A Study of the Origins and Development of KELO-LAND Television

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A STUDY OF THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF
KELO-LAND TELEVISION

BY
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A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts, Major in
Speech, South Dakota
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I should also like to thank the management and staff of KELO-LAND television for their encouragement and kindness in this study.

WCM
A STUDY OF THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF KELO-LAND TELEVISION

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree, but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

/ Thesis Adviser

Head, Speech Department

Date
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Origins Of The Study

In recent years television has become a topic for intensive study at American universities. This is shown by the multiplicity of studies reported in the annual research lists in *Speech Monographs*. Consistent with this research emphasis in television, several reasons influenced the undertaking of this current study. One reason was a personal interest in the field of television. The writer has been involved in broadcasting since he was in high school, and plans to make his career in television.

Another reason for the selection of this topic was that this type of study had never been attempted in South Dakota. Thus, it was felt to be of importance that the beginnings and development of stations like KELO-TV be recorded while current informational sources were still available. This type of study has been done before, both at the master's and Ph.D. levels, in other sections of the country, which tends to demonstrate the merit of such a study in South Dakota.

A third reason for this study was that it could be of benefit to small or future stations in that the growth of a station from small beginnings to considerable size is described in detail. Some of the common problems encountered in the process of
development of new television stations are also set forth in this paper.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to provide a history of the development of KELO-LAND television, from its beginnings to the present time (1969). For the purpose of this thesis, KELO-LAND television is defined as including only KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; KDLO-TV, Garden City, South Dakota; and KPLO-TV, Medicine Butte, South Dakota. The study includes the origins of the stations, the early operations, and the development of each station.

**Procedure**

The following steps were undertaken and completed during the study. Step One was to survey the following publications in the field of speech to determine whether there had been other studies related to the topic:


As a result of this survey it was discovered that no graduate study regarding a South Dakota commercial television station had
been recorded. Two studies, completed in other areas, were found to be relevant to the topic:


While the method used in these two studies was similar to that of the current investigation, it is felt that this did not lessen the importance of the study of the three KELO-LAND stations; rather, it tends to indicate that the topic was worthy of historical inquiry.

Step Two consisted of gathering sufficient data to develop the history of KELO-LAND television. The following sources were utilized:

A. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader for pertinent news items.
B. Recorded and personal interviews with the president and staff members of Midcontinent Broadcasting Company (owners of KELO-LAND television).
C. Records of Midcontinent Broadcasting Company for information on the development of the stations.
E. The Director of Educational Media at South Dakota State University for information on KELO-LAND gifts to KESD-TV (the university-owned educational television station).

Step Three represents an attempt to synthesize the accumulated data into a systematic chronological history of KELO-LAND television.
Step Four contains a summary of the study and endeavors to draw conclusions from the chronology regarding the development and progress of KELO-LAND television.
CHAPTER II
ORIGINS OF THE STATION

KELO-TV had its origins in the association of Eddie Ruben, Joe Floyd and Larry Bentson. These three men developed and own the KELO-LAND stations, KELO, KDLO, and KPLO-TV.

Mr. Ruben

The association between Mr. E.R. Ruben and Mr. Joe Floyd, which led to the development of the KELO-LAND television system, began in 1928. Mr. Ruben, a 1920 graduate of the University of Minnesota, assumed control of his father's business, the F and R theatre chain in Minneapolis. In 1928, when Ruben was thirty years old, F and R Theatres sold out to the Publix Paramount Theatres. Mr. Ruben then accepted a general supervisory job for the Publix Company in New York. Prior to this time, Mr. Ruben had had no contact with Mr. Floyd.

Mr. Floyd

In 1928 Floyd was fifteen years old and finishing high school at Washburn High in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Following high school, Floyd entered employment with the Publix Paramount Theatres as an usher in the Minnesota Theatre in Minneapolis. Floyd described his job in this way:
I'd had numerous jobs all my life since I was a kid, and the minute I got there, dressed in what those days was a seventy-five dollar usher suit—and in those days suits were selling for fifteen dollars—and white gloves, I knew immediately that my career was going to be in the theatrical business, and I have never changed from that time. I was very fortunate.

Floyd's first meeting with Ruben came when Ruben visited the Minnesota Theatre on official business. While Floyd held the door for him, Ruben said, "It's nice to see you, good morning, son." While working in the Minnesota Theatre, Floyd reported that he received extensive experience in all phases of the theatre business.

During this time Floyd began attending classes at the University of Minnesota. Knowing that he did not plan to graduate, as there were no specific courses in theatre operation, he selected certain courses which he felt would be of help to him in his career. He attended the university part-time for two years.

Ruben-Floyd Activities

On January 1, 1931, Mr. Ruben returned to Minneapolis from New York to reenter the theatre business. He persuaded the owner of the Pantages Theatre to open the theatre again, after it had been closed for five years. Mr. Ruben hired Mr. Cliff Gill, who had been the Minnesota head of advertising for the Publix Theatre chain, as manager and Floyd as assistant manager. The theatre reopened August 5, 1932.

The Pantages Theatre at that time became what Floyd called a fifteen-cent "grind house." The management played old films and
directed their billings toward people out of work. These people still had enough money to pay fifteen cents to pass their time.

Floyd recalled that during the height of the Depression the Pantages Theatre was the only theatre in the Twin Cities to make money.

In 1933 Mr. Ruben purchased the Granada Theatre in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Floyd, at twenty years of age, was named manager. He moved to Sioux Falls in December of 1933. The Granada Theatre was remodeled and opened playing Little Women on January 1, 1934.9

At this time, Mr. Floyd's previous experience in advertising came into productive use. The theatre was using what Floyd called "limited product" (B-grade motion pictures). Floyd carried about double the amount of advertising than other theatre managers, and often had B-grade films grossing high revenues. In this way he gained the reputation, as he said, "of making big ones out of little ones," a practice and reputation he carried over to the broadcast media.10

The Granada Theatre became a profitable business under Floyd's direction. When World War Two broke out the theatres in general suffered from a lack of availability of new pictures. Theatre attendance, however, remained high.

The next step for Mr. Ruben was to build the Hollywood Theatre in Sioux Falls. This was the first new indoor theatre to be built in Sioux Falls in twenty years. The Hollywood was
completed in 1938. In 1939 Floyd, on his own, built the Sports Bowl, a bowling alley located next to the Hollywood Theatre.

When the war ended and new movies began reentering the market, Ruben expanded to drive-in theatres. Ruben and Floyd pioneered the first drive-in theatre in South Dakota, the Starlight Theatre in Sioux Falls. They rapidly expanded with other Starlight Theatres in Huron, Aberdeen and Rapid City in South Dakota, and Fargo and Grand Forks in North Dakota. With the exception of Rapid City, the company still operates all of these theatres. In 1968 Ruben and Floyd opened another theatre, the K-Cinema, in Sioux Falls. Today Mr. Ruben operates the chain of theatres out of Minneapolis.11

Floyd The Innovator

During the time that Floyd was working for Ruben, he was also experimenting with other businesses. Floyd was young and eager and wanted to develop his ideas. In an interview, he said:

Eddie [Ruben] was very cautious. . . . I don't think there's ever been a venture that we've ever got into that Eddie didn't object to, and didn't want to go into it, and that I didn't push him into it. By the time I got him to go, brother I had all the negatives that there were ever to have, which was very good. 'Cause sometimes I would realize through this maneuvering where I was exposed. I was the continual optimist and he was always on the pessimistic side. I think that between us we made a good combination. When the bowling alleys first came out with their new contour. . . . I got into bowling right away. Eddie didn't want to get into that. That was the first time I ever really broke away from Eddie and went on my own.12

While managing the Hollywood Theatre in Sioux Falls, Floyd developed a close association with the area radio stations. Floyd produced several programs for the radio stations, including one in
which he used the sound tracks from movies to give a preview of the movie without revealing the plot. As Floyd said, "This was how I found out about copyrights." Due to the copyright laws the show had to be dropped, much to the disappointment of the radio station.

Floyd next developed a program called "G.I. Blind Date." This program was at first produced as a stage show for the theatres. In the program soldiers and young ladies, separated by screens, talked on a telephone in front of the audience. Through the conversation, a "blind date" was arranged. The program seemed to be successful, so Floyd decided to develop it into a radio show.

Floyd said he knew nothing about producing or selling a full-sized radio show at this time. He solicited the help of Johnny Gillin, of radio station WOW in Omaha, Nebraska. Gillin referred Floyd to Tom Wallace, a producer in Chicago. Floyd wanted Ruben to back him on the program, but Ruben refused. Wallace and Floyd produced the program in Chicago and went to New York to sell the show. Floyd claimed that he didn't know how to sell a show at that time, but in spite of this lack of knowledge he was successful; with the help of Herman Levin and Bernie Schubert, New York promoters, the show, featuring Arlene Francis, was sold to Maxwell House Coffee. Floyd stayed in New York for about a year with "Blind Date" and, at the same time, continued working in the theatres for Ruben. He commuted to Sioux Falls on weekends to set up theatre programs for the following week.

"Blind Date" was on the air from 1942 to 1946 and was, in
Floyd's words, "...a fabulous success." Floyd recalls that he made a great deal of money on the show, but lost it all backing Broadway productions. He did, however, receive a liberal education on what to and what not to do:

... our last big one was the musical version of Rain called Sadie Tompson, and I think that took my last dollar. It opened up one night and closed three nights after it opened. ... I said, 'Herman (Herman Levin), I've had enough.' I said, 'I'm going back to South Dakota. ... I'm broke, I haven't any more money. I gotta go back and go to work.'

Floyd indicated he was making about eighty dollars a week, at this point, as the manager of the Hollywood Theatre. During the peak of the "Blind Date" radio run, his remuneration was about four thousand dollars a week. He returned to South Dakota, to Sioux Falls, as he had promised Eddie Ruben that he would take care of the theatres.

When he returned, Ruben made Floyd a partner in his business.

... so when I got back Eddie asked our attorney, 'What do I have to do to go in partnership with Joe to make him stay home?' He said, 'I think you have to give him a piece of it.' So then Eddie took me in as a one-third partner.

