VOLUME 27 NUMBER 1 SUMMER/FALL 2002

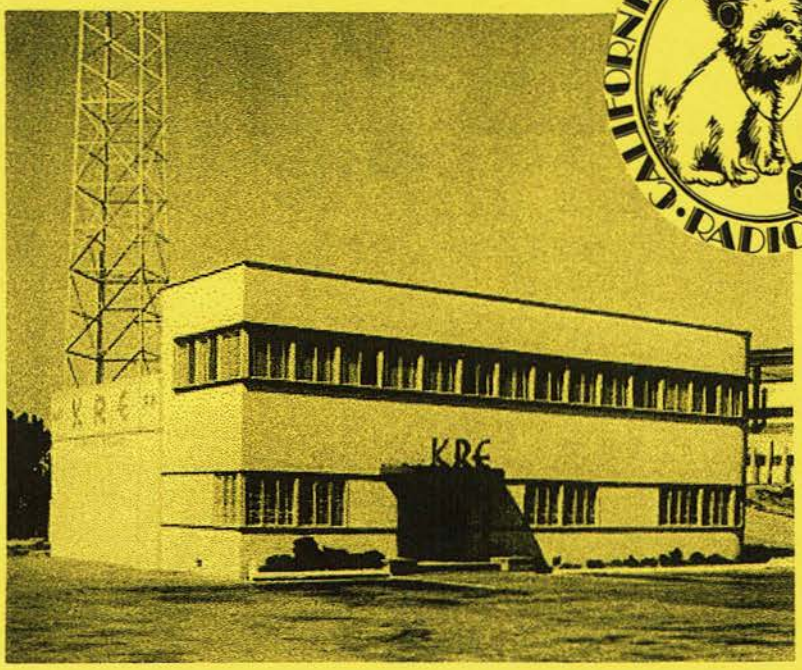
Newsletter & **JOURNAL** *Of The*

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY

2002 Official Membership Directory

&

CHRS Repair & Restoration Directory



California Historical Radio Society
P. O. Box 31659
San Francisco, CA 94131
HOTLINE - (415) - 821 - 9800
Web - www.CaliforniaHistoricalRadio.com/
Email - mhadams@got.net

FOR THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF EARLY RADIO

ABOUT CHRS

The **California Historical Radio Society, (CHRS)**, is a non-profit educational corporation chartered in the State of California. **CHRS** was formed in 1974 to promote the restoration and preservation of early radio and broadcasting. Our goal is to provide the opportunity to exchange ideas and information on the history of radio, particularly in the West, with emphasis on collecting literature, programs, and the restoration and display of early equipment.

CHRS OFFICERS AND STAFF 2002

Steve Kushman - *President, Mail Pick-up, Membership, HOTLINE*
4233-25th St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 821-7671

Scott Robinson - *Vice President, Publicity*
625 Olima St., Sausalito, CA 94965, (415) 331-9159

Mike Adams - *Board Chairman / Web Site*
112 Crescent Ct., Scotts Valley, CA 95066, (408) 439-9544

Bill Wray - *Secretary*
187 Bronte St., San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 285-5817

Richard Look - *Treasurer*
822 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131, (415) 282-5278

Paul Bourbin - *On Site Event Chairman*
25 Greenview Ct. San Francisco, CA 94131, (415) 648-8489

Bart Lee - *General Counsel*
595 Market St. #1350, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 956-5959

Mike Simpson - *Mailing Chairman, Board Member*
21818 Via Regina, Saratoga, CA 95070, (408) 867-7315

Stephen Sutley – *Journal Editor, Board Member*
P. O. Box 1094, Pacifica, CA 94044, (650) 359-7787

Norm Lehfeldt - *Name Badge Chairman*
757 Guerreo St., San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 285-0643

Larry Clark - *Technical Advisor, Librarian*
438 York Dr., Benicia, CA 94510, (707) 745-9132

Steve Parr - *Journal Art Direction*
7023 Fairmount Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530, (510) 528-8918

Hal Layer - *Mailing Labels*
P. O. Box 27676, San Francisco, CA 94127

Don Steger - *Sacramento Chapter Chairman*
4821 Rockland Way., Fair Oaks, CA 95628, (916) 967-4630

ON THE COVER – The historic **KRE** studio & transmitter building, 601 Ashby Ave. in Berkeley, CA, in about 1949. The fiture home of **CHRS**.

