

The San Francisco Amateur Radio Club, since 1909... Highlights of its First 50 years.

A Presentation by Bart Lee, K6VK, ARRL, AWA, CHRS,
Fellow of the California Historical Radio Society, in History

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1909, 1912, 1917, 1941...

Significant Early Dates for San Francisco Amateur Radio

- As early as 1903, young men in San Francisco followed commercial work in the Radio Art with their own wireless telegraphy transmitters and receivers, spark coils and carbon rod detectors.
- By 1909, in San Francisco and elsewhere, men and boys formed clubs to work with like-minded “wireless telegraphy” experimenters.
- Their object was to communicate over the air -- the “ether” it was called, and they did, sometimes to the annoyance of the Navy and others.

The First U.S. Receiving Station, 1899



San Francisco's fabled Cliff House,
as it appeared around 1900

America's First Transmission, from
Lightship 70 to the Cliff House,
by Spark and Coherer



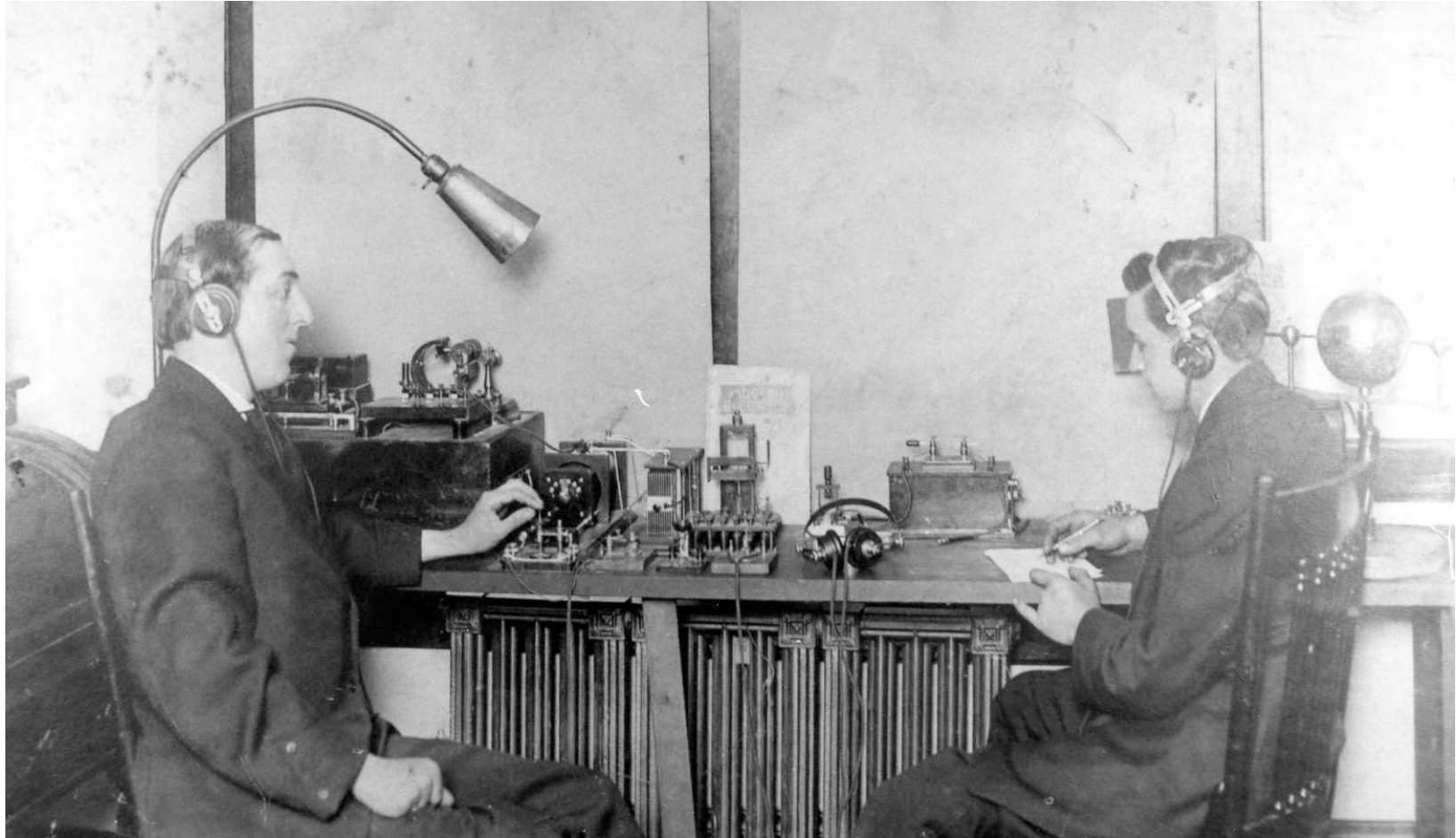
THE CALL FIRST TO HERALD
THE RETURN OF THE TROOPS
Glad News Flashed by Wireless Telegraphy From Behind an
Ocean-Haze Curtain.

August 26 , 1899, *San Francisco Call* newspaper;
local and nationwide enthusiasm ensued.

Navy, Commercial Developments

- Marconi gets across the Atlantic, 1901.
- McCarty in San Francisco makes a “wireless telephone” in 1902.
- Navy stations operate in the Bay Area from 1904.
- Lee de Forest puts “PH” in the Palace Hotel, 1904.
- Cyril Elwell works with an arc transmitter, 1907.
- Maritime stations in SF from 1907 – *e.g.*, Massie.
- Great White Fleet visits SF 1908 – wireless music.
- “Doc” Herrold in 1909 in San Jose experiments with modulating a spark transmitter, and by 1912 with an arc, broadcasting music.

'Doc' Herrold and Ray Newby, c. 1909 Operating a Small "Spark" Set



San Jose, California; Ray Newby lost his amateur wireless antenna tower in the 1906 Quake.
This photo appeared in *Modern Electrics* in 1910.

1909 *S.F. Call* Newspaper Story: San Francisco's "Youthful Wireless Operators"



This original newspaper story is archived and displayed at the KRE Radio Station Museum of the California Historical Radio Society in Berkeley, California.

Nuts & Volts,
SF ARC 2/20/2004
Special
Edition

YOUTHFUL WIRELESS OPERATORS in San Francisco



*About the Lowell High School Wireless Club,
From the San Francisco Chronicle, December 26, 1909,
story by Ross G. Miller. An excerpt:*

This is amateur morning in the wireless world. San Francisco and adjoining suburbs alone have between 200 and 300 young wireless operators; amateurs who rank as such principally in name, who are everywhere dotted about the city and country for a stretch of miles that extends way beyond the city and county boundaries.

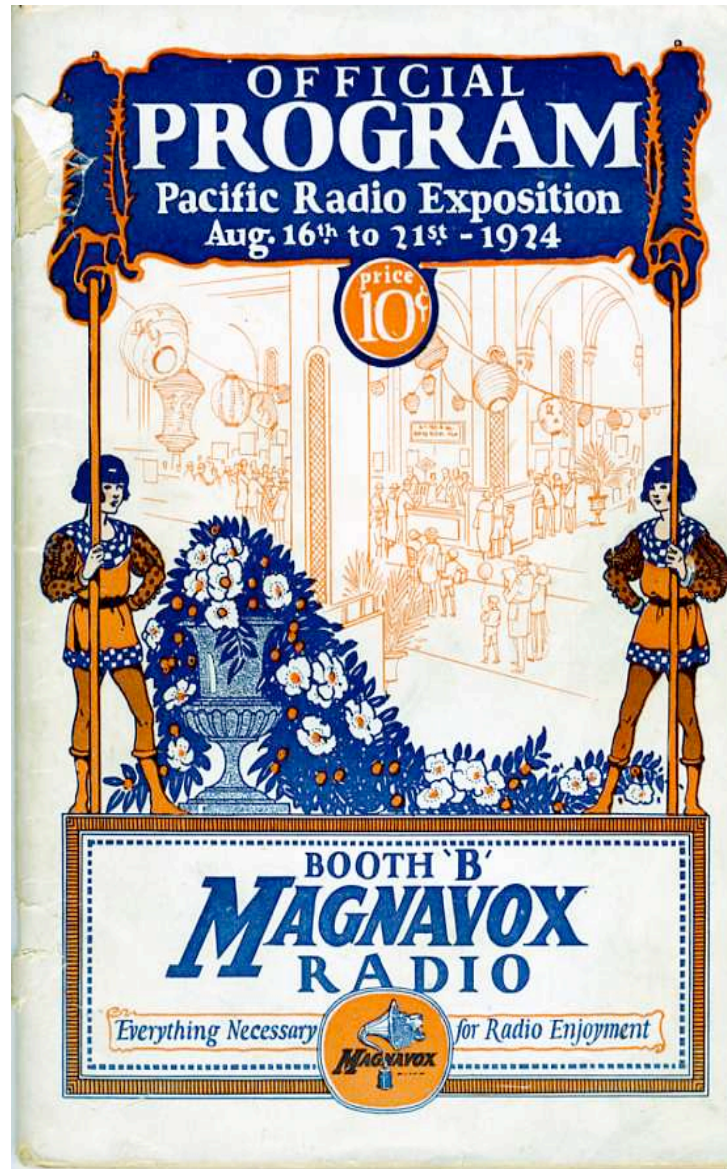
1909—
200 to 300
SF Amateurs.

San Francisco Radio Club Formed in 1909

- Henry W. Dickow, later Editor of *Pacific Radio News* and W6JYN, helped form the Club in 1909 as a 12 year old boy; the President was R.E Crowden.
- In 1917 Dickow wrote: “In former years there flourished a radio organization ... known as the San Francisco Radio Club, having a membership of about fifteen operators. This club was organized before the U.S. Government laws went into effect and disbanded shortly after... twelve [of the 15] successfully passed the ...Commercial First Grade examination...”
- In 1917, Crowden, then a Marconi operator, noted that several of the original members participated in the revived San Francisco Radio Club.

The Earliest SF Callsigns, 1909

- Wireless clubs assigned their own member callsigns circa 1909.
- The Bay Counties Wireless Club used S as a prefix; Ray Newby was SEW, after using the self-assigned call EZM.
- The San Francisco Radio Club saw fewer than 26 eligible amateurs in the City at the time; it used the prefix RS for **R**adio **S**anFrancisco, and then letters A through Z, e.g., **RSC**. (ARD, 1/'41, p 43)
- Bill Larzelere and Ed Stevens were two of the first amateur wireless operators in San Francisco.



