

Curriculum Guide for
On Air: 80 Years of Broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley
Radio transmissions to Television signals

A visit to the broadcasting exhibit at the Arms Family Museum of Local History will give students the chance to progress through the history of broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley. From the first local radio transmission in 1926 by Warren P. Williamson Jr. on WKBN, to the current television stations of today such as WKBN 27, WFMJ 21, and WYTV 33, students will see how broadcasting in the Valley has changed over time.

Tour Goals:

- Familiarize students with the broadcasting history of the Valley
- Broaden students' thinking about different modes of communication
- Enhance students' appreciation of the work of the early pioneers in the early stages of radio and television
- Stimulate students' knowledge of broadcasting history with real artifacts, images, and hands-on activities
- Encourage students to examine the process behind broadcasting on radio and television

Objectives for Student Learning:

- Identify radio and television stations of the Mahoning Valley
- Describe how radio shows used sound effects on their broadcasts
- Explain the Valley's transition from radio to television
- Outline a few of the significant uses of radio and television
- Examine the importance of broadcasting
- Imagine how a news broadcast would look on television through hands-on simulation

Ohio Academic Content Standards:

Social Studies

- Describe how forms of communication have changed over time
- Explain how language and stories influence culture
- Obtain information from multiple sources
- Identify systems of communication used to move ideas from place to place

Language Arts

- Active listening skills
- Identifying and recalling information from oral presentations and visual media

Science

- Explore how things make sound
- sound effects on early radio broadcasts

Divisions within the Exhibit:

Radio

Even before the first local transmission on September 26, 1926 by Warren P. Williamson Jr. on WKBN, radio was one of the primary ways people kept up to date on information and current events as well as a main source of entertainment. The exhibit features equipment from the first local radio broadcast such as the original transmitter. Throughout the years of the Great Depression and World War I, people used the radio to keep them updated on local, state, national and international issues. One of several audio clips in the exhibit features a fireside chat with President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the bombing of Pearl Harbor. These audio clips help students hear first hand what radio looked and sounded like in its earlier days. Students will enjoy a hands-on area where they can create the old-fashioned “foley” sound effects that were used on radio shows.

Television

The post World War II era saw many new technologies develop and the lives of people everywhere changed. The television made its way into the Mahoning Valley in the 1950s with WKBN and WFMJ. As both stations raced to be the first one on the air, the fever of television was spreading wildly throughout the country. The exhibit holds numerous pieces of television equipment from both stations. Cameras, film reels, and a boom microphone are included in the exhibit as well as images from the various television shows and on-air personalities. The exhibit also includes a television with old news footage as well as a documentary about the history of broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley featuring oral histories from those who were involved in the business. Students will have fun with a hands-on station where they can dress up as a news anchor and recite a news story.

Preparation and Expansion: Pre-and Post-Visit Activities

Jeopardy (Grades: 2-6)

One great method of review for a topic is to play a Jeopardy review game. This game has twenty-five questions to choose from in five different categories such as Radio, Television, Important People, Radio/Television Shows and the Present & Future of Broadcasting. As in the real version of Jeopardy, the questions range in difficulty from 100 to 500 points in each category. Teacher instructions and answers are provided at the end of the curriculum guide on pages 8 and 9 respectively. Students should be split into two or more groups to play. Ideally, this game works best with a computer projector due to the power point format. Click [here](#) to download the file.

Compare and Contrast (Grades: 4-6)

Methods of communication such as radio and television have changed a great deal over the years. Have students compare photographs and images from early radio and television with images of radio and television today. Discuss any similarities or differences they may find and have them develop a chart showing what they have discovered. If you cannot access the internet, the images are provided at the end of the curriculum guide on pages 10-13.

Links for early images of radio and television:

- 1) <http://www.mahoninghistory.org/exhibits/onair.stm>
- 2) <http://www.mahoninghistory.org/bmaalbumWKBN.stm>
- 3) <http://www.mahoninghistory.org/bmacoll.stm>
- 4) http://mahoninghistory.blogspot.com/2007_11_01_archive.html

Links for today's images of radio and television:

- 1) <http://www.goucher.edu/images/600%20x%20327/radio-4277.jpg> (radio controls)
- 2) http://wifinetnews.com/images/reciva_net_radio.jpg (new internet radio)
- 3) http://www.chrysler.com/shared/2008/sebring_convertible/interior_conveniences/images/6cd_radio_req.jpg (digital car radio)
- 4) <http://www.bybb.com/images/television.jpg> (flat screen television)
- 5) <http://securitytags.biz/detachers/image/Sony-Plasma-television.jpg> (plasma television)
- 6) <http://www.argos.co.uk/wcsstore/argos/images/70-5291845SPA68UC439530M.jpg> (black television)

Interviewing (Grades: 5-6)

Personal accounts of history from eyewitnesses can provide students with different perspectives about historical events. Conducting an interview with a close relative or family friend will give them a primary source of information about a historical event. Prior to the interview, students should develop questions that they plan on asking to prepare themselves for the interview. The questions and answers from the interview would be able to provide the class with different stories about history that they may not have heard before. A list of some sample interview questions are provided in this curriculum guide on page 6.

