



CONNECTIONS *news*

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Dave Felice, editor

A Message from Our Director

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. We have really enjoyed all the new folks we are meeting doing tours, both in Denver and Seattle. We have quite a few new volunteers also which is wonderful.

THG recently has acquired some important artifacts. The Seattle Connections Museum now has a grandfather-style Central Office Master Clock. These clocks were used as the reference for all company clocks in each major city. In Denver, volunteers are busy arranging for the display of a 6-foot diameter floor medallion. The heavy bronze medallion was once embedded in the floor at 195 Broadway.

In this edition of THG's Connections News, you'll find stories about Alexander Graham Bell's teaching, and the impact of Bell System advertising on contemporary language. Scott McClellan and John Swartley share memories of their telephone careers.

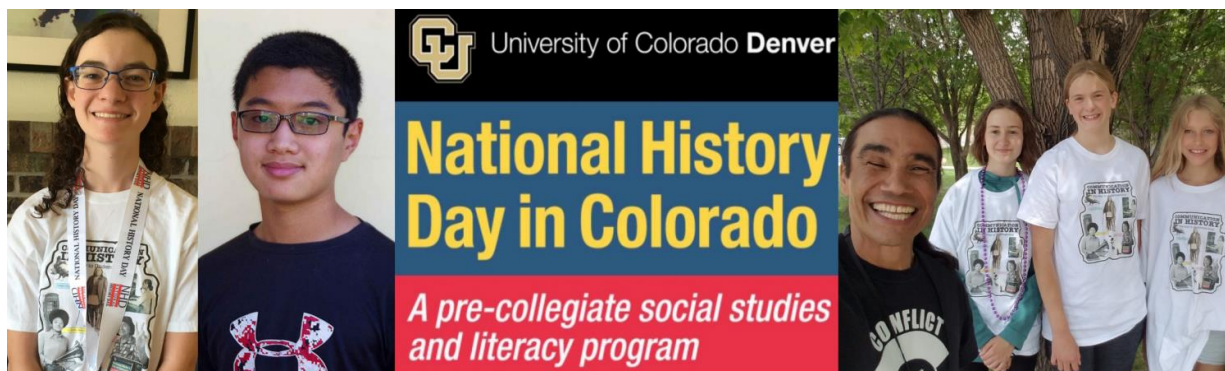
As always, we welcome your comments, contributions, and volunteer involvement. Contact us if you are considering the tax-deductible donation of your historical telephone documents and/or artifacts.



Have a Happy Holiday and a great New Year. Thank you so much for your support.

Sincerely,

Renee Lang, Managing Director



National History Day is a social studies and literacy program that equips students in elementary, middle, and high school with the skills necessary to succeed in college and the real world. Students participate in a project-based learning curriculum that emphasizes critical reading and thinking, research, analysis, and the drawing of meaningful conclusions. Students can complete these projects in groups or as individuals in one of five categories: documentary, paper, exhibit, performance, or website.

THG has been a proud sponsor of National History Day in Colorado for many years. In addition to our sponsorship, THG volunteers judge at the contests, and our organization presents a special monetary award for the best project about telecommunications.

Winning subjects have included a range of communications topics, among which are: the history of the Automatic Telephone Exchange; the invention and impacts of the digital camera; the BBC during World War II; Nikola Tesla; and Lorena Weeks' fight with Southern Bell for the right to apply for "non-traditional" jobs.

In 2022, a web site about Sesame Street developed by Finn Spangenberg was clearly the best of several outstanding projects. You can see it at <https://site.nhd.org/34580293>.

More than a half a million participants in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and five U S territories spend the school year developing their National History Day projects, which must relate to a theme. This year's theme is *Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas*.

In Colorado, students compete in one of fifteen regions across the state in either the junior (middle school) or senior (high school) division, or in the elementary poster contest (4th and 5th graders). Regional winners compete at the state contest in May on the University of Colorado Denver campus. First and second place state winners compete in Nationals at the University of Maryland, College Park.

National History Day in Colorado reaches nearly 23,000 students across the state each year. The program also provides teacher training, research field trips, supply grants, classroom resources, scholarship opportunities for students, and graduate and continuing professional education courses for teachers.