This Program of
the 1924
San Francisco
Pacific Radio
Exposition
discusses the
History of the
San Francisco
Radio Club.

The 1924 Pacific Radio Exposition Looks Back

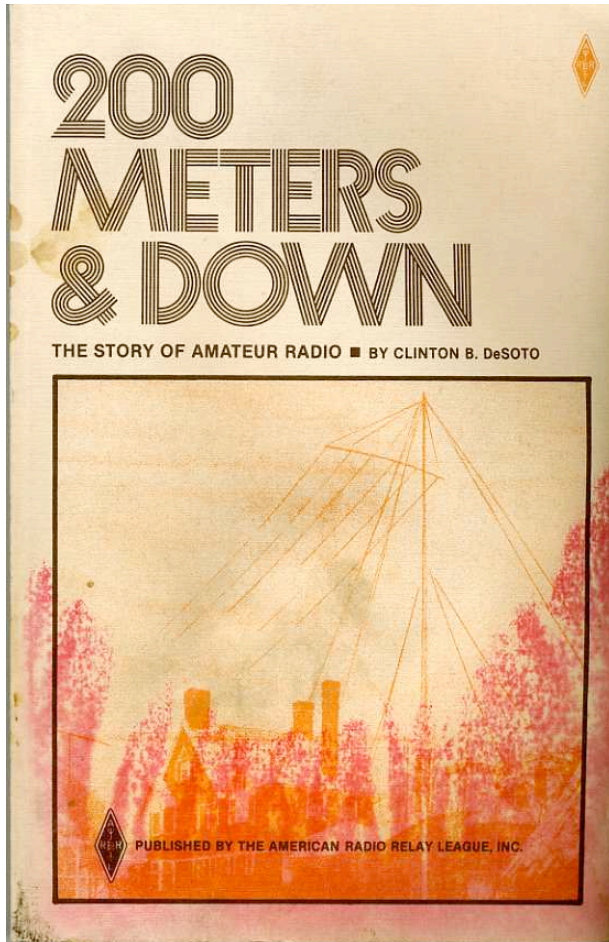


“Radio amateurs of San Francisco have long been banded together in an organization known as the San Francisco Radio Club, Inc. The club is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in America, having been founded in 1911 [sic].”

1912 – Amateur Radio Challenged

- The Government relegated amateur radio to wavelengths “200 meters and down”; *i.e.*, 1,500 KHz and up.
- This was thought to be a wasteland; most maritime stations worked on 600 or 800 meter wavelengths (500 – 800 KHz) and amateur wireless stations did the same – often annoyingly.
- The 1912 restriction would be like a law today that amateur radio could only use frequencies of five gigahertz (5 GHz) and above.

DeSoto's History for ARRL Covers before and after 1912.



Many (most) amateur wireless operators turned away, once restricted to shorter wavelengths.

State of the Amateur Wireless Art, 1911-1912, in operation by M. H. Dodd



Photograph Archived and
Preserved at the
Western Historic Radio
Museum, Virginia City,
Nevada; This Photograph on
the Museum Website is
Copyright Henry Rogers,
All Rights Reserved.

The 1912 Station Today

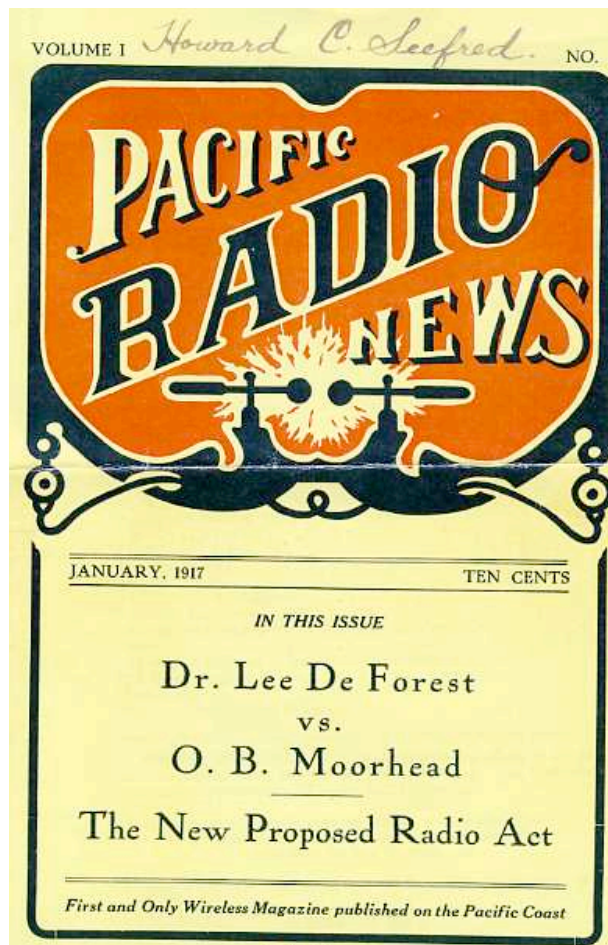


Preserved at the Western Historic Radio Museum, Virginia City, Nevada; Photograph by and Copyright Henry Rogers, All Rights Reserved.

Sharon and Henry Rogers received the CHRS "Doc" Herrold Award for 2001 in connection with their museum.

M.H. Dodd closed his station and sealed it up in 1913, as a result of the wavelength restriction.

Between 1913 and 1917
Amateur Radio Again Flourishes
First Issue of *Pacific Radio News*, January, 1917.



In 1916, the San Francisco Radio Club Reinstitutes Itself

- The Club reinstitutes itself in January, 1916, publishes a “Yearbook” in 1916 (with 36 members) and *Pacific Radio News*, starting in January, 1917 (Vol. 1, No. 1).
- Henry W. Dickow (6HD) is the principal of the Club and the magazine – he goes on to a distinguished career and the magazine becomes *Radio*.
- Dickow was not above doggerel:
*“The San Francisco Radio Club,
Its members tried and true,
Will furnish all the latest news,
That may appeal to you.”*



Henry Dickow in 1924.

The San Francisco Radio Club Flourishes in 1916 and 1917

- According to Dickow (1917): It has nearly 100 members
- Many members are employed by commercial wireless corporations
- Members must pass an examination equivalent to the U.S. First Grade Commercial examination
- Interference is avoided by use of the Club's measuring instruments [wavemeters and the like]
- Prominent speakers address the Club and the Club prints the lectures
- Initiation fee is \$1 and monthly dues 25 cents [= \$3/yr = \$50 today]
- The club room is at the corner of Frederick and Belvedere Streets

Official Praise for the Club

- Radio Inspector Lt. Ellery Stone notes that only the San Francisco Radio Club and the Institute of Radio Engineers in New York had published Yearbooks.



Inspector Stone.

- According to Dickow (1917) “The task of tuning stations to resonance has met with great approval by the local Radio Inspectors...”
- U.S. Radio Engineer V. Ford Greaves wrote: “I ... desire to congratulate you and the members of your club on your excellent organization....”

Club Officers in 1917

- H. W. Dickow, President (6HD in 1913)
- D. B. McGown, Vice-President*
- H. R. Lee, Secretary - Treasurer
- T. J. Ryan, Sergeant-at-Arms**
- H. J. Malarin,*** Examining Officer
- C. M. Heaney, Examining Officer

*Later (1921), Assistant Radio Inspector.

**Later (1919) also a Club Officer.

*** H.J. Malarin was later a radio dealer, 1921. Laurence Malarin ("LM") was the legendary manager of United Wireless and American Marconi in San Francisco (later RCA).

April, 1917



The WAR to End all Wars

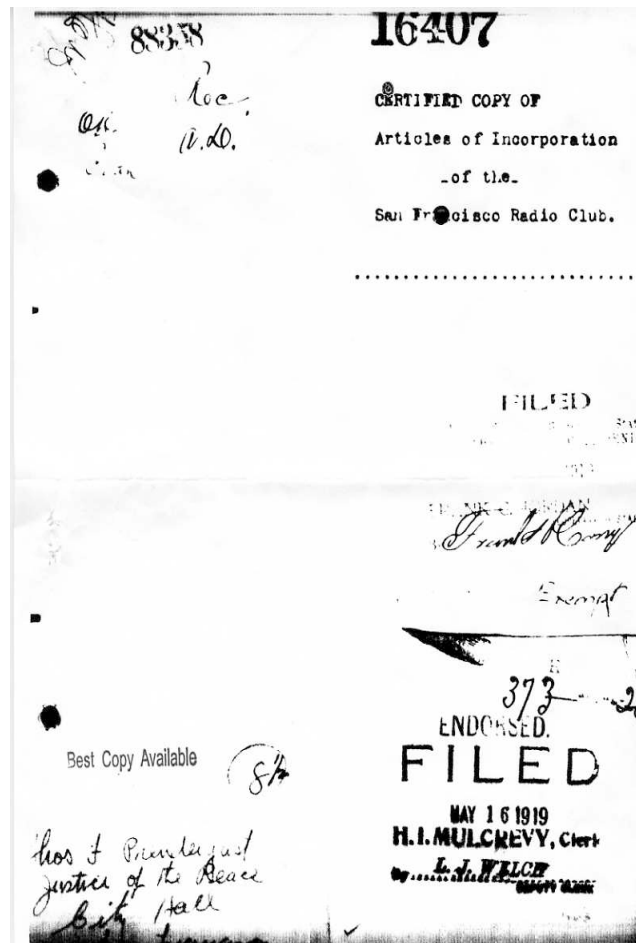
- In April, 1917, the Government shut down *all* radio stations, receiving as well as transmitting; *all* antennas had to come down.
- The San Francisco Radio Club held itself together under the leadership of F.K. Teeter, Jr. with only four active members.
- Amateurs enlisted in the Armed Services.
- Most amateur wireless clubs and all stations went inactive for the duration.

A Return to the Ether, or not?

- After Victory in November, 1918, Amateurs looked to getting back on the air, especially with the newly available vacuum tubes.
- The Navy, however, wanted to maintain its wartime total control.
- Commercial interests won out, also liberating amateur radio from Navy suppression.

The San Francisco Radio Club Revives after World War One.

