

Letter to the Editor, AWA REVIEW
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Sir:

The Antique Wireless Association, its members and affiliates, now enjoy an opportunity, and (at least from a historical perspective) face a danger. The archeology of radio beckons, but the sites are disappearing fast.

Archeologists hold that mankind has flourished through three great ages: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. I suggest that we have entered a fourth: the electrical age. We know the artifacts of the electrical age are at risk. But so too are the sites of the great events, and the small events that give texture to our understanding.

Industrial archeology seeks to explore, document and preserve our industrial heritage. The railroad was perhaps the last stage of the Iron Age: the iron horse on steel rails. The telegraph perhaps opened the electrical age: electricity over wires for signals, then for power (and industry), then wireless, radio, television, Radar, computers, the Internet. Historians of technology have documented much of this development. Yet many of the sites are unexplored, undocumented and wasting.

I propose that those of us who can, should take up exploration and documentation of early radio sites. Radio Archeology promises much new knowledge and perhaps some adventure. As it happens, many of the early sites are seaside, adding to their lure. A few have been preserved, for example Marconi's Poldhu, Cornwall, UK transmitter location; a few have succumbed to the elements, for example, Marconi's Cape Cod "CC" station, lost to the encroaching ocean. Archeologists in Ireland are mapping and exploring the Marconi Clifden site. The Marine Radio Historical Society in Bolinas, California has reinstated Marconi/RCA marine station KPH/KSM and recently made discoveries about its antenna field and the original KPH site.

Many agencies, companies and organizations would be pleased to help in documenting their or nearby land and its uses. Some have

professional archeologists on staff, *e.g.*, the U.S. National Park Service. Many radio journals, perhaps this one, could publish the reports, and encourage further responsible and ethical exploration.

Time is taking its toll. I hope we can use that inevitability to energize the exploration and documentation of the places of radio history.

Very truly yours,

Bart Lee, Fellow of the California Historical Radio Society.
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Cc: (various)

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