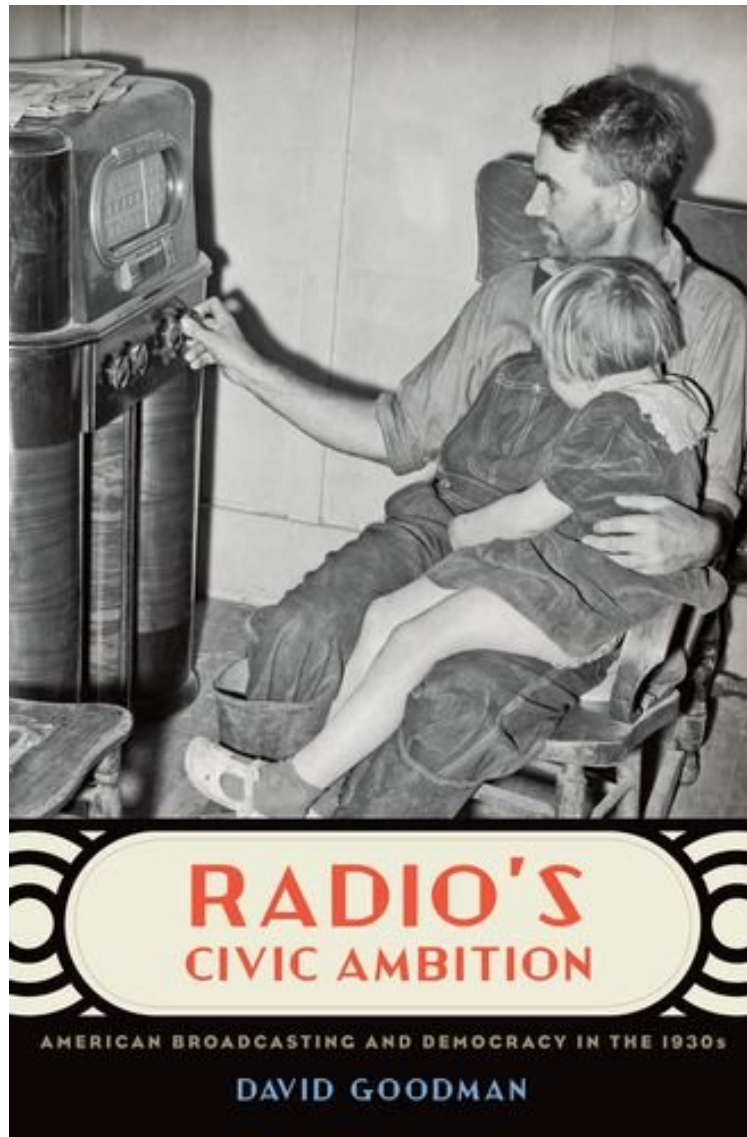


(Free pdf) Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s

Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s

David Goodman

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David Goodman : Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Radio's Civic Ambition: American Broadcasting and Democracy in the 1930s:

The history of American radio broadcasting has often been written as a lament for lost possibilities, a tale of what might have been. One now familiar landmark in that account is the story of how American commercial broadcasters, in the passage of the 1934 Communications Act, won a great victory over reformers who wanted frequencies set aside for non-commercial use. It is generally agreed that the defeat of the radio reformers was decisive and permanent, and that the best hopes for a public radio in the United States had been thwarted by 1934. In *Radio's Civic Ambition*, however, author David Goodman focuses not on the lost possibilities and defeated reformers, but on what did happen as the beginning of another chapter in the story of the struggle over the meaning and purpose of American broadcasting. Commercial broadcasters paid a considerable price for their victory: in the years after 1934, American broadcasters always had to be seen to be providing public service as well as entertainment. An impressive range of programs, from imaginatively conceived classical music broadcasts to lively multi-opinion radio forums, was designed to promote civic engagement and individualization. By the later 1930s, political leaders, key social science and communications intellectuals, the Federal Communications Commission, and many articulate and educated ordinary Americans, increasingly expected commercial broadcasters in the US to perform a range of ambitious civic functions, including encouraging local community, strengthening democracy, fostering talent, and producing tolerance for other points of view. A new look at the history of commercial radio broadcasting in America, *Radio's Civic Ambition* will appeal to students and scholars in communications and radio studies, music history, media studies, and American history.

"Goodman's book provides a great look at how the American broadcasting industry in the 1930s was civic-minded as well as responsive to government." --*American Journalism*"In *Radio's Civic Ambition*, David Goodman has produced a significant critical rethinking of the philosophy and operation of American broadcasting. Bringing out the educational and public service aspects of what has commonly been derided as a wholly commercial system, Goodman demonstrates how American radio was shaped by larger currents in social and political thought, particularly in the fields of classical music and public affairs programming. This impressively wide-ranging study also sheds new light on Adorno's famous critique of US media culture and provides a window into scholarly debates on radio and its social function in the 1930s and 40s. All scholars of American history and culture, as well as media studies, will find it provocative and stimulating." --Michele Hilmes, author of *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting 1922 to 1952* (1997) and *Network Nations: A Transnational History of British and American Broadcasting* (2011)"A brilliant contribution to the history of American broadcasting. Goodman's argument is subtle and bold, painstakingly researched and creatively conceived. *Radio's Civic Ambition* is a revisionist history in the best sense of the term. Goodman has sifted through the archives, revisited the usual theoretical suspects, and produced an imaginative and persuasive new way to think about American radio's Golden Age."--Jason Loviglio, author of *Radio's Intimate Public: Network Broadcasting and Mass-Mediated Democracy* (2005)"A thought-provoking and, at times, innovative intellectual history of radio programming."--*The Journal of American History*"Not only a significant addition to the history of early American broadcasting, and one that forces a rethinking of entrenched assumptions about that system's political alliances, but it is also a model of the kind of cultural history that is possible when we are excused from having to constantly re-establish the pertinence of an area of study." --*Journal of Communication*"Goodman's book provides a great look at how the American broadcasting industry in the 1930s was civic-minded as well as responsive to government. It poses many future research questions about radio and the listening audiences' response to what was offered to them." --*American Journalism*"Pushes readers to rethink what they know about the ideology of radio in the 1930s and the possibilities for media in a democratic state." --*American Historical Association* About the Author David Goodman teaches American history at the University of Melbourne and is author of *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s*.