Television The Monster

Commercial television was first authorized by the Federal Communications Commission on July 1, 1941. To film theatre operators, the new medium was a monster. Trade magazine writers and theatre proprietors were frightened, according to Floyd. To them the "Amos and Andy" show and subsequent vacant theatres were a threat to the establishment.
Floyd said he felt that amusements moved in cycles:

In earlier days the theatre was a reward for a child's good behavior. Next, if you didn't have anything else to do you went to the theatre. At the present time, if you have nothing to do, you stay home and watch television; you now make a deliberate point to attend a motion picture.18

Within the general cycle, Floyd felt there were subcycles in the film industry itself, such as westerns, musical extravaganzas and mysteries. Many of these patterns reappeared in television.19

Broadcast Background Versus Show Business Background

Floyd feels there are two backgrounds which are beneficial to productive television. One is a radio background, while the other is a show business background. The majority group in television rose from the ranks of radio. Floyd feels that this group was trained primarily in talking to people, supplying them with news, weather, and other information.20

According to Floyd, the show business group was more video oriented. He said that in his opinion it was easier for the showman to understand what the people want, or think they want. This, he felt, came from the showman's experience in selecting many hours of programming for the theatre. In television, this ability to select programs that people would accept and enjoy was very valuable. This is why Floyd maintained that the showbusiness group had the advantage over radio people in programming for television.21
Purchase of KELO Radio

Ruben and Floyd were successful in their theatre operations. Once again the innovator, Mr. Floyd began looking at television. Some theatre operators saw television as a threat, but Floyd saw it as something in which he and Ruben should take an interest.

Floyd mentioned that Radio Station KELO was for sale. KELO Radio had on file with the Federal Communications Commission an application for a television station. Floyd felt that television was the only medium that could threaten their theatre concern. He suggested to Ruben that they "... get a hunk of the television business and see where we go."22

Floyd began to negotiate the purchase of KELO Radio. The owner, Sam Fantel Jr., wanted to sell for two main reasons: one was that he had other businesses he wanted to pursue, and the second reason, according to Floyd, was that Fantel did not want to build the television station.

Floyd then received a call from Ruben, requesting a meeting in Minneapolis. Attending the meeting were Mr. Clair Stout, an attorney assisting Floyd in the negotiations; Mr. Leon Goldfarb, a financial consultant and accountant for Ruben and Floyd; and Mr. Bentson, a Minneapolis broadcaster and Ruben's son-in-law.

At the meeting, Ruben stated that he had conferred with Mr. Blank, a successful theatre operator in Des Moines, Iowa. Blank had advised Ruben not to go through with the purchase. He reasoned that one didn't need a radio station as a base for television. He
felt that if television was a threat to the movie industry it was also a threat to radio. Ruben agreed with Blank and suggested to Floyd that they drop the negotiations, but Floyd told Ruben, "Eddie, I hate to do it all over again, but I am going to have to do it. I'm going to go anyway."23

Ruben was still apprehensive. He suggested at this point, however, that if they did pursue this matter they should include Larry Bentson of Radio Station WMIN, St. Paul, Minnesota. His plan was to take two-thirds of WMIN and give Bentson one-third of their South Dakota properties. Floyd, until now, had only met Bentson once, when Bentson had married Mr. Ruben's daughter.

The discussion came to the point where Floyd stated he was going to purchase KELO Radio and asked Bentson if he was going to stay at WMIN Radio or be a partner. Bentson said he would go along with Floyd. Ruben finally agreed, saying, "As long as you two fellows have it that way, I guess I'm not going to hold out on you; we'll go ahead."24

As in most of their operations Floyd had overcome Ruben's opposition, and they proceeded with their plans to purchase KELO Radio. Bentson was made a partner with one-third of the stock. The purchase of two-thirds of the WMIN Radio shares was made later.25

KELO Radio

Originally Radio Stations KELO and KSOO, both of Sioux Falls, were associated stations. Sam Fantel Jr. was a partner of
Morton Henkin, who owned the radio stations. KSOO operated during the daytime, from dawn to sunset, and KELO operated from sunset to midnight.

In 1946 the stations were forced to separate under the duopoly rule of the Federal Communications Commission (the rule, in substance, states that ownership is limited to only one radio station per town). At this time Mr. Fantel assumed control of KELO Radio and Mr. Henkin retained KSOO. Both stations then began broadcasting full time.26

On May 19, 1950, Sam Fantel Jr. filed an application for a television station on behalf of KELO Radio. The following story appeared in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader:

APPLICATION BY KELO IS FIRST IN STATE
Station Won't Be In Operation Until 8 Months To A Year

The Communications Commission today received the first application for a television station in South Dakota. The application was filed by Midcontinent Broadcasting Co., Sioux Falls. It asks the use of Channel 11. The same company now operates the standard station KELO at Sioux Falls.

The television application went into the FCC's "frozen" file, on which action has been suspended pending the close of the current hearings on color television and related issues.

No TV For 8 Months

Sam Fantel Jr., President of the Midcontinent Broadcasting Co., said today that eight months to a year would be the least possible period of time before KELO would have television in Sioux Falls.

In explaining the "frozen" file of the Federal Communications Commission, Fantel said that the "freeze" has been on since September, 1949, and that the FCC would not award any
television grants until certain frequency allocations and color problems of a very technical nature were settled.

350 Applications

"There were approximately 350 television applications from all over the United States now on file with the Commission that are pending action and are awaiting the lifting of the 'freeze,'" commented Fantel. "At the time the 'freeze' is lifted, the technical problems which have made it necessary will have been solved."

"Radio Station KELO, cognizant of the desire and right of the public to have this new and greatest medium of mass education and entertainment, has placed an application now before the FCC," Fantel said.

Asked about the period of time in which television would be available in this area through KELO-TV, Fantel said that it depended upon the action of the FCC in lifting the "freeze."

"It is expected that the 'freeze' may be lifted sometime in the fall of this year, probably sometime during the late fall or winter months," Fantel declared. "At that time the station will receive its television grant."

"The final construction of the station would then be based on weather conditions, available equipment and other factors," he said. "The possible minimum time would be about eight months to a year unless the FCC lifts the 'freeze' earlier than expected."

Planned For TV

Fantel said that when planning and constructing facilities and transmitter in 1948, KELO had planned for eventually entering the television field.

Station KELO is an affiliate of the National Broadcasting Co., which has developed network television to an extensive degree. However, Fantel said that it was not expected that KELO would carry network programs at first by direct interconnection network facilities, but that network programs might be televised from films of NBC and other networks.27

This television application was of utmost importance to Floyd, Ruben, and Bentson. The three associates were buying KELO Radio mainly as a base from which to construct a television station. Floyd relates, "... that's the only reason we bought it, we would not have gone into the radio business, per se, ourselves."28 Mr.
Evans Nord, executive vice-president and general manager of Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, has a slightly different view on this situation (at the time of purchase, he was serving in the capacity of manager of KELO Radio):

They didn't pick a television station. At that time it was KELO Radio. But we did have a construction permit for a television station. The TV station was not in operation when they bought it; it was strictly a radio station. I am sure that it had some bearing on it because they could foresee wisely the possibilities of television, having been in the theatre business. But the radio station was a good property in itself. I am sure that the television permit itself had a very definite influence on their interests, but I think they would have bought the radio station on its own.

Nord's feelings on this may be due to his lengthy background in radio. Floyd's reflections are likely more accurate, as he was involved in the actual purchase. In any event, KELO Radio became the basis for KELO-TV.

By the time of the actual purchase, Floyd and his associates knew that the FCC freeze on television applications would be lifted. Floyd said this was common knowledge throughout the industry, and the freeze had already been lifted in some of the Eastern markets.

Floyd felt that the lifting of the freeze was one of the reasons that Fantel sold the station. With the freeze lifted Fantel would have had to activate the channel, which he was reluctant to do in view of the fact that there were other businesses which he wished to expand.

The following story appeared in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader...
on March 14, 1952:

SALE OF RADIO STATION KELO
IN SIOUX FALLS IS ANNOUNCED

Filing of an application to transfer ownership of the Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, operators of Radio Station KELO, was announced in Washington, D.C., today.

Reached at his office in Sioux Falls, Sam Fantel Jr., president of the company, confirmed that negotiations for the sale of the 5,000 watt NBC affiliate, have been completed, pending approval of the Federal Communications Commission.

The new owners are Joe Floyd, Sioux Falls, associated with Eddie Ruben, President of the Welworth Theatres and Starlight Theatres of South Dakota, which Ruben and Floyd have mutually operated for the past 19 years. Their associate named on the pending transfer is N.L. Bentson of Radio Station WMIN, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Floyd In Charge

Floyd, who will be in charge of operations, following approval of the transfer, has been a resident of Sioux Falls for the past twenty years.

Ruben is a resident of Minneapolis, and Bentson is currently a resident of St. Paul.

Floyd is a well known theatre owner and operator, including the Hollywood Theatre and the Starlight Drive-in in Sioux Falls. Floyd has been responsible for several network radio and television productions in New York and Hollywood.

Speaking for the new owners, Floyd said that it is their intention to follow to completion the extensive television plans developed by Fantel, as well as to carry on the radio operations of the company.

Sale price of the company was reported to be around $300,000.

Fantel's future plans were not revealed, but it is understood that the sale was made to enable him to devote more time to other interests.

Another story on the sale was carried by the Argus Leader on Friday, May 2, 1952:

New ownership of the Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, Inc., operators of Radio Station KELO became final on Thursday with the transfer of active management. Purchase of the company was made from Sam Fantel Jr., Sioux Falls, after
the sale was sanctioned by the Federal Communications Commission on April 18. Direction of the NBC affiliated station will be handled by the new president of the company, Joe Floyd of Sioux Falls.

Regarding television plans at KELO Floyd said we are doing everything in our power to see that Sioux Falls is among the first to receive a television grant. According to Floyd, no personnel changes were affected in the transfer. Station manager Evans Nord will remain in his present capacity. 32

Joe Floyd was now the president of Midcontinent Broadcasting Company. During an interview he related his feelings concerning his new position.

... I knew nothing about radio. Thanks to our capable guy, Evans Nord, I just went up ... and listened. I remember Bud's [Sam Fante] parting shot to the employees was that he had sold out to a very successful firm with lots of money ... 'and I'm sure they'll be able to afford to give you the raises that I couldn't.' So the morning I took over they were standing about twenty feet deep at the front door. 33

KELO had its studios and offices at Eighth Street and Phillips Avenue in Sioux Falls, over a drugstore. Fante apparently liked appearances, and he had an impressive office. Floyd said that initially he "sat behind a huge desk knowing nothing, but finding out what was going on in a hurry." 34

One of the first decisions made by Floyd and Bentson in their new partnership capacity was that they needed to obtain new advertising representatives (companies that represent stations in dealings with advertisers and agencies). They approached some of the biggest of the advertising agencies in New York, asking "... would you like to rep KELO?", 35 but were turned down. Next they went to a company called H-R Agency, and also received a rather lukewarm reception. Finally they went to O.L. Taylor, a
representative organization run by a George Benard. The company represented a group of small stations, and did take the KELO account. (At a later date KELO was accepted by H-R Agency. Today they are H-R's second largest account.)