This Edition – Compiled & produced by Steve Kushman

CHRS News & Information, from the President

Steve Kushman - 11/1/02

Greetings –

Your **Society** is alive and well! We have some changes that will effect us all. We have new officers, new swap meet fees and the beginning of a new era for **CHRS**. The **CHRS / KRE** project will mean the fulfillment of a 28 year quest for a home for our **Society** and the **CHRS Museum**. In this issue you will find the proposal that succeeded in securing the space for us, and a wonderful history of **KRE** by **John Schneider**. Also, you will find a fascinating story by **Henry Rogers** about restoring a 1912 wireless station.

New Officers –

After many years, (nobody knows how long), **Will Jensby** has retired from the position of **CHRS** Treasurer. **Will** has done a fine job over the years of keeping our books and managing our funds. Our thanks go out to **Will** for all the help he has given to **CHRS** over the years. So, who will now keep our books? **Richard Look** has stepped up to become our new Treasurer. **Richard**, who is a computer specialist & accountant, has been with CHRS for 7 years and is very enthusiastic about his new position. He promises to be a great asset to our staff and Board. Thanks **Richard**, for volunteering your time to **CHRS**.

Dale Sanford has been our Board Chairman for about 8 years. Due to his distance from the Bay Area, **Dale** has graciously stepped down as our Chairman. Many years ago, I took over the Presidency from **Dale**, and during my first years I counted on him for help, encouragement and guidance. **Dale** was always there for me and for **CHRS**. He and his wife **Vernell** handled our mailing for many years. We as a group owe the **Sanfords** many thanks for their service to **CHRS**. I am very pleased to announce that **Mike Adams** has been elected to be our new Board Chairman. **Mike**, as you know, is our Web Master and has been doing a fantastic job keeping our site fresh, interesting, up to date and happening! **Mike** is the Chairman of the Department of Television, Radio, Film and Theater at San Jose State University and a long time **CHRS** member. We can't thank **Mike** enough for volunteering to do 2 important jobs for **CHRS**!

New Fees –

After discussion at two previous meetings, the Board voted to increase the seller's fee at our events to $10. We have not increased this fee in many years. The increase is due to our slight decline in membership, rising costs and the need for funds for the KRE project. $10 is still the lowest seller's fee among the other local venues.

CHRS / KRE Project –

Earlier this year, a mutual friend introduced me to Jaime Arbona. **Jaime** has a radio collection, but didn't know about **CHRS**. He came to my house and caught radio disease. He joined **CHRS** and has been to almost every meet. **Jaime** told me he might have a line on a building for us. **Jaime's** company, **IL Radio**, sells time and programming to radio stations and does business with Inner Cities Broadcasting Corporation of Berkeley, (**ICBC**). **ICBC** owns a building at 601 Ashby Ave. in Berkeley. This historic building was one of the first structures built exclusively for radio broadcasting. Until 8 years ago it was the home to the studio and offices of KBLX-FM. KBLX outgrew the space and moved to San Francisco. Now, most of the building is vacant. We proposed to **ICBC** that **CHRS** occupy and restore this structure as our headquarters, educational facility and museum. On August 8th we had lunch with the West Coast President of **ICBC**, **Mr. Harvey Stone**. **Mr. Stone** expressed the overwhelming enthusiasm by the **ICBC** headquarters in New York and the West Coast staff in favor of the **CHRS** proposal. We have a hand shake agreement although there are some details to be worked out. We hope to secure a 99-year lease at $1 per year. Please read the proposal for all the details. And thanks go to **Jaime Arbona** for making this happen!