May 16, 1919 ... in anticipation of lifting of the ban (in September, 1919)



Articles of
Incorporation
of the
San Francisco
Radio Club,
1919

The Club's Purposes in 1919

- To promote among its members the practice of and interest in Radio Communication
- To advance the science of Radio Communication among its members
- To have club rooms and halls for its members
- To construct and maintain for the educational advancement of its members Radio apparatus and equipment
- To conduct lectures and demonstrations and give courses in Radio Communication and construction of apparatus
- To hold social functions
- To acquire a library and current periodical literature on the science of Radio Communication

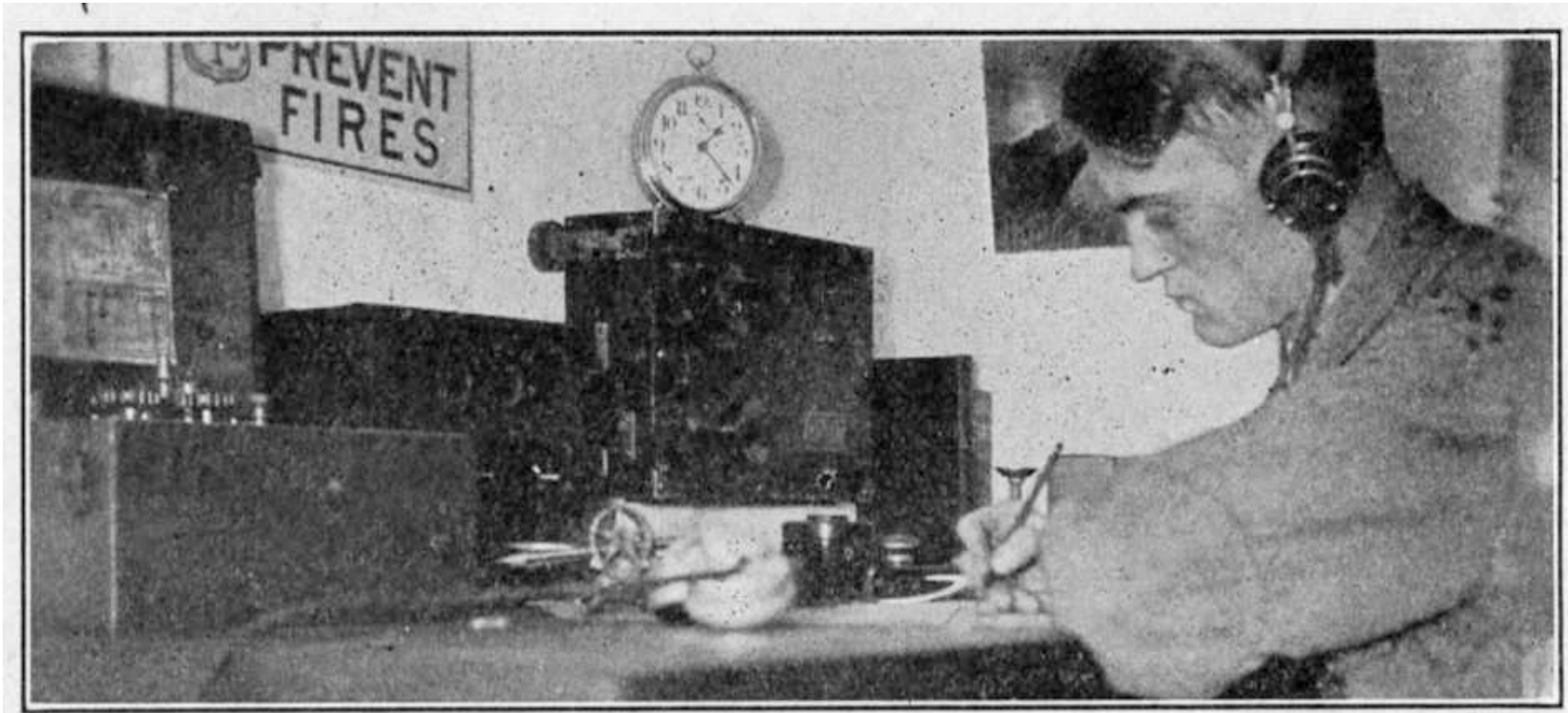
The Incorporating Amateurs

- Adolph W. Honing, 516 7th Avenue
- William Joseph Henry, 554 11th Avenue
- Francis K. Teeter, Jr., 365A 11th Avenue (who had kept the Club alive during the war)
- Eugene L. Chaix, 2056 Bush Street
- Thomas J. Ryan, 349 7th Avenue (a 1917 officer)

The Program of the 1924 Pacific Radio Exposition notes:

“The first radio show held in San Francisco, a number of years ago, was entirely conducted by the San Francisco Radio Club.”

Francis K. Teeter, Jr.



By 1921, Teeter had pioneered use of radio by the U.S. Forest Service, calling on amateur operators to sign on and using World War One radio equipment from the Army Air Service for both air and ground operation. From *Pacific Radio News*, Oct. 1921, p. 98.

A Vacuum Tube Transmitter c. 1921; 20 Watts, CW & Phone, Do -It -Yourself

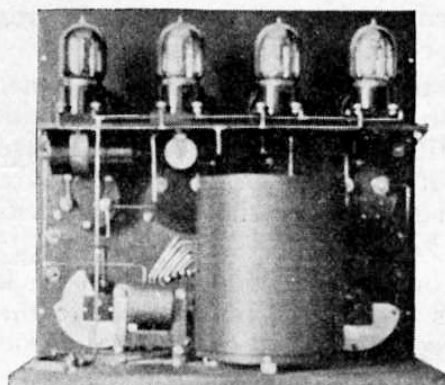
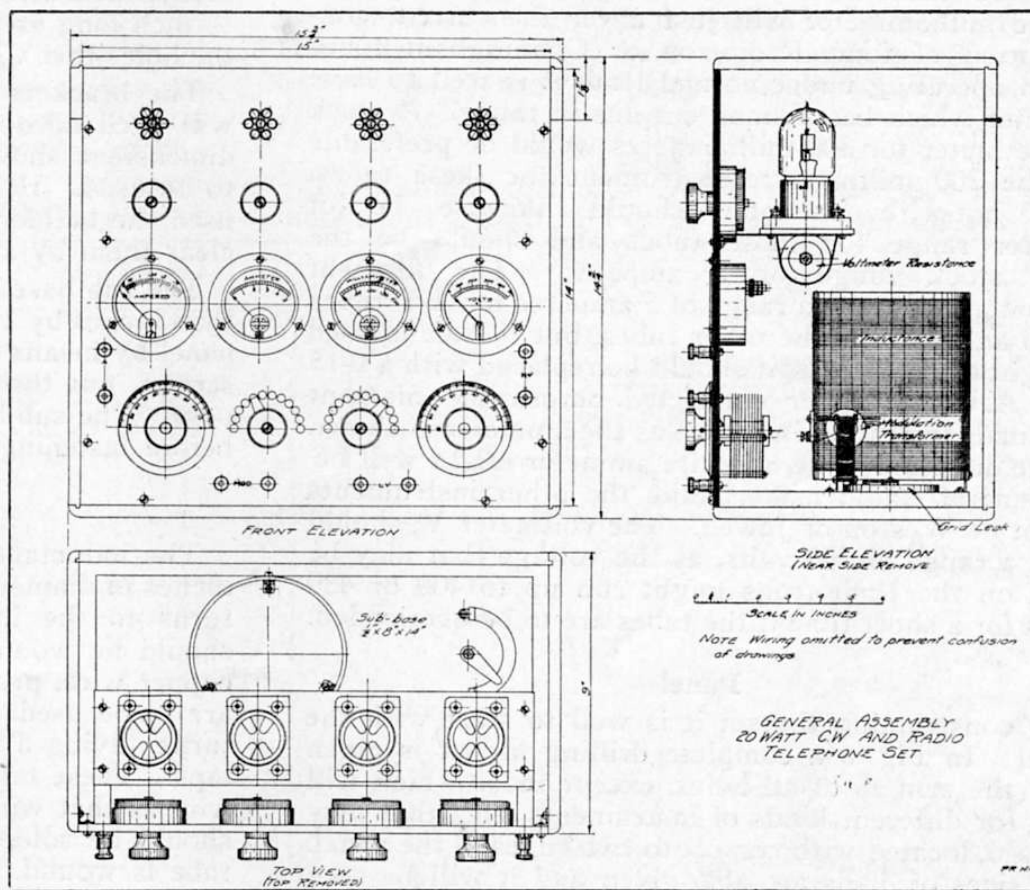


Fig. 1 (Above) Rear view of panel.

Fig. 2 (To Right) General Assembly Drawing.

The arrangement of the various pieces of apparatus required in the construction of a highly efficient C.W. transmitter must be compact. Short connecting leads are essential. But compactness must not give way to efficiency. The general arrangement of mounting the apparatus shown on the panel in illustration is an excellent one. Care must be exercised in wiring the transmitter in such a manner that the high tension leads will not interfere with those carrying the low tension current. Nickel plated hard-drawn copper wire is well adapted for the bus-bar type of connections. Rounded corners and firmly soldered connections will not only add to the appearance of the wiring, but will prevent loss from leakage. All connections terminating into binding posts should be soldered. Do not depend on screw-and-nut connections. They will often work loose.

