



# THE OLD TIMER'S BULLETIN

Published for the old time Wireless Operator, Historian and Collector

Vol. 2

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No. 1

## Collection of Wayne Nelson, W4AA

We feature this month the work and background of one of the top 4th district pioneers and historians - W4AA (see large photo on center pages). He started in the game, like most of us, as a youngster who had to pinch pennies for his first wireless gear; however, Wayne differed from most OT's in that he always had a strong interest in the background of his hobby. This interest remained from the beginning so that today he still has the first bill for his 1916 QST subscription as well as the old yellow tablet on which he copied weather reports from NAA. His Navy 1916 tuner, consisting of a large and small catmeal box has a distinct place in his collection! He has long since lost his original receiver using a #6 Dry Cell with a needle across the notch in the up-raised carbon as a detector; in turn, however, W4AA has amassed one of the nicest collections of old time wireless gear, books and magazines in the country. The photo shows a portion of the equipment of which many items are recognizable. In addition, he has a library of over 600 volumes and a large carefully kept magazine file.

What does this old time historian do for a living? You guessed it! Wayne started in the broadcast business in 1925 and in the past 35 years has built and owned eight broadcast stations. He is the present owner and manager of W4WN and W4WP.

Although Nelson is somewhat partial to the history of early broadcasting and equipment, his collection includes many fine pieces of early commercial and amateur gear such as an original 1900 coherer-decoherer set.

Speaking of early broadcast receivers, he has a feeling of reverence toward a piece of pioneer equipment which may have contributed to the progress of the art. He believes that a now silent radio can hold its head high when given credit for the countless hours of pleasure, thrills and possible paths, that came to a family or maybe an otherwise lonely person. . . . .

## Rare Fleming Valve



This rare tubular valve from the Peter Kailus Collection is one of the later commercial types used in Marconi installations. As noted, it has a cylindrical plate probably of sheet nickel and a spiral "V" filament which appears to be tungsten. This particular tube has a 2 contact "Ediswan" bayonet base, but others were made with an Edison medium screw base. A small label on the glass envelope indicates it operated on 12 volts.

Of interest to some is how Peter Kailus obtained the tube. It is the result of his first ad in QST way back in 1925! Pete obtained this tube and other early Fleming valves from British sea-going operators, who much to his surprise, either subscribed or had access to QST - back in the good old days when spark was still holding its own commercially!

HISTORICAL WIRELESS SHRINE is a must for the visitor to New York City. It is located at Battery Park (foot of Manhattan) and consists of a monument placed there by the Veteran Wireless Operators Association and dedicated to wireless operators who lost their lives at sea while on duty. Each operator's name and the event is inscribed on a metal plate. A salute to our brothers!

## Editor Interviews Zip Jones, ex-5QW

On the recent retirement of Ed "Zip" Jones from RCA, radio lost one of the most colorful figures it has known. To record the occasion, WQZY, WZEE and your Editor, WZIC, moved in on Jones one rainy miserable night back in November with a tape recorder and several cameras. Getting up the gear, they put Ed thru the paces and now have on tape many of his experiences for over a period of 50 years. "Zip" has been everything from Chief "Op" at old WNU (United Fruit- New Orleans) to Editor of several radio magazines including Radio News for Hugo Gernsback. At the time of his retirement, Jones headed promotional advertising for RCA.

"Zip" has led a colorful life which can be verified by the numerous boxes of letters,



photos, articles, mementos, etc, which he turned over to the A.W.A. for safekeeping. After going thru the material and personally meeting this OT gentleman from the south (New Orleans to you!) we came to one conclusion - "Wow!" - what a movie could be made around this fellow!! (Note- the author of numerous articles and stories, the best one concerning E.T. Jones himself can be found in "Radio & Television News", pages 330-331, October, 1938)

INSTITUTE OF RADIO ENGINEERS (I.R.E.) have Larry, K4BJ to thank for a regular periodical. Larry is Editor of the "Suncoast Signal", a 6 page paper with interesting news, announcements, etc, of particular interest to radio engineers along the west coast of Florida. K4BJ is X-WJBY, X-W2BS, X-2CSD, X-2CWN, etc, He operated arc at old WSR (2400 meters) at East Moriches just after RCA bought out Independent, a couple of years at WNY (Bush Terminal) and a short time at WSC (Tuckerton). Guess he's qualified to handle any kind of a radio journal!

