

Time, Love Go Into Radio Collection

By NEVA RAE FOX

To some people, antique collecting is nothing more than a money-making business. But, to an Egg Harbor gentleman, collecting antique radios and parts is a time-consuming hobby that he knows contains no fortune.

Bill Laverty started collecting the radios he remembers from when he was young, and the 20 year old collection boasts approximately 150. He's always on the lookout for radio "names that were familiar when I was a kid."

But, he is quick to stress that these radios are valuable only to other collectors. "You can't go out and sell it," Laverty explained. "People don't buy — they swap for items of equal value."

Laverty noted he was one of about 1500 radio collectors in the country, and has about 300 contacts to help find the parts he needs. "Most of them are younger," he explained.

He stays on top of the collecting scene through his organizations, which include the Antique Wireless Association and the Canadian Vintage Wireless Association. He attends conventions and subscribes to Radio Age "to keep up to date."

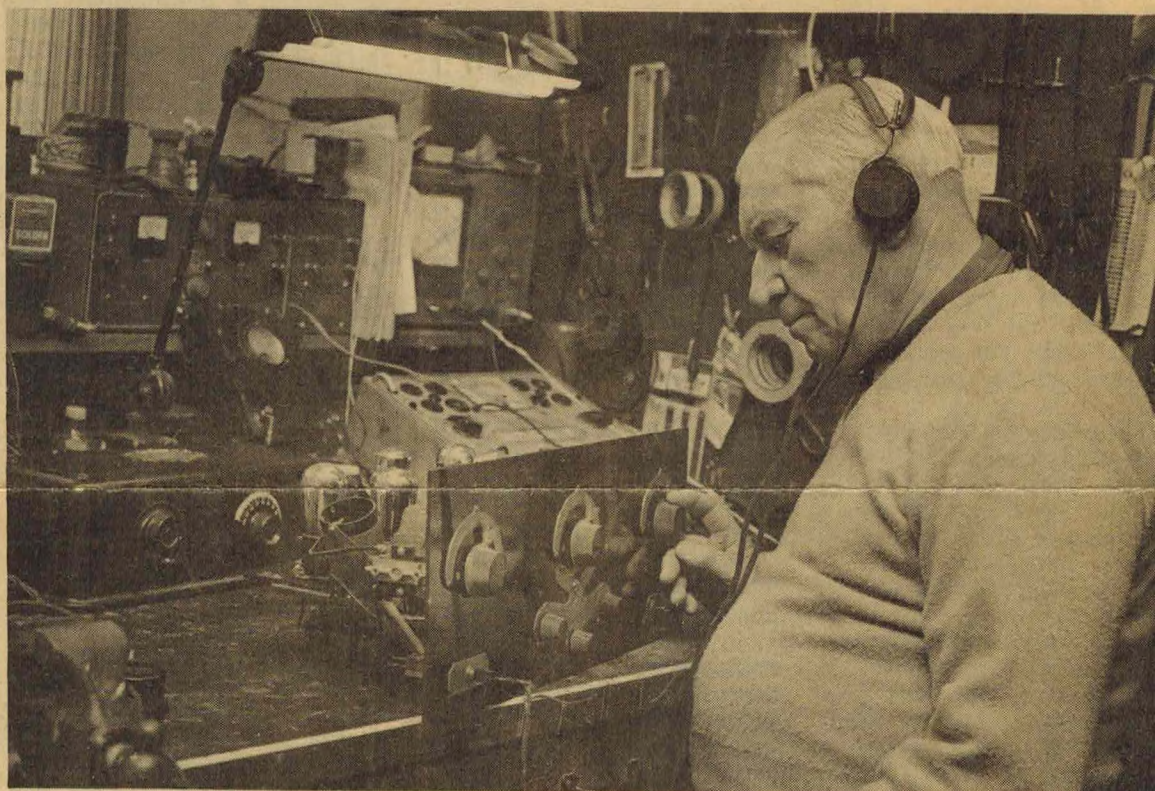
His vast collection of old radios has appeared in the Wall Street Journal plus two television news programs.

Laverty devotes a great deal of time to collecting and repairing his pieces to insure their proper operation. "I get a lot of fun out of it," he commented. "And, I like the people who visit — that's the main fun."

He admitted that collection radios and all the parts that go along inhabit a lot of room in his Egg Harbor home, and he has to limit himself at times. "With collecting," he continued "it could be something that could drive you out of your house."

This was obvious when stepping into his workshop. The antique items cover an entire wall plus sections of two others.

Among his collectables are 1922 crystal radios and a large 1923 "deluxe radio" with cone shaped loudspeakers. "This is what you



BILL LAVERTY tests his 1923 "Eagle Neutrodyne", one of the many sets he has restored in his home workshop. THE NEWS/Floyd Reese

had in the living room," he exhibited.

While displaying a bulky 35 year old Webster Chicago tape recorder he noted, "Imagine this, compared to what we have now."

Not only does he collect radios, but he maintains a supply of parts for them, including meters, dials, tubes, and telephone equipment.

The old radios had at least two dials to turn, instead of today's one. "Everything was done separately," Laverty explained.

His array of tubes, which numbers 1000-1500, are different sizes, shapes, and ages including 1912 handmade ones. "I have some new, but most are used," he commented.

Laverty searches for the equipment in a number of places, such as conventions, flea markets, barns and lofts. "They come from anywhere at all," he said.

The white-haired gentleman has had an interest in radios for a long time. In 1923, he operated his own radio factory where he built

and sold his wares throughout the state, and in 1924 he worked at Philco where he assisted in the final tests of their first radio..

Laverty was also one of 800 people who participated in the first transcontinental test. Unfortunately, only 25 members were successful. "I think everybody was heard but me," he lamented.

The collector is eager to help

anyone with his same interest but hastily reminds that there is no fortune in radio collecting. He likes to educate people to them in "channeling their collecting to what is really interesting."

He advises all new collector research the field before buying anything. "It's a challenge," explained. "Don't go out and buy junk."