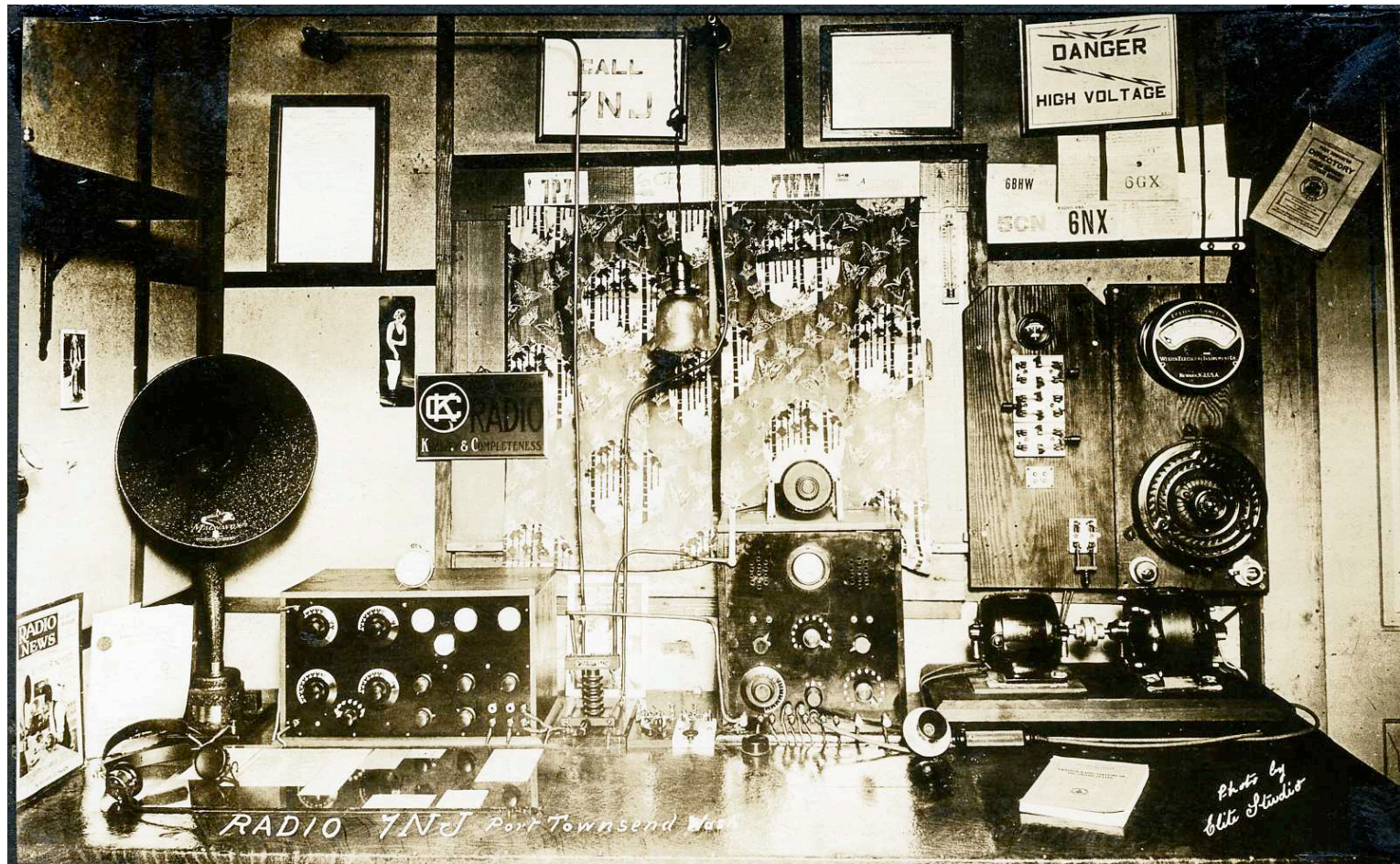


1921-'22 Club Officer Nominations

- President: H.W. Dodge, H.W. Dickow, E. Schivo
- Vice-President: C. Thompson, S. Fass*, M. Heeder
- Secretary: H.W. Dodge, E. Schivo
- Treasurer: S. Schomaker
- Sergeant at Arms: M. Heeder, E.S. Peterson

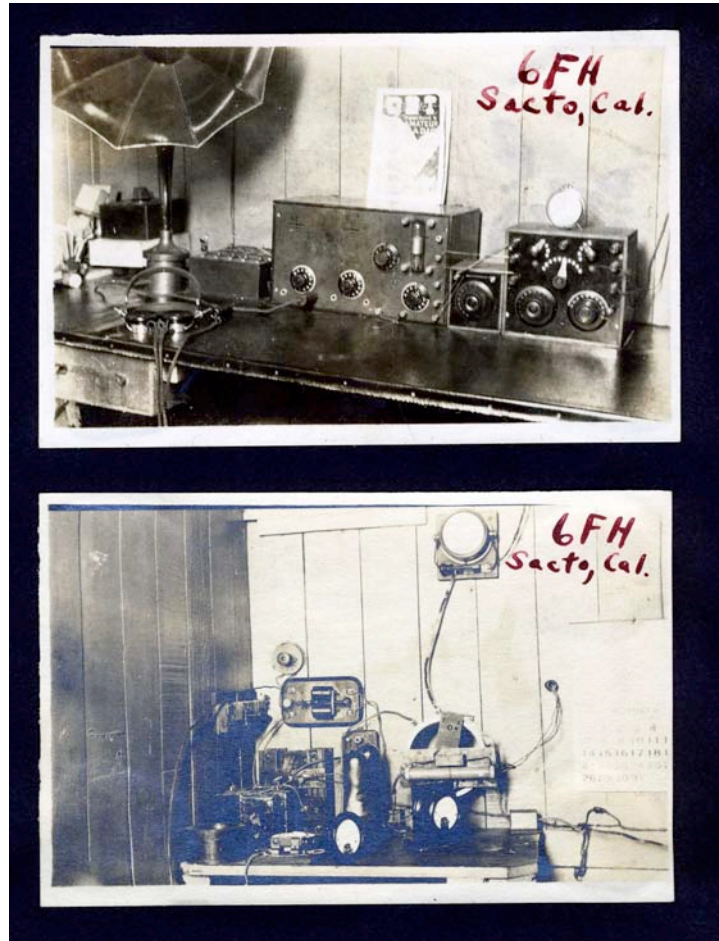
*Sydney J. Fass, active since 1909, had been a seagoing and shoreside wireless operator and established one of the largest radio and electronics retailers in San Francisco in the 1950s.

1922 State -of -the -Art Stations

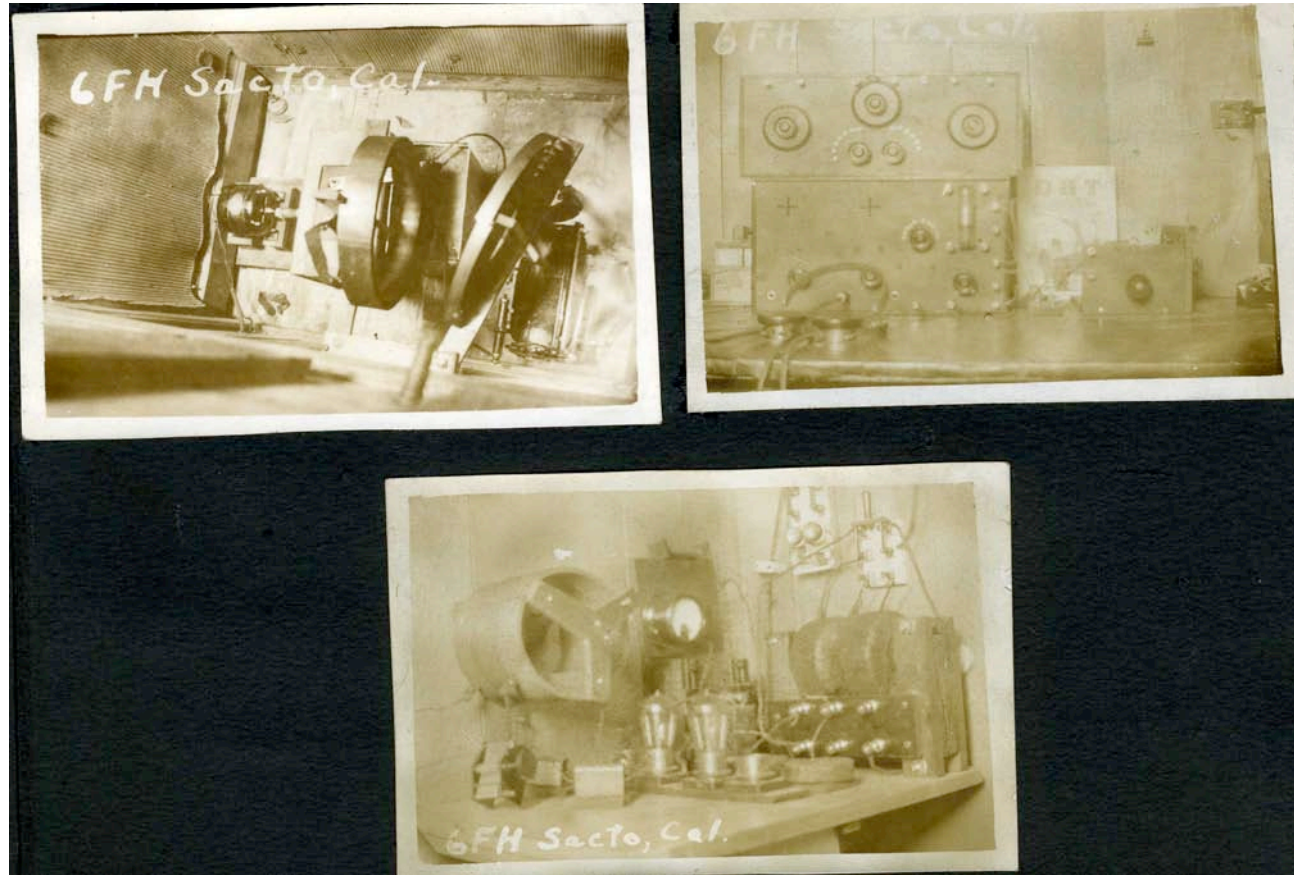


7NJ, Washington State. All photos from an album of C. West (5CN) Vancouver, B.C., Canada; more such follow.