From the Spangenberg web site: "I knew Joan (Ganz Cooney) was a television producer. So we were just talking, and I said 'Joan, do you think television could be used to teach young children?' " ~ Carnegie Foundation psychologist Lloyd Morrisett, Street Gang: How We Got to Sesame Street, 2020.

Controversy over Bell's teaching

For advocates of sign language, Alexander Graham Bell is the arch-enemy, says author Katie Booth. In her recent book, *Invention of Miracles*, Booth documents how Bell became the chief protagonist in the conflict over signing and speaking.

After nearly 20 years of exhaustive research, Booth says the inventor of the telephone used his prestige to suppress signing in favor of teaching the deaf to speak and lip-read.

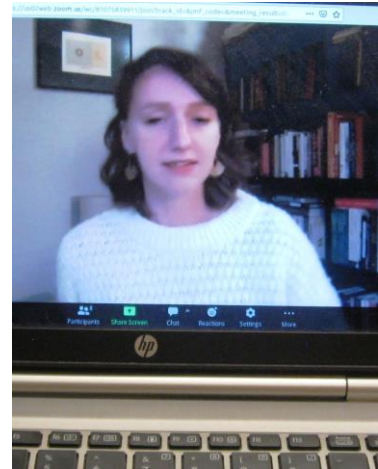
"Bell is complicated man. It was really hard emotionally to do this work," said Booth in an online presentation for the New Hampshire Telephone Museum. "I wanted to understand Bell and he became uncomfortably human."

Booth continued: "(T)he man launched a war in which the deaf had to fight for their lives against Bell's legacy of the theft of their language culture and dignity. Bell had the resources, thought he knew better, and didn't listen to the (deaf) community."

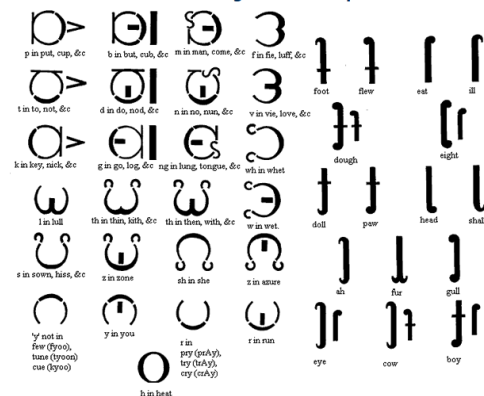
Writing from a deeply personal perspective, Booth tells of how hospital personnel ignored her non-speaking deaf grandmother who suffered a heart attack and subsequently died.

She explains that Bell and other "oralists" saw speech as a means of integrating deaf people into larger society, making them seem less different, strange, or even fearsome. Even by the time Bell became a prominent teacher in the early 1870s, it was already evident the deaf preferred their own language of signing.

"How anyone could see ASL (American Sign Language) or deafness as a problem made no sense to me. ASL made my family members stronger, smarter, more themselves. English wasn't *bad*, but it wasn't quite *theirs*, either. Without the free use of their (sign) language, they were hidden inside their own bodies," writes Booth.



Alexander Melville Bell's original Visible Speech chart



Bell had been involved in linguistics and teaching nearly all his life. His father, Melville, taught elocution and had developed a phonetic alphabet known as Visible Speech. As an adolescent, Alexander studied the anatomy of speech, even experimenting with an artificial speech machine and attempting to teach the family dog to vocalize.

Bell's mother, Eliza, and his wife, Mabel Hubbard, were both deaf, but their deafness developed later in life, after they had learned to speak.

In this revisionist biography, Booth traces Bell's journey from his birthplace in Edinburgh, Scotland to London, then Brantford, Ontario, and eventually to Boston. In 1871, at Dexter King's Boston School for Deaf Mutes, Alexander

promptly succeeded, using the Visible Speech model to teach deaf children to pronounce sounds correctly.

The author also tells about how Bell responded with disgust to a stage play about the plight of a partly-black woman who could not marry a white man. "Aleck didn't think this prejudice existed in his own heart. Instead of recognizing a larger struggle between normalcy and difference...he believed he could be a force for good," Booth writes.

Bell then limited his teaching and spent more time on his experiments. He had two private students, 5-year-old Georgie Sanders whose wealthy father supported Bell's work and 15-year old Mabel Hubbard who later became Bell's wife.

Booth says Bell's attempts to capture the sound of voice led to invention and promotion of the working telephone in 1876.