HAMOND RESEARCH CORP. may have "popped" up in some of your reading. A general outline of the outstanding work performed by this group at Gloucester, Mass. is summarized in the Sept., 1957 issue of the Proceedings of the I.R.E. Their research started way back when Fessenden was still at Brant Rock. They were one of the first pioneers in developing radio controlled objects. - Tnx to Bob Murphy, W2AE

HISTORICAL RECORDING recently reviewed by the A.W.A. is the "Golden Jubilee" record made by the Radio Club of America. We feel that every radio historian in the country should have this 33 1/3 rpm record in their library. A tremendous masterpiece by the RCA, one can hear the voices of Maj. Armstrong, Paul Godley and Capt. Round describe their early experiences and associations. This LP record may be obtained by writing to: Ernest Amy, Radio Club of America, 11 West 42nd St., N.Y.C. 36, N.Y. Price - \$2.50

ARLINGTON is back in the news. WJJD reports working KANAA at the old NAA station site. It is operated by the U.S.N.R.F. and is on 20 meter SSB. All OT's should try and QSO this station and obtain the "NAA" qsl card which has a drawing of the old NAA towers!

BRANT ROCK brings back memories to W4KJ. Harold lived in Plymouth, Mass. as a boy and well remembers Fessenden's station and the famous 420 ft. tower at Brant Rock. He recalls the day they cut the guy wires on the tower and sold everything for junk! (Ed. note - a more recent crime was when the guys were cut at 'ole Tuckerton. Fortunately, however, the A.W.A. - W2GS, W2LP, WQZY, WZEE, W2RHPO and WZICE completely photographed this station a short time before it was destroyed. W2RFV was manager at the time.

EX WITH SPARK is recalled by Howard Seefred of 'ole 6EA fame. His first receiver (1908) was of the carbon and needle type with DX up to 10 miles. By 1912 he had graduated to the mineral detector and started to hear NAA and NAR on the Atlantic coast and "HU" in Hawaii. His 1/4 KW. spark set was reaching out 100 miles. Tops was in 1916 when he heard JCC in Japan with a mineral detector and 400 ft. antenna.

Amateurs will remember Howard, however, for his later DX work when his 1 KW. spark was heard as far away as Hawaii, Alaska and New Jersey - and that was real DX for amateur spark in the early days! Others of course, associate 6EA with the famous coast-to-coast relays of 1917.

W2EA can still be heard on the amateur bands, and for sentimental reasons, he uses a 1 tube receiver (det. as 2 step) constructed in 1924! The transmitter is an XTAL control job built around 1937.

NEGATIVE FEEDBACK circuit of 35 years ago produced interesting results when tested by Grote Reber. The receiver, called an "Infradyne" was obtained from Joe Simpson and was put thru a modern test. The three tube I.F. strip used UX-199 tubes with a frequency of 3600 kc. See the July, 1959 Proceedings of the I.R.E. for the results.

# THE OLD TIMER'S BULLETIN

This paper is printed four times a year. It is strictly a non-profit publication and neither sponsored by nor formally affiliated with an organization of any kind. Editorial material comes from many sources which we believe are reliable but the accuracy of which we in no way guarantee.

Correspondence regarding old time radio is invited from all readers with the understanding that said material may be used gratis in the BULLETIN.

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The publishing cost of this "Bulletin" has been set at \$1 for the 1960-61 season. The cost for the 1961-62 season will be determined by circulation and number of pages and will be announced in September.

**OLD DF** .....Some years ago, following the early development of wireless, a station stood in a low section of land, a short distance from Manhattan Beach, N.Y. Various powers were used from time to time and the range was always unusually great. Incredible distances were covered even with low powers and the nightly press was copied by ships near and far.

Old operators of that day will recall the low frequency spark of "DF" and how well high impedance it was to tune him out. Owing to the broad tuning in those days, the signals were generally "all over the tuner." Although the press was sought after and welcomed, the interference at other times added not a little to the trials and tribulations of operators of the day. It was an ordinary occurrence to learn that operators had copied "DF" in many corners of the earth such as Alexandria, Egypt or in the South American waters. While no real explanation was given for the unusual carrying power, it was generally considered that the extremely good ground and clear range to sea, combined with some other freakish condition, placed "DF" in a class by itself. (Ed Faser, W2EI)

**SORRY FELICHS** but we were swamped with news items in this issue and had to leave out some fb articles by W1SS, W2IA, W5CA and others. Guess we need more pages !