Floyd had been involved with the video aspect of communications, while Bentson's experience was in the radio area; so although they were new to the television business, their backgrounds were complementary. During this initial venture into television, the partners sold their interests in Radio Station WMIN in St. Paul and purchased WLOL Radio in Minneapolis.36

One of the main problems that Floyd faced in his new project was the general lack of knowledge about the television medium. At every opportunity, Floyd would visit existing television stations to observe their operations. He found that various television stations were being supported by radio, which to him justified his earlier action in purchasing KELO Radio.

Floyd wanted to study the operations of a television station in a similar situation to that of Sioux Falls. This station, like the Sioux Falls station, would have to be small, with no network affiliation, and be the only station in the area. Austin, Texas, was recommended, so Bentson and Floyd made a trip to Texas. When they reached Austin they received some rather pessimistic advice from the station manager, Jess Kallam.

When asked about television, Kallam replied, "Oh God, don't ever get into it, this is terrible.... just don't ever get into
it... the more money you give them the more money they spend...
I wish I never heard of television." When asked what he recom-
mended for Floyd and his operation, he replied, "... just don't
spend any money." He said, "I would just drag my feet, I wouldn't
get into this business." Kallam is still manager of the Austin,
Texas station, KTBC-TV.

Floyd and Bentson temporarily took Kallam's advice. They
did proceed more cautiously than originally planned, and in the
process lost their option on a TV tower to Sioux City, Iowa.

On November 19, 1952, the Federal Communications Commission
issued to Midcontinent Broadcasting Company a construction permit
to build a television station. The station was to be located in
Sioux Falls, South Dakota, broadcasting on Channel 11.

SUMMARY

The association of Eddie Ruben and Joe Floyd led to the pur-
chase of KELO Radio, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Floyd and his associates assumed control of KELO Radio on
April 28, 1952. On November 19, 1952, the Federal Communications
Commission granted a construction permit to Radio Station KELO
(Midcontinent Broadcasting Company) for a Sioux Falls television
station, utilizing Channel 11.
FOOTNOTES

1Recorded interview with Joe Floyd, president, Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

2Personal letter from Eddie Ruben, president, Midcontinent Theatre Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 30, 1969.

3Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

4Ibid.

5Ibid.

6Ibid.

7Ruben, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 30, 1969.

8Ibid.

9Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

10Ibid.

11Ibid.

12Ibid.

13Ibid.

14Ibid.

15Ibid.

16Ibid.


18Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

19Ibid.

20Ibid.
21Ibid.
22Ibid.
23Ibid.
24Ibid.
25Ibid.
26Ibid.

28Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

29Recorded interview with Evans Nord, executive vice-
      president and general manager, Midcontinent Broadcasting Com-
      pany, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 19, 1969.

30Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.


32"KELO Ownership Transfer is Made," Sioux Falls Argus
      Leader, May 2, 1952, p. 5.

33Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

34Ibid.
35Ibid.
36Ibid.
37Ibid.
38Ibid.

39Broadcasting 1969 Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: Broadcast-

40Recorded interview with Les Froke, chief engineer, Midcon-
      tinent Broadcasting Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Febru-
      ary 26, 1969.
CHAPTER III
DEVELOPMENT OF THE KELO STATIONS

Construction Of The Station

When the television construction permit was issued to KELO Radio on November 19, 1953, the process of ordering equipment began. Before Sam Fantel sold the station, he had placed a tentative equipment order with Radio Corporation of America (RCA). The order, placed February 3, 1950, was conditional upon receipt of the construction permit.

The Fisher Company of Portland, Oregon supplied the tower for KELO-TV. The company had been constructing high tension power lines across the Columbia River in Washington. This experience enabled Fisher workers to construct towers quickly; thus they were able to provide rapid erection of the KELO tower. KELO's first TV tower was 583 feet in height. According to Joe Floyd, a height of over 500 feet was unusual at that time.

Only basic television equipment was in use when KELO-TV signed on the air the night of May 19, 1953, according to Les Froke, KELO chief engineer. Floyd had decided that in order to save money he would not use live cameras. KELO-TV was the first station to commence broadcasting using film only. Froke, in an interview, said that he did not feel the equipment was inadequate:

Well, we weren't limited too badly. About the only thing we couldn't do was put on live local pictures. Everything was
CHAPTER III
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When the television construction permit was issued to KELO Radio on November 19, 1953, the process of ordering equipment began. Before Sam Fantel sold the station, he had placed a tentative equipment order with Radio Corporation of America (RCA). The order, placed February 3, 1950, was conditional upon receipt of the construction permit. 1

The Fisher Company of Portland, Oregon supplied the tower for KELO-TV. The company had been constructing high tension power lines across the Columbia River in Washington. This experience enabled Fisher workers to construct towers quickly; thus they were able to provide rapid erection of the KELO tower. 2 KELO's first TV tower was 583 feet in height. 3 According to Joe Floyd, a height of over 500 feet was unusual at that time.

Only basic television equipment was in use when KELO-TV signed on the air the night of May 19, 1953, according to Les Froke, KELO chief engineer. 4 Floyd had decided that in order to save money he would not use live cameras. KELO-TV was the first station to commence broadcasting using film only. 5 Froke, in an interview, said that he did not feel the equipment was inadequate:

Well, we weren't limited too badly. About the only thing we couldn't do was put on live local pictures. Everything was
on film... so the only thing we were limited in was actual live cameras.6

The film projectors were located right at the transmitter building. According to Floyd, this again was to save money.7

In recalling if there were other major problems during construction of the television station, Evans Nord stated:

I can't recall any major problems at that time. I am sure money was a problem. We originally went on with a five hundred foot tower at the location of our radio transmitter site seven miles southeast of Sioux Falls. Back in those days we had no live cameras and damned little equipment of any kind.8

Thus, the engineering staff seemed to feel that the equipment was adequate while the production staff appeared to have some doubts.

As the equipment was being installed, the programming staff prepared to sign on. On March 20, 1953, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader carried the following story on KELO-TV preparations:

KELO TV SLATES HOURS AND PROGRAMS; TOWER IS SHIPPED

KELO-TV, Sioux Falls television station, hopes to have its test patterns on the air by April 15.

The date is tentative, because Midcontinent Broadcasting Company is awaiting arrival of a 500-foot tower for its 12-bay antennae. The tower, last piece of equipment needed for operation, has been shipped. Actual programming will follow completion of test patterns.

Meanwhile, KELO personnel are preparing for the "on the air" date. And Joe Floyd, president of the radio-TV firm, announced the testing schedule that the station will follow.

From Monday thru Thursday, the Sioux Falls station plans to telecast from 4 to 10 pm; on Friday from 4 to 11:30 pm; on Saturday from 3 to 12 midnight, and Sunday from 1 to 10 pm.

TV Studios Being Finished

There's a smack of Hollywood in preparations underway at the KELO Studio, 8th Street and Phillips Ave. Workmen are
finishing the interior of the TV studio where productions will be staged and filmed.

Film libraries are being built up and a film room, for editing and splicing of local productions, is being finished. When the Midcontinent Broadcasting Co. planned the station's studio, provision for TV was in the plan. The studios and rooms are being finished now.

Floyd detailed a number of NBC network and other TV productions which the local station will offer on film. He also explained the production of programs which will originate in the Sioux Falls studio and elsewhere.

Network and other national programs will come to Sioux Falls on film. Local programs will be filmed in the downtown studio or on the spot for special events. Local films will be developed here, and rushed back to the studio for editing. All films will be telecast from the station's transmitter site, 7½ miles southeast of Sioux Falls.

Murray Stewart is the KELO-TV program director. He will schedule the TV station's programs and direct its local productions. Stewart recently returned to Sioux Falls from Hollywood, where he was employed by the CBS television network.

The program director assisted in the production of several Hollywood network programs and also appeared in two different programs. He was director of the Sioux Falls Community Playhouse from 1946 to 1952 and was also affiliated with KSOO during that time.

Reviews Local Programming

Stewart said that local programming would include educational ones, sponsored by the Parent Teachers Association, public service productions by the Safety Council, and farm films produced by the extension service at the State College, Brookings.

Station personnel who will appear on regular TV programs include Jim Burt, sports director; Bill Wigginton, news director, who recently came here from the Cities; Tom Searles, weather-newscaster; Marie Horton, women's director; and Les Harding, farm director.

Initial programs to be offered by KELO-TV include productions designed to appeal to all members of the family.

Some of the productions are TV versions--with different names--of radio programs to which the listeners have long been accustomed. These include "Heart Of The City" (radio's "Big Town"), "Royal Playhouse" ("Fireside Theatre") and "Counterpoint" ("Rebound").

Television fare for the younger viewer of KELO-TV will include Abbott and Costello, Hopalong Cassidy, Dick Tracy Adventures, Cisco Kid, Range Rider, Gene Autrey, and Crusader
Rabbit.


Bishop Sheen Is Scheduled

Bishop Fulton Day Sheen will be telecast on KELO-TV in "Life Is Worth Living." The station will also offer "The Living Book," another weekly religious program.

The Sioux Falls station will present daily and weekly round-ups from NBC's news service. They will be shown in the city within 24 hours after production by the network.

Stewart indicated that yesterday's movies, which have figured in TV operations in other cities, will also be shown on KELO-TV. For sports fans there will also be "Ringside With The Rasslers." It is a 5000 watt station and will have an effective radiated power of 57.5 KW.

Floyd said KELO-TV will be one of the most powerful stations in the nation.

Transmitting equipment is installed and ground or foundation installations have been made for the 500-foot tower. The tower requires special handling by railroads because of its size. Original design plans called for a six-bay antennae. When it was changed to a twelve-bay, a different, wider tower was necessitated, resulting in the delay.

Floyd announced that consulting engineers will arrive here Monday to aid the station's personnel in technical matters preparatory to operation.

Evans Nord is general manager of KELO Radio and KELO-TV. Marion Stoneking is sales manager of the TV operation.

Programming

In 1953, when KELO-TV signed on the air, the main source of programming was syndicated film. Nearly every half hour television show produced live had a film version. Many of these were then syndicated. Other syndicated programs came from Hollywood and independent producers.

Floyd worked closely with the area television set
distributors. He stated that for most manufactured products at that time, the distribution point for the Sioux Falls area was Sioux City, Iowa. However, with the newer electrical appliances, Floyd reported that Sioux Falls developed as the distribution center for the surrounding area. Floyd arranged a meeting with representatives of RCA, Philco, Zenith, Motorola and other distributors of television sets. At the meeting various half hour filmed programs were screened, and Floyd reported that he said:

Now look, it's the chicken or the egg. How are you going to get the television sets? You want to sell the television sets, I want the viewers. If I don't get the viewing, I don't sell any advertising—and if I don't sell any advertising you don't get any television sets sold.