A Sacramento Station 6FH

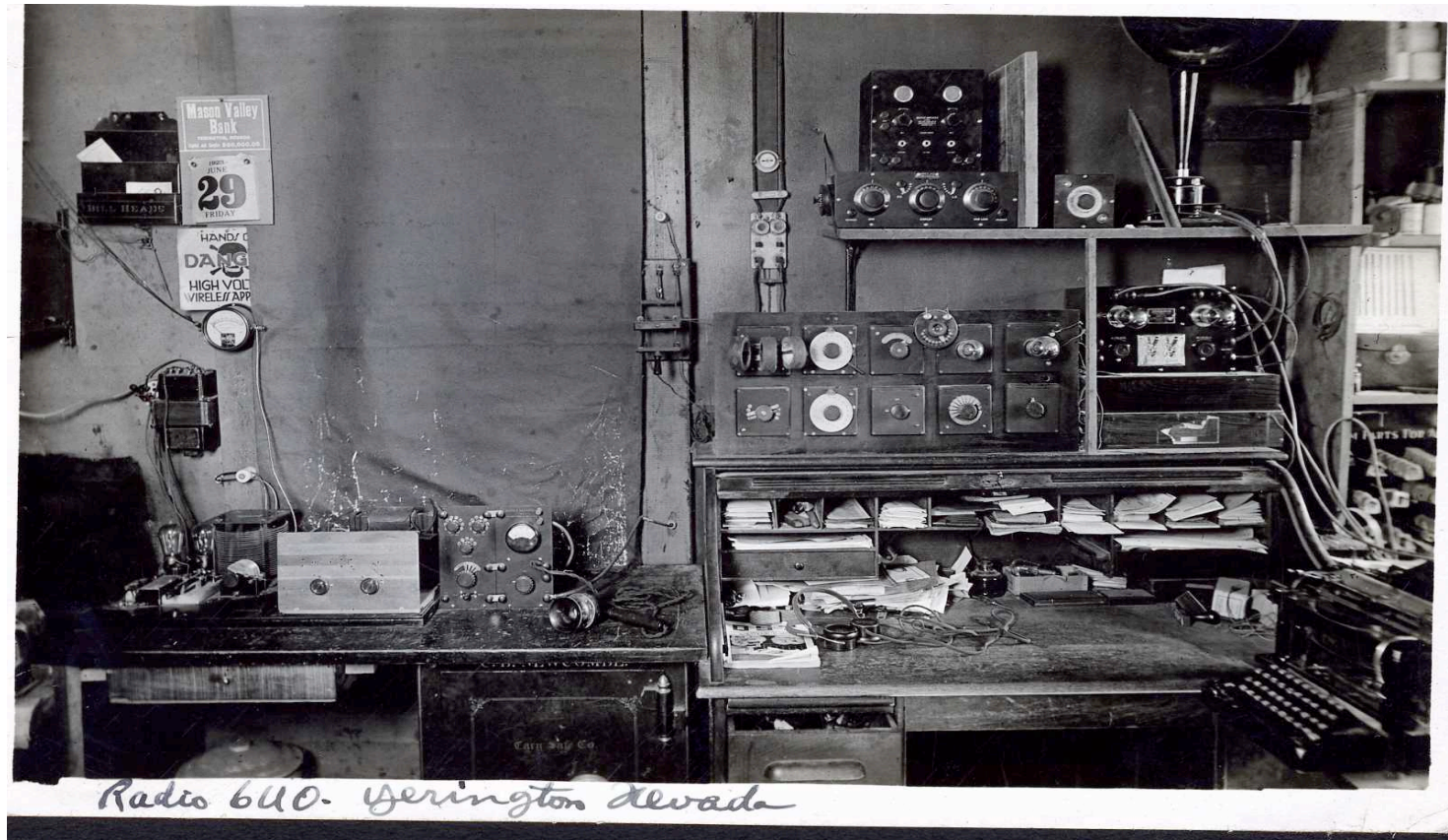


6FH Transmitter & Receiver



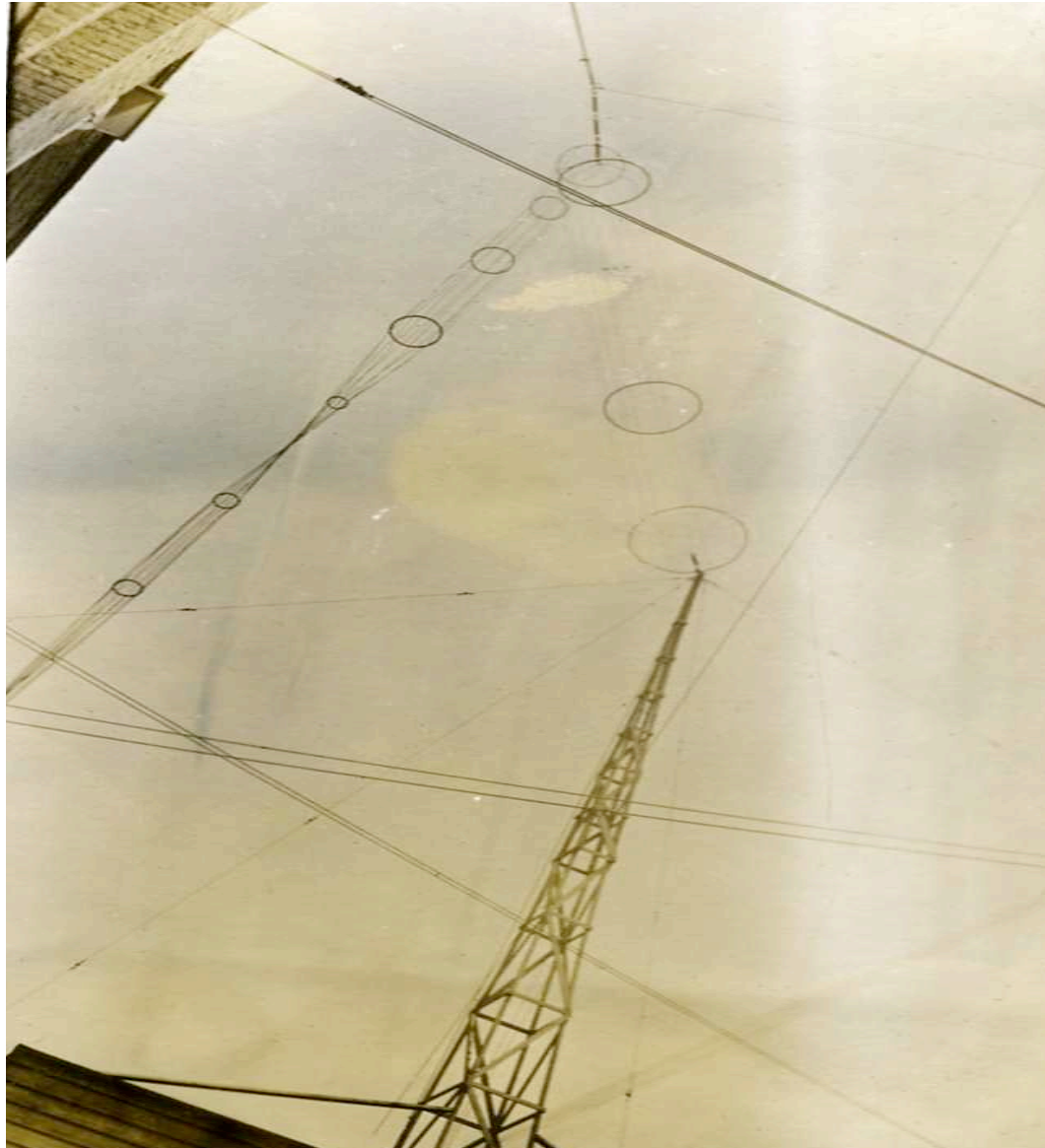
Note transmitter tuning inductances and the one tubular Audion (regenerative) receiver.

6UO Nevada



Note DeForest Interpanel modular receiver and Western Electric audio amplifier for horn speaker, as well as typewriter for “traffic” and tube transmitter in Bill Heade’s station in Yerington, Nevada.

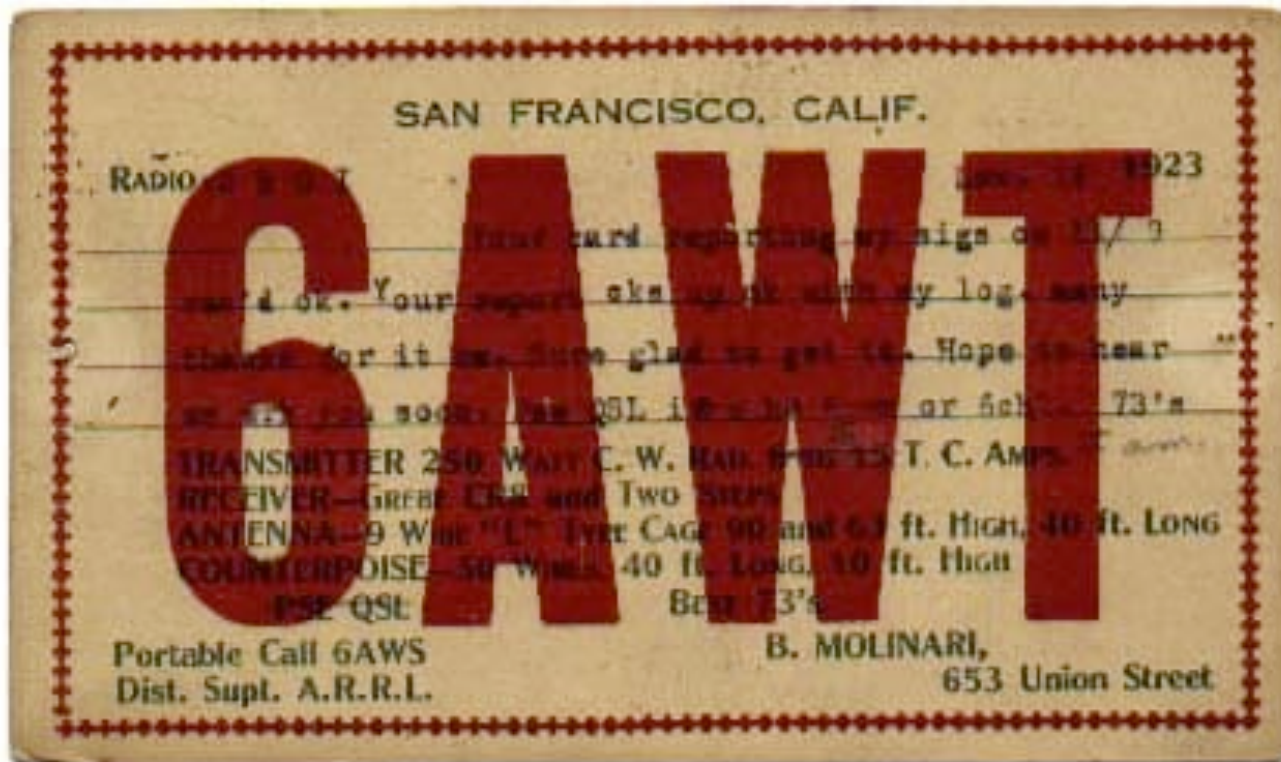
Cage Antennas & Tower at 6AWT



It is likely
that some
amateurs
enjoyed
trading
station
photographs

.

Bart Molinari, 1924 Hoover Cup Winner, Best Amateur Station in the US



In 1927, Philo Farnsworth, the San Francisco Inventor of Electronic Television, Employed Molinari as his Chief Engineer, at his Green Street Laboratory.

