

## *The Golden Age of Radio*

Fred Fischer  
Chokio, MN  
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Fred Fischer was born on November 14th, 1901, and has lived in Stevens County for 89 years. The first 56 years of his life he lived on a farm, and then moved into the town of Chokio in 1957. While living on the farm, he got into town about once a week. Fred received the equivalent of an eighth grade education and was married in 1925. The family he listened to the radio with consisted of himself, his wife, and four children.

The first time Fred listened to the radio was while visiting his sister in a little town in Canada during January of 1922. It was a small radio with two headphones so that two people could listen simultaneously. The first radio he had in his home was in 1927. It ran on batteries and had a loudspeaker, rather than headphones.

The main reason he purchased the radio was for entertainment purposes. According to Fred, he was one of the first in the area to get a radio. Before they had a radio, he and his family read a lot of books and the daily newspaper. There was also a movie theater, but they didn't get there very often.

Programs that Fred remembered listening to were: Fibber McGee and Molly, Amos 'n' Andy, Ma Perkins, Jack Benny, The Life of Riley, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Hit Parade and Lux Radio Theater. His family's favorite type of programs were the comedies.

There was only one radio in Fred's household, which was located in the living room. The members of his family listened

whenever they had free time. There were no rules for listening. In his family, it was understood that one was not to listen to the radio until one's work was done. Whoever got to the radio first chose what programs were listened to, but it was generally only on in the evenings. While listening, they did not carry on conversations or do other activities. Fred also commented that he altered his schedule for certain programs.

Fred's reason for tuning into programs was that they were more interesting than others, and the only program he remembers looking forward to was Amos 'n' Andy. The only items that Fred could remember discussing with others were news related ones. According to Fred, radio kept his family informed about grain prices, political figures and weather information, but throughout the interview he stressed the entertainment value.