# Remember when?

by Edward S. Pyle, W2CE

.....the 60 cycle quenched spark gap transmitters of the Kilbourne & Clark Mfg. Co., which sounded so much like a "goose on the loose" were giving the Marconi Company of America a bad time ? (about 1915).....Just an angle to get around Marconi patents but E. & C.'s Chief Engineer, Fred Simpson, did much better a short time later by using a mercury arc tube in the transmitter circuits which permitted a much more pleasing 500 cycle audio note without patent violation. A lot of money went to court just the same on this one !

.....or...Fred Schnell, the Traffic Manager for the A.R.R.L. (1925, Lord, that's not long enough ago to be classed as 'old-time' but here you have it) was given a leave of absence at the request of the U.S. Navy Dept., commissioned a Lieutenant in the Naval Reserve and assigned to the flagship of the Pacific Fleet, the USS SEATTLE, to demonstrate the practicality of the so-called "short waves" to the Navy Dept. ? Brother and How ! Fred's successful contacts with ham stations throughout the world on his long cruise to Australia, long after the Navy 'long wave' circuits had failed, started the Navy on the short wave path !

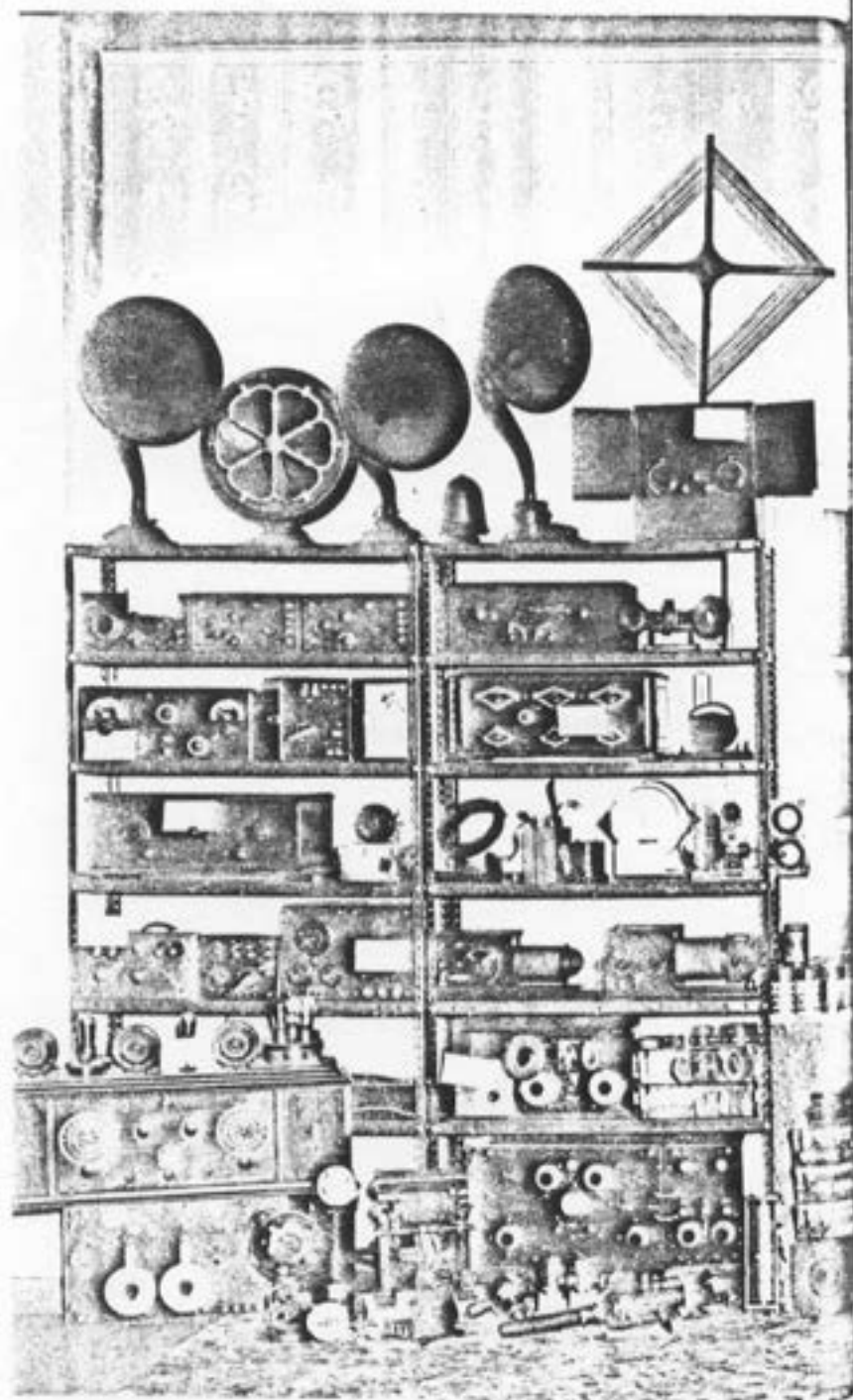
.....the U.S. Army saw the "Pend writing" on the wall later the same year and established liaison with the American amateur through the "Army Amateur Radio System". With minor changes, a similar arrangement goes on today and is very active thru the "Military Amateur Radio System" ..MARS..

