale Avenue on September 26, 1926.

E: Before we get to that, how did the parents feel about this wedding that took place in Chicago?

W: They had met Isabel before hand. She was in New Castle and I would drive to New Castle and back. They met her and she was with the family. They liked her very much. She was a lovely person.

E: What were the qualities that attracted you to your wife?

W: I don't know, I don't know how to answer that one.

E: You see her sitting on a porch up here at Ashtabula.

W: She was a nice looking girl. I don't know how to answer that. When you fall in love how do you know why?

E: There are qualities about a person that you . . . You like their spirit.

W: Let's say that she had all of those. That is about the best way to answer your question. And she knew how to cook. She didn't do bad at that. I remember one night we were in New Castle at Mother McFarland's, that was her name. Her mother was Mrs. McFarland. She said to me . . . She had just heard that we had gotten married. She said, "Well, now that you have got her what are you going to do with her." I said, "Well, we have an apartment over in Youngstown, 125 West Boston Avenue, and we would like to have you come over and visit us anytime. That is where we are going to be living."

E: Did you get along well with her parents?

W: Very well, they were lovely people. I didn't have any trouble there.

E: Can you tell us something about your new home, the business adventure you got into, at the same time you were still working down at the steel office?

W: Yes, I can do that. We lived at, I said before, 125

West Boston. When we found that it wasn't large enough for the family we were going to have, we had to move. We moved to a home on 26 Auburndale Avenue. We moved into this home and now we had a new bedroom, another bedroom. Our first youngster Barbara was born about this time; May 9, 1925. Barbara was born in May of 1925. We are moving in there about late 1924, or 1925. After we got ourselves settled . . . Bear in mind now, I am still working at the employment office of the Republic Iron and Steel Company down on Center Street. I am driving back and forth. I am working a day turn, so it worked out pretty well.

I recall that after I had gotten out of the Army, having been in radio all the time in one way or another. My mind said to me, "Well, I have had enough of that. I don't want any more." During a period of time there, just after that, I was not particularly interested in radio as such. I had this period in the Army plus the amateur radio before. As we got into this new house, and it was a new house too. It was owned by one of the steel companies when they were building homes for their employees. Anyway, after I got into this house I got the idea I ought to get back into radio again. So, I started out.

In order to get into radio I had to have a tower of some sort to attach an antenna to. That meant I was going to have to build some sort of a tower in a back yard that didn't have anything but space. I adopted a system that we had had in the Army, in which the portable transmitters in the signal core had sections that stack on top of each other. I decided that is about the only way I can put up a tower back there. I got some corrugated down spouting, if you know what I mean. They are gutter drain pipes about six or seven feet long. I wired the outside end of them with wire and soldered it on so the ends would be secure. Then I stacked these things one on top of another. On that wall up there you will find a picture of this home. I don't know, perhaps you would like to take a picture of it for here is a picture of the home and the antenna system. That antenna system was held on one end by this tower I built in the field. I would guess it was probably twice as high as the house; fifty feet perhaps. One end of the antenna was attached to on it, the other to the house. So, I got back into the amateur radio business. Our group of hams, as we were known, enjoyed each other's company and association.

E: What did your neighbors think about this?

W: My neighbors didn't bother, either on the back street or either side of me didn't bother. As a matter of fact I took some of the guy wires over onto the proper-

ty along side of me. They didn't object to that at all. I am back again in the amateur radio business, having been pretty sure I would not get in it again after I got out of the Army. Anyway, I am working at the mill and our first . . . We got into the home and got settled. Our first thing that happened was Barbara, who was born. We had now a bedroom for her. Also, another bedroom in which Isabel could have somebody that might stay at home in the night when I was away. Give her some feeling of security, instead of being all alone. Now, we are in to a situation where I . . . A friend of mine, by the name of Creed Chorpenning and I were amateurs. As a matter of fact, our amateur association started to build an amateur station up at the corner of the road into Niles. McKinley Heights is it, on the way to Niles?

E: Yes.

W: I got a telephone pole from the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, which they put on a truck. We hauled that up there and set it up and had a little building there. We were going into an amateur association building. We amateurs at that particular state were pretty much a group of ourselves.

E: Was this sort of like a little club house?

W: Yes, a little club. Like a chicken coop, not a big one. So, we got into that. That didn't last to long. Creed Chorpenning and I got closer and closer together. Creed was a very intelligent fellow and a good person to associate with. We decided between ourselves we ought to have a service department. He was repairing radios in those days but he was working in another place that he didn't have. I said, "Creed, why don't you and I get together here. I will build a bench down in the basement of my home. I got lots of room in that basement." So, we built a bench. We moved into there and we named the business that we had just started The Radio Electric Service Company. I said to Chorpenning, when we got into it, "I think that after . . ." We had been into it a little while. I said, "Chorp, why don't we go into the broadcasting business?" This is the time that broadcasting was just beginning. As a matter of fact, you could get a license for asking for it. I said, "If we got into the broadcasting business, and we ran a broadcasting station, people would let us repair their radios." That was the whole idea of why we went into the broadcasting business, was to publicize ourselves as being service people and repairing radios. We not only repaired radios but Chorpenning built radios. In those days radios were not to many of them completed and available that you could buy; Attwater Kent was one. In those early days there were a few

major concerns, like General Electric and Westinghouse who had the patent rights on circuitry.

This is the early day too of the development of the vacuum tube. Vacuum tubes were made and were used as rectifiers. It was about this time that they put a grid in the tube. Well, the grid was just a wire between the plate and the filament. The object of the grid was to control the circuitry that ran through the tube and to control it. Old Dr. DeForest is the one who completed that. That changed the whole tube situation, the vacuum tube system, to where you could use it and control it. We got into the business of the Radio Electric Service Company and Chorpenning worked in the basement of my home for quite some time. I had this amateur radio station on this tower that I told you about.

E: Warren, what did these radios cost that Creed was building in the basement? You sold them to the public right, you built them and sold them?

W: Oh, we built them and sold them. Now, there were some already made radios. This is the beginning of the earliest radio receivers. It hadn't developed because the people who owned the patent rights on circuitry and the vacuum tube was just coming into its own. You ask me what they would cost and I am going to have to guess; \$75, \$80 for a little radio.

