

ZENITH "RADIO LOG" NOV. 1945

company, were stationed in the same Navy Office in Chicago. They talked radio in their spare time and soon decided to start in that business when the war ended. When they were relieved from active duty, Mr. Mathews and Mr. Hassel formed the Chicago Radio Laboratory and started building radio sets for amateurs.

The two men soon proved that they could convert their dreams into products with the simplest of tools and plenty of work. There was no such thing as an assembly line or a plant then. Their whole production took place on the kitchen table with tools limited to screw-drivers, a hammer, a hand drill, and a soldering iron designed to be heated over a gas stove. They soon made the iron more convenient by heating it in an old style electric heater.

As these two worked, they continued to dream of two things—improved radio equipment and greater production. Their continued efforts soon moved their "factory" from the kitchen table to a 14 x 18-foot area in a combined factory and radio station just north of the Edgewater Beach hotel. The call letters of their station, 9ZN sparked an employee's suggestion for the company's present name.

An employee suggestion

At the time, the Mathews-Hassel team was manufacturing nine products in addition to operating

station 9ZN. An employee suggested that these nine products be advertised in a radio amateur's magazine of that day and that the heading of the ad be 9ZNith. Pronounced, the ZNith became Zenith, and with the "e" added later, the present trademark was created. Other employees contributed additional ideas and the progress of Zenith in an infant industry continued.

Mr. Mathews and Mr. Hassel built and installed equipment for the L and N railroad to eliminate the need for stringing telegraph wires over very rough country between Nashville and Tullahoma, Tenn. That was the first radio used in railroading. Their next special assignment was the construction of long wave receiver to enable the Chicago Tribune to get peace conference news direct from Lyons, France.

A flash-back over Zenith's thirty years provides the theme for the company's future—continuing progress in the field of radionics.

Requests for equipment

The beginnings of the present company date back to the experiences of Ralph Mathews, who had an amateur radio station in Chicago in 1915. Being centrally located, his station was heard by many other amateurs who wrote in to ask him what equipment he used. His first dream of a possible market for radio sets came from those queries, and he built and sold some sets before World War I put an end to all amateur radio activities.

During the war, Mr. Mathews and Karl E. Hassel, who now holds the post of consultant in the engineering division as assistant vice president and director of the