"His power as a successful inventor allowed Bell to advocate (for teaching speech) and convince others of the value of oralism," Booth told her online audience. "Fear-mongering about sign language then led Bell to eugenics."

Booth writes that while promoting oralism, Bell was originally skeptical of lip reading.

Although Bell studied the hereditary aspects of deafness, the record is inconclusive about his views of deaf people marrying and having children. Booth argues that, despite his many achievements, insistence on teaching speech and oralism overshadowed his life-long commitment to helping the deaf community.

She writes: "Even in Bell's time, the deaf knew the importance of sign language for deaf education, but Bell didn't value that knowledge. He was thrilled...at the execution of a great experiment. That experiment failed, but he still couldn't believe he was wrong."

Alexander Graham and Mabel Hubbard Bell, with their daughters Elsie and Daisy, moved to a family estate known as Beinn Breagh (Beautiful Mountain) in Nova Scotia in 1885. Bell continued his experiments. He laid the foundation for magnetic sound reproduction, a phone using light transmission, and hydrofoil technology. He developed a metal detector, and a motor-powered aircraft. Bell died in 1922, at age 75.

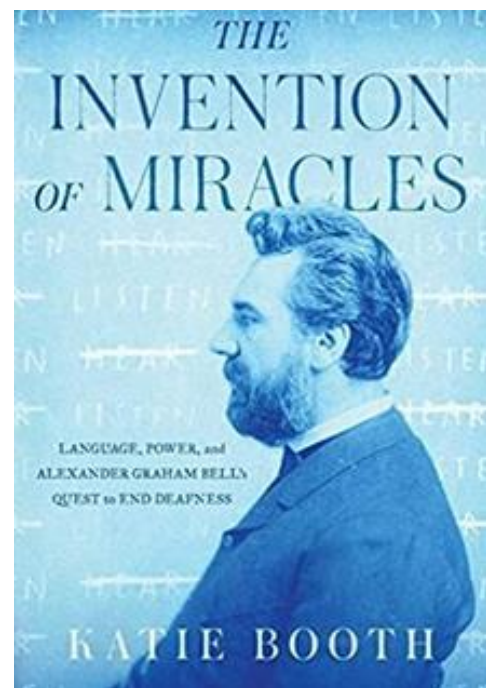
The controversy over signing and speaking continues to this day. A recent episode of the NBC television hospital drama "New Amsterdam" focused on a deaf doctor reluctant to have carpal tunnel surgery. The doctor feared losing the use of her hands during the recovery.

The Invention of Miracles was first published by Simon and Schuster in 2021. In a post on WordGathering.com, reviewer Karen Christie describes the book as "the first text...for general readership that takes on the generational drama wrought by (Bell) and his legacy."

According to Christie, the book shows that "one thing Bell seemed to believe in more than anything was the power of his own brilliance. The story of Bell's telephone seems to be, in Booth's telling, a truly American story, full of political maneuvering, capitalistic greed, secrecy, deception, and psychological manipulation."

New Hampshire Telephone museum is located in Warner, and can be contacted at info@nhtelephonemuseum.org or 603-456-2234.

Story by Dave Felice



The opinions expressed in this story are those of the author and reviewer, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Telecommunications History Group.

"Reach out" established in language

A little-known event at Mountain Bell's Utah office sets the stage for popular use of a phrase meaning "to make contact."

AT&T introduced its catchy "Reach Out and Touch Someone" advertising campaign in August 1979. The "reach out" idea became a lasting part of American English, even reaching the point of irritating over-use.

Although not documented by AT&T, there may be some question about the origin of the slogan. In March 1979, Mountain Bell's Utah Public Relations Manager Ken Hill was looking for an advertising phrase to be used locally.

Hill asked his staff to go into a room and not come out until they had a new slogan. The discussions and scribbling resulted in "Reach Out to Someone by Phone." Hill was preparing to implement the local advertising when word of the national campaign came from New York. The Utah plan was abandoned.

The nationwide advertising was developed by N.W. Ayer, considered the oldest agency in America. Ayer had represented the Bell System since 1908.



The "Reach out, reach out, and touch someone" ads were hard to avoid in the next decade. Anyone born before 1975 could probably sing the memorable music jingle. As late as 1997, an ad known as "Joey Called" was named by Entertainment Weekly as one of the 50 Best Commercials of all time.