These programs were important to KELO-TV, and Floyd said that he persuaded each of the TV set distributors to sponsor a half hour filmed program. They became the backbone of the original KELO-TV programming. The money paid for these programs by the distributors was spent basically on radio, as it had a larger audience at this time. The radio advertisements promoted the sale of TV sets, as well as KELO-TV and the sponsored programs. This arrangement, according to Floyd, was profitable both to the stations and to the distributors. The distributors had to advertise to move their sets, and KELO needed revenue.

This cooperation between the distributors and KELO helped KELO-TV keep down its overhead. There were no live cameras, and thus the technical crews were kept at a minimum. Also, the staff of KELO Radio in addition worked for KELO-TV. Floyd said that, all
The closing of a Sioux Falls film processing company prior to KELO-TV's opening on May 19, 1953, proved beneficial to KELO-TV. KELO hired several employees of that company who were experienced in film. Ella Hansen, who is at the present time Mr. Floyd's secretary; Glen Wentzel; and Dewey Killeaney joined the staff. Since these people had worked with film they were valuable additions to the KELO-TV staff.13

**Live Film**

KELO-TV developed a technique that was unique to television, a process that Joe Floyd called "live film."14 As previously mentioned, when KELO-TV signed on the air the station's capabilities did not extend to live electronic pictures; thus everything had to be produced on film. The main problem was producing a news and weather show at three o'clock in the afternoon and still broadcasting the correct information at six o'clock. "Live film" solved this problem.15 Floyd persuaded Harold's Film Service, Sioux Falls, to install a film processor. Then all local productions were shot on sixteen millimeter film, edited at the studio, and sent to the transmitter for telecasting.

Under this system the newscasts did not present any particular problems other than a time delay. However, problems did develop with the weather programs since temperatures changed from the time of filming to the time of broadcast. This was solved by filming the weatherman giving the general weather information, and
when it was time to film the report of the current temperatures, the weatherman would simulate a call to the weather bureau; this was followed by a short period of silence on the film. When the film was televised, an announcer back at the studio would fill in the silent portion with the current temperatures. As the studio announcer had a specific length of time to complete the temperature information, the filmed weather forecaster would signal that time was up by touching his ear, or some other prearranged cue. This meant the studio announcer had to finish immediately as the filmed weatherman was going to hang up the phone. It was this combination of filming and live announcing that Joe Floyd dubbed "live film."

"Live film" worked well and gave the KELO-TV audience the impression of a live local production. As in most operations of this type, however, there were days when the studio announcer finished either too early or too late, causing poor coordination of the audio and video portions of the program. 16

**Floyd The Promoter**

Another problem that KELO-TV had to solve in the first year of operation was that of securing network programming which, according to Floyd, was hard to obtain in those days. Floyd reported that the typical reaction in New York City was "Who needs Sioux Falls, South Dakota." 17 Some of the larger producers had not even heard of Sioux Falls, and were not worried about including this particular town in the distribution of their programs.

At this time KELO-TV began a long association with
Elizabeth Beckjorden, an employee of the O.L. Taylor Advertising Agency which handled the KELO-TV account. Beckjorden, who was well respected on Madison Avenue, used informal social methods for promoting her clients' interests; she would invite many of the important agency personnel and advertisers to her apartment to meet and talk with Floyd and Evans Nord.

One program that Floyd felt was particularly important in getting KELO-TV financially established was the "Colgate Hour." This program was not available to any station that was not interconnected with a network, and KELO-TV had no interconnection facilities. Mrs. Beckjorden introduced Floyd to George Laboda, who handled the advertising for the Colgate Company (Laboda is now executive vice-president of Colgate), and Floyd approached Laboda many times with his desire to broadcast the "Colgate Hour." On one occasion, when Floyd was entertaining Laboda in a suite at the Warwick Hotel in New York, Laboda discovered that Floyd brushed his teeth with Pepsodent toothpaste; Floyd still recalls being quite worried at the time that the account was lost. However, Floyd said that Laboda finally told him, "Look, if you'll just leave me alone, I'll give you the program." Floyd reported that KELO-TV became the first station to receive the "Colgate Hour" on a filmed delay basis. (Delay was necessary, of course, because the program had to be shipped to Sioux Falls.)

The importance of the "Colgate Hour" was that it was one of the top-rated shows of the time. If Floyd could say that his
station was carrying the "Colgate Hour" he felt he would stand a much better chance of obtaining other top-rated shows; and this proved to be the case. According to Floyd, agencies and networks would say, "If you have the 'Colgate Hour,' that's good enough for us."19

The "Colgate Hour" was sent to KELO-TV in the form of a kinescope—a copy of the original film produced by photographing the image, by motion picture camera, from a special television receiver and recording it on film.20

The top shows, such as the "Colgate Hour," were the instantaneous "live" shows. Videotape recorders had not been developed at that time so the shows were fed live from New York, through the network, to the various stations. It was sometimes difficult to distribute these shows on film or kinescope prints because of the time element. In many cases there was a two-week delay and if, for example, the shows were Christmas specials, they were soon out of date. To receive these shows live, interconnection was necessary.

According to Evans Nord, Floyd practically lived in New York the first year that KELO-TV was in operation.21 He would call on the agencies or the account itself, diligently working to obtain contracts. At this time KELO adopted the slogan, "Gross $50,000 by 1955."22 By this Floyd and his staff meant that they wanted KELO-TV to have a monthly income of fifty-five thousand dollars in 1955. In 1969 Floyd said, "We couldn't run the basement for that much
To obtain this goal, large amounts of money had to be spent in promotion of the station. Evans Nord feels that the success of KELO-TV today is largely a result of Floyd's aggressiveness.

Joe's the promoter at heart. He spent money he didn't have in promoting national advertising. I don't think it's boastful in saying that if you go to New York today and ask about KELO-LAND, or ask them what the best promoted station in the country is, half of them at least will say KELO-LAND.24

Floyd reported that national advertising in the 1950's was different than it is today. At that time the buyers (purchasers of air time for advertising) would buy time "by the seat of their pants."25 Today this is determined by scientific methods such as population studies.

In the 1950's, according to Floyd, financial success depended on how the station or product was promoted. Floyd considered Johnny Gillam of Radio Station WOW to be one of the best promoters in the mass communications field. Gillam always wore a rose in his lapel, which came to be associated with him. Another promoter in New York held parties at a hotel and required the guests to leave their shoes at the door of the suite; then the host would send the shoes out to be cleaned, with orders not to bring them back until a specified time. No one ever left the party early. Another promoter, according to Floyd, always brought a rose for the secretary of the person he wanted to see, and he was usually received. Floyd studied these various techniques and became expert at the practice himself.
One of Floyd's own innovations was the KELO World Series Party. The Series Party started with Floyd reserving a box at the World Series and asking a few of the top agency people to join him. The second year there were two boxes; in the third year three boxes were supposed to have been reserved for him, but when Floyd picked up the tickets he discovered that instead of three boxes, he had been given three seats in one box. As an alternative, he reserved a suite in a hotel and held the party there, watching the game on television. The guests so enjoyed themselves that the KELO World Series hotel parties were held for eight consecutive years. During the last year fourteen hundred people attended, including representatives of the television networks, advertising personnel, and generally "anyone who counted," as Floyd put it. Floyd feels there was no single action that gave KELO-TV more publicity than the World Series Parties. He recalled that one year the bill for the party was approximately $33,000.00. The "little people" at that time were also included in these events; many of these "little people" are now heads of agencies or in related positions. They still think fondly of KELO, according to Floyd.

As well as promoting KELO, Floyd was also promoting himself. During this early period Floyd was approached by Cliff Gill (with whom he had been associated many years earlier in connection with the Publix Theatre chain), who had an idea for a promotion. Gill had the opportunity to purchase one-third of the cover page of a new advertising magazine, ANNY (Advertising News Of New York). This
magazine was to be sent to agencies and people involved in advertising in New York. Gill created an image of Floyd, consisting of a picture of Floyd with a cigar in his mouth and the caption "I'm A Helluva Salesman." Tied in with the caption was a message that KELO-LAND helped Floyd become this way.

The "Floyd Image" caught on. In New York, Floyd recalled, "People would say, 'Let me see that crazy guy with the cigar.' It was the greatest door opener in the world." KELO officials expanded the "Floyd Image" and used it in all their trade advertising. They passed out cigarette lighters and ashtrays printed with the "Floyd Image" and, in general, used it whenever the opportunity arose. While Floyd at this time was actually promoting himself more than the station, he was the one who was contacting the agencies. The technique was successful, and both Floyd and Evans Nord agree that there is not a station in the country that doesn't know and admire the technique and wish it were their own. One disadvantage of the technique is that now, wherever he goes in public, Floyd must have that cigar. As he stated, "Every time Evans and I would go to New York, Evans would say, 'Get a cigar in your mouth, Joe.'" The "Floyd Image" is still used today, although to a lesser extent.

The promotional activities of KELO were not limited to the national scene; Floyd promoted KELO-TV just as seriously at home. He engaged Don Shaw, a local band leader, and booked him throughout the KELO area to promote KELO Radio and TV. Floyd in turn would
promote the places where Shaw's group was performing. Floyd utilized gimmicks such as searchlights and sound trucks conspicuously labeled "KELO," to make people more aware of the KELO stations. These units were made available for various public occasions.

While the KELO-TV tower was being constructed, the station carried a live radio broadcast each day from the site. Floyd conversed with the construction workers concerning the progress of the tower. With these broadcasts from the tower site he continually reminded the Sioux Falls people that television was coming to the area. Floyd injected these and other show business techniques into the promotion of KELO-TV, and at the same time encouraged people to buy television sets.\(^{30}\)

**First Expansions**

On January 17, 1955, KELO-TV completed its first major physical expansion. At this time the television studios were moved across the street to the second floor of the Hollywood Theatre building. At the same time KELO-TV acquired television cameras, and the "live film" technique was dropped. Along with the cameras, video switching equipment to change from one picture source to another was also installed. Les Froke, the chief engineer, felt that regular switching equipment was too expensive for KELO-TV needs and therefore designed a switcher out of less expensive material. KELO continued with this temporary improvisation until 1969.\(^{31}\)

In October of 1953, another "first" occurred for KELO-TV.
By utilizing an off-the-air pickup (re-broadcasting another station's signal), KELO-TV was able to bring "live" to its viewers the 1953 World Series. This same method was also used for "live" broadcasts of other special events.

In May of 1954, KELO Radio and TV had fifty-four employees. The television station broadcasted from 2:00 P.M. until midnight during the week, from 1:00 P.M. to midnight Saturdays and from noon to midnight on Sundays. A total of 138 hours of network programming were carried each month.

