

# WOMAN MANAGES BIGGEST STATION

## Bertha Brainard, Pioneer in Broadcasting, Now Heads Activities of WJZ's Powerful Plant

Women in commercial life are usually pictured as personnel department heads, advertising writers and artists and in other positions where the feminine viewpoint and temperament assist them in the conduct of the duties. They are rarely found where a knowledge of mechanical devices is essential to proper achievement of their assigned tasks. Nor are they often pioneers in any new industry. For the most part, they allow men to develop projects to a point at which the refining touch is required to give a new industry final polish and luster. Then women step in to accomplish that particular job.

### Had War Service.

Bertha Brainard, manager of WJZ, owned by the Radio Corporation of America, "key" station of the National Broadcasting company's blue network and one of the country's most powerful radio stations, is the exception which proves the foregoing paragraph a rule, rather than a theory. Not only is Miss Brainard one of the real pioneers in the radio broadcasting industry, but she is thoroughly versed in all its branches.

The state of New Jersey produced Miss Brainard and the broadcasting station whose activities she now directs. She was born in South Orange and graduated from the South Orange High school and the Montclair Normal school. During her school days, she was interested in theatrical work and took part in many amateur performances.

At the outbreak of the World war, she enlisted in the motor ambulance



BERTHA BRAINARD

section of the American Red Cross. She served with her unit for many months during the hostilities. After the Armistice, she turned to literary pursuits, securing a position with the Fairchild press.

### She Broadcast 'Broadway'

When WJZ first came into being, Miss Brainard immediately realized the possibilities of the great power known as broadcasting. She realized, too, the immense opportunities which would be open to those who entered the radio entertainment field at the outset. Accordingly, she decided to gain some first-hand knowledge of broadcasting.

At that time, WJZ was a small station in the experimental stage, owned and operated by the Westinghouse company. It was one of two broadcasting stations in the United States. With her experience as a writer serving as her card of introduction, Miss Brainard interviewed the manager of the station and submitted to him a proposal to conduct a weekly review of current Broadway plays from the Newark studio for WJZ's listeners.

Old timers among broadcast listeners will remember Miss Brainard's weekly theatrical chats, entitled "Broadcasting Broadway." Preparing and presenting them entailed a great deal of work and she received no recompense for it other than a thorough knowledge of the broadcasting methods then in use. She showed such efficiency in her work, however, and she became so popular with the radio audience and with the station's staff, that the management of WJZ soon asked her to serve the station in another capacity.

WJZ needed a representative in New York city. The studios were located in Newark, while the great majority of the entertainment talent was drawn from Manhattan. It was necessary that some responsible person with a knowledge of the theatrical and musical fields and the abilities of various artists handle the booking of entertainers to be heard over the air.

### Well Qualified for Job

Miss Brainard accepted the position and proved from the outset her exceptional qualifications for the job. And it was a job in those early days. Naturally, artists possessing real talent were not fighting for the opportunity of donating their services to a broadcasting station. Through her contacts, however, Miss Brainard was able to bring many capable performers of the theatrical, operatic and concert stages to the Newark studios. Her broadcast features were soon listed among the outstanding attractions of the station.

When WJZ's studios and offices were moved to the Acollan building in New York city, Miss Brainard was made assistant manager of the station. She was responsible for inaugurating a broadcast hour specially devoted to the interests of women. Under her guidance, the period became immediately and greatly popular.

In the fall of 1926, management of WJZ was taken over by the National Broadcasting company and Miss Brainard was made manager of the station. Today, she is one of the outstanding women in the radio field and the only woman managing a station of the size, the power and the importance of WJZ.

"Radio broadcasting is the most interesting game in the world," Miss Brainard declares. "One never does the same thing twice. One night is by visiting celebrities, the next an operatic diva. There is no monotony, but instead a stream of interesting experiences and interesting people. Of course, life in a broadcasting station is not always smooth. We have our troubles, but we try to treat them with common sense, and they usually iron themselves out. And the opportunities we have for helping others is a continual wave of happiness."