So, we get into the service business and it grows and grows. It becomes a pretty fancy business. I make application then after talking with Chorpenning and agreeing to do this. I made application to the Department of Commerce and got a license for a broadcasting station. Well, this is the very beginning of the interference that there was between radio stations, back in those days as the wave of one station would beat with the wave of another, you would get a whistle on the air; a heterodyne was what you would get on you receiver. Well, we searched the band, across the band of frequencies, from I think 1500 to 550 kilocycles. We searched that to where we picked a point that we thought we would create the less interference. We asked to use that frequency and it was granted. So, when we got on the air with a transmitter we got quite a fine public reaction from our people that came to visit us. We would read the news on the air. The first person, I think one of them, who came to visit was a chap by the name of Walter Kauffman, who lived over on Bryson Street. He had a good voice so he became our announcer. We operated this broadcasting from the livingroom of the home.

Of course, after you get into the business you find out

that one of things you need is programing. You don't get programing easy for hours on end.

E: How many hours a day did you operate this?

W: We only operated it for a few hours in the evening, is when we did. That was the time when we were free and would get together. We operated out of that for a time. The transmitter was on the second floor in a back room over the back porch. That is where the transmitter was. It was 7.5 watts of power. That 7.5 watts was one little vacuum tube that created 7.5 watts of power. We got out pretty well and got some pretty good reception.

E: Could you get out ten miles with it?

W: Oh, probably about ten but not much further than that. That became the next . . . One of the problems in the future was to increase the power and to get more coverage. Anyway, we ran the thing and we went into that. September 26, 1926, was the day we had our first broadcast. Then in November the Youngstown Vindicator got interested and wanted to put on the election returns. That was alright with us but how would we get them. So, the Vindicator installed a wire system between their office and the bathroom of the new home. We had one of these telephones. Probably you may have seen them, the old style that are on a board about two feet long and about ten inches wide. Well, we stood it in the wash basin in the bathroom and the bath tub was just behind. You sat on the edge of the tub and used the telephone. We copied the returns that the Vindicator gave us. So, the first election returns then in November . . . I have forgotten who the president was . . .

E: Is this in 1928?

W: No, this would have been in 1926 or 1929. I'm sorry but I will have to look.

E: We had a President's election 1920, 1924, and 1928.

W: It would have been in the fall of 1926.

E: Yes, that would have been either the Congressional elections or the local elections. We elected Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover that decade.

W: Oh, they were in office. Well, I don't remember. After all now, I am trying to go back sixty years and recall what went on. That is not to simple for an old man.

E: What did it cost you to run that station?

W: Not any amount at all. It was pretty small, 7.5 watts. The transmitter was up in the room over the back porch. That is the same one that was used before.

E: What did Mrs. Williamson think about all this going in her new home?

W: She put up with me, let's put it that way. She is raising a child too. She had some help, a girl to take care of some of the kitchen work. In those days you could hire people to work in your home very easily. Isabel had to have help, so she did have a girl who came in in the morning and stayed during the day.

E: She never said, "This telephone in the wash basin is going to far."

W: Oh no, but this was only during the election returns that the telephone was there. It was upstairs. We had the reception upstairs because we didn't want to put it down where the microphone was in the livingroom. We got the returns from the Vindicator and then took them downstairs and gave them to . . . I think Walter Kauffman was the announcer then. We gave them to him and he reported the election returns. Well, that was our first important broadcast. Then there was a chap by the name of Arthur Brock. Arthur Brock had a radio sales place on Phelps Street under the Ritter and Myer Company. Which was on that corner at the time, the southwest corner facing on Federal Street.

Youngstown's first radio show, he put that on. That was from the Fitch building, which had just been built down at the corner of Commerce Street and Wick Avenue. It is now a parking garage and so forth. On the second floor of it he had the first annual radio show.

E: Did you charge him for air time?

W: No, we were working for love. Don't get money into this yet. We are just doing this for the love of something to do and for the fun, I guess, that there was in it. In the first annual radio show I sold Brock the idea that we would move the transmitter down there if he would give us space for the Radio Electric Service Company. To show the sets that we were making, or selling. We had Brumer Tulley radio receivers, I think, back about this time.

So, the radio show went on and I guess was a successful operation. The radio dealers around the town all showed up and had exhibits. Now, we are into a time, or been in a time, where dealers are displaying factory

made radio receivers. Anyway, that went on and I think also we decided we would also sell sets. About this time Thanksgiving came along with the Rayen South football game. We felt broadcasting was in order so we felt we should broadcast it. We moved the transmitter over to the second floor hall at Rayen School and we broadcast the Rayen School football game between Rayen and South. Which was something in those days because South High had just come in, more or less, recent years. Rayen and South were competitors. Anyway, we broadcast that game. I can't say that I think we did too good a job because we had some problems with the transmission and the microphone.

E: They obviously didn't have broadcast booths.

W: No, we were down on the side lines with the transmitter up in the back hall of the Rayen School. We were down on the sidelines of the field. Then we had a microphone line running all the way from the field up to the transmitter. The microphone line would pick up some of the transmission. So that spoiled our quality so that it was not what it would have been or should be. Anyway, we broadcast the Rayen-South game that year.

About this time Leonard Skeggs, who was the secretary of the Young Man's Christian Association, got interested in this thing and said, "Well, why don't you put your transmitter in the YMCA down here." This was another idea of how we might get programming someplace. "If you do that then we will give you the morning setting up exercises and morning religious service direct from the YMCA." So, Chorpenning and I talked it over for awhile and we thought, "Maybe this is a good idea. We will get some programing."

E: What types of things would you consider when you and Creed sat down here to talk about moving that transmitter? What kind of things were under consideration?

W: Well, the transmitter . . . The idea of getting some programing and the idea of having something that was worthwhile on the air, other than a few of us fooling around in the living room of the home . . . We did get a record player and we did play records. We did do other things. When you start building programing hour on end, you got yourself a job. This was necessary in the business if you were going to have anybody to listen to you.

E: In other words the move to the YMCA, and Skeggs providing you the space and so on, really now is the first step towards organized programing. A procedure that might even go to all day programing at some point in the future.