In September of 1954, KELO-TV had anticipated increasing broadcast power; however, some difficulties developed, as described in the following story from the Sioux Falls Argus Leader, September 1, 1954:

**INCREASE IN POWER FOR KELO DELAYED**

Power increase for KELO-TV set to go into effect Wednesday and expected to benefit fringe area reception, has been postponed.

The delay, Station Manager Evans Nord said, results from the failure of certain equipment to arrive in Sioux Falls. These items are vital to the step-up of power. He said the increase will probably go into effect September 15.

The increase in power was effected on October 4, 1954.

Shortly after this power increase, on November 21, 1954, cable connections were made with NBC, enabling KELO-TV to carry network shows on an instantaneous basis.

During the Sioux Empire Fair of August 1955, KELO-TV participated in its first remote (outside the studio) television broadcast. The following story describing the event appeared in the
Sioux Falls Argus Leader on August 23, 1955:

'LIVE' TV SHOWS FROM FAIR
SCORE FIRST FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota's first microwave installation for telecasting is in operation during the Sioux Empire Fair at Sioux Falls. The $30,000 mobile unit belonging to Northwestern Bell Telephone Company enables KELO-TV to telecast "live" and direct from the fairgrounds.

The Phone Company has placed a portable 68 foot tower at the fairgrounds. This beams the sight and sound signal through the air to a dish-like apparatus atop the Phone Company building in Sioux Falls.

The parabolic antenna catches the signal and transmits it just like it does the shows arriving by the coaxial cable [special cable to carry television signals] from Omaha.

This portable telecasting station has been used in covering football games, floods and the Edward R. Murrow "Person To Person" show, according to Howard E. Brace, Omaha area plant inspector.

The Sioux Falls station is telecasting several times a day from the fairgrounds and will continue the schedule the remainder of this week. The portable equipment will be removed on Sunday.36

KDLO

At the outset, both Joe Floyd and Evans Nord realized that they had to increase the potential audience of KELO-TV. There were not enough sets in the Sioux Falls area to justify the advertising revenue they wanted, so they developed the idea of the "semi-satellite."37 Nord knew that the big radio stations like WCCO, Minneapolis, and WHO, Des Moines, were receiving high audience figures and realized that KELO would have to expand in order to compete for major advertising contracts. To accomplish this expansion it would be necessary to increase the area of TV coverage. It was decided to expand by developing KDLO-TV, utilizing Channel 3.
Channel 3, however, had been assigned to Watertown, South Dakota. KELO-TV did not want to locate its satellite there, as it would be supported by Watertown revenue only. Federal Communication Commission rules at the time stated that the licensee could move a frequency fifteen miles, post office to post office, without going through a prolonged hearing. For these reasons the license site for KDLO-TV was changed to Florence, South Dakota, a town within fifteen miles of Watertown, but the studios were constructed in Garden City, South Dakota.

Garden City was picked for a specific reason. It is located almost equidistant between the cities of Watertown, Huron, and Aberdeen, South Dakota. By being licensed at Florence with the studios and transmitter at Garden City, KDLO-TV served and was able to draw support from all three major locations.

The station was set up as a semi-satellite; i.e., the station had its own "live" capabilities (was able to produce local live shows), but would carry most of its programming from KELO-TV, Sioux Falls. Floyd used the term "semi-satellite" extensively in his promotional efforts in New York where it aroused a great deal of interest, as the semi-satellite was a new concept in television.

Floyd had a unique experience when he made the announcement of the selection of Garden City for the KDLO site. He had asked his secretary, Kay Pecaut, to call someone of importance in Garden City and arrange for a meeting of the townspeople, at which time he would announce Garden City to be the KDLO site, and she made arrangements
with the banker in Garden City to promote the meeting. However, when Floyd and his secretary arrived at Garden City, there was no sign of a meeting. After inquiring at various places, they finally discovered that the meeting was being held in Clark, South Dakota. It turned out that Floyd's secretary had reached the president of the bank in Clark, who had an extension phone listed in Garden City. Kay Pecaut was so embarrassed about her mistake that when they reached Clark she wanted to remain in the car; Floyd, however, insisted that she accompany him into the meeting. Floyd recalls that when he entered the meeting he had no idea at all about what he was going to say, as he was prepared to talk to the people of Garden City, not the Clark townspeople. He ended up by announcing that television was coming to the area, and glossed over the fact that the actual transmitter and studio building would be located in Garden City. He stressed the fact that Clark was in the center of the area which would be served by KDLO.

Work progressed well on KDLO-TV during the summer of 1955. At that time it was hoped that the station would be ready to go on the air in time to bring the World Series to the new viewers. The station did commence broadcasting September 27, 1955, just in time for the baseball series.

**Distribution Flow**

Through his business experience, Floyd found that if one were a large-scale distributor of goods in the state of South
Dakota, his goods were distributed through seventeen counties in Minnesota, nine counties in northern Iowa, the whole of South Dakota, and four or five of the northern counties in Nebraska. The term "distribution flow" was created by Floyd to describe the pattern that the distribution of goods followed in South Dakota and surrounding areas. KDLO-TV and, at a later date, KPLO-TV were begun with the idea of covering the areas of this distribution flow. Floyd then approached clients and agencies, emphasizing the fact that KELO-TV blanketed the entire route which their distributors would cover in South Dakota and adjacent states. This term, like "live film" and "semi-satellite," was used extensively in promotion.43

Tower Tumbles

On September 20, 1955, disaster struck as KELO's first TV tower collapsed in an electrical storm. The following account of the incident was carried in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader on September 21, 1955:

KELO-TV TOWER A MASS OF WRECKAGE

Strong high altitude winds are believed to have caused toppling of KELO-TV's 575 foot tower southeast of Sioux Falls Tuesday night, during an electrical storm. Part of the tower, which is a complete mass of wreckage, is shown east of the transmitter [refers to picture]. In its descent, the falling tower cut power lines. Harrisburg S.D. and radio stations KELO and KSOO thus were without power from 7:50 to 9:50 P.M.

The tower is believed to have toppled from the top down. It fell in a triangle formation so quietly that it was not heard by those inside the transmitter.44

There are two hypotheses on the collapse of the KELO tower,
according to Les Froke. There may have been a tornado, with such high intensity winds that the structural capacity of the tower was exceeded. The other possibility concerned a structural fault in the tower. The Fisher Company of Oregon, which constructed the tower, was required to pay $50,000.00 in damages, as legal opinion held that the collapse was due to a structural fault.45

KELO officials decided to erect a temporary tower in order to resume broadcasting immediately, as reported in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader:

Plans were immediately begun today to construct a temporary tower from 200 to 300 feet in height. The tower is enroute here from Sioux City. It will probably be two or three months before another permanent tower is constructed.

The shorter tower will mean that some fringe-reception areas will not receive signals. KDLO, located near Garden City, which was to receive network programs through KELO next week, will not be affected by the mishap. Another microwave link will be installed between Sioux Falls and Arlington to send signals that could not be received by the temporary tower.

Station officials say KELO will be back on the air in time to carry the World Series. The temporary tower probably will be ready for use Monday with a power of about 30,000 watts, instead of 100,000 watts as had been the case before the storm.46

On September 23, 1955, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader carried another story on the construction of the KELO-TV temporary tower, indicating that KELO-TV followed through on its intentions:

TEMPORARY KELO TOWER GOING UP;
ONE AT COLEMAN

A temporary KELO television tower to replace the 575 foot structure that collapsed during a storm Tuesday was expected to reach the 150 foot level by tonight. Station manager Joe Floyd reported today that the concrete tower base was poured Thursday and that five men were working on the tower today.

If fair weather holds, said Floyd, the remainder of the
The tower will go to its top height of 250 feet by Saturday. The connection cable is expected to arrive here at 4 A.M. Saturday on a chartered plane from Boston. It will be installed up into the tower on Sunday.

The antennae should arrive here by air express from Los Angeles Saturday and be installed the same day. Micro-link equipment for network programming should be installed Sunday.

If work is completed on schedule, the station may be able to broadcast Sunday night. Otherwise, officials plan to return to the air Monday.

Meanwhile, another 220 foot tower is being built on the REA property near Coleman to serve as a link between Sioux Falls and Garden City for network programs for the new TV station KDLO. The tower will be needed because of the decreased sending power here while the temporary tower is in operation.

It will be two or three months before another permanent tower is constructed. Until then, good reception of the Sioux Falls signal will be limited to about 30 miles. 47

The loss of the KELO-TV tower reduced the signal area of KELO-TV. 48 Plans were started immediately on a new permanent tower, while power to the temporary tower was also increased. When the temporary tower was constructed, power was cut to 10,000 watts from the original 200,000 watts. 49 On October 4, 1955, the power was boosted to 60,000 watts, and on October 9, 1955, KELO-TV increased its power to 150,000 watts by using a different, more powerful transmitter. 50

On October 25, 1955, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader carried a story announcing plans for a new permanent KELO-TV tower:

1,032 FT. ANTENNA PLANNED
BY SIOUX FALLS STATION

Assurance of good television reception in a much wider area than is now possible, was forecast today by officials of KELO-TV if present plans are approved by government agencies.

Station manager Joe Floyd announced that plans are being formulated for a new permanent tower that would be the highest structure in South Dakota and the tallest TV antenna in the Northwest.
Proposed height of the tower, which would be located at the present transmitter site, would be 1032 feet. This would be a height increase of 456 feet over the 576 foot tower that was destroyed by high winds in September.

"Engineering studies show that additional height would assure excellent coverage in the Mitchell-Plankinton area in South Dakota, Spirit Lake-Esterville area in Iowa and the Jackson-Windom-Fairmont area in Minnesota," said Floyd. Estimated cost of the project is $170,000.51

The 1032 foot KELO-TV tower was put into service with 219,000 watts of radiated power on June 17, 1956.52

The loss of the KELO tower had delayed the first broadcast from KDLO. The signal for KDLO was to be picked up "off the air" (received by air and re-transmitted) from Sioux Falls. Without the tower this was not possible as the KELO signal would not reach KDLO. KELO engineers solved this problem by having a second temporary relay tower installed at Coleman, South Dakota (as indicated earlier). According to Les Froke, the necessary tower construction was completed in approximately one week. KDLO-TV, as mentioned previously, began broadcasting on September 27, 1955.

**Crusader Incident**

On January 29, 1956, the night staff of KELO Radio and TV had a rather unique experience, when a gunman fired several shots at the station. The incident was reported the next day in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader:
FARMER SHOOTS UP KELO; 'CRUSADER'
HELD AFTER GUN BATTLE

White Lake Man Starts Out To
'Do Away With Radio Station'

A weird shooting spree that started in Sioux Falls and ended with a highway gun battle near Beresford, landed a White Lake farmer in jail last night.

