

the *Northside Municipal Court* broadcasts, a device later used in some 26 cities.

Generally, WHB features news and music, but it has a method of "block programming" which allows one period to feed into the other, caters directly to a particular type of listener. In the morning, the station aims at the farmer, city worker and housewife. Typical features: livestock estimates at 6:25, *Musical Clock* from 7:15 to 9:00, with the day's market report on the fruits and vegetables available at 8:25, the *Weatherman* broadcasting at 9:15 and various tips on the shopping prospects in the city. Davis carries "block programming" further than most other stations by carefully choosing music, announcements and other special ingredients to satisfy specific moods. The station features music in the afternoon, but has yet to attain the standing which its morning programs enjoy.

Still Waiting

Although John Schilling founded WHB back in 1922, the station still goes off the air at sunset, reaches its latest hours in June and July, when it subsides at 8:45 p. m. Davis has worked long and hard to get a full-time license, thought he had finally reached his goal, when the government's recent "freeze order" on manpower and materials popped up to stymie it for the time being. While most station managers would remain discreetly mum about such matters, Davis has even discussed his troubles with the FCC in WHB advertisements, as when in an ad devoted to Henry Goldenberg, WHB's "calm chief engineer," he barked: "FCC please note! Our application for full-time operation on 710 kilocycles is still pending."

But Davis refuses to be seriously concerned with such temporary setbacks. Now 48, he has lived through a time which, as he puts it, "saw the kerosene lamp give way to the jet propulsion highball," and he has enjoyed every minute of it.

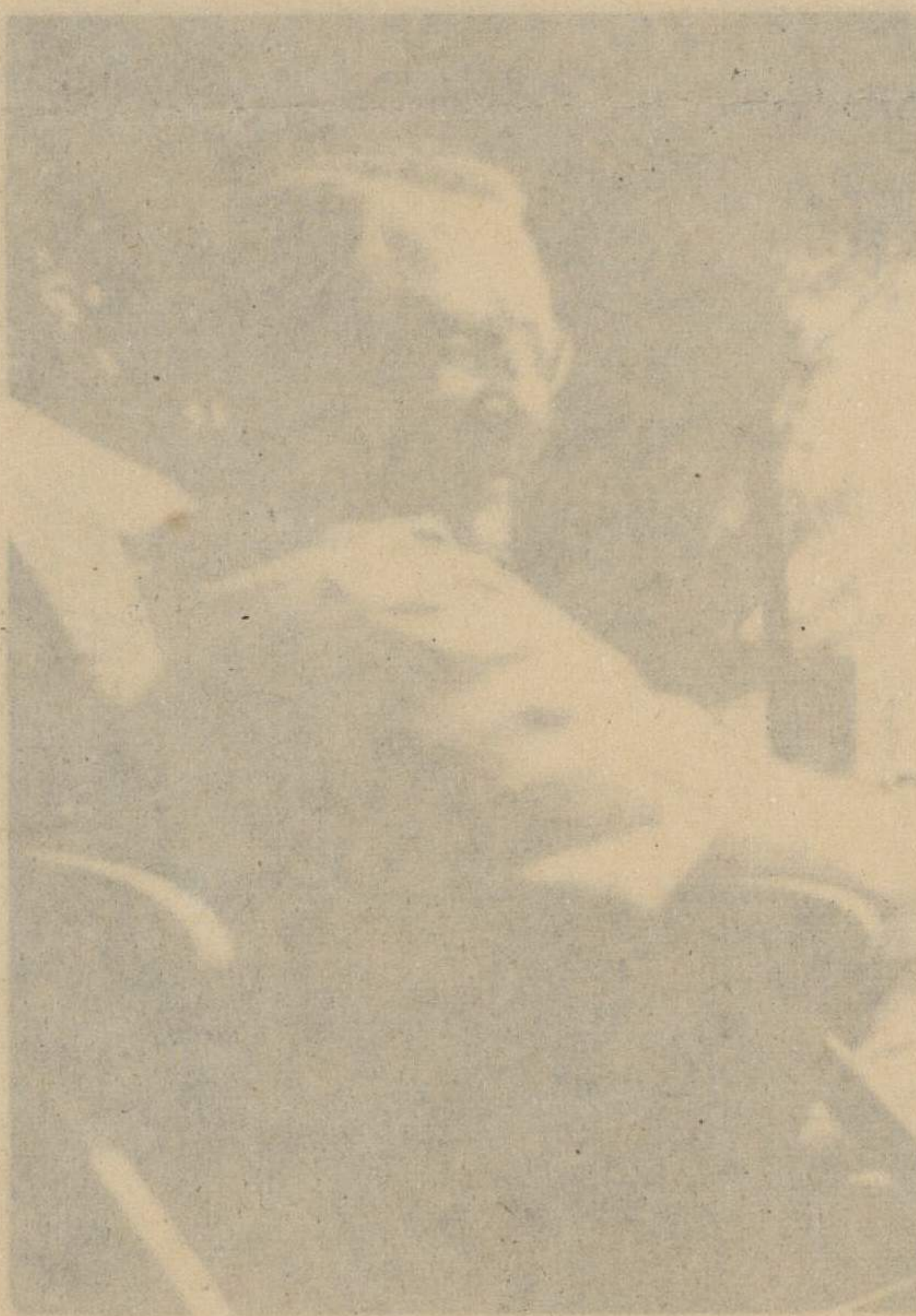
Bouncing about as he does, Davis has rafts of friends all over, is a frequent topic of conversation in the trade. In one such discussion he was termed a "wonderful fellow" whereupon another in the group, after musing a moment, said: "Wonderful — perhaps — but the word is picturesque."