W: Yes, we looked at it as something of a way to develop what we had. We had gone beyond the point that we thought of initially, of just being in the business in order to get people to let us fix their radios. We have gone on beyond that into the development of WKBN. Really, this is the very beginning of the development of WKBN. Bear in mind now, we didn't have money. We were still working for love. We were running down to the YMCA each morning and broadcasting the YMCA's morning alter service and the religious programming, such things as that for the love of doing it. Well, that gets tiresome after awhile too. You can understand getting up every morning and doing that.

E: What kind of competition do you have at this time? Is there any other stations trying to do the same thing you are doing?

W: As we develop we find some people in town--this is just after the radio show--who get interested too in getting into the broadcasting business. Mr. V.E. Yaw, who operated a battery company, sold, I think, Willard storage batteries. He was located at 651 Market Street right next to the W.C. Zabel Company and was the leader who operated the V.E. Yaw Company. Mr. Yaw interested some very prominent Youngstown men to join with him in an application for a broadcasting station. This, of course, would be a competitor. We had no control over whether we had a competitor or didn't have a competitor. He did get a license but unfortunately he got into some problems with interference. When he put the station on the air it caused some heterodyning in radio receivers. People didn't like the idea of that because there was enough interference on the the air from other stations. Now we get another one in Youngstown and it creates interference. "I can't get Cleveland or Pittsburgh or Detroit like I used to get them." Mr. Yaw and his associates found themselves not to well reputed with the public. Their studios and transmitter were on the second floor of the Yaw building. They tried various things to get the trouble straightened out. They had bought a Western Electric transmitter. They hired an engineer here and an engineer there. Unfortunately, they didn't have, or seem to have, the knowledge or the ability to do what was necessary to do, which was wrapped up in Creed Chorpenning and myself. Particularly Creed who was a good engineer, or amateur and engineer. Of course, they went on for awhile operating there on the second floor of that building; of the Yaw battery company. They had a license, WMBW I believe it was. I have forgotten the frequency that they were assigned. They got in trouble with heterodyning and various other things. People didn't like them. It got down to that, to where eventually they gave up and closed up.

E: Were the people who had radios at that time writing letters to the editor or were they showing up at the station?

W: They were talking to the newspapers and newspapers were printing it. They are going down and talking to them and to everybody else. It was one of those things where, "You hurt my reception. I can't get Cleveland anymore because you create interference for us." Eventually after being on the air, and I am guessing again now, but I would say maybe six months, they decided that they were going to quit. I think maybe some of our friends in the YMCA may have helped them make the decision. Make a decision to quit too. I don't know anything about that. I merely assume that. Anyway, they decided to give up.

In the meantime you can appreciate that we were trying to make what we had better. To increase our power and to have greater coverage. Of course, WMBW got into this business by a license from the FCC who told them what frequency they should transmit on. We are in the business of broadcasting in the YMCA. Eventually WMBW decides to go out of business. We increased the power of our transmitter about this time to 50 watts then to 100 watts from the 7.5 watts. We built a new transmitter and we went to 100 watts of power. Fortunately we were amateurs as such and we knew what we were doing. So, we could rebuild this thing. The old one that you see down in the WKBN lobby now went out of business and another one came into business. Throughout the life of WKBN, clear up to the time it got to 5000 watts, we were continuously rebuilding or trying to improve what we had.

E: Now, was this Creed that was doing this?

W: I'm pretty active in it myself, too. Creed was a good engineer but I was an engineer also. So, I worked when I wasn't at the mill and building this or that. Creed worked on it too when he had the time to work on it. He was more of an engineer than was I at that time. Let's say that in fairness to him.

Anyway, we went to 100 watts of power and improved our coverage. We changed our antenna. We didn't have to have a pole down there for an antenna. We made arrangements with the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company to hook one wire on the Stambaugh Building on Central Square. Then we later built a tower on top of the Moyer building on the corner of Commerce and Walnut street, now occupied by the YMCA building.

E: It wasn't that Palace Theater complex was it?

W: No, it wasn't Palace Theater. Palace Theater was there on the corner.

E: Yes, that was in front of the YMCA, wasn't it?

W: Yes. This is back of the YMCA. They were in the clothing business.

Anyway, we stretched our antenna from Stambaugh Building to the top of this tower back there. It is a long story as to how the tower got into existence but Huffman Brothers Lumber Company, and Dur Huffman was the one who helped me in that particular stretch. To build a wooden tower on top of that building was no small job.

E: How did you get the line across the square?

W: Well, I can't tell you how we did it. I would say when you get a bunch of young people and they want to do something, they get it done. That is about all I know. Probably they threw a line down from the roof. I don't remember that. That was our antenna and so we got much better transmission and coverage with our 100 watts of power. Now we go on from there and then we tried to do things better.

On October 13, 1928 we went to 500 watts. That means we have built . . . Discarded the little transmitter, built another one with larger vacuum tubes, and increased our power to 500 watts.

E: Are you getting any kind of flak from other smaller stations around that you are interfering with their transmission?

W: No, we didn't have problems of that to amount to anything at all. Our biggest problem was to put things together with what we had. We didn't have much money. Although, we were selling time; we were beginning to sell time to people who wanted publicity and got money for it. We are getting a little income now. At first we didn't have any, we worked for love. So, we built a transmitter and got higher power and better coverage. People now want to advertise with us. We got in the business of selling time. On January 30, 1939--now this is two years after the twenty-eight when we went to 500 watts--we went to 1000 watts of power.

The Federal Communication Commission, I think, came into existence at this time. It wasn't in existence when we first started. When the FCC came into existence they began to tell us what we could do. So, they first gave us a frequency with a small station down in

southern Ohio with divided time operation. Now, that means you can't be on the air all the time. You have to sit down together and agree when you are going to broadcast. The two of us were not on the air at the same time. We didn't get along too well with that over a period, which wasn't extensive. We are working with the YMCA now.

E: What was the difficulty with that station in southern Ohio, both of you wanted to be on at prime listening time?

W: Everybody wanted to buy time at the time of . . . Usually the dinner hour and hear the news and so on. They couldn't be on, we couldn't be on, so we were working now with the FCC for a solution. Leonard Skeggs is quite active and very decidedly helpful to us. It would help the YMCA too for us to be in better shape. He and I traveled to Washington and so forth and talked to the FCC.