The Site - For most of 601 Ashby's life it bore the call letters of **KRE**, (1370 then 1400AM). It has a large studio, big enough for an orchestra. It was featured in George Lucas' film "American Graffiti". There are 2 working transmitters there. KFRC-AM 610 and KVTO-AM 1400, (formerly KRE) are diplexed and transmit from the 400 foot tower. The studio and offices that will be available to CHRS occupy about 4000 square feet. Also there is a large parking lot. It was built in 1937 and added to in 1939 and 1948. Please read **John Schneider's** very interesting history of KRE.

$$$$$$ - There is no easy way to say this. If we want to make 601 Ashby Ave. into the world class facility that we envision for CHRS, we must raise a lot of money. This money will come from fund raising activities, grants and donations from corporations & foundations, and from we the members. Yes, we have a "museum fund", of about $1300. This is pennies in today's high priced world. We need to all dig deep and contribute "Special Donations". These are donations worthy of recognition on a plaque prominently displayed at the CHRS Museum.

Those members who donate more than $1000 to the KRE project will put themselves into an elite group of preservationists who realize the importance of this project. They also will become Life members of **CHRS** and will have the satisfaction of helping to create the first West Coast venue dedicated to the history of radio. We also will depend on the membership for fund raising ideas and input into the project. The proposal has much more information.

Our Next Event -

December 7th, Saturday, 2PM - San Francisco. St. Anne of the Sunset Church. It's a **ONE item swap, Holiday Social & General Meeting**. Entrance on Funston Ave. between Judah & Irving Streets. Free parking in the schoolyard. Follow the signs to the Cliff Heinz Room. Funston Ave. is 6 blocks East of 19th Ave, (Highway 1). Please bring **ONE** good item to sell or trade & bring a snack or dessert to share, (**CHRS** will provide coffee & soda). *EVERYONE is INVITED*, to express their views and suggestions about **CHRS** now, and in the future. And share some Holiday Cheer with your fellow radio nuts. See you there! Thanks to **John Wentzel** for arranging the meeting space.

No More Coffee at Foothill –

Lynn & Martin Love have been serving coffee and do-nuts at our Foothill meets for five years. They have announced their retirement as of the end of 2002. What is an early morning at Foothill without coffee? Bleak! The **Loves** have been our champions of early morning cheer and we can't thank them enough! Who will carry on this important service? The **CHRS** Coffee Urn is looking for a new home.

2003 Schedule -

We anticipate our full compliment of events for 2003. There is a chance that we will possibly change the location of an event and move it to the KRE building at 601 Ashby Ave. in Berkeley. Stay tuned. The schedule will come as a separate mailing in January.

Journal Editor -

Ah, now we get to my favorite subject. Long time member **Steve Parr** has been very quietly doing the art direction and pre press on our last two slick **Journals**. He did the fine work on the **"1899"** edition and our **"25th Anniversary"** edition. He will continue to do our art direction and pre press. Many thanks go to **Steve** for the great job he does. But **Steve** is not an **Editor**. We need a person to collect, select, edit and put the contents into a package that can be given to **Steve** for production. **We need an Editor! CHRS will provide our new Editor with a computer** loaded with the software, (Quark Express), to produce the **Journal**. **CHRS will provide all the necessary training.** After the articles are collected and assembled, they are roughly plugged into the **Journal** template. Then **Steve** will take over and do the fine tuning. This is an absolutely fabulous opportunity for someone to learn valuable desktop publishing skills that can be used in many other areas. Will somebody please save our **Journal?** All we ask is 2 per year.

Time to Renew –

It's that time again. Please renew your membership in **CHRS** for 2003 as soon as possible. A form is provided in the back. New membership cards will be sent later. Remember, you, the membership, keep this **Society** in existence. We try to do our best, but need your support to keep it going. So, renew now and don't forget to send a donation back along with your dues. Donations are especially important to us now as we embark on our journey to restore and occupy the **KRE** building. Sources of income for the **Society** other than dues such as donations and auction proceeds are very important to keep us financially healthy.

Sacramento Chapter –

Our group in the Capitol holds regular meetings at the **Commerce Community Bank Building, 1500 River Park Drive, Room #100** , off Arden Way near the Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento. They meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month, at 7pm. All members are invited to attend these meetings and join the lively radio related discussions. Contact **Don Steger** at **(916) 967-4630** or evyanddon@aol.com for details.