Breaking News (Grades: 3-6)

For some students, it might be their life's ambition to be on television as a reporter, news anchor, or even a meteorologist. Have students write a story or report that they would like to record on video, similar to television news broadcasts. For inspiration, students could watch two or three news broadcasts and make observations. The activity would involve a few small groups with roles such as the news anchors, the meteorologist, reporters and camera operators. Each group will choose different stories from the ones they wrote and "broadcast" them. A real video camera could be used to tape the broadcasts or the students could present them in front of the class. Either way, the final products from each group should be shown to the class. If time permits, a field trip to a local television station could also aid the students in writing and "broadcasting" their stories.

Old Time Radio Show (Grades: 4-6)

Radio stations in the Mahoning Valley had different radio shows on the air for the entertainment of the people. The radio shows made their sound effects by hand, since sound effect technology did not exist during the 1920s-1940s. Students will develop their own script or story for a short radio show and use sound effects like old radio shows did, deciding what sounds are necessary and what is needed to create them. Their shows can either be recorded and played back to the class or shown as a skit in front of the class. A great website for old time radio show clips is <http://www.otr.net/>, which was used to find the episode of the show below. Entire episodes are available on this site, but students can just listen to clips of them for this activity. The website uses RealPlayer.

Links: - Sample script and sound effects

- Link to ["The Lone Ranger"](#) -5/25/1938 (The link takes you straight to the file and it starts playing automatically. The first 2 minutes are the introduction music--29 minutes total.)

Hangman (Grades: 2-6)

Students can play hangman to familiarize themselves with the important terms, dates and people of broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley. Students can choose a term from the list provided in this curriculum guide on page 7 and using a chalkboard or dry erase board, the students will put blank spaces where the letters of the word would be. The class will guess letters and if they guess the right ones, they will be put in the blank spaces. If they do not guess the right letters, they will be put off to the side and a hangman drawing will build up for each letter missed. This game can also be played in teams with the board divided and one player from each team will go up for each round.

Informational Websites

Several resources on the web have additional information about broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley. One of the best options for information would be the Mahoning Valley Historical Society's website or the WKBN/WYFX website.

Mahoning Valley Historical Society

<http://www.mahoninghistory.org/exhibits/onair.stm>

The Mahoning Valley Historical Society's website has a section which briefly discusses the broadcasting exhibit. It describes the beginnings of broadcasting with radio in the Mahoning Valley, continues toward television broadcasting and has equipment from WKBN 27 and WFMJ 21. The images are located at the end of this curriculum guide on pages 9-12 and can also be found online.

History of WKBN/WYFX

<http://www.wkbn.com/about/8389502.html>

The local station's website provides a brief history about the television stations from their radio beginnings. The information progresses chronologically in a short article, chronicling the significant events in the station's history. The article can also be located at the end of this curriculum guide and the link is below.

Link to article: [History of WKBN/WYFX](#)

WKBN and WKBN-TV

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WKBN>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WKBN-TV>

The first link provides a short description of the stations that had and still have the call sign of WKBN. The second link provides more information about the current television station of WKBN 27. This website provides a timeline for the television station and gives information about some prominent news anchors.

570 WKBN

<http://www.570wkbn.com/main.html>

This website has a great deal of information about one of the local talk radio stations that still retains the call sign of WKBN. This is an AM station that provides Mahoning Valley residents with news, sports and talk radio. There are many links on their website that allow for listening online as well.

History of Broadcasting

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_broadcasting

This wikipedia article describes the history of broadcasting with a timeline as well as a global perspective. First it talks about broadcasting around the world, and then it is divided by decades. There is a section about the United States in about every part of the article. This is a good informational article about the history of broadcasting in more general terms.

Broadcast History Resource Links

<http://www.midcoast.com/~lizmcl/links.html>

This site has many links as well as general resources about the history of broadcasting. It also has a section on specific topics in broadcasting such as 'The World's Earliest Television Recordings and Radio Propaganda. The text transcripts of some of the broadcasts are included on some of the resource's web pages.

Sample Interview Questions

Education

- 1) What was your educational experience like?
- 2) What, if any, were your favorite school subjects?
- 3) What, if any, were your least favorite subjects in school?
- 4) Did you have a favorite teacher and if so, what made them stand out in your memory?

