



BIOGRAPHY - RALPH H.G. MATHEWS

Ralph H.G. Mathews, Head of the High Fidelity Department of the Westinghouse Corporation, has been an important contributor to the science of radio and sound reproduction for the past 35 years.

One of the first amateur radio station owners in the country, Mr. Mathews operated his own "ham" station in Chicago at the age of 13, and through high school and college, spent his summers as a commercial shipboard radio operator. His station 9-ZN, was the most powerful amateur station in the country and at one point Mr. Mathews packed the station into an ornate truck and took it on a cross-country tour to broadcast some radio "firsts." These included what is believed to be the only broadcast ever made from the summit of Pike's Peak, and the first broadcast of lion's roar. Responses showed that his station was powerful enough to send these broadcasts coast to coast.

Some of the earliest long distance radio-telephone experiments in history were carried on between the laboratories of the famed Dr. Lee DeForest at Ossining, New York, and Mr. Mathews in Chicago. Housed in a shanty-like building with 9-ZN was also Chicago's first radio factory, the Chicago Radio Laboratory which later became the Zenith Radio Corporation, taking its name from the station's call letters.

From Mathew's laboratory came an ingenious wireless system which made the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad the first railroad in the world to successfully dispatch trains by radio-telegraph. In recognition of these and other contributions to the field, Mr. Mathews was chosen as a member of the first board of directors of the American Radio Relay League. He has also held many offices in the Institute of Radio Engineers.

When Zenith was formed, Mr. Mathews became Chief Engineer in charge of broadcasting stations, and assisted the president in sales promotion and publicity. He left in 1926 to become Vice President of the American Radio Broadcasting Corp. He later branched into advertising and marketing, first as an independent sales engineering consultant, and later as a partner in Ford, Browne & Mathews, Chicago advertising agency specializing in accounts in the radio field.

Along with electronics, Mr. Mathews has had a parallel career as naval officer in two world wars. He now holds the rank of Commander in the Naval Reserve. This phase of his career began prior to World War I, when he was one of nine college students selected by Admiral S. C. Hooper to be commissioned as Naval Communications Officers and thus form the nucleus of the now-vast Naval Communications operations. He has served on numerous electronic engineering projects for the Navy since 1916.

During World War II he served with distinction in the South Pacific as Executive Officer of the American base at Sydney, Australia, and Captain of the Navy Yard at Hollandia, New Guinea. The latter base is famed as the jumping-off point for the liberation of the Phillipines in the Japanese war. He is active in the American Legion, the Military Order of World Wars, and the Reserve Officers Association.

After his World War II duty, Mr. Mathews returned to advertising and sales work with electronic and radio companies. He also served as a faculty member at Purdue University, in charge of the Indianapolis extension course in technical salesmanship for engineers. This was followed by the direction of new business operations for two Chicago advertising agencies.

Immediately prior to his joining the Westinghouse Corporation in 1957 Mr. Mathews was director of the high fidelity division of the Magnavox Co.

Ralph Mathews was born with the rare gift of absolute pitch--the unique ability to determine the right musical note--and has always been interested in music. He has had a season seat at the opera since he was 16 years old, and has the complete recordings of 62 operas which he made on tape from FM broadcasts. Mr. Mathews also holds the distinction of having produced the last record ever made by the late Ezio Pinza.

Musical interest is very much a part of the Mathews' family life, since his wife, Elizabeth, plays the concert harp. They also share an interest in tennis--they met on the tennis court--and badminton. Both were the Indiana state badminton champions, and Mr. Mathews is currently Chairman of the National Umpires Committee of the Badminton Association.

Mr. Mathews now works and resides in Metuchen, New Jersey, where the Westinghouse High Fidelity Division has its plant and offices.