.....Yeah, verily, I say unto you...the ham made his 'place in the sun' very early and, through consequent development and energetic and loving devotion to his hobby, has been instrumental in promoting "wireless" to "radio", and "radio" to electronics, both amateur-wise and commercially.. Without the "ham" in this field, radio communication and electronic development would still be years behind in progress ! ...you wanna argue ?

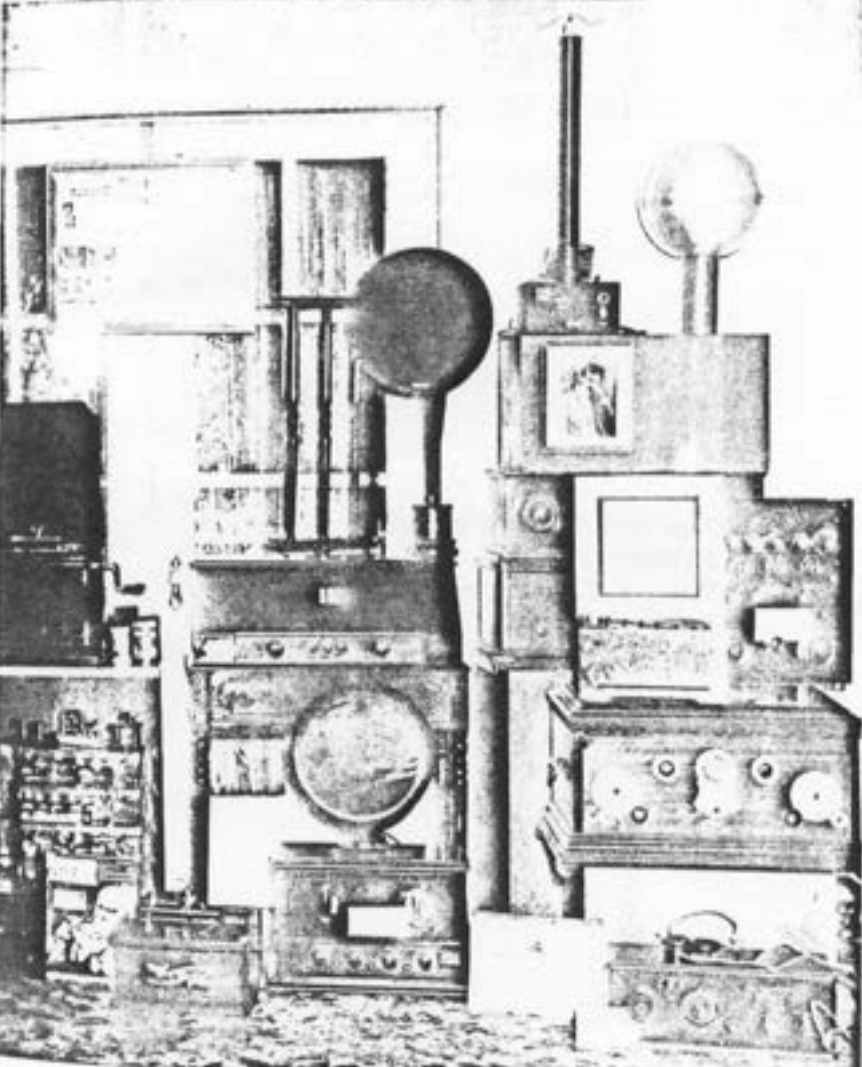
73, W2CE

**INFO ON EARLY "5B" RECTIFIERS**, comes from Fred Penard who has corresponded with F.L. Spencer of the Raytheon Co. Fred has detailed info on the development of this cold cathode rectifier tube. Seems the original tube was designated as the "5B" tube and was designed for receivers with an UX-112-A output tube at 135 volts. The "5B" tube was made at the Champion Lamp Works at Danvers, Mass.