Finally, the FCC moves us away from this station and we come into a divided time operation with Ohio State University, WOSU. That happens and we are at a 1000 watts and we share time with OSU. That is in January 30, 1939. Well, we have the same problem with OSU. Mr. Higgy, who ran the station for the University, and I were together time and time again on our operating hours. Of course, the University didn't operate on certain hours. We had a schedule of time which was pretty good; sometimes we would be on at night and we would be on in the day time. It permitted us to operate at hours that were better for us and also, I guess, better for Mr. Higgy. He didn't have to bother too much at off hours. Anyway, now we are with Ohio State University. I can say to you at this point that I spent fifteen years working with the FCC and Ohio State and various other stations to cure the divided time that I had. That is fifteen years believe it or not.

E: In other words, practically all during the 1930's and up to the Second World War, roughly, you were working on a divided time schedule?

W: Well, we are working on divided time here until April 18, 1941. From 1939 to 1941 we were on divided time. Our competition locally had gone out of business. We had gotten into various problems; I mentioned that Arthur Brock was a problem for us.

We had a letter as we got into business--this, I am going back now to the early years--from Cleveland. The lawyers in Cleveland represented the music company or ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. So, they said, "You can't broadcast copy-

written music at any time unless you have a license from ASCAP." We didn't have any license and we didn't have any money either but we were broadcasting phonograph records. Certainly, that was what they were talking about. We felt, and after I checked with my lawyers and everybody, they could fine us \$125 or something like that for just one violation of a copywrite.

He was publicizing his company. He gave \$500 to WKBN. That then began to create another problem. That problem happened to be who had what interest in the operation of WKBN, the Radio Electric Service Company or The Brock Radio Shop. Anyway, we finally decided that we would turn that over to the lawyers and let them decide who owned what in this thing. Andy Henderson, you may not have known him, Andy Henderson was my lawyer. The other fellow for Mr. Brock, can't think of his name. They heard it and finally they wrote a finding for us. It turned out the Williamson and Chorpenning had sixty percent of the company and Brock had forty percent of the company. Brock had a right to have his company on the air anytime he wanted to without paying for it. This created a problem with yours truly. That went on for awhile and we put up with that. That is mixed up in this fifteen years of business that I'm talking about.

- E: What did ASCAP charge in the 1930's and early 1940's for every time you played one of their tunes? The other one was BMI, wasn't it?
- W: BMI; this was the broadcasters that got into a business themselves and created their own music company. BMI came into existence, and BMI was originally financed by the broadcasting industry. Including WKBN, who had its share of interest in it. BMI came in and from that point on then ASCAP had their tail feathers clipped maybe a little bit.
- E: What did ASCAP charge? Did they charge . . .
- W: You had to have a license.
- E: Then you had to log every song that you played.
- W: No, we didn't have to log. If you had a license that is all they wanted. That is all. That came out of the Cleveland lawyers that I mentioned. Anyway, as I said, we went on from that point in an effort to finally get a full time operation. We are broadcasting the news and the news services come on the air. As a part of it all, still of this, we joined CBS in September 1929. We were one of sixteen stations in the network affiliation at that time. That is 1929.

E: What was the attraction to join CBS?

W: Programming. NBC had two networks at that time; the red and the blue. I don't remember now. NBC was on the air and finally gave up one of those networks, which later got into ABC and Mutual got into the picture too. We then have CBS and we have a problem because of time division in our operations and our ability to take network time.

E: Did CBS come and talk to you or did you go talk to them?

W: I spent time on the road. I'm on the road practically all the time. I go to CBS and sell them the idea that they ought to be on Youngstown. Finally did get it and this is back in the early days of Mr. Paley, Mr. Paley I think is a year younger than I am and he is the one who put CBS together. He is now aged and away from that. Maybe CBS isn't as well off as it used to be when he was there directing it. Anyway, we are now in that.

As I say, I spent fifteen years trying to correct our divided time. It seems now we would get WFMJ as a competitor and would have to compete with a full time operation. The one way it seemed we might solve our problem would be to enter into an agreement with the Cleveland Plain Dealer who had stations in Cleveland and Columbus. They wanted to improve their operation with frequency changes so we got into an FCC application with them which was known as the Ohio Shift. The application got nowhere with the FCC for about three years, because of political problems and was finally withdrawn, but in the course of time the Plaindealer became the owner of Mr. Brock's stock in WKBN and they were my partners for a period of time. They were not interested in Youngstown radio, so eventually they sold their interest to me. It may be interesting to note at this point, that the band of frequencies assigned for radio broadcasting were from 1500 kc at the low end of the dial to 550 kc at the upper end. It happens that the longer wave lengths at 550 kc end of the band are much more efficient than those at the 1500 kc end. The longer waves tend to follow the curvature of the earth while the shorter ones go into the sky and are reflected back many miles away on reaching the heavy side layer of gas in the sky--perhaps a thousand miles or more before they come back down.

Another problem present at this time was a gentleman from Cleveland named Clayton Townes. He bought control of Arthur Brock's stock in WKBN and became the manager of time sales for WKBN. He sold considerable time on the air but he had other ideas which had to do with

taking our 570 kc to Columbus. I succeeded in getting rid of this problem when the Cleveland: Plain Dealer became interested with me; however, he sold a lot of our time for money that turned out to be bad debts which the station had to write off. But getting rid of Mr. Brock was worth while. The Plain Dealer remained my partner for a period of time but eventually offered their interest to me for purchase which I assumed.

E: This was early WFMJ?

W: Yes, this was early WFMJ.

E: And the Vindicator.

W: And the Vindicator. Well, it so happens that in the very early days of my efforts, I went to Mr. Maag and his brother and said, "Now wouldn't you like to buy an interest in WKBN." The Vindicator at that point didn't feel they wanted to get in the business of broadcasting, and other newspapers felt the same way. So, there was no interest in it. Later on, I think, the Vindicator would have liked to have been in with WKBN. The Cleveland Plaindealer had different ideas of what they wanted to do and I had an agreement with the Plaindealer that existed. This is part of the fifteen years, now bear this in mind. Finally, Mr. Maag got his station on the air. We couldn't compete and maintain our audience with him, even with the network we had, because we were off and on the air. When we were off the air there was no station on the air on our 570 kc. There wasn't another one that came on in our place at all. So, I had to go to the Plaindealer and talk to them up there, and say, "Now I have got to make a change in this. We can't exist in this. I have got to find a way out of the divided time operation that we have."