Culture

- 5) What kind of games did you play growing up?
- 6) Where did you go with your friends?
- 7) What were some of the types of music you and your friends listened to?
- 8) What, if any, were some of your favorite books when you were younger?
- 9) What do you like to do in your spare time now?

Family

- 10) How was your family life growing up?
- 11) Did you have a nickname when you were younger? If so, what was it and how did you get it?
- 12) Did your family have any pets? If so, what were they?
- 13) What types of chores did you have around the house?
- 14) What, if any, was the favorite place you visited growing up?
- 15) How was dinner time with your family when you were younger?

List of Terms for Hangman Game

- **Warren P. Williamson Jr.** (founder of broadcasting in the Mahoning Valley with WKBN)
- **Broadcasting**
- **Mahoning Valley**
- **Radio**
- **WKBN** (first station in the Mahoning Valley)
- **WFMJ** (second station in the Valley)
- **Youngstown**
- **September 26, 1926** (first WKBN broadcast in the Valley by Williamson Jr.)
- **Creed M. Chorpening** (radio engineer who worked with Williamson Jr.)
- **CBS**
- **Sound effects**
- **Story Book Lady** (show that had a woman read to children with sound effects going on in the background)
- **Communication**
- **NBC**
- **ABC**
- **Serial** (weekly show produced in episodes or chapters)
- **The Man behind the Gun** (WWII radio show that broadcasted about soldiers fighting in the war)
- **William F. Maag Jr.** (first owner of WFMJ and owner of the Youngstown Vindicator)
- **Frequency modulation** (FM-nearly interference-free medium for radio broadcasting)
- **Pete Gabriel** (worked for WKBN radio until recently-had interview about 9/11)
- **Television**
- **Philo T. Farnsworth** (inventor of television)
- **September 7, 1927** (first successful test of electronic television)
- **PBS**
- **WNEO** (Alliance, Ohio area PBS station)
- **WEAO** (Akron, Ohio area PBS station)
- **RCA** (Radio Corporation of America; once thought to have invented television)
- **Color TV**
- **Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood**
- **Tip Top Clubhouse** (television show that had a police officer named Clancy who had a hound dog sidekick)
- **Romper Room** (national television show from the 1960s that also aired locally; hosted by a woman who played games and sang songs with children)
- **HD**
- **Satellite**
- **Wireless**
- **Digital**

Teacher Instructions for Broadcasting Jeopardy

1. Download the Broadcasting Jeopardy file. The link is after the description of the game on page 3 of this curriculum guide.
2. Once the file is downloaded to your computer, a window will pop up and one of the options will be to open the file. Click on Open and a power point presentation will start.
3. It will open up in slide show mode with the first slide (introduction) as your screen.
4. Divide the students into groups. There should be at least two groups.
5. Click on the first slide, and it will take you to the next slide in the presentation.
6. The second slide is the Jeopardy game with the categories and point values under each.
7. One of the groups of students will start out by choosing a category and point value.
8. What you will do is click on the point value, which is hyperlinked to another slide in the presentation that has the answer.
9. The students will then try to provide the right question for that answer such as “Who was Warren P. Williamson Jr.?”
10. Many slides will have hints (if there are hints, there will be a statement in parenthesis after the answer), and if the students need the hint, you can click again on that same slide and a hint will pop up. Just make sure that you only *click once* after you bring up the hint on the hint slides, or else you will go to the next answer slide instead of back to the game board.
11. After that slide is finished, you will click on the blue square in the bottom left corner of the slide. This is what power point calls an “action button”. These “action buttons” are on all of the slides and are hyperlinked back to the main game board on the second slide, so that you can just click on the button and it takes you back to the game categories!
12. Once the game is over, you can click on the small blue square in the bottom left corner of the second slide where the game board is and this is the “action button” that ends the slide show.

Answers to Broadcasting Jeopardy

Radio

- 100- WKBN (Channel 27)
- 200- WFMJ (Channel 21)
- 300- Sound effects
- 400- NBC
- 500- September 26, 1926

Television

- 100- PBS
- 200- The Pioneer
- 300- WYTV (Channel 33)
- 400- RCA (Radio Corporation of America)
- 500-September 7, 1927

Important People

- 100- Warren P. Williamson Jr.
- 200- William F. Maag Jr.
- 300- Creed M. Chorpeneing
- 400- Pete Gabriel
- 500- Philo T. Farnsworth