Remembering Stephan –

At my first **CHRS** swap meet in 1988 or '89, I came across a table of radios with a pleasant looking, smiling man behind it. We talked briefly and his voice somehow sounded familiar to me. It was a comforting voice. I looked down and spotted his business cards on the table. "Are you the **Stephan Ponek**?" I asked with starstruck amazement. Yes, his was the voice that I enjoyed listening to on the radio so much during those late nights of underground radio, in the late '60s & early '70s. **Stephan's** laid back style and choice and knowledge of the music that he played made him one of my favorites. We lost **Stephan** in October last year. He left us many years too early at 62, due to heart failure. I got this sad news from **Frank Camenish** and **Marc Gotlieb** at the November '01 meet. I was stunned and shocked. I had spoken to **Stephan** in late September '01 and he told me he wanted to become more active in **CHRS** and wanted to remain on our Board of Directors. I always enjoyed talking to him. During the 12 years I knew **Stephan**, I found him to be a kind and gentle man. He always had a good outlook, no matter if his current situation was good or bad. He always had a good word to say and a big smile. I'll miss that smile and the man who entertained me in my youth and later became my friend....

You can read about **Stephan's** adventures in underground radio in a book called, "Voices in a Purple Haze".

That's All Folks! –

I want to thank all the staff members who make this **Club** function. They volunteer their time and effort for the benefit of all. We try to provide opportunities to all, for the exchange of ideas and the preservation of radio, but we need your help. We need you to give something back. We need you to volunteer for staff positions that are available. We need your ideas for the advancement of **CHRS**. We need your articles and photos for our **Journal** and **Web Site**. We need your cash donations. We need items donated for auction. Most of all we need you to step up and ask, **"What can I do to help our Society?"** Best wishes for a happy Holiday Season and a prosperous 2003. As always, I am available for your questions, suggestions or comments. Please contact me at, **(415) 821-7671** or email me at kushseal@flash.net

Best Regards,

Steve

Mike Adams is a busy man – In addition to being the Chairman Of the Broadcasting & Theater Departments at San Jose State University and the Chairman of the Board of **CHRS** and the **CHRS** Web Master **(Terrific job Mike!)**. **Mike** has written the definitive book about the life and times of **Dr. Charles Herrold**, America's first broadcaster, (pictured to the right). The book is being published by McFarland Press and should be available in 2003.We are thankful to **Mike** for his work with **CHRS** and his efforts to preserve radio history.

A Proposal from
The California Historical Radio Society
To Mr. Harvey Stone,
President, Inner Cities Broadcasting Corporation
of Berkeley - 6/28/02

OUR VISION:

The California Historical Radio Society proposes to occupy, restore and maintain the historic KRE radio station building located at 601 Ashby Avenue in Berkeley.

We envision a West Coast center devoted to preserving and presenting the history of radio and broadcasting. We envision a museum, open by appointment only at first, dedicated to the history of radio. It would be a place where children would come on school field trips to learn about radio broadcasting, spark transmitters, crystal sets, vacuum tubes, Marconi and "Doc" Herrold. The Bay Area is rich in broadcasting history and needs a place to teach this history to present and future generations. The historic KRE radio station and transmitter building would be an ideal location to tell the important stories of radio's golden past. It would be a place to showcase significant historical artifacts. The interior spaces could become galleries to present the history of radio and broadcasting using static and interactive displays. It would be an accessible home for the CHRS library, made available for members and others needing to do historical research. It would be an office and meeting place for our Society, a place to exchange information and to network with other collectors. The parking lot would be an ideal place to hold several of our swap meets. We would have a place to teach collectors how to repair and restore vintage equipment. These are skills that are quickly disappearing as old time repairmen retire or pass on. We envision a vintage radio repair shop where members and the public can have their treasured family antiques repaired or restored. To preserve a family's audio history, we propose a service that would be able to transfer records, reel to reel tape, audio cassettes, 8 tracks or wire recordings to CD.

We would like to reclaim and restore the large studio, control room and announce booth that was "state of the art" in 1939. The studio would be used for meetings and "how to" demonstrations, as a classroom, a staging area for displays and perhaps for recording. We would like to re-equip the control room with vintage gear. We would make the studio available to community groups for meetings. CHRS would make sure the group carries its own insurance and CHRS staff would always be present during these events.