Ayer's creative director for the AT&T account at the time, Richard Keith, says the client preferred the slogan "Keep in touch, America." Subsequent pre-release testing showed "Reach out" was preferred two-to-one.

David Lucas composed the now familiar music. According to Lucas, the tune had to be concise, sincere, and likeable. Repeating the phrase "reach out" was the key lyrical component when the ads were developed for radio and television.

Some observers say the Ayer creative team enabled AT&T to use the campaign to communicate the concept of emotional connection. In effect, the advertising campaign helped AT&T convince customers of the ease of long distance, while establishing the Bell System as an essential part of American life.

With Divestiture and the introduction of cellular service in the 1980s, the advertising faded into history, but the linguistic impact remained. Not everyone is pleased with the way the phrase has been popularized.

According to *Merriam/Webster*, the phrase "reach out" came into general use around 1870. "Reach Out and Touch (Somebody's Hand)" was the debut solo single of Motown singer Diana Ross, released in April 1970. There are about a dozen other recordings which use the phrase in the title.

Pulitzer-winning Washington Post journalist Gene Weingarten is a harsh critic: "...no development contributed more dramatically to the death of the (American English) language than the sudden and startling ubiquity of the vomitous verbal construction 'reach out' as a synonym for 'call on the phone' or 'attempt to contact.' "

Weingarten calls the usage "a jargony phrase bloated with bogus compassion."

The "reach out" campaign also shows how consistency is key to successful advertising. Other businesses continually strive for something that will "stick" as well and as long. Ace Hardware uses the same tag jingle – Ace is the place with the helpful hardware man/folks – that it has since 1973. Companies advertising convenience foods, soft drinks, insurance, and automobiles might change the slogan while still looking for the memorable phrase that gets people to continue reading, watching, or listening to the message.

In his book about advertising, *Thirty Seconds*, Michael J. Arlen carefully analyzes production of the Reach Out commercial called "Tap Dancing." The commercial involves five vignettes, each involving two people discussing a life event they consider important. Arlen, a former TV critic for *The New Yorker*, discusses the challenges of developing and editing the material into a compelling 30-second commercial.

According to Arlen, the creative team had to put all the pieces together while keeping the "obligation level" correct: "You can suggest in an artistic manner that a person might feel better for making a phone call to a faraway friend, but it wouldn't be right to suggest that something terrible will happen to the person if they don't make the call..."

In any event, the "reach out" phrase has been established. Such a creative, long-term, and extensive advertising campaign is unlikely to be repeated. Some of the Ayer material now resides in the Smithsonian Institution and the AT&T Archives. There are video commercials on the internet. The audio recordings are mostly held in private collections.

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McClellan departs from board

After more than two decades, Scott McClellan is stepping down as a charter member of the Telecommunications History Group Board of Directors. McClellan's remembrances provide a capsule history of U S WEST and THG. This is his first-person account.

My involvement with THG really began in summer 1973, long before either THG or the Seattle Connections Museum existed. I had just started as a summer law clerk with the legal department of Pacific Northwest Bell (PNB), before my third year of law school at the University of Washington. My wonderful very first company secretary, Ramona, introduced me to her



boyfriend, Herb Warrick. I worked on the 14th floor of the Exchange building at 2nd and Marion, then PNB headquarters. The building was an Art Deco masterpiece built in 1930 to house the Seattle Stock Exchange but was converted to an office building following the 1929 stock market crash. Herb Warrick often visited Ramona and graciously offered to help this new young law clerk learn something about telephony, PNB and the Bell System, all subjects about which I was clueless.

PNB at that time was the newest and one of the smallest of the 23 Bell operating companies, having been spun off from Pacific Bell in 1961. Nevertheless, it was led by several Bell System heavyweights, Wally Bunn who went on to become the Chairman of Southwestern Bell, and Don Guinn, who later became the Chairman of Pacific Bell (which became Pacific Telesis following divestiture). As these Bell System leaders cycled through, the company was largely run by its extremely capable Operations VP, Andy Smith, who later became PNB's President.

The 1973 PNB Legal Department was led by legendary Seattle lawyers, John Rupp, PNB's General Counsel, and Donald MacLean. They had transferred from Schweppe's, PNB's outside counsel and Seattle's oldest law firm founded in 1859. The department was then led by another famous Seattle lawyer, Alfred Schweppe. My immediate supervisor, Edmund Raftis, hired me for the summer job, paying the astronomical sum of \$750 per month!