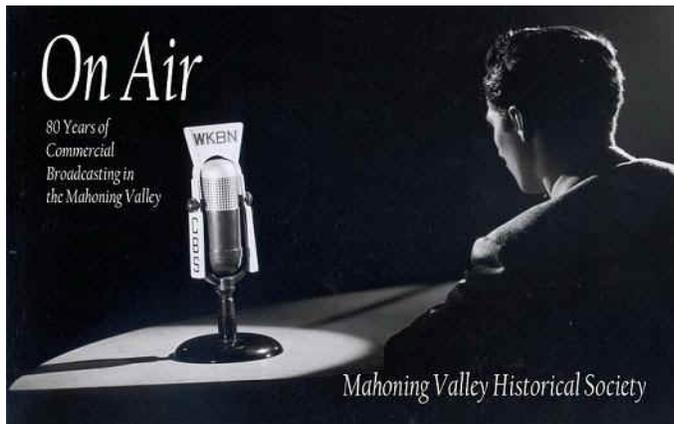
Radio/TV Shows

- 100- Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood
- 200- Romper Room
- 300- Story Book Lady
- 400- Tip Top Clubhouse
- 500- The Man behind the Gun

Present & Future

- 100- HD (high definition)
- 200- online/computer/internet
- 300-satellite (dish)
- 400- wireless
- 500- digital

Images of Early Radio and Television





WKBN-TV MORNING?
WKBN-TV AFTERNOON?
WKBN-TV EVENING?
WKBN-TV SATURDAY?
WKBN-TV SUNDAY?

*You name it...
 we have the
 audience!*

**WKBN-TV DOMINATES WITH
 366 QUARTER-HOUR FIRSTS!
 CLEVELAND, PITTSBURGH
 STATIONS FAIL TO SHOW!**

Looking at the Sept. 18-24, 1955 Telepulse Report another way, WKBN-TV's striking domination is again shown in the breakdown of quarter-hour firsts. While the two Youngstown stations capture every quarter-hour, Cleveland and Pittsburgh stations fail to obtain any quarter-hour leads. Of the two local stations, WKBN-TV is far superior with 76% of the quarter-hour firsts.

QUARTER HOUR FIRSTS	Mon. thru Fri. 7 a.m. to Midnight	WKBN-TV 366
	Sat. 10:30 a.m. to Midnight Sun. 11:00 a.m. to Midnight	STATION B 76
		TOTAL 442

*Source: Telepulse for Youngstown Observer-Atlas, Sept. 18-24, 1955.

CBS-ABC NETWORKS
 Represented Nationally by
PAUL H. RAYMER CO.
 EQUIPPED FOR NETWORK COLOR
 176,000 WATTS

WKBN-TV
channel 27

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO'S PIONEER STATION



Images of Today's Radio and Television



History of WKBN/WYFX

Broadcasting pioneer, Warren P. Williamson, Jr. was the first to bring radio to Youngstown on WKBN in 1926. He began broadcasting from the basement of his Youngstown home and by the following year, WKBN made its home in a studio at the Y.M.C.A in downtown Youngstown.

By the early 1930s, Williamson began planning to bring television to Youngstown. Williamson submitted a request for a television license, but due to the increasing amount of requests throughout the country, the Federal Communications Commission put all requests on hold until they could decide how to allocate channels.

Construction for the present WKBN building began in 1948. The state-of-the-art broadcasting facility, which opened in 1952, was built to accommodate television. On May 2, 1952, Williamson filed another application with the FCC for a television station in Youngstown. WKBN received channel 27 for television broadcasting.

By January 6, 1953, WKBN was on the air with a picture, but no sound. On January 11, 1953, WKBN became Youngstown's first TV station. WKBN was also the first UHF television station in the state of Ohio and the sixth in the nation. WKBN was affiliated with ABC, DuMont and CBS. WKBN joined CBS with President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Presidential Inauguration on January 20, 1953.

In 1959, WKBN became the first station in Youngstown to use videotape. This videotape was used for a Hostess Cake commercial during the Three Stooges program.

By 1963, WKBN became one of nine stations in the country to operate with one million watts of power or more for better picture service. Power was increased from 19,000 watts to one million watts.

Over the years, viewers have enjoyed WKBN's original programs including Romper Room, Clancy's Tip Top Clubhouse, Space Rangers and the Money Movie.

For over fifty years WKBN has served the Mahoning Valley. In 1998 we brought you the Valley's first Fox station, Fox 17/62. WKBN and Fox 17/62 offer the most local news and sports in the area. WKBN was the first to bring you local news programming in the morning, as well as local news at noon, 5pm, 6pm, and 11pm. Fox 17/62 offers the Valley's only local news at 10pm, as well as YSU football, high school football and basketball.

Remember to watch WKBN and Fox 17/62 as we continue to offer the most local news and sports, plus your favorite primetime programming.

Source: <http://www.wkbn.com/about/8389502.html>