With the advent of the UX-171-A with a plate voltage of 180 volts, the original "5B" tube was redesigned to have a lower conducting voltage or tube loss. This new tube became the popular "5H" and was released in 1925. If interested in more "dope", write - Fred Penard, 65 Maple St. Norwood, Mass.



Part of collection of antique gear by Wayne Nelson, W4AA, Concord, N.C., showing his variety of BC equipment as well as tubes, loose couplers, detectors, etc. Shown also are some Tesla mementos and a Marconi company stock certificate!



## OLD TIME HAM-ADS

Each reader is entitled to one old time ham - ad per issue without cost. All articles MUST be over 25 years old.

**CALL BOOKS WANTED** - Dept. of Commerce (Amateur) prior to 1926. Commercial and Government stations 1930 and prior to 1926. Particularly interested in call books of 1913 thru 1916 and supplements. Also on the lookout for "Everyday Engineering" magazines. Bill Gould, W1SP/2  
526 Woodgate Ave., Elberon, New Jersey

**"BOY WIRELESS"** and similar 'how-to-it' wireless books mostly published in London and circulated in U.S. between 1910-15. Wanted by Larry Triggs, W2YK,  
485 Cloverhills Drive, Rochester 18, N.Y.

**SWAP ANTIQUE RECEIVERS** - have breadboard Atwater Kents, Crosley 'Pop', Kennedy 220 and other gear for trade. Paul Giganti, W6GY,  
2429 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos, California.

**OFF BRAND 201-A's** made in the 1920's wanted by- Howard Schrader, 23 Lillie St. Princeton Junction, New Jersey

**FADA SPECIALIST** is Bruce Hagen of Akron. Bruce is on the lookout for any of the early Fada receivers manufactured in the 1920's or early '30s as well as the Andrea 193E 5" Television set. Also looking for the knobs on the 1924 Fada neodyne. Write- Bruce Hagen, 1079 Juneau Ave., Akron 20, Ohio

**PIONEER SUCCESSORS** - Dr. W.R. Baker, one of the nation's foremost radio and television pioneers passed away recently at the age of 67. Dr. Baker directed the research at General Electric for over 20 years as well as organize the national committees for setting engineering standards for commercial television, etc. Old time radio men, however, will remember him for establishing the world's first high power broadcast station at WGY in 1922.

**MUSEUM TO VISIT** is the Edison Museum - Library and Laboratories at Malms and Lakeside Ave., West Orange, New Jersey. Write for the hours. An opportunity to see the first phonograph, stock ticker, electric motor car, movies, Edison effect lamps and a multitude of other early inventions.

**AMATEUR ACTIVITY** on the ham bands is paying off for many an CT. W2DA (ex-9AW sph) out in South Dakota ran into W2UN recently on 75 SSB whom he hadn't worked since 1921 ! Result: FE qso and some old gear.

**EVERYDAY MECHANICS** magazine collection was recently completed by W2AK when he stumbled on to the first 15 issues. "Thorn" is a "dye-in-the-wool" historian and likes to read old off-beat material.

**ELECTRICAL EXPENDITURE** Vol. I or Radio News, Oct. 1921 wanted by Joe Simpson. Will swap. Write - 85-39 152nd Street, Jamaica 32, New York

**A.R.R.L. HANDBOOKS WANTED** - No. 1 and No. 2 to help fill out historical library. Write - John Allender, W3CJN, 901 Overbrook Rd., Baltimore 12, Maryland

**SWAP** - several WD-11's for what have you ? Fred Cunningham, 2704 Alcatraz Ave., Berkeley 5, Calif.

**DE FOREST AUDION** - wanted to complete replica of receiving set described in Vay, 1939 QST. Also looking for W.E. 100 A carbon mike stand. Cash or will swap components. Ed Newran, ex-W3EOK,  
2041 Colonial Ave., S.W. Roanoke 17, Va.

