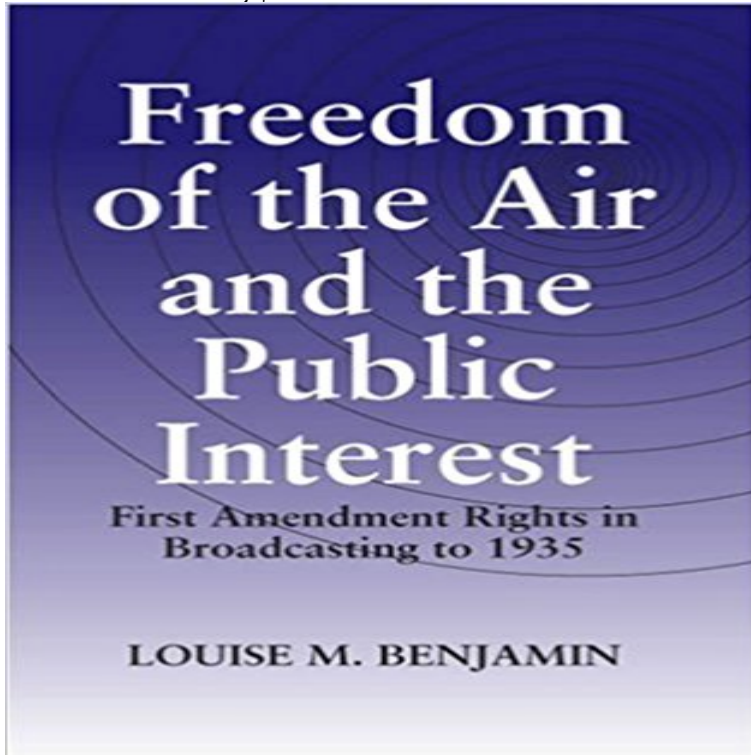


## Freedom of the Air and the Public Interest: First Amendment Rights in Broadcasting to 1935



A unique and definitive study of freedom of expression rights in electronic media from the 1920s through the mid-1930s, Louise M. Benjamin's *Freedom of the Air and the Public Interest: First Amendment Rights in Broadcasting to 1935* examines the evolution of free speech rights in early radio. Drawing on primary resources from sixteen archives plus contemporary secondary sources, Benjamin analyzes interactions among the players involved and argues that First Amendment rights in radio evolved in the 1920s and 1930s through the interaction of many entities having social, political, or economic interests in radio. She shows how free speech and First Amendment rights were defined and perceived up to 1935. Focusing on the evolution of various electronic media rights, Benjamin looks at censorship, speakers rights of access to the medium, broadcasters rights to use radio as they desired, and listeners rights to receive information via the airwaves. With many interested parties involved, conflict was inevitable, resulting in the establishment of industry policies and government legislation particularly the Radio Act of 1927. Further debate led to the Communications Act of 1934, which has provided the regulatory framework for broadcasting for over sixty years. Controversies caused by new technology today continue to rage over virtually the same rights and issues that Benjamin deals with.

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