I was president of the Ohio Association of Broadcasters earlier in the years. One day we had a meeting in Columbus and we are talking with Andy Ring, chief engineer of the FCC at the time; we were having hearings and all this sort of thing. Anyway, we finally worked out an arrangement whereby the University station WOSU would get 640 kc, which then had a station operating on that frequency down in Texas--I think it was 640--and we got full time operation on 570. To get this added time we had to build a directional antenna in order to force the energy that we radiated in certain directions. So, it would not create interference with other stations in those directions. In order to get things moving and get things on the way, I found I needed to buy a new transmitter for the University and give it to them. About the time they got a new transmitter in everything turned out to be hunky-dory.

E: You had to buy to OSU a transmitter?

W: I bought OSU and gave them a 5 kilowatt transmitter. That was part of an arrangement to get Ohio State to go on 640 kc. They needed a new transmitter and so I . . . It cost me about \$2500 just between you and me.

E: This is a time now you build this directional antenna?

W: Okay, now we are back up . . . Now we are into another war about this time too; World War II. I don't remember the date of it.

E: December 7, 1941.

W: 1941. We build then a directional antenna but the worst part of it is I had to build the darn thing during the war. There were regulation during the war that you couldn't do certain things because of the war effort and need for this, that, and the other thing. Well, I bought four towers. Fortunately in these days, we are selling time and we are making money. Up till the earlier days we worked for love. No, we didn't. I mean we weren't paying big salaries but we made a little money. So, when I got into the Plaindealer thing . . . Anyway, I buy four towers and I put the foundations in and get the four towers erected. I just have them up when the government would like to have my four towers. They wanted . . . This was the time that we were worrying about bombing from Russia over the Arctic Circle. They were building radio stations up along the border in order to keep track of it and they wanted my towers but I fortunately had them up. They wouldn't take them down.

I didn't have the other equipment it took to build an antenna. I had to have electric meters for this and for that. So, I got some of my friends and said, "Have you got any meters?" It so happened I had a right to repair meters back in the days of World War II but I didn't have the right to buy any new ones. Nor would the rights be issued. So, I went to my friends and I bought all the old used meters I could get. I figured I would send them back to the factory and have them rebuilt to the size that would fit for the purpose that I need. This is the way I got meters for a directional antenna back in the days of World War II.

E: Who put up these towers for you now?

W: A fellow from Texas. I can't give you the name. It is in the records but I can't tell you his name right off hand. He erected the towers for us.

E: Now, are these the towers that sit out behind the offices here now?

W: No. Those towers are a pile of junk out there nowadays. They were taken down. We then had an application for a new radio transmitter and we bought a farm out on Western Reserve Road, out south of town. We put six towers up there and built a new directional system because we wanted to build a tall tower out where we are. We built a new AM broadcasting station out there, which is now in operation.

Well, that reminds me of another problem. One that came along right about this time. That is . . . It is a good thing I had that recollection there because I have lost a particular point in here. We are in the YMCA, and we are operating for the YMCA, and we are an eleemosynary (comercial business) institution in a building public supported. Some people in the town didn't like that. So, WKBN had to move out of the YMCA. We were in the YMCA downtown from 1927 to 1952.

So, that posed a new problem for me too during this period of time. That was we had to move from the YMCA lock, stock, and barrel, because we had become a commercial institution in the YMCA. The question was will we build downtown or will we build out on the southside. I finally decided we would build in the southside. So, we bought a property out there on Sunset Boulevard and put our transmitter out there. Finally, after some years with a single antenna which was providing the split time operation at the moment, we finally put up three additional towers. That became a directional antenna in which, by adjustment, we controlled the energy that went to other stations on that particular frequency; 570 kc. That was New York City WMCA, Syracuse WSYR, Asheville, North Carolina and Yankton, South Dakota. So, our four towers had to divide our energy up and force energy out in other directions than to New York and so forth. At least this gave us full time operation. That was the important thing to us. Still I had preserved the 570 kc, which I said before I enjoyed because of its efficiency. Now, we are in full time operation and beginning to wonder what comes next. Anyway, we have two stations now in Youngstown operating on radio and along comes, what next, television. Television gets into the picture.

E: Before you go to television Warren, what kind of problems did World War II present to a station that had now, by the 1930's, got itself well established? You were getting good air time and then suddenly this World War II. What kind of problems did that present to the station?

- W: We were listening, for the most part, to recorded war news from England that came over here. As a matter of fact, some of those broadcasts from England I have recordings which we made of those. That is the way we were getting our news in those days. It isn't like it is today.
- E: These were sixteen inch audio disks, weren't they?
- W: Yes, they were aluminum coated, plastic disks; sixteen inch disks. Don't ask me the names now of who were the prominent news people at that time because I would have trouble picking it up. My recollection isn't that good. I think that is probably one of things that came out of the war effort. In those days it was different than they are today because you had telephone lines under the ocean, along the bottom of the sea, between here and England or other places. It so happens that those cables would not carry the frequencies that were necessary for voice transmission or for music. So, in the early days when programs were replayed they were recorded on discs and the discs were carried over.
- E: Did they require you to do so much public time, in other words to sell the war effort?
- W: No, there was no requirement of that. I would imagine that that was taken care of by the industry as such. Who were very anxious to do what ever they could do to help the war effort. There was no regulation that I recall; that we had to do this, or had to do that, programing wise. It was just done by the industry, by the broadcasters, who were very conscience of the fact we were at war.
- E: Did you feel yourself any desire to sell the war effort to the community since you had in a sense the voice of the valley?
- W: Well yes, I think we did anything we could do to sell the interest of the country to the people. I can't say that we had a particular program for that. The programing that we were doing then, which was full time operation, was designed pretty much by the network as such. It did the thing that you are asking the question about, selling our position.
- E: What percentage of your air time, say in the early 1940's, was CBS and what percentage of it was local oriented?
- W: Oh my, I would have to guess on that. I would say that sixty percent of our time was network and forty percent of it was local programming of one kind or another; the

news and the other local programming. I would say sixty percent of our time was network. That was a very necessary thing. My goodness! You don't appreciate what it is to create programming until you have to do it.

E: And to try to bring it to some sort of quality and standard.

W: Yes, and it takes people and people take money. So, you don't do it easily or for nothing. By any manner or means.