**WANTED** - QST'S, 1923- Mar. June, August, Oct., Nov. and Dec. 1922- Jan., Feb., March and May. Swap or cash. Peter Kallus, 4025 Clauson Ave., Western Springs, Illinois

**FOR SALE** - Fortbloop 5 tube receiver, Type 212 made by the Eagle Radio Corp. about 1923. Also a W.E. Model 7-A 2 stage P.P. amp. with (3) 216-A tubes and W.E. type 10-D (51E-W) horn speaker. Make offer. Harry Schoff, Box 105, Holcomb, N.Y.

**WANTED** - Marconi Magnetic Detector and Multiple tuner. Also looking for a IP-76 receiver. Louis Risoli, W1AAT,  
422 Lafayette St., Salem, Mass.

**VALUE OF DE FOREST AUDION** is requested by W2LA (ex-W2B). Answer: Hard to tell since it may be a real early one with crude construction (uneven plate obviously cut with shears, etc.), one with or without burnt out filaments, single or double plate, Hudson filament, etc. And like all historical gear - the real answer is the supply and demand.

**DR. JOHN V. HOGAN**...We regret to report the passing Dec. 29th of Dr. John V. Hogan at 71--after a lifetime of radio pioneering. He was associated with Lee DeForest in several early enterprises and was identified with early work in facsimile transmission.

**MORE OUTER SPACE** - from W2IA who recalls the incident of Marconi hearing signals from Mars around 30,000 meters (?) says George, "Marconi was permitted to languish in his glory for quite a number of days and then the General Electric Co. made an announcement to the effect that G.E. had been experimenting on the day the Martian signals were received on 'exceedingly long waves' and had employed the local trolley feeder system as an antenna after the street car system had been closed down for the night ! ..nuff sed..



WCA-1627A or COAST GUARD T-5 TRANSMITTER represents the newest piece of equipment at the A.M.A. Historical Museum. This commercial tube transmitter of the mid-20's represents the combine efforts of WJRH, 112W and WJRE's brother - the latter providing his station wagon for transportation. The transmitter is a NDPA using a 211 as oscillator and 2 211's as PA. with a frequency range of 312 to 500 kc and output of 300 watts. (Described in Mary Loomis' book "Radio Theory and Operating" page 728, 1928 Edition).

The transmitter has some historical significance since it was used on a government ocean survey vessel. This and other early commercial marine apparatus will be on display with amateur gear when the barn museum opens again in April.

TINPOIL TO STEREO is a recently published book that is a must for every serious minded historian. Although it does not cover early wireless, it concerns a kindred interest - the development of the phonograph from Edison thru to present Hi-Fi stereo. It is a large expensive and profusely illustrated book but well worth the extra money. The author - Oliver Read, W1ETI, of course !

TESLA COIL SET is on between W9AX and KRDM as to which can get the longest spark. W9AX plans to use a 1/2 KW. spark set and KRDM will run 1/2 KW. to a pair of 813's to excite the coil. Results in the next issue.

TUBE COLLECTORS - a series of receiving tubes made by the DeForest Co. in the mid twenties may be of interest to the average collector. These tubes all had insulantite bases, straight sides, tit top and were interchangeable with other common tubes of the time (UV-201, UX-201A, UX-112, UV-199 etc.)

The DW2, DW3, DW7 all had the "UV" base. The DL2, DL4, DL5 and DL7 used the "UX" base and the DL3A used the UV-199 base. Of the group, the DW3A, DL7 and DW7 are the most difficult to find.

GS250B EMERGENCY MARINE SPARK EXTH is the newest item in Selwyn Blake's (ex-LCPW) historical collection. Selwyn made the initial contact for this fine piece of old historical equipment when a certain (?) foreign ship docked in his home port last summer. Letters to the Steamship Company finally paved the way - however, the big problem after it was shipped from Europe was to get it thru the U.S. Customs, etc. Took over a month of haggling regarding duties, storehouse fees, etc.,

GID TIDOR'S NITE at Oakland, Calif. had a large turnout with Hank Brown, W6HB, Bill Orr, W6SAI and many other celebrities present. W6KH won the prize for being the oldest licensed amateur present.