We realize that ICBC still uses some spaces in the building. These spaces would be locked and off limits to all except ICBC personnel. We understand the importance of protecting the integrity of the tower, transmitters and all connecting lines and cables, including the ground array.

According to a schedule determined by ICBC's needs and the resources of CHRS, we propose to restore the exterior of the building to its 1949 form. We would repair and repaint as needed, replace the standing stylized KRE logo above the front door, remove the KBLX sign from the side, remove the screens from the lower windows and re-glaze them with a modern vandal proof material. We would install flood lights controlled by motion detectors and supplemented by video cameras. We would raise the perimeter fences and add razor wire to the tops. We would encourage Cal Trans to do the same with their fence. By trimming the overgrown vegetation and trees we will eliminate hiding places. Removing the silt deposits and cutting back the brush will reclaim the parking lot. We are confident that by bringing new life and activity into this historic structure the vandalism problem will be greatly reduced or hopefully eliminated.

We anticipate that the benefits to ICBC would include:

- Relief from the cost of building and grounds maintenance.
- Improvement in the asset value of the property itself.
- Increased security for the building and grounds through enhancements in fencing, lighting, surveillance, human occupancy and increased public visibility. The 601 Ashby site will no longer appear to be an 'unoccupied' building.
- Demonstration to the City of Berkley (and the other communities that ICBC serves), of ICBC's commitment to community involvement and philanthropy.
- A tax benefit to ICBC to the extent of the rental value being donated to CHRS.
- Prominent identification at the finished site, in CHRS materials, and in all materials used for fundraising, of ICBC's sponsorship of the first permanent Radio Museum in Northern California.

WE ARE CHRS:

The California Historical Radio Society, (CHRS), is an educational non-profit corporation, (#C0731882), founded in the State of California.

In the early 1970's a group of dedicated people, mostly electronic engineers who were also antique radio collectors, had the vision to realize the importance of the radio and broadcasting history that was beginning to fade. They founded CHRS in 1974 to preserve and protect the artifacts, ephemera and programs of the radio age, "from wireless to wireless." AM broadcast radios are generally our main interest but we also focus on wireless, amateur, commercial and military communications, early phonographs, tube hi-fi, television, advertising and literature relating to RF and the mechanical or electrical reproduction of sound.

We are a group of about 450 members, all passionate about our love of vintage radio. We have been holding public events for over 25 years without incident. We carry $2 million in insurance and have never filed a claim. CHRS has had long-standing relationships with the Ampex Corporation, Foothill College in Los Altos, the Western Railway Museum, the Presidio of San Francisco, the National Park Service and the Towe Auto Museum. Several years ago, CHRS members provided most of the display items for the exhibit "On the Air" at the San Francisco International Airport. In 1999 we held a public ceremony and re-creation to commemorate the 100th. anniversary of the first practical use of wireless in the United States. The US Park Service and the US Coast Guard also participated. In 2000 we provided a display featuring a decade of vintage radios for the Gavin Convention, at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco.

While CHRS's resources include an existing dues-based treasury, additional funds neccessary will have to be raised through special events, grant writing and special donations. This of course will greatly affect the construction schedule. Relatedly, an inspection by qualified HVAC and building professionals may still need to be performed to determine the extent of needed plant repairs. We have within our active membership, the talent and willingness to secure needed funding. Naturally, since these investments represent so much to CHRS, we would like to be protected for a reasonable lease term. We trust that we may count on a lengthy term of occupancy under any agreement.

OUR STAFF:

Mike Adams is our Board Chairman and web master. He is professor of radio, television and film and the Chairman of the Department of Television, Radio, Film and Theater at San Jose State University, and faculty advisor to KSJS 90.5 FM. Mike has presented papers on broadcast history at conferences of the Broadcast Education Association, BEA, and the Antique Wireless Association, AWA. He has written articles for historical radio journals and periodicals and authored two books on radio and television production, and produced an Emmy-nominated video series for PBS called 'Radio Collector". His latest television work is a documentary on "Broadcasting's Forgotten Father: the Charles Herrold Story." Mike is also a director of the Perham Foundation Electronics Museum.