And a Beresford night marshall miraculously escaped two shotgun blasts fired point-blank at him before the gunman was disarmed by a nonchalant passerby.

Earlier the gunman inflicted an estimated 2,000 dollars damage on the Sioux Falls KELO-TV studios and transmitter building because, he said, he wanted to "do away with radio stations."

Officers identified the man as Ardell R. Rueb, 29, originally from Tripp.

Two shots from a .410 shotgun shattered the KELO weatherball and a large plate glass window at KELO studios in downtown Sioux Falls at 7:50 P.M.

A few minutes later flying glass sprayed down on KELO engineer Russ Artus at the transmitter a few miles southeast of the city. Six empty shells were found at the scene.

Tower Troubles Again

For the second time in a year—on May 4, 1956--KELO lost another tower. This time the tower belonged to KELO Radio although, according to the Sioux Falls Argus Leader, the cause of the collapse was related to KELO-TV. A winch was being used to string and tighten a guy wire supporting the new 1032 foot TV tower. The wire broke, slicing through another guy wire supporting one of four radio towers. The 210 foot radio tower then collapsed. The radio towers were located nearly a quarter mile from the TV tower, but due to the height of the new TV tower the supporting guy wires reached out to the radio towers. The four radio towers were used to provide a directional signal at night for KELO Radio so the KELO
signal would not interfere with other stations. The Argus Leader quoted Evans Nord, KELO general manager, as saying the tower loss would affect only the nighttime radio signal.55

**KPLO**

In 1957, KELO completed coverage of the "distribution flow" pattern.56 This was accomplished with the completion of KPLO, located in Medicine Butte, South Dakota. The establishment of KELO-LAND (KELO-TV, KDLO-TV, and KPLO-TV) enabled the company to cover the entire route of the South Dakota product distributors. Floyd described the plan thusly:

To get to this area, we knew that again there was no publicity that would give you this area. It takes seven daily newspapers, a combination of thirty-three weeklies and umpteen radio stations to cover this distribution flow. Now we can take the travel patterns of Colgate, Maxwell House Coffee, Old Home Bread, Storz Beer--any distribution factor you want--and they distribute this way. You don't have to say, 'Half of the area is in Minneapolis and half the area is down here.' Our theory is that we can go from Sioux Falls and put sets northeast, northwest and west for a period of 340 miles, and stay in the distribution flow. But we can't go over sixty miles to the east; we're not in it. Then in the east you get a different ice cream, different beer, bread, different products completely.57

KPLO was financed in a different manner than KELO and KDLO-TV.58 The station cost approximately $300,000.00, and Floyd offered to provide $150,000.00 if the people of the Chamberlain-Pierre-Winner area would raise an equal amount. No company stock was involved in the project. All that Floyd and KELO would guarantee was to carry all of the KELO-TV programs on the new station. In this way the new station would start off with a full network,
whereas if the station were built without affiliation, obtaining programming would be a problem. Starting an independent station would be comparable to starting KELO all over again, while by this method KELO would also be financing the interconnection of KPLO.\textsuperscript{59}

According to Floyd, as the idea developed other stations began to compete with KELO to provide the television service for the area. Other stations interested were KORN-TV, Mitchell, and WNAX-TV of Yankton, South Dakota. Finally the people of the Pierre-Winner-Chamberlain area called a meeting to obtain a decision concerning the offers. Floyd reported that he had just returned from a meeting of the National Association of Broadcasters in Chicago and that he had been up all night, suffering from a cold and sore throat. The meeting was held in the courtroom at Reliance, South Dakota. (More than likely, however, the meeting was a Kennebec, where the Lyman County Courthouse is located.)\textsuperscript{60} One of the companies--KORN-TV--was represented by a lawyer, Mr. Fuller, and WNAX was represented by Mr. Donavan, one of the station's executives. The two stations stressed that they were part of the community and would provide "live" service. Finally, it was Floyd's turn and he made the following address, emphasizing the point that he, as president of a broadcasting company, was there in person.

... it all quieted down as I walked up to the front. It was like facing a jury. I said, "Look, you'll have to excuse me, I have a terrible cold and I really shouldn't be here. I just want to thank all of you for all the work you've done and all the meetings you've attended--you're a great bunch of people and I would like to serve you. Mr. Fuller over here doesn't know a tube from a tower; he's an attorney. Donavan here, he
knows a lot about it, and he's told you about all this 'live' stuff. Well, by the time the tower is built, we'll have all that. But you know, the funny part of it, I was in Chicago last night; I was up till two o'clock this morning, and with this cold I drove all the way out here today. Mr. Eppel, he's still having a big time down in Chicago... Mr. Tincher and Mr. Sylvan... they gotta throw their henchmen out here. They haven't got time to come out and see you people, they're too busy. I told you I'd be here and I am here."61

At this point, according to Floyd, someone in the back of the courtroom yelled, "By God, we're for you, Joe." "And that," said Floyd, "was how we got the deal."62

To build KPLO the people of the area collected about $130,000.00.62 KELO contributed a similar amount and in addition agreed to duplicate the KELO-TV programming. If KELO did not abide by this agreement, ownership of the station would be turned over to the communities involved, but if the contract was not broken, Midcontinent Broadcasting would receive title to the station at the end of five years.

At the end of the five-year period, Floyd stated, KELO-TV was a big business in a high income bracket. KELO did not want to assume the ownership of KPLO because Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, proprietors of KELO-LAND, would have to pay $165,000.00 in income taxes.63 Floyd even offered to sign over his share of KPLO to the area people, and just manage the station; however the communities felt that KELO-TV should assume the responsibility of ownership. So Midcontinent Broadcasting did pay the taxes and did take over the station.64
The actual construction and development of KPLO proceeded with few problems. Les Froke, chief engineer for KELO-LAND, stated that the biggest problem was the composition of the soil on which the tower was to be erected. The tower site was composed of shale, and each time the shale was broken the soil started slipping out from underneath, forcing continuous reevaluation in selection of the exact tower site. The transmitter building is still shifting quite badly, according to Froke. Other than this, there were no major problems and the station was well received by the area people.

The Networks

In 1957, KELO-TV was still affiliated with the NBC (National Broadcasting Company) television network. KELO had signed with the NBC network when the station began broadcasting. Initially, only film from syndicated and network sources could be utilized. Then on November 21, 1954, KELO was interconnected by coaxial cable from Omaha with the rest of the NBC-affiliated stations.

Floyd, a member of the NBC Affiliate Board (advisory board to the NBC network) recalled that in 1957 the network rate (rate paid to stations for carrying the network programs) was about $350.00 per hour; however, he felt that KELO-TV was providing circulation value far beyond that rate. Floyd attended a meeting in New York with NBC officials and stated that he wanted a higher rate.
The reaction of the NBC people was to suggest that Floyd wait until the next meeting, and then perhaps something could be done in this regard. While Floyd was in New York, Elizabeth Beckjorden called and asked him to meet Ed Shurick, a high official with CBS (Columbia Broadcasting Company). During their conversation together it was discovered that Shurick's father formerly owned Radio Station WLOL in Minneapolis, the station that Ruben, Floyd and Bentson had bought when they sold Radio Station WMIN in St. Paul. According to Floyd, he and Shurick liked and respected each other immediately. The morning after their initial meeting, Shurick offered Floyd the CBS outlet in South Dakota at $550.00 per program hour. Floyd stated, however, that he would stay with NBC if that network would increase the rate to $500.00 per program hour. He also told Shurick that he would not tell NBC of the CBS offer; this, according to Floyd, was the way he (Floyd) operated. Floyd contacted the NBC officials and stated that he needed $500.00 per program hour. The officials said they might be able to reach a compromise, and after some discussion indicated to Floyd that the final decision was to offer him $400.00. Floyd then returned to Mr. Shurick of CBS and told him, "You've got a deal."68

When NBC discovered that Floyd, who was still a member of that network's Affiliate Board, had signed a contract with CBS, every effort was made to persuade him to change his mind. Suddenly Floyd was offered more than the $400.00 by the NBC network; in fact, the offers went as high as $850.00 per program hour. Floyd,
however, had signed the CBS contract, and to him the matter was finished.

Then began a long association between KELO-TV and CBS which, according to Floyd, has been satisfactory for all concerned. The 1969 network program rate (as of December 31, 1968) paid by CBS to KELO-LAND was $1150.00 per program hour. (Two other stations—WTEN, Albany, New York and KFMB, San Diego, California—also receive $1150.00 per program hour from CBS.)

Floyd feels that his dealings with the network have been quite equitable. He stated that twice he turned down network rate increases as he felt they were not justified and he did not want to price himself out of the market:

We want to go to an advertising agency... when they get the pencil out and they figure that we're delivering at two dollars and a half per thousand instead of eight and a half dollars per thousand, they buy. That's the way I want to keep it.

Table 1, on the following page, shows the CBS network rate increases from 1958 to 1967. (The discrepancy between Floyd's figures and those on Table 1 arise from the fact that Floyd was quoting the increase rates from memory.)

**New Home For KELO-LAND**

In April of 1959 KELO-TV and Radio moved to a new location at 13th Street and South Phillips Avenue. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader of April 30, 1959 carried an article on the new building.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>$410.00</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>600.00</td>
<td>725.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961*</td>
<td>725.00</td>
<td>725.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>725.00</td>
<td>825.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>825.00</td>
<td>875.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>875.00</td>
<td>975.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>975.00</td>
<td>1050.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1050.00</td>
<td>1150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1150.00</td>
<td>1250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No change in 1961; increase rejected by Floyd.
KELO radio and television will be relocated in a new building at 13th Street and S. Phillips Avenue by May 8.

Owner Joe Floyd says movement by departments from two studios on N. Phillips Avenue has started.
A grand opening is planned May 22. The public will receive an electronic tour of the modern structure through television media [sic].

Construction cost of the cement block building with brick facing was $200,000.

Floyd said production and business offices will function around studios which are centrally located within the two level plant. Most offices will be in an open area. New technical equipment is being added.

Building space is 26,000 square feet. There are 1418 electrical outlets and 925 miles of electric wiring.

Facilities have been made available for parking. KELO radio and TV has 88 employees.

One of the big problems in a move such as this is the transferring of the actual "air" operation. Les Froke stated that the move was made overnight. He said that before they began the move, all phases of the operation were carefully planned:

... so as a result, we went off the air Saturday night and were back on Sunday morning... there's always some particular factor that upsets your timetable, and in this particular case it was one of the men who had some information as far as the wiring was concerned. He decided to stop on the way down at midnight to get a lunch. We lost roughly two hours, as a result, so we didn't get on as early as we otherwise would have.

