

4. Radio

This section describes the explosion of the radio broadcasting and radio manufacturing industries from KDKA in 1920 through the emergence of dominance of radio by the three national broadcast networks. The three main sections are: the simultaneous creation of the broadcasting and consumer electronics businesses by H. P. Davis and the growth of those industries in the 1920s, the development of federal government policy on public ownership of the airwaves by Herbert Hoover, and the emergence of advertising as the economic foundation of broadcasting with a focus on William Paley. Key topics are: the nationwide excitement about radio; pioneering role of Westinghouse; RCA as sales arm for the “radio trust” of GE and Westinghouse; the competitive market for cheap radio sets; the simultaneous evolution of broadcasting, phonograph, & movies; AT&T’s effort to monopolize broadcasting and its powerful role in the movie business; radio chaos and competition; federal policy concerns; the FRC; the table of allocations; the inexorable rise of advertising; the dominance of content by the three networks.