



# ABC in Detroit

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**W**XYZ, ABC in Detroit, was purchased by the American Broadcasting Company during the year 1946. At the time of this purchase, it was generally believed that the engineers who were then members of the IBEW, would switch to another union. An NLRB election however, proved otherwise and today there are 64 engineers at WXYZ, all members of the IBEW and Local Union 1218. These engineers overwhelmingly approved a new contract which was recently negotiated by a committee of WXYZ engineers and International Representative Freeman Hurd. These engineers, like the officers of L. U. 1218, believe in the principles and the practice of conciliation and arbitration and consequently there has never been any strike action at WXYZ.

Let us take a trip through the WXYZ facilities, starting out at the AM Studio Building. We see a former mansion converted into six radio studios, as well as a fully-equipped master controlroom. Conveniently located adjacent to the controlroom are recording facilities for disc as well as magnetic tape recording. Many well-known dramatic shows emanate from these studios, such as "The Lone Ranger," "The Green Hornet," and others. In order to accommodate the many dif-

ferent program feeds, the controlroom equipment was so designed that three different program channels can be switched simultaneously to as many as seven different outgoing lines and very often this system is used to its full capacity. Occasionally, the feeds from this controlroom go to other networks including the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corp.). This studio building is located in a picturesque setting on Detroit's Eastside, opposite from the Detroit River Front.

The AM Transmitter Building of WXYZ is located some fourteen miles from the AM studios and is on Detroit's Westside, near the City of Dearborn. It consists of a standard 5DX RCA Transmitter, a directional antenna system which uses two towers at night, while during the day only one tower is in use and an auxiliary 1 kw transmitter for emergency service. Normal radiated power output of WXYZ is five kilowatts. FM monitoring facilities have been provided to give standby service in case of telephone line failure. A well-equipped workshop, complete living quarters, and a two-car garage make this location a pleasant place to work.

WXYZ-TV and WXYZ-FM are located virtually in the center of metropolitan Detroit. Surrounded by the

Right: The WXYZ Mobile Unit at the Detroit River Races. Chief Engineer Charles Kocher, pointing, directs Cameramen John Doran and Don Farmer.

Below: Protected with an Arctic face mask, Engineer Zack Lee does a remote in zero weather.





In recording room, Engineer Ray Spejna checks a taped program.



Supervisor Ed Simons making log entries at the AM transmitter.

Detroit Art Institute, the Main Public Library, the many buildings of Wayne University and the Engineering Society of Detroit, the Maccabees Building with the WXYZ antenna has become a landmark for Detroiters. The effective radiated power output of WXYZ-FM is 30 kilowatts, while the effective radiated power of WXYZ-TV is 29.7 kilowatts visual and 13.9 kilowatts aural. Located in this building are the four television studios, two on the first floor and two on the fifteenth floor. The TV and FM transmitters and a master controlroom with adjacent Telecine Room are also located on the fifteenth floor. The largest studio on the first floor provides access by automobile. WXYZ-TV was the first television station in Detroit and Michigan to provide for the demonstration and operation of automobiles within a television studio.

WXYZ-TV started telecasting on October 9, 1948, and, although the other Detroit television stations were operating on temporary FCC authorizations, it was the first to complete final facilities installation and submit satisfactory proof of performance to the Federal Communications Commission, thus qualifying for and obtaining the regular commercial television station license in Detroit and Michigan. In 1949, WXYZ-TV was the first Detroit TV station to schedule full time television programming, starting at 7 a. m. every week-day morning and at the same time extending its night-time operation past midnight. Since its opening, many outstanding local and network shows have originated from this station which, like other ABC stations, operates on Channel 7.

In addition to the studio facilities, a remote television truck complete with cameras, power supplies, microwave equipment, mobile radiotele-

phone and other necessary gear, has enabled the WXYZ engineering department to do an outstanding job of remote television programs. For example, a daily two-hour remote went on the air for a period of better than three months from Detroit's major airport at Willow Run, Mich., which is located about twenty-eight air miles from the TV studio building. It was microwaved every morning in a single hop! The engineers on this particular assignment started out at 3 a. m. every morning in order to get things ready for the airshow which was scheduled at 7 a. m. But, the technical director on this show, James Brinn, assures us that the boys really liked that shift in spite of the fact that they had to go to bed with the chickens.

Many interesting remote programs have originated at WXYZ-TV such as the Annual Boat Races on the Detroit River, and an interesting sidelight on one of these remotes was the microwaving of video signals from the conning tower of one of Uncle Sam's submarines. This was also the first on-the-air use of the Zoomar Lens by any TV station in Detroit. Another outstanding remote program was a Championship Golf Tournament (The Motor City Open-1950). Using five working cameras and two full remote crews as well as two complete microwave set-ups, WXYZ-TV had complete television coverage of the eighteen-hole golf course.

A thrilling episode for Detroit television viewers was a shot by Golf Pro Sunny Burke, whose long putt at the eighteenth hole rimmed the cup, and, after a few breathtaking moments, the ball finally fell into the hole. All this on close-up camera by means of a forty-inch Reflector Lens, making it full screen size!

During 1951, the City of Detroit



An 85-foot tower set up to microwave a recent golf tournament.



Engineering drawings are expertly done by IBEW Engineer John Gulevich.



Engineer Dan Angelich shoots a wheel production line at a Chevrolet plant.



Vic Adams, Supervisor, Hal Dushane, and Lou Dumon, all maintenance engineers at work.

celebrated its 250th anniversary and many civic events were telecast, including the gigantic birthday parade which lasted for several hours. Again, two remote crews at different locations and using two microwave set-ups and many cameras, gave Detroiters outstanding coverage of this historic event. Another remote program was recently originated from Windsor, Ontario, in Canada. The WXYZ engineers had to bring along their own power on this one, since the available power at Windsor was 25 cycles a.c. The portable power supply was a gas-engine driven alternator of 10 kva capacity and supplied all needed power at 60 cycles to operate the TV gear in the truck and also lighting. This occasion was the visit of Princess Elizabeth and her Royal Party and the telecast, originated by WXYZ-TV, was the first international television program which was fed and carried by stations from coast to coast, thus again making television history.

In sports, too, the WXYZ-TV remote staff has outstanding operations in picking up boxing, wrestling,

bowling, football, baseball, roller-derby, skating, horse-racing, midget auto racing, jalopy racing and others. While on the subject of midget racing, on one of the telecasts an accident occurred on the track and, due to two cars colliding at high speed, one of the midget racers was thrown into the air and narrowly missed Engineer Bruno Yank, on one of the cameras, by a mere matter of inches. Bruno managed to stay calm through the whole thing however, and thus provided Detroiters one of the biggest television thrills they had ever seen. Other remotes which might be classified as unusual were telecasts from a hospital operating room, from a Detroit police station, the Detroit Fire Department Training School, Grosse Isle Naval Base, the Detroit Zoo and even used car lots.

Speaking of the unusual, the engineers in the TV studios still remember the time when a pistol expert from the Detroit Police Department fired a revolver right at the camera lens. A piece of bullet-proof glass

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A view of WXYZ-TV Studio B on the main floor of the Maccabees Building in Downtown Detroit.