6AWT 1923 San Francisco, CA.

From the K8CX Ham Gallery, Tom Roscoe

The 1927 License of the San Francisco Radio Club, callsign 6MU

The **First** License Issued by the Federal Radio Commission, Bernard Linden, Radio Inspector, November 17, 1927.



B. LINDEN

Inspector Linden.

Form No. 8 LICENSE NO. 1

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL RADIO COMMISSION
RADIO STATION LICENSE

CLASS: Amateur CALL SIGNAL 6MU

San Francisco Radio Club is hereby authorized, subject to the provisions of the Radio Act of 1927 and the conditions mentioned in this license, to use and operate the radio apparatus herein described for the transmission of radio communications for a period of ONE YEAR from the date of issuance unless this license is sooner suspended or revoked.

This license shall not vest in the licensee any right to operate the station, nor any right in the use of the frequencies or wave lengths specified herein beyond the terms hereof, nor in any other manner nor at any other time or place than authorized herein. This license is expressly subject in terms to the right of use or control conferred by section 6 of said Radio Act.

The apparatus authorized to be used and operated by the licensee is located in the State of California, county of San Francisco, city or town of San Francisco, Bright Street, Number 454, and is described as follows: RT - CW. ICB, PHONE

This station is authorized for communication only with similarly licensed stations and on wave lengths or frequencies within the following bands:

Meters	Kilocycles	Meters	Kilocycles
0.7477 to 0.7496	401,000 to 400,000	37.5 to 42.8	8,000 to 7,000
4.69 to 5.35	64,000 to 56,000	75.0 to 85.7	4,000 to 3,500
18.7 to 21.4	16,000 to 14,000	150.0 to 200.0	2,000 to 1,500

telephone permitted only in bands 150 - 190, 20.68 - 21.4, 4.69 - 5.35 meters, with a power output of 100 watts,

and at all times unless interference is caused with other radio services, in which event a silent period must be observed between the hours of 8.00 and 10.30 p. m., local time, and on Sundays during local church services.

This station is not authorized to broadcast news, music, lectures, sermons, or any other form of entertainment.

This license is issued under and in accordance with the Radio Act of 1927, and all of the terms and conditions thereof are made a part hereof as though specifically set out in full herein.

Dated this seventeenth day of November, 1927.

At San Francisco, Calif.

FEDERAL RADIO COMMISSION,
W. H. G. BULLARD,
Chairman.

By Bernard H. Linden, Supervisor of Radio.

“LICENSE NO. 1”

Saved from E-Bay by Paul Merrill, W7IV, and made available to the Club by Ed Silvester, NI6S, and Dave Bellici, WA6UHA.

Earlier 1927 Temporary License, awaiting new US Regulations.

FEDERAL RADIO COMMISSION
Commerce Building
Washington

TEMPORARY AMATEUR STATION LICENSE

San Francisco Radio Club
484 Bright Street
San Francisco, Calif.

You are authorized to operate your Amateur Radio Station in accordance with previous regulations, on the wavelengths within the bands between (0.7477 and 0.7496), (4.69 and 5.35 meters), (16.7 and 21.4 meters), (37.5 and 42.8 meters), (75.0 and 85.7 meters) and (150 and 200 meters), pending the formulation of new regulations governing the operation of Amateur stations and final action upon your application for license.

The call signal assigned for use by your station is 6 M U
(333-b)

FEDERAL RADIO COMMISSION
J. F. Dillen
(Acting Chairman)

Edwin W. Lovejoy
Edwin W. Lovejoy
(Issuing Officer)

Acting Supervisor of Radio
(Title)

Place San Francisco, Calif Date November 1st, 1927.

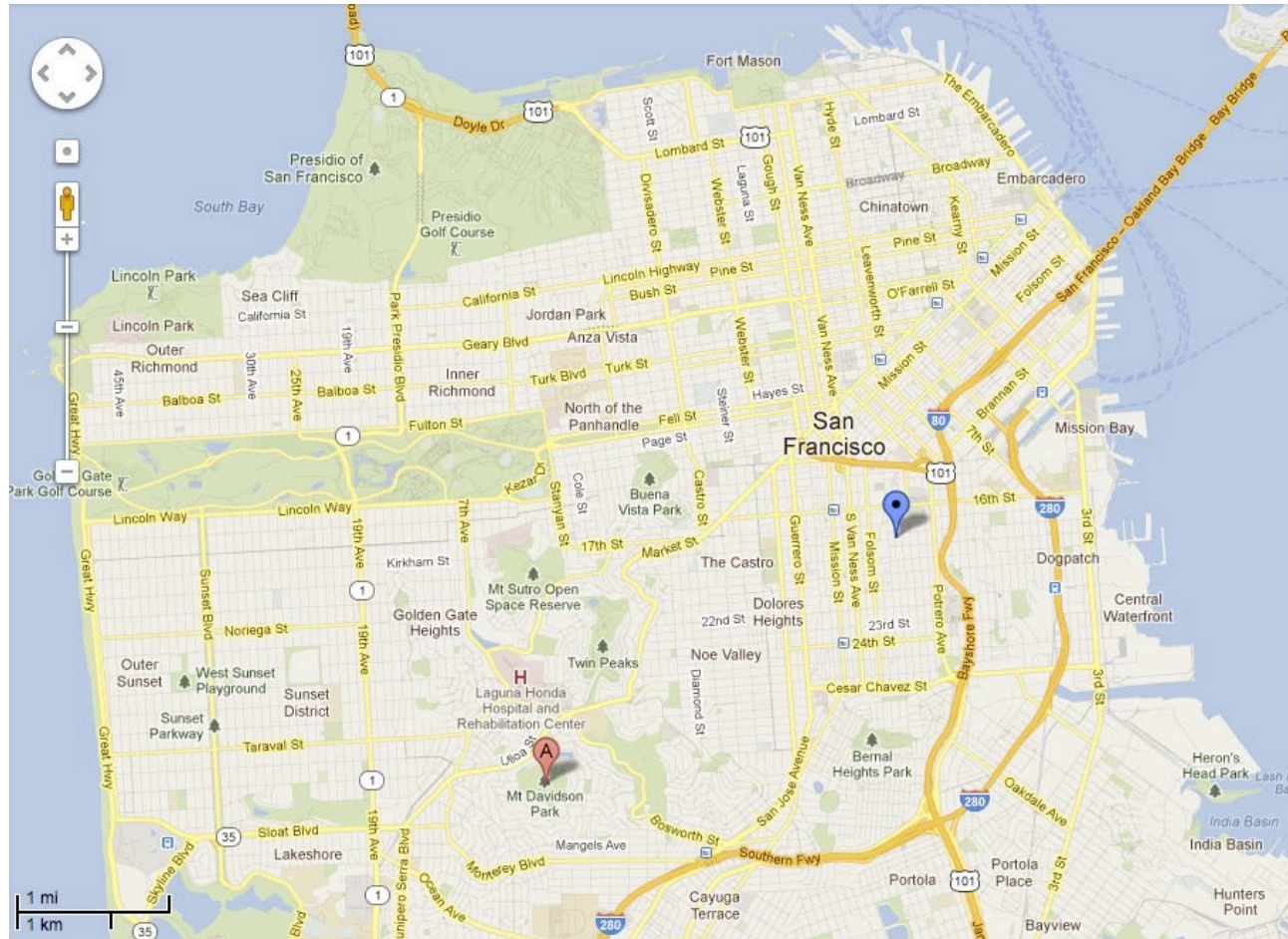
6MU, Address: 454 Bright Street

- Power Authorized: 100 Watts.
- Bands Authorized: 70 cm, 5 meters, 15 meters, 40 meters, 80 meters & 160 meters (1,500 KHz to 2 MHz).
- Phone operation only in 70 cm, 15 meters & 160 meters.
- Term of license: one year.
- Silent Hours, 8 PM to 10:30 PM if interfering.
- No news, music, lectures, sermons or entertainment.

The 1930s & 1940s

- The San Francisco Radio Club remained active through the Depression.
- In at least 1940, 1941 & 1948, it mounted ARRL **Amateur Radio Emergency Corps Field Day** exercises, some of which were filmed.
- Field Day QTH, Mt. Davidson, the highest point in San Francisco.

Mt. Davidson (= A), SW SF



Mt. Davidson *circa* 1940



Note cross at top.

Field Day circa 1940



Les Funston, W6QQU in ARD, 1941

Hams in the 1940s Movie



W6BIP, known as “Bip,”

Wilbur E. Bachman,
an early VHF enthusiast
(112 MHz = 2&1/2 m)
operated mobile/
portable. He visited
the Club well into his
90s about 1999.

Bip at his mobile 112 MHz rig:



R. S. (Russ) Hanlon



Russ Hanlon, **W6KJ**, preserved the 16mm movies and may have shot and edited them.

William A. (Bill) Ladley



Bill Ladley owned the Pacific Felt Company whose large truck features prominently.

It housed operating positions on Field Day.