Froke indicated the major new piece of equipment installed at this time was a vertical interval switcher, which replaced the one that he had designed earlier. A switcher is a special machine that switches from one video source to another (cameras to films, etc.) at the end of each electronic picture sequence. The TV image is created by a beam scanning the picture in lines, and the machine switches only when a picture is completed. According to Froke,
when the new switcher was installed there was only one other in existence and it had not been completely tested. However, the new switcher worked well and, as Froke says, "has given yeoman service." 76

Land for the new building was purchased from the Sioux Falls Children's Home. 77 Floyd's father, a general contractor, came out of retirement to supervise construction of the building. 78

SUMMARY

From the time that KELO first received its television license, Floyd and his associates envisioned the expansion of their television facilities in order to include a larger market. Plans for eventual expansion were initiated at the beginning of KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, and were followed throughout the development of KELO-LAND TV.

On September 27, 1955, KDLO, at Garden City, South Dakota, commenced broadcasting. On July 4, 1957, KPLO, located at Medicine Butte, South Dakota, began broadcasting. Floyd called these stations "semi-satellites," signifying that they could produce "live" signals as well as carrying the KELO-TV signal.

As important as the planning and development of KELO-LAND was the promotional activity of Floyd and other KELO-LAND personnel. Without this promotional effort, the station most likely would not
enjoy the successful position it holds today.
FOOTNOTES


2Ibid.


4Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.

5Recorded interview with Joe Floyd, president, Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

6Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.

7Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.


10Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

11Ibid.

12Ibid.

13Ibid.

14Ibid.

15Ibid.

16Ibid.

17Ibid.

18Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
22 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.
23 Ibid.
25 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Floyd and Nord, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.
30 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.
31 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.
32 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.
33 Ibid.
36 Sioux Falls Argus Leader, August 23, 1955, p. 2.
37 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.
40 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

42 "Policies and Procedures" (Sioux Falls, South Dakota).

43 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.


45 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.


48 "KELO Boosts Its Power Output To 60,000 Watts," Sioux Falls Argus Leader, October 4, 1955, p. 17.

49 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.

50 Ibid.

51 Sioux Falls Argus Leader, October 25, 1955, p. 6.

52 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.


55 Ibid.

56 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

61 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.


67 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 24, 1969.

68 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.


70 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

71 Ibid.

72 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, May 6, 1969.


74 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

78 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

KELO-LAND 1959-1967

The years from 1959 to 1967 were relatively quiet and stable for KELO-LAND. According to Tom Sheeley, vice-president, operations, this period was spent developing methods for increasing the quality of KELO-TV programming while also maintaining day to day operations.¹

Lee Heisel, director of engineering at KELO-LAND, reported three major technical developments during this eight-year interval. In November of 1963 a new 1408 foot tower was erected at KDLO-TV, Garden City. This new tower increased the effective range of the KDLO-TV signal by approximately 33 per cent. In the fall of 1964 two technical changes were made: new black-and-white cameras, with a much higher degree of versatility, were added at KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, along with KELO-LAND's first videotape recorder. This new equipment added greatly to the potential capabilities of the Sioux Falls station.²

KELO-LAND Today

KELO-LAND officials apparently remained conscious of the fact that a larger audience produced larger advertising revenues. In 1967 it was decided to replace the 1032 foot tower in Sioux Falls with a 2000 foot tower.³ This would make the new tower one of the
tallest television towers in the world. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader of May 1, 1967, reported the anticipated height of the tower as follows:

Residents of the Sioux Falls-Rowena area would be among the first to question the Soviet Union claim that it now has the "world's tallest tower"--the 1761 foot Moscow television tower. True, it is taller (by 705 feet) than the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

But KSLA-TV, Shreveport, La., has a 1898 foot tower. KTHI-TV, Fargo, has a 2063 foot tower. And workmen are almost out of sight on the new 2000 foot tower being constructed for KSOO-TV and KELO-TV near Rowena.4

Les Froke, chief engineer at KELO-LAND, stated that the new 2000 foot tower should increase the quality of reception in the fringe area by a radius of seventeen miles and also increase the main signal area by fifteen miles.5 The new tower, it was anticipated, would utilize a relatively new principle in television, known as "diplexing." In diplexing, KELO-TV and another Sioux Falls station, KSOO-TV, would share the same television tower and antennae. According to Froke, this sharing of the tower saved both stations a great deal of money.6

As the new tower was being erected, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader of August 4, 1967, carried a story on the changeover to the new tower and its probable effect on television reception:

Area viewers should begin getting the benefits of the 2000 foot tower near Rowena in the next couple of weeks. KELO, Channel 11, hopes to complete the switch to the new tower with full power by next Wednesday or Thursday. KSO0, Channel 13, plans to carry out the switch-over on or about August 14.

Jack Townsend, promotion manager at KELO, said that persons within Sioux Falls probably would not need external antennas to pick up either channel. Persons out in the area who are now
getting a good signal on Channel 11, he says, should not need to change antennas, as they should receive both 11 and 13 well on their present antennas.

Officials of both KELO and KSOO indicate that the switch-over from old to new towers may cause temporary confusion and trouble in their transmissions. Viewers are not to be dismayed over such difficulties, they said.

Les Froke said that the KELO engineers started the move to the new tower after signing off the air on Saturday night, August 5, 1967. Once again, they were attempting to move a transmitter to a new site overnight. Power was actually applied to the transmitter early Sunday morning; however, audio trouble developed. The station went on the air in a limited way Sunday afternoon August 6, 1967 and, according to Froke, went to full power a few days later. Froke stated that KELO-LAND officials were well satisfied with the improved operation of the new tower, and judging from the mail received, the area people were also satisfied with reception.

More Tumbling Towers

On June 24, 1968, at 8:37 P.M., the new 2000 foot KELO-KSOO television tower was struck by a North Central Airlines plane, causing the structure to collapse. Once again, KELO-TV was off the air due to a falling tower. On June 28, 1968, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader included an account of the cause of the accident:

... the Convair 580 prop jet piloted by Daniel Otten, Minneapolis, struck a tower cable during a thunderstorm.

The North Central Airliner made a safe landing at Joe Foss Field after the mishap with no injury to a crew of three and nineteen passengers.
The same issue of the Sioux Falls Argus Leader (June 28, 1968) carried a report of KELO's temporary and long-range reconstruction plans.

Service was restored Thursday to two Sioux Falls broadcast outlets silenced Monday when a commercial plane toppled a tall tower near Rowena. KELO-TV resumed service at 5:53 pm and KELO-FM at 4 pm from a 1032 foot tower near Schindler [KELO engineers moved the transmitter back to the old site and tower]. KS00-TV has announced that it expects to restore service in ten days.

KELO and KS00 have been making common usage of the 1984 foot tower.

Joe Floyd, president of Midcontinent Broadcasting Co. and the KELO stations, said that September 15 remains as target date for completion of a replacement tall tower.12

KELO-TV was fortunate in that the old tower had not been dismantled. Les Froke stated that the engineers moved the transmitter back to the old building and tower and thus were able to resume broadcasting approximately sixty-nine hours after the plane hit the 2000 foot tower.13 KELO-TV was back on the air June 27, 1968 at 5:45 P.M.14

Although the Sioux Falls Argus Leader of June 28, 1968 reported Joe Floyd stating that a 2000 foot replacement tower would be completed by September 15, 1968, this did not prove to be the case. KELO-TV resumed broadcasting from the Rowena site with a new 2000 foot tower on May 2, 1969. The delay was due primarily to bad weather conditions.15 The old KELO-TV 1032 foot tower will not be dismantled and will serve as a standby unit.16 This, no doubt, was a precaution influenced by a long history of falling towers.
Full Color

In September of 1968, with the installation of color cameras, KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, became the first "all color" station in South Dakota. This expansion came a little earlier than KELO officials had planned. Evans Nord, general manager of Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, explained the change of plans in this manner:

We hadn't expected to go color until September of 1969. But again, Sioux City was putting in color cameras and we have an area in northwest Iowa that gets both Sioux City and us. We felt that we had been Number One all the way along in everything, and we weren't going to be Number Two in color. So we went to color about a year ahead of time. 17

Nord stated that the event which primarily promoted interest in color in this area was the total color broadcasting of the networks' programs. Until that time there had been little interest in color television due to the lack of color receivers. He reported that when KELO-TV began full color operations in September, there was an excellent reaction from KELO's viewers judging from the letters received. 18 Les Froke said that due to the high cost of the color receivers people tended to write to the station more readily. He also stated that the area people were pleased with the color quality. 19 Nord believes that the color set saturation (number of color sets in the KELO-LAND area as compared to the total number of sets) is now (1969) approximately 25 to 30 per cent. 20 He also stated that KELO-LAND is now planning complete color equipment for the satellite stations, KDLO-TV and KPLO-TV. "Eventually everything will be in color," said Nord. 21
KELO-LAND officials stated that they feel the stations would not have enjoyed such success without the loyalty and support of the employees. KELO-LAND has managed to retain a high number of the original KELO Radio employees and the personnel hired when KELO-TV was first established. This low turnover of employees has been beneficial to KELO-LAND. Tables 224 and 325 contain a list of the original KELO Radio employees and the initial employees added when KELO-TV commenced operations.

Midcontinent Broadcasting designed a profit sharing policy to benefit employees who remained with the company over a long period of time. Based on profits, the company contributes up to a maximum of 15 per cent of an employee's salary, which is deposited in a trust fund (15 per cent is the maximum allowed by the Internal Revenue Code). This contribution is tax-free as long as it remains on deposit.

Working conditions at KELO-LAND, according to Joe Floyd, are such that there is an atmosphere of cooperation and friendliness which produces an effective team effort.