Stories of the 'ole days included the one of driving the rotary gap with a water motor fastened to the kitchen sink. When it was time to go on the air it was necessary to pull a string attached to the faucet ! ("Temp" Campbell-W6EWA)

## The Literature of the Art. . . Books, Reviews

"KILBOURNE & CLARKE STORY" is another good one for your historical library. It is easy to obtain - send 50¢ to "Wire & Communication" magazine, P.O. Box 20, Ridgewood, New Jersey, and ask for the November issue 1960. The author of this '60 article is our west coast historian, W7OCE. (Ed. note- Kilbourne & Clarke Co. as most of you know were pioneer manufacturers of fine marine wireless equipment. Very little info is available on their activities - so this article by Howard is welcomed by the OT.)

"MAN OF HI FIDELITY" - the book covering the life of Ed Armstrong will soon be out of print. Better order your copy from the nearest bookstore now before it becomes a collectors item !

"ARC's OF HAM RADIO" is the newest in a series of books written by Howard Fyle, W7OCE. Although not of historical interest it would be a good addition to your library since books on amateur radio are scarce. This book and the one titled "Building up your Ham Shack" may be obtained from most mail order houses such as Allied Radio, etc.

THE NYMPH AND THE LAMP is a fiction book to look for when browsing thru a used book store. Now out-dated (published in the U.S.A., 1950) it concerns adventures at the old time wireless station on famous Sable Island - the remnant of all the old Marconi Stations. One was picked up recently for 25¢ Historians - be on the lookout for this one !

TOP READING MATERIAL about the old days can be found in the 1925 issues of the now defunct magazine "Radio Amateur" printed by the 'ole 2nd district gang around N.Y.C. The series of articles were written by Fred Parsons, 2AEP, now W2EEX, who needs no introduction to you old timers. Terrific reading material 35 years ago.

LONG WAVES - if you haven't already seen it - grab your new QST and read the very informative article written by WJRP on page 60 (QST, Jan., 1961). Bill covers the complete spectrum from 15 kc. thru 550 kc. - what to listen for and when !

HOLLOMB, N.Y.

Bruce Kelley, Editor

## THE OLD TIMER'S BULLETIN

16th ORIGINAL OLD TIMER'S MEET at Trenton, N.J. slated again in April - watch for announcement in QST. This gathering, without exception, is the top meet for old time amateur and commercial operators in the country. To prove our point - here are but a few of the guests who have attended: John Reinarts, Fay Weising, E.B. Warner, John Rider, Irving Vermlilya, Lloyd Espenshied, Clarence Tuska, Gerald Tyne, A.L. Sudlong, H.W. McCandless, Ed Handy, E.N. Fickerill, Paul Godley, John V.L. Hogan, Harry Sedewater, Alfred F. Mergen, R.R.C. Matthews, Hugo Gernsback, plus dozens of others. How many of these names can you recognize? Ed Baser, as most of you know, is the guiding hand behind this star studded event. Try and make it this year if you can.

WIRELESS DISPLAY of old gear in store window by Joe Pavak, W3OEF, at recent Amateur and Electronic Convention in Minneapolis drew considerable interest. In fact, Joe was reluctant to take it out. Same occasion brought W3QDA and other OT's to the city.

MICHIGAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM comes to our attention again (See April issue) when we received some fine photographs of their displays from W6FX. It would indicate that more public museums could use bona fide old timers to set up their exhibits.

NEW ORLEANS is a city where one can find many real old time wireless men many of whom worked for 'ole United Fruit. W.J. Drumney is a typical example. "Bill" started listening in 1906. Between 1908 and 1912 found him in the Signal Corps at Boston. 1912 and 1913 with American Marconi, then Tropical Radio until the war. Then the Navy as an instructor plus operating on the U.S.S. Missouri and Geo. Washington. Following the war Bill pioneered in early U.S. Air Mail as well as being on the U.S. Shipping Board and as the Radio Supervisor in the Gulf Division.

Of interest to some is that just prior to the war while working with Bill Berkley at 84 State, Boston, he was assigned the task of copying solid everything that Sayville (German) sent out from 6:00 P.M. to midnight. The Sayville operation, is of course, another story.

MARCONI OPERATOR at the age of 16 was when Karl Krech, W3ES, started in the commercial game. Amateur work began in 1910 with the call "RUP" and then 2BR in 1913. Karl recalls that he was the junior "op" with Irving Vermlilya, IZE, and later became the Chief Operator of the S/S "Ancon" - the first ship to pass thru the Panama Canal. Incidentally, W3ES was associated with W3EG in P.O.T.C. while at Cornell University and along with Dan is now a member of the Radio Club of America.