W6PW



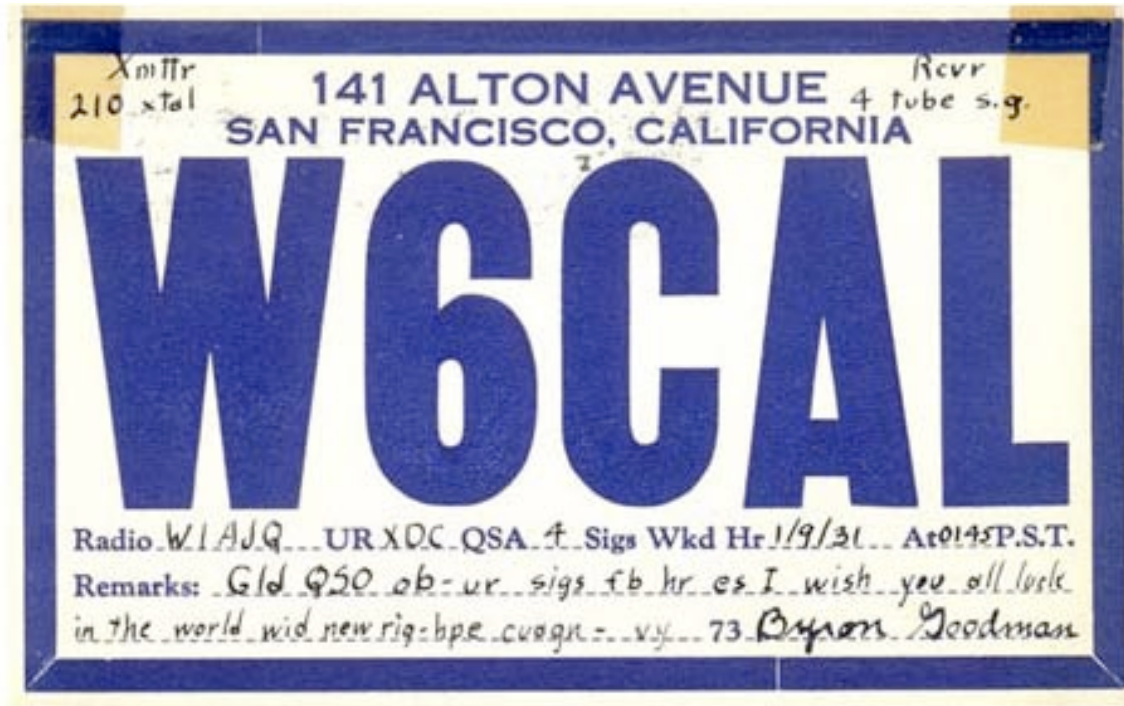
W6PW, John L. Stevens, 3508 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, was at one time President of the Club. He appears in the Field Day film. He first appears in *Radio Amateur Call Book* magazine, Summer, 1932, Vol. 13, No. 2. (CHRS Archives)

Other Movie Hams and Stations

- **W6CIS** Kenneth E. Hughes
- **W6WB** Clayton F. Bane
- **W6NF[?]** Jack Slater
- **W6CAL** Byron Goodman (see QSL)
- **W6AXD** (and the CQ Dog) (but maybe **W6AXO**)
- **W6CJA** Carl F. Frunk, Modesto (Frunk was **6CX** in Berkeley in 1913)
- **W6AKU** Ralph E. Greene, Los Angeles

- Maybe Russ Hanlon visited and filmed these amateurs in North and South California.

W6CAL QSL 1931



W6CAL 1931 San Francisco, California

SM5LNE Collection

From the K8CX Ham Gallery, Tom Roscoe

Early 1940s, Successful Operation

224 members in 1940. **Frank Jones** was a distinguished engineer who pioneered VHF 5 meters for commercial use; he wrote often, especially the “West Coast Handbook.”



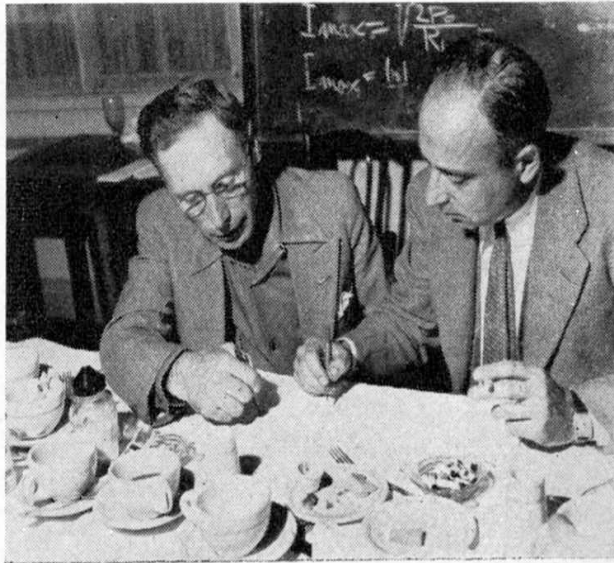
[ARD, January, 1941, p. 42]



The San Francisco Radio Club, Inc., in session. A portion of the membership is gathered around Arthur H. Halloran, editor of Amateur Radio Defense, who is explaining the A-B-C's of filter design X-Y-Z. How many of your friends on the air can you identify from this picture? You'll see Frank Jones, F. D. Wells, C. F. Bane, Wes Little, Paul Bickel, Fred Cookson, Herb. Pherson, R. J. Higby, Harry Elliott, Harold Emmal

and a few dozen others. The photograph is by N. R. Farbman, W6SEM, staff photographer.

Ten Meters Phone



A. W. Fonseca, W6NYQ (right) and Harry Elliott, W6PHX. Both are 10-meter 'phone enthusiasts, known to almost every amateur on the band. W6NYQ is an executive with the Pacific Tel. and Tel. Co., and a former president of the club. He is the arranger of the club's technical programs. In the photograph you see him at work on a problem solved on the table cloth, for the benefit of W6PHX. It has often been said that waiters and waitresses could become rich if only they could analyze or decipher the myriad of "intelligence" written on table cloths.

High sunspot numbers and consequent good propagation in 1947 through 1951 facilitated ten meter 'phone work.

Old Timers



After-meeting pow-wows last far into the night, sometimes until the wee-small hours of the morning. Members hate to go home. They gather in small groups, cuss and discuss their problems. Here you see Hal. Ayers W6NGV, making the issues plain to W6NCB, W D. Hewartson. The bottles in the foreground once contained milk, beer, ale, lemonade. The amateur's taste is as varied as his bands of operation. Hal Ayers is another ex-president of the club, and for years he set the type for "Radio" magazine in the plant where the magazine was then produced. W. D. Hewartson was on the air before World War I, and is another of the Charter Members of the club.

W.D. Hewartson, **W6NCB**, (left) was one of the 1916 Charter Members of the San Francisco Radio Club; Hal Ayers, **W6NGV**, was a Past President of the Club.



Left: Bob Hutchinson, **W6BGW**, tells **W6ROO** about working Admiral Byrd at the South Pole;
 Middle: Pat McGorray, **W6JDP** discusses finances with Gibson Gray, **W6PUX**;
 Right: F.D. Wells (**W6QUC**) and Arthur Halloran (ARD Editor) do the math.



Left: Bob Hanson, **W6MPC** and Johnny Werner, **W6ONQ**, both ex-**W6USA (Golden Gate Exposition)**; Right: **W6ONQ** and Clayton Bane, **W6WB**, a technical advisor

SF Radio Club members at **W6USA**, 1939 Golden Gate Exposition, Treasure Island



W6USA 1939 San Francisco, California

Golden Gate International Exposition

From the estate of W9WPF

From the K8CX Ham Gallery, Tom Roscoe

Success Secrets of a Radio Club

Some pertinent suggestions for founding and successfully conducting the kind of a radio organization which will be lasting. Taken from the model San Francisco Radio Club, Inc., which has weathered every storm over a long period of years and is today more strongly united than at any time since its inception.

- 1) Age 21 and over for membership but some open meetings
- 2) Meetings regularly at the same restaurant
- 3) = a free room in return for members buying dinner
- 4) Technical presentations of high quality
- 5) Extensive publicity, pass the hat to cover this cost
- 6) No discussion of finances during meetings
- 7) No dues and no initiation fees
- 8) Meetings first social at dinner, then technical.

K6OQM's Surprise Party

The Club surprised visitors from Hawaii, **K6OQM** and **XYL K6ROJ**, with a Hawaii-themed party at the Club meeting; people all knew each other from amateur radio contacts, which made for fellowship. On another occasion, the Club arranged meetings and get-togethers for a visiting New Zealand Amateur across the Country to Chicago. (DeSoto, *CQ*, 1941, p 17)

• After the "surprise party" we find Paul and Ella Christensen, **K6OQM** and **K6ROJ**, respectively, still chuckling over the affair at F. D. Wells' home. From left to right: Sam C. Van Liew, **W6CVP**, President of the San Francisco Radio Club, Inc.; A. W. Fonseca, **W6NYQ**, ex-president of the club; F. D. Wells, **W6QUC** (standing); Ella Christensen, **K6ROJ** — and Paul himself. A few days later Paul and Ella pulled stakes for Seattle, where they are guests of Bob Beebe, **W7IGM**, and Mabel Beebe, **W7HXU** . . . a foursome of radio hams who maintained an almost daily QSO on the 10-meter band.



June-July, 1941

ARD, June, July, 1941, p. 57

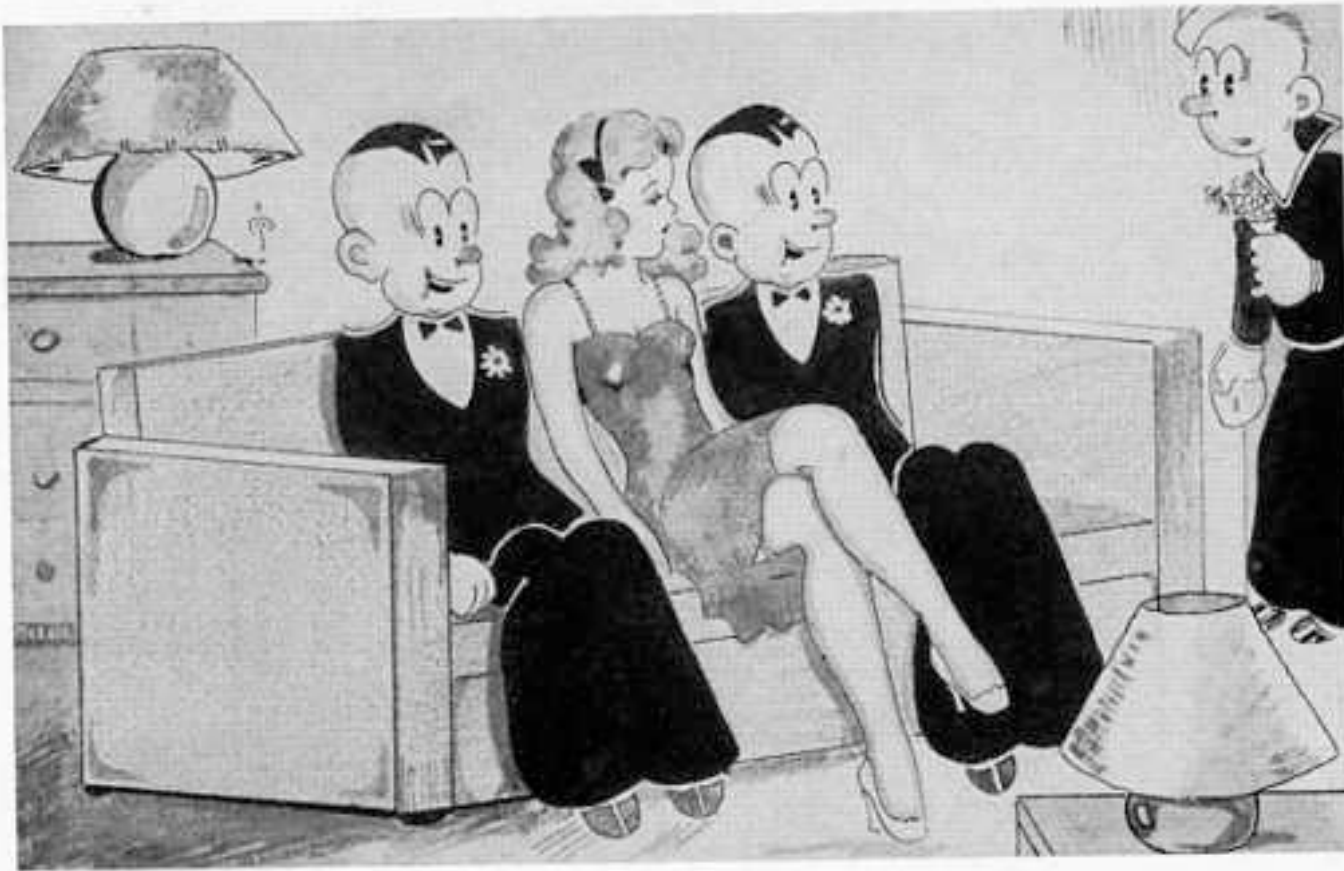
57

1941 San Francisco Ham Humor



W6QQU

More 1941 Ham Humor



Mr. Q to Miss Match: "I always knew you were a good oscillator, but I never thought you were a doubler."