E: Do you ever go down to your archives here in the studios of WKBN and listen to some of those and say, "Oh my gosh, why did we do this?"

W: Yes, as a matter of fact. I have preserved out there, out at the station, at the office, a lot . . . Not a lot but a number of programs and the way they were. I should say to you, maybe at this point, that some of the programs I have replayed I like better than some of the programs we are putting on today. This is my personal opinion. I can't control or run a company unless you satisfy the public. I think the public, a certain portion of the public, are not too well sold on the kind of programming we are putting on. We are in the talk show business now.

E: Oh yes.

W: We are talking in the morning, we are talking in the afternoon, we are talking in the night. We are talking all night. People seem to like that sort of . . . Would you call it gossipy thing? I don't know but they like to hear other people's opinions. It seems to be the popular kind of program. The old days of when we played music and some talk . . . I have some programs of that that I was questioning just the other day, "Should I save some of those programs for the history of this company or should I wipe them out." Where do you stop? You don't know. I am trying to write a history for WKBN and I have gotten pretty well along. I got along to the point where . . . I'm not as far along as we are talking by any manner of means. I'm just not completely sold, personally, to the talk show business. Though, it seems to be popular. People want it and so they get it. That is our business. Radio isn't today what it used to be. Times have changed, circumstance have changed, the business changes accordingly. Television has come along into the radio business. Television had a great influence on radio. We used to think when television came, or was coming, that radio would go out of business. That is not true. The things you are hearing today are on radio, the talk

show business. In television you have some of that too. Now, we are getting football games, baseball games, and all kinds of games; Olympic, business, and such things as that. This is what people seem to want. You stay in business by keeping your listeners.

E: That is right. When WFMJ and the Maag family and the Vindicator got their license and began to operate, did you sit in your office with your staff of people, and say, "Okay it is time to kick this into a higher gear. We have now got some major competition. There are other stations that are going to pop up here sooner or later so we got to keep this company moving. We have got to kick it and get moving."?

W: Yes.

E: What types of things now did you do to make sure you stayed number one with the listeners?

W: Well, as a newspaper has circulation counted and publicized, so the broadcasting also has an accounting medium. That by use of telephone or correspondence or otherwise it determines who listens to what. In a community you find that the competition may have certain rating points at certain hours and those points will change through out the day. So that you are aware of your listening audience on radio or television and that is provided by a service that you buy and pay for, like the newspaper circulation business is. Your ability to stay in business is based on your ability to maintain ratings of listeners; audience in other words. No use for people to spend money with you if they haven't got listeners who will buy their product because they hear it on your radio or see it on your television. Does that answer your question?

E: Well yes, but what types of things did you do either in your programming schedule or in corporate decisions to make sure that you had those listeners? You know, listeners will go up and down the band looking for entertainment.

W: Yes, and they will have certain entertainment they like. So, you buy those programs or the network furnishes those programs. Those programs have certain rating points and are known as such. I don't want to tell you what we have to spend money wise to buy programs that have listener interest. We bought them. There is one starting October 1 here, that we spent enough money to scare you in order to buy the rights for that program. Which is owned by the people who created it. This, so that you buy those programs and you fit them into the time of day that they belong in. There are certain times of day that there are ladies

listening. There are other times that the men listen too. There are other times that the family and the children listen too. We know what the rating points are in those times. They are all published. So, you can form your programing to meet the rating points and to create the best kind of listener interest that you can create yourself.

E: Was this the WKBN corporation that started after the lawyer decision that you got sixty percent of it and Brock radio service had forty percent? That lasted for a given period of time but the driving force behind WKBN, as I understand it, has always been primarily you.

W: I think that is true, and now that you have raised that question you remind me . . . I guess I told you, fifteen years that it took me to solve my split time operation. I had to do it to stay in business. This I told the Plaindealer, it had to be done. Eventually then, when the FCC did not do what we wanted to do in Cleveland, Youngstown, and Columbus . . . When it got to the point that they wouldn't do anything with that, then we had to look in the other direction as to what we would do to save our own necks. That gets around to the question you have raised about what did you do in programing to keep the interest of the public together.

Of course, Arthur Brock created some problems for me but he was a fine gentleman. I can't do that with strictly business relationships that a person gets into in time. He eventually sold his interest to a group and eventually I bought it back when I bought the Cleveland Plaindealer interest back. Now, what do you do next? What do we do today, looking over the hill, and saying where do we go? This we did back in the days of radio and we looked ahead into what was television. We began to plan that. I recall the Vindicator and ourselves tied into each other every now and then. It was a competitive situation. We both had a license to go into television and who got into television first would be something that we would always want to say, "Well, I was first in the business." Now I'm into another one.

E: Before you do television, can you recall, just clear across the board, personalities other than Creed who have been part of the WKBN family?

W: Can I recall them? Well, I had a station manager who worked for me by the name of Dutch Bowden, J. Lothaire Bowden, and I had a chief engineer by the name of Wilkins, Bernard T. Wilkins. Both of whom worked with the station. I had Johnny Cherpack, who had WBBW down here and Tony Ross, and Gene Trace. All of them were

employed by me. Cherpack, and Ross, and Trace operated the station out on South Avenue. Now if you want names of other people, there was of course my faithful secretary Ruth Cruikshank who came to WKBN as a young girl out of school, worked for the station for about fifty years, who qualified and was elected as a State Professional Secretary.

E: I'm just talking about people who you always could leave the office and know that things were well in hand and come back in the morning and know that WKBN was still on the air.

W: Well, that is true. Dutch was my station manager. He is no longer living. Really, he was my right arm. B. Wilkins is retired. This is the trouble, most of these people that I had in those days are dead or retired.

E: Time too goes on.

W: Maybe that is where I ought to be, I don't know. Here I pick up a couple of other names. Sid Davis is a chap I employed. He was in the news department. Jack Jurey, a local boy, was in the news department. He is deceased also. Sid Davis went to Washington. Jack Parr one day . . . Do you remember the name Jack Parr? He walked into the place with his top coat on, had a small dog in the pocket of his coat, and went to work for us. He was with us for quite some time. I corresponded with him the other day and sent him one of the old checks that we used to pay him. I forgot what it was for a week. I think maybe it was \$25 or some such thing as that. I sent him the check and have had correspondence from him.

E: You should have got him under a long term contract.

