

Our First Radio Speaker

By Gary Knehans

Pulaski County didn't have its own radio station until KJPW signed on the air in April, 1962. But local residents had enjoyed radio entertainment long before that, many of them regular listeners to KWTO in Springfield.

Quite by accident, the *Gazette* staff discovered that the radio era in the local area began in the early 1920's, when a few county stores offered some of the first radio receivers.

In all probability, newly elected and installed state representative James W. Armstrong was the first Pulaski Countian to speak over the airwaves. On Monday afternoon, January 15th, 1923, Armstrong delivered an address from the W. O. S. wireless station of the State Marketing Bureau, located in the dome of the Capitol at Jefferson City.

His broadcast comments were as follows:

The grand old state of Missouri greets her sister commonwealths throughout the union; and through me her humble Representative, Pulaski county sends greeting to her sister counties of Missouri and to the whole listening world.

I presume that those who have preceded me in the daily program from this broadcasting station have spoken in fitting words of the superior advantages of our state in geographical position, soil, minerals, forests, and climate.

When I tell you that my county of Pulaski is one of those south central Missouri counties embraced in that indefinite region commonly known as the Ozarks, I feel sure that unless you have visited this section, you have a very erroneous idea of what the term Ozarks mean. No doubt you have the common conception that this is a region of lofty and rugged peaks and sterile soil. In fact there is very little of our section that even vaguely fits this description.

Pulaski county is situated on the northern slope of the great Ozark uplift. Our streams flow north and empty into the Missouri river. We are situated in what is rightly called the Ozark plateau and the wildest stretch of the imagination could not find anything that could be classed as a mountain. Indeed, often have tourists expressed disappointment because they expect to see lofty and barren mountains.

The Ozarks have no well defined boundary. I know of only one way the stranger can make sure of that mystic place. When the air seems a little purer and the sky a little bluer, you may know you have entered the Ozarks. When the waters are all cold and clear and every home offers you hospitality and good cheer, you may be assured that you are in the heart of the Ozarks. When you observe that the women are more modest and the garage man a little more honest, you will be convinced by this never failing token that you

are truly in the Ozarks. When you find people who make small pretense, but practice the Christian graces, where the worship of God and love of their fellowman is almost universal, you will begin to learn what the Ozarks really are.

Here you will find the cavalier of the south has blended his chivalry with the energy and ambition of the north and east and out of this amalgamation has come the most loyal, hospitable and ruggedly honest American Citizen.

My own county of Pulaski invites you to visit us and verify the truth of my statements. It is true that we are smaller in area and have less wealth and population than many other counties in other sections of the state, but there are very few that can show as much progress in public improvements and private enterprise.

With our smaller taxable wealth and a tax rate of only 83 cents on the \$100 valuation, for all purposes, exclusive of school and state tax, we maintain every activity for which the county is liable and I want to publish this fact to my widespread audience; to have payment refused on a county warrant, on any fund by the County Treasurer, is a thing

unheard of in old Pulaski. We pay as we go and always keep a comfortable margin in our treasury. Out of this tax we pay interest on a \$250,000 bond issue for road building, the only bond ever issued by Pulaski county.

We boast of the fact that there is not a remote corner of the county that is not readily accessible by a good graded road, much of which is surfaced with gravel.

We claim no congested center of population and want none. We are proud of our pure air, health giving waters and ample breathing space. We are keeping much of it for ourselves and our own enjoyment. But we invite you for a visit that we may prove our claims. Our roads are good and are consistently improved. We on are on the state program for 80 miles of highly improved roads; nearly half of which will be of the highest type of concrete. But you need not wait for the full completion of these projects. You will (like) our roads better than any other partly rural county in the State. The Gasconade, Big Piney, and Roubidoux rivers furnish the best of fishing. Quail, squirrel, and rabbits abound in our fields and woodlands.

Here in the beautiful playground of the middle west you can still hear the appealing notes of the hunter's horn, and enjoy the full cry of the pack as they chase their quarry up and over the rolling hills, down the fertile valleys and through the rich fields of standing grain.

We invite you to this section where you will find the real "Little Church in the Wildwood" where God is worshiped in spirit and in truth and not with pomp and display. To know this section is to love it. We invite you again to the Ozarks.

When you find the spot of supreme beauty and quiet contentment, where the house dog wags his tail in welcome, where the birds sing their sweetest notes, where the flowers bloom in the greatest profusion, where the persimmon and pawpaw swing to the gentle breezes, where the nuts cover the ground and the grapes hang in great purple clusters from every oak, you will know you are truly in Pulaski county, as she nestles as the highest jewel on the bosom of the great, growing and abounding imperial state of Missouri.



FARNHAM STORE CO-FOUNDER WILLIAM LOGAN FARNHAM, SR., seated with his wife Sadie. Grace Farnham Clark and William Logan Farnham, Jr., are standing in the back. Courtesy of Don Farnham, William, Jr.'s son.