1941 State -of -the -Art



The More Things Change ...



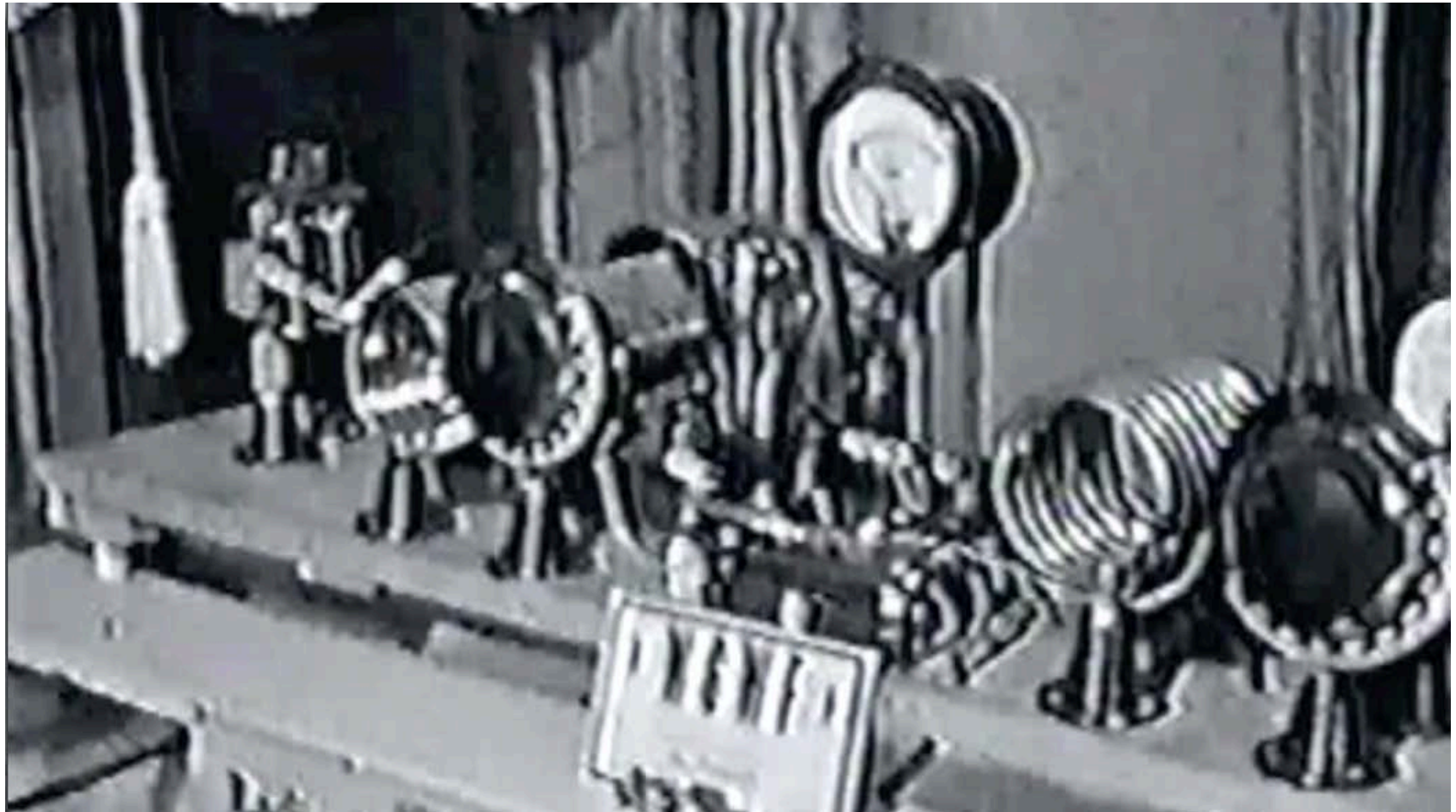














World War Two



- All amateur operations shut down
 - WERS operates locally on VHF
 - (War Emergency Radio Service)

Victory, 1945 and Back on the Air: 1948 Field Day















W6PW as the Club Callsign, 1950s

- In 1957 (and thereafter), **W6PW** appears as the Club callsign in in *Radio Amateur Call Book* magazine.
- John L. Stevens last appears as **W6PW** in 1955.

1950s to the 21st Century

- The Two Meter repeater as **W6PW** (“Poppa” – **W6TP** is “Mother”)
- Change of Name: “ ... *Amateur* Radio Club”
- Field Day every year, once including light Morse code to the Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club (**W6CX**) on Mt. Diablo in Contra Costa County
- Members provided Amateur Radio assistance in the 1989 Earthquake and at 9/11
- Support for ARRL ARES and SF Auxiliary Communications Service (ACS = RACES) and public service
- Regular Meetings, Nets and Social Events

21st Century, SF ARC



EmComm as Important now as 1941

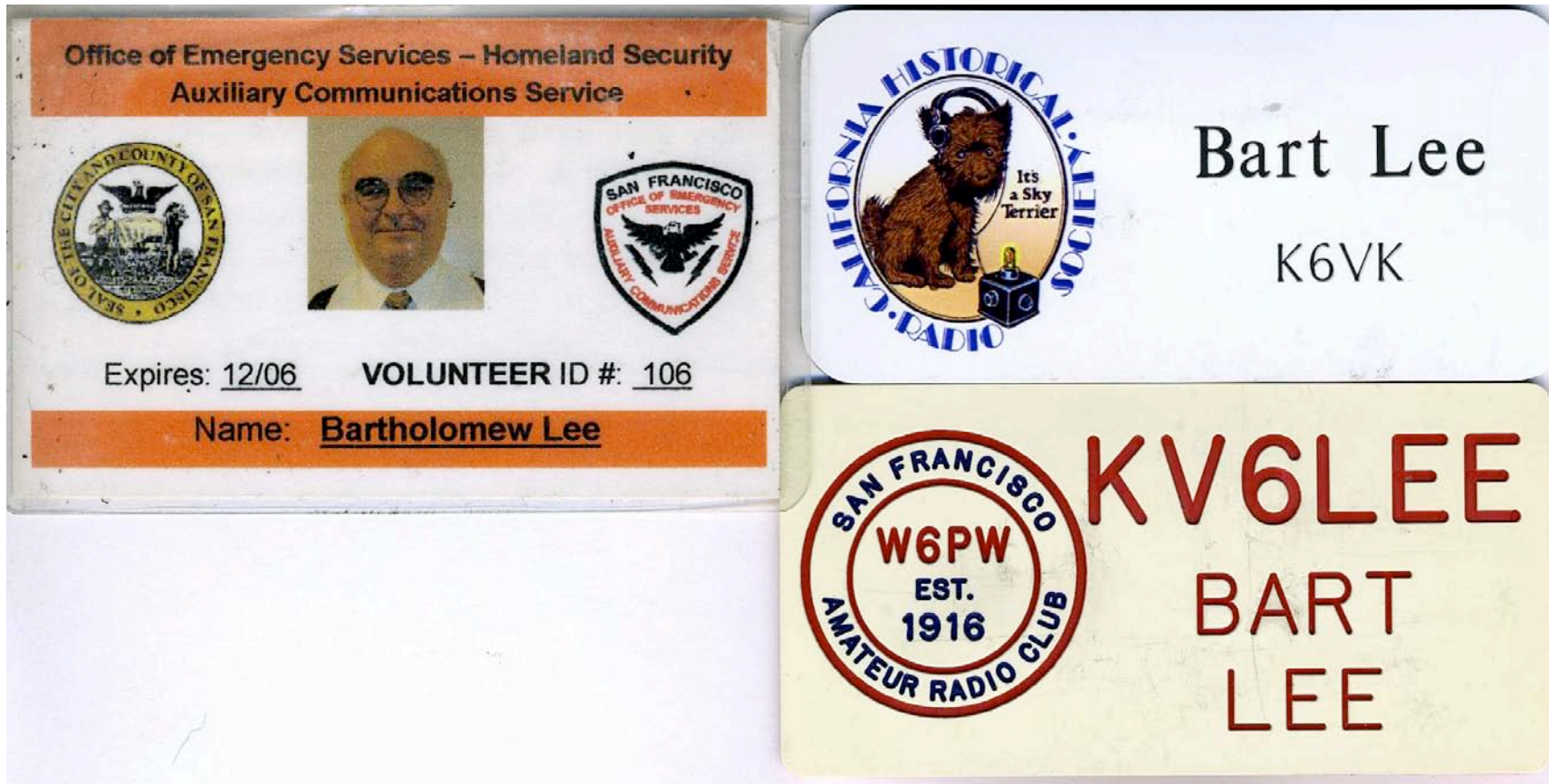


Field Day 2002 Diversity!



Miss Keller Visits The Presidio Field Day Site, 2002

More Information and Photos Wanted by:



73 de Bart, **K6VK**, xKV6LEE, xKF6YWU,
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