W: Oh yes. The difficulty with employees in Youngstown, is that Youngstown is a smaller community. Our competition, so to speak, with employees are big time; Pittsburgh, Cleveland. They can afford to pay much more for employees than we can afford to pay.

E: Do you sometimes get the feeling that you identify a student at Youngstown State--who has some flare for broadcasting, television work, that type of thing--you bring them here, you train them, and just about the time they are ready to be a superstar on WKBN radio, or television, they are weaned away to somebody else? Do you ever feel like you want to kick the desk or beat on the desk and say, "Where is the fairness in all this?"

W: Well, the first thing that strikes me when you say that is the fact that perhaps it isn't as bad as it used to be. I can recall back in the days when we didn't have

women on the air as such. That we would have an employee, bring them in, and make something out of them, and they would get to good to be in Youngstown. So, Pittsburgh wants them, or New York wants them, or somebody wants them where they can pay them twice what we can afford to pay them. That isn't true now because we are getting more people in it. The girls, the young women, are getting into it and doing good jobs incidentally and serving well in the industry as such. So, we have more people for the industry than we used to have. It is not as bad now. We brought a man down here from Cleveland, I think now who is up at the University, and who is doing news and weather for us. I think he has joined the University or he came in here from Cleveland. The University's program up there, in which they are training some of these young people in that. We have one program--I can't think of the name of it right off hand--where the girls up at the University and we put it on the air every morning. I can't think of it, don't hold me down on this inability to remember. This is old age.

. . . Here completely because we are a competitive situation when we move from radio to television. Everybody thinks, "Well, when television comes on, radio will cease to exist." That isn't true. Radio is here today performing its service and television is here. Now, candidly we are looking over the hill and saying, "Where to we go to next when television isn't what it used to be." I think that is entirely possible. As a matter of fact, we are getting into the telephone business and pretty seriously so, as to where do we go next.

All of this discussion reminds me that when I was on the Board of Education, my friend Mr. Choffin and I used to talk at length about the young men who graduated from high school and didn't go on to college or have a trade experience. During my tenure on the Youngstown Board of Education, the public passed a bond issue to provide funds to modernize old school buildings, build new buildings where needed, and close old buildings no longer justified by their locations. I recall one of East Wood Street at that time. I was the Board's president and Mr. Choffin suggested one day during our talk that we ought to have a trade school where high school graduates or others would learn or improve a trade in which they were interested. Presenting this to my board, they hesitated to spend any of the bond money for this purpose. Reporting this to Mr. Choffin, he said that I had to learn the hard way in my early days. "You tell the Youngstown Board that I will give them \$100,000 to buy equipment if they will start one." My board was enthused and we did convert the empty East Wood Street building to a Choffin Trade

School. Mr. Choffin did give the \$100,000 and this is how the Choffin school got started. Later, the State of Ohio provided funds to develop schools for this kind of public education. Mr. Choffin further established a trust in his estate which annually provides the Youngstown school system with funds for this purpose, and the Choffin Career Center at 200 East Wood Street was established.

Anyway, you asked me about television. Back in those days we are pretty competitive and getting in the business. Television comes along and we both, I am talking about the Vindicator, Mr. Maag, and ourselves, and we get into the business. Well, I had built the transmitter. We had bought one and put it in. He had bought one out on the hill out here too. So, the question was who gets into it first because we want to be competitive. We have got to be if we want to be able to say we are really the first in the industry. So, we at WKBN go on the air. We have a picture but we don't have a voice. That happens to be that we couldn't buy the equipment to get the voice. That is what we call a filter plexer incidentally, where you put two signals, one the picture and the other the sound, into it and it puts them together. If you don't have the filter plexer you only have one signal. We were broadcasting pictures but no voice with the pictures. We did this up here for awhile and I thought to myself, "Well, we got to have a filter plexer." So, we knew that filter plexers were built up in Maine. I got the truck and I got Don Gardner. I put him on the truck and I said, "Gardner, go on up to Maine and get a filter plexer, buy a filter plexer, bring it back so we can have sound with our visual signal and beat our competition on the air with television." Well, it worked out and we did. Not to much in advance of our competition. Here you have CBS and NBC in competition; who gets the business. This is what you are looking for.

- E: Was there any pressure put on by the CBS radio for you to do CBS television, or did it pretty much go hand in hand?
- W: No, it went on its own. CBS never got into that. They were very careful what they did with their various associates because of the FCC and so forth. They were very careful of their position with the Communications Commission.
- E: Have you always had a good relationship with CBS?
- W: Oh yes, the finest. It happens back in the radio days, the early days of radio. With time division we couldn't take all of their programing at all. We could

take some of it. They charged us for the telephone lines to get the programming into us. I have forgotten what it was but I think we were . . . One time I recall we were about \$10,000 in debt to CBS because we hadn't paid for the telephone lines and they wanted to know what to do. I said, "Well, here we are. Take it out." Finally we settled our affairs and so forth.

E: Let me ask you, obviously your first daughter Barbara. . . . Does she participate in the WKBN corporation?

W: She got into it early and she married Dave Stewart. She got into it in the early days. As a matter of fact, went out to Chicago and took a schooling program on television. Then, she and Dave Stewart got married. She had her family and so forth. Bud, my older son, and J.D., my younger son, are in the business with me. Very fortunate for me that they are because they each have an interest in the affair. I have, heading my management people, my own sons at this point and have had for some time.

E: Did they come into the business willfully or did they have no choice but to come down and sweep up, and clean up, and ease into the corporation?

W: No, I made it my purpose to throw things in their way. To get them interested in the business. Each one of them worked during summertime--if they were in school--in the business. I did that purposefully to get them interested in it. Someday, what is going to happen to it? My planning was, well when the time comes here it is. I am very fortunate in that respect. Barbara, we lost, she passed away early. I can probably figure the date. This is my memory. 1966, Barbara passed away. Anyway, she has passed away and both of the boys really run the business. Bud is an engineer, spent his time in the service and so forth. He is well trained, has his masters degree in electrical engineering. The younger man, J.D., has his masters degree in business administration. So, both of them are pretty well equipped in that standpoint. Bud really, at this stage of life with the company, is . . . Mostly interested, I think to say with him, is in where do we go with this cellular telephone business we are into.