Educational Broadcasting

While their basic concern was with the commercial aspect of television and radio, KELO-LAND officials also influenced educational broadcasting in South Dakota and gave it substantial support. Floyd was one of the original members of the ETV Board in South
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Starting Date</th>
<th>Final Position</th>
<th>Termination Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evans Nord</td>
<td>August 1, 1946</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine Flaherty</td>
<td>September 22, 1946</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>Retired 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Burt</td>
<td>January 17, 1947</td>
<td>Sports Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Froke</td>
<td>May 1, 1947</td>
<td>Chief Engineer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick Janssen</td>
<td>May 1, 1947</td>
<td>Transmitter Engineer</td>
<td>Retired 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Bailey</td>
<td>May 1, 1947</td>
<td>Transmitter Engineer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russ Artus</td>
<td>July 1, 1947</td>
<td>Studio Engineer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Harding</td>
<td>July 26, 1948</td>
<td>Farm Director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Sheeley</td>
<td>August 28, 1951</td>
<td>V.P. Operations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Dedrich</td>
<td>January 9, 1952</td>
<td>Staff Announcer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3

**STAFF MEMBERS OF KELO-LAND**  
**FIRST TEN MEMBERS ADDED FOR KELO-TV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Starting Date</th>
<th>Final Position</th>
<th>Termination Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glen Wentzel</td>
<td>February 1, 1953</td>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td>Retired 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Stewart</td>
<td>February 15, 1953</td>
<td>Production Director</td>
<td>Resigned 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ella Hansen</td>
<td>May 1, 1953</td>
<td>Floyd's Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ester Soost</td>
<td>May 6, 1953</td>
<td>Film Editor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewey Killeaney</td>
<td>May 6, 1953</td>
<td>Film Editor</td>
<td>Retired 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Unzicher</td>
<td>June 1, 1953</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>Resigned 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marvel Hansen</td>
<td>July 2, 1953</td>
<td>TV Traffic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Andersen</td>
<td>January 28, 1954</td>
<td>Nord's Secretary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Townsend</td>
<td>March 1, 1954</td>
<td>Sales Engineer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick Briggs</td>
<td>June 6, 1954</td>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dakota (the state board governing educational television), and KELO-LAND donated much of the equipment necessary to establish KESD-TV, the educational television station owned and operated by South Dakota State University at Brookings, South Dakota.29

On November 10, 1963, Joe Floyd wrote to Archie Gubbrud, who at that time was governor of South Dakota. Floyd offered to donate certain equipment for the construction of KESD-TV.30 The equipment to be donated consisted of a system of color film projectors, two image orthicon cameras and a television tower (the old 821 foot KDLO tower which was replaced by the 1408 foot tower). The offer also included installation of the tower foundations and payment for the professional services required to erect the tower. The total value of this gift to South Dakota State University was $136,651.84. The following table is a breakdown of the cost of the items as estimated by Floyd in a letter to Dr. Ben Markland, director of educational media at South Dakota State University:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color chain (projectors)</td>
<td>$31,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two cameras</td>
<td>20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV tower</td>
<td>41,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erection of tower</td>
<td>29,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and installation of foundations</td>
<td>14,567.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
<td>984.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$136,651.84</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gift from KELO-LAND to KESD-TV was 100 per cent tax deductible at the equipment's value at that time (as listed above). The university supplied the rest of the necessary equipment and modified the tower for KESD-TV's operation.32 Dr. Markland stated
that South Dakota State University probably would not have a television station if KELO-LAND or some other donor had not provided the stimulus. 33

While not completely relevant to the study, it is consistent with the pattern of tower mishaps that the 821 foot tower, donated by KELO-LAND to KESD-TV, was involved in a fatal accident shortly after its erection. On October 8, 1968, a small plane carrying four persons struck a KESD-TV tower guy wire. The tower, although damaged, did not collapse, but the four men were killed. 34

In 1969 KELO-LAND also provided a scholarship fund of one hundred dollars for a deserving student majoring in radio and television at South Dakota State University. 35

SUMMARY

From 1959 to 1969 KELO-LAND officials were cognizant of the fact that to increase revenues they would have to develop a greater audience. They also realized that television viewers were becoming more sophisticated and because of this they would have to produce a high quality picture. To achieve these goals, KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, erected a new 2000 foot tower to increase the strength and quality of its signal. Within a year, however, the tower collapsed due to a plane accident. A new 2000 foot tower went into service on May 2, 1969.

In September of 1968, KELO-TV completed its latest expansion,
becoming the first "all color" station in South Dakota.

KELO-LAND has been fortunate in that there has been a low turnover in personnel. The majority of the employees who were with the firm when KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, was constructed are still within the company's employ today.

KELO-LAND officials also supported educational broadcasting. They donated $136,651.84 in equipment and services to KESD-TV, an educational television station at South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota. Floyd also serves on the South Dakota State Educational Television Board. In 1969, a one hundred dollar scholarship was provided for a student majoring in radio and television at South Dakota State University.
FOOTNOTES

1 Personal interview with Tom Sheeley, vice-president, operations, Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, May 6, 1969.


3 Recorded interview with Joe Floyd, president, Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.


6 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 24, 1969.


8 Froke, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, February 26, 1969.


10 Ibid.


12 Ibid.


14 Ibid.

15 Sheeley, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, May 6, 1969.

16 Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.

18Ibid.


21Ibid.


23Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, April 8, 1969.


25Ibid.


27Ibid.

28Ibid., p. 1.

29Personal interview with Dr. Ben Markland, director of educational media, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, April 28, 1969.

31Personal letter from Joe Floyd, president, Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to Dr. Ben Markland, director of educational media, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota, January 7, 1969.

32"Application for Federal Matching Grant to Construct Noncommercial Educational Broadcast Facilities," Exhibit No. 6, July 25, 1966 (copy in files of director of educational media, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota).

33Markland, Brookings, South Dakota, April 28, 1969.


35Markland, Brookings, South Dakota, April 28, 1969.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

KELO-LAND television developed from the association of Joe Floyd, Sioux Falls, South Dakota with Eddie Ruben of Minneapolis, Minnesota. This association began in 1928 when Floyd entered into employment with the Publix Theatre Chain, a company in which Eddie Ruben held a supervisory position. In 1932, Ruben resigned from the Publix Theatres and purchased the Pantages Theatre in Minneapolis.

In 1932 Floyd became the assistant manager of the Pantages Theatre. Ruben purchased the Granada Theatre in Sioux Falls in 1933, and Floyd moved to Sioux Falls (where he has resided since that time) to serve as manager. After the Second World War Ruben expanded into drive-in theatres throughout the Midwest. Another theatre, the Hollywood, was opened in Sioux Falls in 1938. Floyd was also in charge of this theatre.

Joe Floyd was an innovator. While working for Ruben he was experimenting with various businesses on his own, and initially developed a radio show called "G.I. Blind Date." The show was popular and Floyd, with the help of others, was successful in developing it into a network radio show. From 1942 to 1946 "G.I. Blind Date" was a successful network show and proved quite profitable for Floyd.
This money Floyd promptly lost in subsidizing Broadway shows. During the "Blind Date" run Floyd remained in charge of the Sioux Falls theatres, commuting between Sioux Falls and New York.

When "Blind Date" was cancelled, Floyd returned to Sioux Falls. At this time Ruben made Floyd a one-third partner in the theatre business.

Floyd felt that television was a possible threat to the theatre business, and resolved to reduce the threat by development of a local television outlet. After some persuasion he convinced Ruben that they should purchase KELO Radio in Sioux Falls, as the owner had applied for a television construction permit. At this time Larry Bentson, Ruben's son-in-law, was made a partner.

At the time of the purchase there was a Federal Communications Commission "freeze" on construction permits for television stations. Floyd knew, however, that the "freeze" would soon be lifted and he wanted to use KELO Radio as the base for a new television station, apparently buying the radio station to obtain the television construction permit. On April 28, 1952, Floyd, Ruben and Bentson assumed control of Midcontinent Broadcasting Company, becoming owners of KELO Radio. On November 19, 1952, the Federal Communications Commission issued Midcontinent Broadcasting Company a construction permit for a Sioux Falls television station, utilizing Channel 11.

KELO-TV commenced broadcasting on May 19, 1953, with the
minimum of equipment. The station was one of the first to broadcast using only film. There were no facilities for "live" telecasting, but Floyd developed a new technique called "live film": all local productions were photographed on film, including the local news and weather, giving the impression of "live" productions. "Live film" was utilized until electronic cameras were installed in 1955.

Floyd felt that what KELO-TV most needed at this stage was advertising revenue and programming. To achieve this he carried out a great deal of promotional activity, both at home and in New York. At home he promoted the sale of television receivers to build up his audience, and in New York he promoted KELO-TV to increase advertising revenues and programming.

In order to increase the listening audience and to cover the "distribution flow," a term Floyd employed to the routes used by distributors and salesmen, KELO officials opened two more television stations, KDLO-TV at Garden City, South Dakota and KPLO-TV at Medicine Butte, South Dakota.

KELO-LAND has had a history of falling television towers. On September 20, 1955, the KELO-TV, Sioux Falls tower collapsed in a windstorm. On May 4, 1956, a KELO radio tower collapsed. On June 24, 1968, KELO-TV's new 2000 foot tower, put into service in August of 1967 to increase the KELO-TV area of coverage, was hit by an aircraft and collapsed. Fortunately, in this case, KELO-TV still had the old tower and was back on the air in sixty-nine hours.
KELO-LAND is fortunate in that there has been a low turnover in personnel at the stations. A majority of the original KELO Radio staff and those hired in the first few years of KELO-TV are still with the organization today.

In September of 1968, KELO-TV, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, became the first "all color" station in the state. Plans are also being made to convert KDLO-TV and KPLO-TV to stations broadcasting all programs in color.

KELO-LAND television also aided the development of educational television in South Dakota. The grant of a tower, cameras, projectors and other equipment provided the primary impetus for the development of KESD-TV at South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota.

Conclusions

Five main factors appear to have strongly influenced the origin and growth of KELO-LAND television:

1. The video-oriented background of Joe Floyd contributed to the success of the KELO-LAND programming and thus to the success of the stations as a whole.

2. Timing was an important factor in the success of KELO-LAND. In 1953 there was no other outlet for television in Sioux Falls. This gave KELO-TV the opportunity to develop at its own rate without pressure from competition. When competition did develop, the KELO-LAND stations were well established.
3. KELO-LAND television's loyal, competent staff aided its sustained growth. Men such as Evans Nord, executive vice-president and general manager; Thomas Sheeley, vice-president, operations; and Les Froke, chief engineer, surely contributed greatly in establishing and sustaining the growth of the KELO-LAND stations.

4. A definite plan for development was a factor that influenced KELO-LAND's growth and success. From the beginning there was a master plan for development that was fairly closely followed. This planning enabled KELO-LAND officials to budget revenues in the light of further expansion.

5. A most important factor in the development, growth and success of KELO-LAND was Joe Floyd's intuitive sense of "showmanship." Utilizing this sense effectively through promotional activities, he developed KELO-LAND to the point where the stations today enjoy a disproportionately high rate of support from both advertisers and listeners.

6. Lastly, the study has been of value to the writer in the learning and application of historical research techniques. The writer also has had the opportunity to trace the development of a television system from inception to modernization, a task that should be of benefit to him in a future career in television.

Implications For Further Study

While this study traces the origin and development of South Dakota's largest television system, it deals only with a small
portion of the medium in the state. Combined with other studies, however, this thesis should provide an additional contribution to the expanding volume of historical studies of mass media outlets. This historical spectrum could be substantially increased by additional historical studies of early and contemporary commercial and educational television stations.
LIST OF TABLES

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