History, part 1

Radio
What set the stage for radio

Penny Press – mass production of newspapers, creation of a mass audience.

Phonograph – Thomas Edison; provided entertainment in the home, popular demand for recorded music.

Motion pictures – again, Edison; laid groundwork for TV.
What set the stage for radio, cont.

**The Telegraph** – Samuel Morse, 1844; ability to electronic signals over wires.

**The Telephone** – Alexander Graham Bell, 1876; voice over wires.

Radio combined these elements, with wireless transmission.
What set the stage for radio, cont.


* Some historians say Nikolai Tesla rightly deserves credit for wireless, but Marconi successfully defended his patent in court.
What set the stage for radio, cont.

Commercial Uses – At first, “wireless” was mainly of use to sea-going ships. Only telegraph signals.

Rescue of Titanic survivors, 1912.

[Titanic distress call](http://example.com/titanic)
Government control averted

U.S. Navy took control of all “wireless” stations in World War I.

Congress decided not to allow the Navy to maintain control of wireless after the war.

From this point, U.S. radio and TV stations would remain under private control (although regulated by the federal government).
Radio as we know it
Reginald Fessenden – first known voice/music transmission, 1906.

The First Radio Station – KDKA, Pittsburgh, widely accepted as the first U.S. radio station (again, disputes).
(First radio station, continued, KDKA)

Dr. Frank Conrad, Westinghouse engineer, began experimental broadcasts in 1919.

Westinghouse wanted to motivate people to buy home radios.

KDKA’s first broadcast, Nov. 2, 1920; presidential election coverage.

KDKA - first broadcast 1920

KDKA today:

KDKA website
Commercials

WEAF in NYC aired first commercial, 1922.

“Toll broadcasting;” 10 minutes promoting an apartment house.

Many considered advertising on radio “scandalous.”

“Indirect” advertising – advertiser’s name was attached to the program (“Eveready Hour,” click image).

Kraft Music Hall (Bing Crosby w/ Roy Rogers, 1944); comm. at 8:30

Advertising gradually became more blatant.
Government Regulation

1912 Radio Act – presumed wireless telegraphy would continue. Not adequate to control the growth of radio broadcasting.

Sec. of Commerce Herbert Hoover – organized radio conferences, 1920s.

"The American System" - Dempsey & Gruver


Defined AM radio band. FM came later. Broadcasting must serve “public interest, convenience, and necessity;” but advertising allowed as the major source of revenue.
Network broadcasting

Radio Corporation of America (RCA) – originally American Marconi.

David Sarnoff’s “music-box memo;” envisioned broadcasting.

NBC

Branch of RCA, the first radio network, 1926. NBC “Red” and “Blue” networks (more later).

CBS

Began as Columbia Phonograph Broadcasting System, in 1927.

NBC and CBS, of course, eventually evolved into television networks.
Radio in the Depression

Entertainment in the home – relief from grim reality. Radio became as popular as TV would become.

"Empire of the Air" (stop at 7:50)

President Franklin Roosevelt

“Fireside Chats” – FDR used radio to his political advantage; skill in broadcasting became crucial to candidates.

FDR Fireside Chat