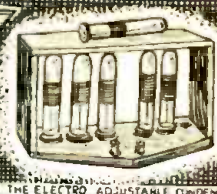


# Of Old-Timers



"decohere" and enable one to receive wireless signals from the Massie Wireless station in that city,—and the bug has never left me.

Shortly thereafter, I accepted a position in New York City, and there found kindred spirits, but the business of making a living put a damper on much activity, but enabled one, nonetheless, to browse about steamship piers, "DF" at Manhattan Beach, "WA" at Waldorf-Astoria Hotel (the famous Col. Wilson's stock station) and other commercial stations, becoming acquainted with the "wireless operators", which kept the interest alive until 1908 when a momentous decision was made of acquiring a real transmitter.

What a thrill while walking through Fulton St. during the noon hour in picking up a little magazine named *Modern Electrics* to discover after reading a few pages that there actually was a store in New York City where "wireless" parts could be bought. The desire to see the place that same noon could not be resisted and on we walked through Fulton, Greenwich and West Broadway, and there on the 2nd floor of an old building we met for the first time, the Father of Amateur Radio, Hugo Gernsback, the publisher of *Modern Electrics* and the owner, if memory fails not, of the famous E. I. Co.; and at the same time it was my pleasure of meeting Victor Laughter, author of a book on wireless. The amateur spirit was there as we have it today and what a "talkfest" we had,—it resulted in my parting with a \$20 bill and leaving the place 2 hours later with a 1-inch spark coil, a 1-slide "tuner" guaranteed to receive 1,000 miles—it had 1,000 turns of black enameled wire on it—, and a pair of headphones which we still have.

During the next 3 years we find ourself "puttering" and feeling very much discouraged because the "Molybdenum" detector would not bring in signals; the "Electrolytic" detector "ate up" the "Wollaston" wire at the rate of almost 1 inch per hour and as this wire cost us \$1 per inch, it became too much of a luxury. But when we discovered a source of supply where we could buy Galena at 25 cents per pound, there was a silver lining in our radio world.

The detectors made with galena were so good and sensitive we found ourselves in the position of being able to copy the Navy Yards all along the Atlantic Coast and, many times, assist in copying messages which Navy and commercial operators had difficulty in receiving. In that manner our circle of friends amongst the wireless operators grew, but once in a while irritation would develop, particularly when our 1-kw. spark transmitter caused interference and we were asked to "stand-by", but it had to be done politely; otherwise the poor Navy, ship or land station operators were in hard luck as our signals were stronger than theirs.

When the laws of 1912 were passed by Congress, and the administration placed with the Bureau of Navigation, Dept. of Commerce, station and operator licenses became obligatory, the old "AH" call changed to 2ZH; after the war to 2MP and as such was as well known as W1ES has been since 1923 when we moved to the first call area.

With the advent of government supervision rapid changes took place and Amateur Radio—through the efforts of the American Radio Relay League, founded in Hartford in early 1914, by the famous inventor and amateur, the late Hiram Percy Maxim—made astounding progress in the field of communication and experiment.

Whom do we find prominently connected with the radio industry today but the men who were radio amateurs 20 or more years ago? Amateur radio is still the great training school of the engineer of today—and tomorrow.

The story of amateur radio is one of service to the government and to communities in time of disasters.

The early pioneers deserve great credit for developing a "hobby" which is the admiration of the world, and where it

may lead to, with television just around the corner, I shall leave to the prophecy of Mr. Hugo Gernsback, whose many editorials have been so far ahead of the times.

## WILLIAM H. PRIESS—

Pres., International Television Radio Corp.



**PRIESS'** work on the development of reflex receivers, while with Kolster and when manufacturing sets under his own name, is well known to many old-timers. His more recent work in television, described in recent issues of *Radio-Craft* magazine, is becoming outstanding and popular. His reminiscence has exceptional value. (Photo is from a painting by M. Kassel.)

**T**HE summer of 1911 found me working in the electrical and blackface gang at the old Waldorf-Astoria. A job requiring a strong back.

Tesla, the Montenegrin genius of Mephistophelian get-up lived on the 11th floor. This man with his induction motor created the alternating current industry, and dreamed of the Earth as you and I would of an apple, which he would activate from a central point to drive ships and trains, give light and heat everywhere without wires. He played with millions of volts and made property cheap in the vicinity of his laboratory. He gave us the multiple spark-gap, and Tesla transformer. His roost was generally avoided by us all, and we tip-toed by it as a youngster by a graveyard at night. On the roof of the Waldorf, a wireless station cracked messages to the ships at sea.

Marriott, of the old United Wireless, the grand-daddy of the Federal Communications Commission field service. I recall my pride in carrying his wavemeter, Braun hot-wire ammeter and voltmeter, in 1912 on ship inspections. Can you remember the racket and the roar of the early commercial wireless sets doing their job at an efficiency of one-half of one per cent? Do you remember the Fleming Cycometer?

Bucher, teaching the Marconi School, in a dismal loft at this time. We two aimed at writing a correspondence school course on wireless, with directions for using the keen stuff Electro Importing Co. was offering. The talented Bucher became the first sales manager for the RCA and later its Vice-President.

Shoemaker, with the largest cud of tobacco ever carried in the mouth of a white man, performing tricks with link circuits. The old-timers remember how he planned a reserve flag wig-wag system to make sure there would be no slip in the advertised first wireless reporting of the America's Cup Yacht Races.

Austin, his mastery of meter and buzzer, and his range data established by the cruise of the *Salem* and the *Birmingham*.

Pickard, the cultured, the foremost scholar of the business and a veritable walking engineering encyclopedia, also an aspirant for wireless cup-race honors. He is of the crystal detector and I.P.76 receiver fame. Have him show you the repellent picture, taken 30 years ago, he has of himself, lolling in a bunk on his reporting tug, bearded and as nondescript in appearance as a tramp on a hand-out line.

Sarnoff, pounding brass in a two-by-four station on top of Wanamakers. Now President of RCA.

Goldsmith, teaching radio and banging out the *Proceedings*  
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