All these people were inspiring and extraordinarily helpful to this young law clerk. Ed Raftis would often drive me to and from work. Don MacLean allowed me to watch the 1973 Watergate hearings at lunch on TV in his office. All that summer, Herb Warrick helped me understand the mystery and seemingly endless complexity of a Bell telephone company. It was something Herb knew very well, having first gone to work for Pacific Telephone and Telegraph (PT&T) in Seattle as a bicycle messenger following his graduation from Roosevelt High School in 1941.

In November 1975, John Rupp retired, Don MacLean became PNB General Counsel, and the company hired me. I had passed the bar in 1974 and had been working for a Seattle law firm. In 1976, the company moved to the newly constructed 1600 Bell Plaza building. Ramona and Herb got married and she ceased to be my secretary. Herb remained a good friend and helpful resource for the many times I needed a trial or rate case witness.

After a time as General Attorney for PNB-Oregon, I went to work for Lawrence DeMuth, Mountain Bell's General Counsel in Denver, in 1983. Larry was the newly appointed General

Counsel of the yet to be created U S WEST, one of seven Regional Operating Companies (RBOCs) which would be formed by the Bell System divestiture in 1984.

I was Associate General Counsel. With Larry, and others, I had to do the legal work necessary to create what was then the 32nd largest company in the country, starting from scratch.

As Vice President of Public Policy in 1988, I was reporting to Gary Ames. He was a former Portland/Seattle PNB finance guru who would soon become the President of U S WEST Communications, a regulated wholly owned subsidiary of U S WEST Incorporated. The phone company was in downtown Denver; the corporate headquarters were in Englewood.

I returned to Seattle as Vice President-Washington, in 1996. Herb Warrick and Larry DeMuth had long since retired, but not before Larry and Howard Doerr created the Telecommunications History Group in Denver. Herb also created the *Vintage Telephone Equipment Museum* in Seattle which we now call the *Connections Museum*.

I retired from the telephone company, by then known as Qwest, in 2000. The company had undergone the long convoluted process in which U S WEST first proposed to be acquired by Global Crossing. Negotiations led instead to acquisition by Qwest, a Denver-based company founded by billionaire Phillip Anschutz.

Larry DeMuth soon called and told me Herb's Seattle Museum was becoming a part of THG. He asked me to join Board of Directors, as well as do the legal work necessary to authorize THG to do business in Washington State. From several visits to the museum, hosted by Herb, I had known about it since its formation in the late 80s. I really couldn't say no to Herb, and thus began my official 20-year service on THG Board.

Working primarily with Herb, Larry, and the wonderful Don Ostrand, we managed to operate reasonably well over the years. As with any merger, such as the legacy phone business, there sometimes could be tension over budgets, funding, branding, advertising, endowments and other various matters.

Nevertheless, the Board worked through the issues and allowed the volunteers to keep doing the work they loved. I always marveled at the dedication and commitment of the old

network folks. They would climb the ladders, study the BSPs, fix the problems, enhance the exhibits, and then be willing to show visitors what they had done and explain why it was meaningful.

Keeping technology alive and teaching young people about it is important. In turn, those efforts by the volunteers kept them lively, vigorous, and socially connected. Folks like our late much beloved Les Anderson personified the heritage of the Connections Museum. He loved the technology and the people he worked with, and they loved him.

As anyone who worked with me would rightly point out, I have no engineering background and never understood telephone technologies. For that reason, I always felt a bit humble and inadequate as a board member. I always respected those who knew how things worked, where the electrons flowed, how the technology evolved and advanced over the decades; and could explain this sort of thing to others.

It's been a privilege to work with great people over the years. I'm so delighted that the THG is still driven by dedicated leadership and strong volunteers continuing this legacy.



THG Inherits AT&T Floor Medallion

Volunteers at the THG Archives in Denver are working on a way to display a massive AT&T floor medallion acquired from Lumen Technologies. Possession of the bronze relief sculpture passed to THG when Lumen vacated its offices at 700 West Mineral in Littleton.



View of medallion with contrast slightly enhanced to highlight detail

Mercury is the Roman god of merchants and travelers. In the sculpture, a running Mercury carries a banner reading "Universal Service." The figure is surrounded by a ring displaying the name "American Telephone and Telegraph Co and Associated Companies" with a bell at the top center.