the advertising agency of Loomis, Paxter, Davis & Whelan, Inc. (Kansas City). One of the prime accounts was the Cook Paint & Varnish Co., which sponsored The Cook Painter Boys over Station WDAF, now the National Broadcasting Co. outlet in Kansas City.

One of the Cook Painter Boys, John R. Wahlstedt, who had picked up the title of "Cook Tenor" in 1929, was the great delight of Charles R. Cook, president of the paint company. Cook especially liked Wahlstedt's rendition of *Roses of Picardy*. When the program shifted from WDAF to WHB, Cook decided to pay the station, have real control over his favorite tenor and get *Costly Cook Tenor*.

In 1930, when WHB became a wholly owned subsidiary of Cook Paint & Varnish, company officials settled back contentedly, but while the "Cook Tenor" continued in good voice, the station lost money steadily. *Roses of Picardy* became a more and more expensive treat. After a year and a half of this, President Cook asked agency man Davis to try his hand at running the station. A pioneer in radio advertising from the agency angle, Davis saw the chance to put some of his ideas in action, promptly took over as president of WHB in 1931.

A struggling operation with only a daytime broadcasting license, WHB obviously needed unusual promotion to



WHB'S DAVIS

He shed off a bit of the slogan

RADIO

THE SAGE OF SWING

Don Davis, the extraordinary president of WHB, publishes a magazine.

The curious combination of a song, a suitcase, and a slogan has had a lot to do with the fortunes of Kansas City's Station WHB, Mutual Broadcasting System affiliate. The song, *Roses of Picardy*, was a factor in the station's sale in 1930; the suitcase is significant because Don Davis, WHB president, practically lives out of it as national station representative; and the slogan, "The Swing is to WHB in Kansas City," sets the pitch for all WHB promotion.

In his latest scheme, the unpredictable Davis shed off a bit of the slogan, emerged last month with a messy, pocket-sized magazine titled *Swing Apparatus for Restoration*. The cover shows a young woman on a swing, who is featured in all WHB advertisements. It became the cover girl of the new publication (see cut p. 38).

Modus Operandi

Swing digests talks by Mutual commentators and public figures, seasons the serious reading with chatty comments on the local nightspots and their stars. Davis and editor Jetta Carlson, former WHB continuity head, explained they were striving for a balance in swing comparable to that of good radio programming. Right now, Davis plans to distribute swing gratis to advertisers and time buyers, print it on quality lowered local commercial printers. He will also send plates of the copy to other Mutual stations for local printing under the title, *Swing*. Each issue of *Swing*, of course, will carry the advertising of the individual station circulating it. While general newsstand circulation is only a dim hope for the future because of the paper shortage, Davis made a test on the newsstands in Kansas City, selling *Swing* at 25¢ a copy. Half the issues sold out in six days.

Donald Dwight Davis, respected, rotund and apple-checked, with a talent for slinging one quip after another, ambled out of the University of Kansas in 1918 with a Phi Beta key, a sense of humor and a fondness for drumming. Five years later he was a partner in

* He is indebted to Noah Webster for the euphem.