We have just built a building on South Avenue for cellular telephone and have a family over there that is no small operation in itself. We found we couldn't put cellular, radio, and television in the same building. There wasn't room enough for it. J.D. manages the operation of the television and radio station. He has his own people there. I must say to you that I am not as close to all of those people as maybe I should be.

That comes because I have come to the end of the line.

E: Well, when you walk into this building or you call on the phone and if you don't designate Warren William Jr. . . . If you say, "I want to talk to the boss," they all know who you are talking about then?

W: No.

E: They don't get that confused with J.D. . . .

W: To talk to the boss, why you talk to Bud.

E: No, that isn't what the employees say.

W: Well, the employees . . . Some of them call me the boss. I am the boss because I have been there all over the years. I know that. I usually tell people that I want to reach me, "Tell them you want the 'old man'." Some of my close friends don't have any problem with that but other don't do it. This is the truth of it because, as perhaps you know, I am away six months of the year. I'm in Florida six months of the year. You would be surprised how I forget names, forget people. Faces? No, no I see that. Recall and that sort of thing is a real problem.

E: Some pioneers will come across an ocean, others will go over a mountain, others will move across plains, and we call them various names. All the way from Davy Crockett to Lewis and Clark and all the others. You have pioneered an industry in . . . Not only in the Valley, but really in north-eastern Ohio. When you get on that frequency of WKBN, you can go all the way to the outskirts of Columbus and that signal just follows you right on down 71. If you listen to your talk shows here occasionally, people in Canada will be calling to talk on these programs. You put out a very strong signal.

W: You are talking about radio now?

E: Yes, I'm talking about radio primarily. Do you have any real feeling for the contribution you have made to the growth of this valley through the radio station out of your bathroom, and kitchen?

W: No, not really. It was a kid's hobby. It was a hobby . . . As a boy so to speak, going back to the early days, very early days of wireless. It was a hobby. It was something I loved to do. Fortunately I was able to use my hands to build this and to build that. Most of our early stuff was done by being built because we had no money to buy. As we got along in life the income started to come along with us and we

then could make investments in this and so forth. I don't have any feeling that I have made a great contribution. I merely picked up a hobby of . . . Or had a hobby and this fitted into it. So, the business developed and I grew with it. Now the business is here and I am ready to retire as many other people have done on our staff; the older people. After all sixty years, you know, in business . . . Or a little better than sixty years, is not a short time for somebody to be in it. I have enjoyed every minute of it. I say to my boys, "Well, here it is now. I'm ready to back out. You pick it up and run it." I am the luckiest man in the world, the fact that I have my two boys interested in what they are doing and enjoying it. The young man, my son Joe, who supervises radio and television is taking an interest in the community. That is the thing you do because I have felt the community has been good to me. From the standpoint of the business development and so forth. In return for that I have to give something back to the community during my lifetime here. A great deal of that, during the radio time, I was with the Youngstown Board of Education as a member of the Board of Education for twenty-seven years. As a matter of fact, was president of it for eighteen years. I felt that I should do that. The community was good to me and that I should in return do something for the community. So, I stayed with the Board of Education. They wanted me, at times, to join this and join that. I would say, "No, I can't do it and still do the job I have got to do over here."

E: What is your attraction to YSU? You gave a considerable endowment to the business school which now bears your name.

W: So, what do you do if you have created something? Do you just throw it away or do you put it some place that you think might do something good? I think that is the reason for it. There are other things that I hoped to do in the course of time. The University is there. I think Youngstown having the University is--forgive my words now--damn lucky. At this point in life to have the University where it is, and what it is, and to see it develop and be a part of the community, is thoroughly something worthwhile.

E: There was some hard feelings among some people in the community when we became a state supported school. They used to refer to it as their university or our university, I guess the appropriate word. We really had to move in that direction.

W: I know what you are talking about because as I moved into the YMCA, the YMCA school changed, and some of the space that WKBN got in the YMCA for its studios was in

areas of the third floor which was the school. At that time the first building was built up there. I have pictures of, a photograph of, WKBN broadcasting the laying of the corner stone in the first building of the University.

E: Jones Hall.

W: That then was a local school. For it to go someplace, a number of people who have contributed to it, but we needed the university. It is doing a very important thing, a very important contribution to the community. The difficulty is today that the cost of education is getting so high that youngsters for the most part can't afford it. So, it is the problem again of where do we get the money to do what we have to do to develop this. That is changing times.

E: I want to thank you for sharing your memories with us over several days.

W: Well, I don't know whether what I have said is worthwhile or not. It will give a picture of what has gone on here. The difficulty is that there are so many other things, minor things, mixed up in this. One of which controls the other. That we could sit here and talk endlessly about how do we do this, why do we do it, and so forth.

E: Well, maybe we will take a break and come back and do it again some more days.

W: I'll tell you it is something I enjoy reviewing in my own mind. Your being here, I must say, made me do some thinking about who did what. I sat here and wrote them down. I missed some of the things that I did here but I think very few people fully appreciate that the Radio Electric Service Company was responsible for the police departments first . . .

E: Yes, we talked about that earlier. Maybe we ought to talk about that for a second; the development of the WKBN and the police radio equipment.

W: Well, how do you mean you want me on the development of that?

E: Just very quickly tell us the things that you did to help get that radio station going for the police department.

W: Well, Paul Lyden said to me, "I have got money for three new policeman now but we would like to have a communication system. What do you think?" And I said, "Well, we will build you one." I took a \$1 a year job

with Paul Lyden, then chief of police. We then built a transmitter and moved it in to the second floor of the fire department out there on Market Street, put a pole in the back, and put an antenna on it. A friend of mine at the time, Victor Getty, was an engineer. He went to work for the police department and he started operating this. He also built the first radio receivers for the cars because the city couldn't afford to buy them. They didn't have the money and by doing what we did, building them, their paying for the parts that we put together to make a transmitter or receivers for each car. Paul Lyden paid for that, or the city paid for that stuff. So, we got Youngstown in business like other large cities were and far ahead of some who didn't get into it. We were able to do it and save some money. I think maybe he didn't hire a couple of policemen but used the money for the salaries that council had voted to him. If he had tried to buy it from the manufacturers he couldn't have bought it with the salaries of all three policemen and more. They had set prices on this equipment and if you wanted it alright, if you didn't that was alright too.

END OF INTERVIEW