In Denver, a new steel frame will need to be fabricated to mount the medallion in a semi-upright position. Then, a suitable location will have to be found to display the artwork. A crew of four professional movers transported the medallion from Mineral to downtown.

The Gorham Co., known for its small silver articles, was founded in 1831 in Providence, Rhode Island. The Bronze Division was established in 1860.

According to AT&T records, artist Paulanship cast three of the sculptures in 1915 for installation at the entrances of headquarters offices at 195 Broadway. By way of the Telephone Pioneers, this medallion made its way to Denver. The others ended up in the Albuquerque Museum and AT&T Archives.

The original casting was made at the Bronze Division of the famous firm of Gorham Silversmiths. The medallion is formally known as a "small statuary bronze." It is like non-ecclesiastical works of Daniel Chester French (Lincoln Memorial) and Augustus St. Gaudens (The Puritan statue in Salem and gold coinage).

The three medallions, approximately eight feet in diameter, are titled "Mercury Carrying the Message of the Gods." They were set originally in the floor at the ornate AT&T headquarters building.





The Architectural Record January, 1924
THE AMERICAN TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY
Welles Bosworth, Architect



Broadway Lobby

AT&T archive photographs show the floor medallions as originally installed at 195 Broadway

Classic Phone Appears in Music Video

In the official music video for her latest hit recording, singer Taylor Swift uses a famed dial telephone.

The Model 554, a rotary wall phone from the mid 50s, makes a three-second cameo appearance. The sequence of Swift using the phone comes about 30-seconds after the start of the video.

The recording, "Anti-Hero" is the third track on Swift's latest album "Midnights." The song placed No. 1 on Billboard's all-format radio chart.



AT&T begins network broadcasting

This year marks the centennial convergence of two events in telephony and radio transmission. Radio station WBAY (AM) began network broadcasting in New York City in July, 1922. In the United Kingdom, a royal charter established the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).

WBAY started as an experiment by Western Electric to demonstrate the commercial value of its broadcasting patents. Unlike the British government model, AT&T initially intended to allow other programming companies to lease time on its radio station. WBAY was originally located atop the 24-story Long Lines building at 24 Walker Street. Later testing showed building's steel infrastructure absorbed much of the transmitting power.

AT&T also owned station WEAJ at the 11-story building at 463 West Street. With a stronger signal, operations were transferred to WEAJ in August. The time leasing arrangement didn't work as expected, so WEAJ had to provide its own program material. The station became prominent and attracted well-known talent. WEAJ moved to AT&T at 195 Broadway in 1923.

Technical experiments with other stations around the Northeast formed the first "chain broadcasts". As a result, AT&T developed a national network of broadcast-quality phone lines as a major source of revenue. After sometimes contentious negotiations over which company would get which part of the broadcasting revenue, AT&T sold WEAJ to Radio Corporation of America (RCA). AT&T would provide transmission Walker Street Building lines for a proposed national network.

To avoid some of the American competitive frenzy, Britain's General Post Office took a different course. The GPO set up a single consortium of leading broadcasting companies, operating as a unified monopoly. Revenue from the sale of approved radio sets, would finance the venture. Later, a supplemental program license fee was imposed.

After the controversial general strike of 1926, the original company was reorganized as a non-commercial organization known as the British Broadcasting Corporation. The BBC focused on national programming and rejected the American notion of achieving the largest audience. The GPO used its monopoly telephone lines to send programming to transmitters around the country.

In the U.S., RCA formed the National Broadcasting Company with its Red Network led by WEAJ and Blue Network from the Westinghouse station in New York, WJZ. Both stations eventually moved to Radio City in Rockefeller Plaza. WJZ installed a leading edge Westinghouse 50,000 watt transmitter in New Jersey. WEAJ followed with a 50KW transmitter on Long Island.

NBC's Blue Network became the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), after a coverage complaint by Mutual Broadcasting (MBS). In 1946, NBC changed the WEAJ call sign to WNBC. CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) bought the station in 1988 and changed the call letters to WFAN.

The free-wheeling nature of American broadcasting continues to this day. The BBC held its monopoly until the mid-60s when challenged by Radio Luxembourg and pirate radio stations in the North Sea.