Paul Bourbin is our events chairman. A native San Franciscan, Paul was President of CHRS for 5 1/2 years and Board Chairman for four. He has written articles for The Journal of the California Historical Radio Society, Radio Age, Antique Radio Classified, The Radio Collector, the Journal of the Antique Wireless Association and Vacuum Tube Valley. He is a noted reviewer of both modern and vintage books. Paul is employed by White Oak Orchids and is also a member of the San Francisco Orchid Society, The Bay Area Electric Railroad Association, and the Bay Area Carnivorous Plant Society. He repairs and maintains a collection of historical artifacts and makes them available for use by historians, as props and for exhibitions.

Steve Kushman is our President. Steve is also a native San Franciscan and has been a

member of CHRS for 12 years and President for 8 years. He and his radio collection have been featured on the television programs, "Marketplace," (KGO-TV), "Treasures in Your Home," (HGTV), and "The Incurable Collector," (A&E). He restores radios and has worked for KGO-TV, (ABC7), as an engineer and video editor for 26 years and received 3 Emmys for his work.

Bart Lee is the CHRS General Counsel and a published radio historian and collector of radios. He is an amateur radio operator (call sign KV6LEE) who is active in local emergency services and who worked for ten days with the Red Cross in New York, Sept. 11-21, 2001. He is affiliated with the Antique Wireless Association and the Military Radio Restoration Group and is a reserve Commissioner with the Boy Scouts of America.

Richard Look is our Treasurer. Richard was raised in New York City building crystal sets, broadcasting to his neighbors and listening to WABC and WWRL. He spent 10 years as a television engineer after attending the master's program in Broadcast Communication Arts at San Francisco State University. Richard is a computer engineer for the City and County of San Francisco and also works as a computer consultant, specializing in small business accounting systems.

Our Vice President is Scott Robinson. Scott holds a BA degree in engineering and has worked in audio electronic design, acoustics, and instrumentation for over 35 years. He currently works as a product design engineer at Dolby Laboratories. His interest in radio started at around 12 years of age and he presently applies his engineering knowledge to restoring and occasionally improving old radios and test equipment both tube and solid state.

Mike Simpson does our Mailing and is on the Board. Mike has been interested in radio and television since he was a boy. In high school he was involved with radio and TV servicing, doing service calls after school and collecting antique radios. After attending tech school Mike moved to the bay area to work for Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. He has since retired after his latest position of nearly 25 years as an Automated Test Equipment Design Engineer in the Missiles Systems Division. Mike still greatly enjoys restoring and collecting antique radios.

Stephen Sutley is a Board member and museum professional (M.A.). He has worked as a project manager, designer, and curator for local exhibitions and for the San Francisco Airport Museums. Recent museum projects include the inaugural exhibits for the Chinese-American National Museum and Dolby Labrotories in San Francisco.

The CHRS Secretary is Bill Wray. Bill has had a keen interest in radio and recording technology since his high-school days in the early '60s, and holds a BSEE from the University of Kentucky. He is an Engineer at Dolby Laboratories in San Francisco where he writes technical manuals for Dolby's audio products and handles the safety aspects (UL approvals) of product designs.

Also on our staff is Larry Clark, electronics and math teacher at Napa Valley College, Norm Lehfeldt, (Howard), morning announcer on KQED-FM, Hal Layer who is retired from a staff position at S.F. State, and Don Steger, vintage audio repairman.

Our staff is just the core of many talented individuals who respect and understand the importance that radio and broadcasting has played in our history.

THE PLAN:

Our goal as an organization is to restore and preserve the artifacts of broadcasting's history. 601 Ashby Avenue, being one of the first buildings designed and built for radio broadcasting exclusively, is a major artifact in Bay Area broadcast history and deserves proper restoration, preservation and protection. There is no better group than the California Historical Radio Society to tackle this important project and to be the caretakers of this structure.

CHRS is not a rich organization, but can offer a hard working group of people who are dedicated and sometimes fanatical about historical preservation. We will provide work parties to clear brush, trim trees and clean out the interior, but we envision the majority of the building restoration to be done by professionals and we will certify that it will be up to all codes and standards. All work on the structure and the grounds would have to be approved by ICBC.

In our group, we have grant writers, architects, publicists, museum specialists and attorneys, all vital professionals needed to secure funding for this project. Being a registered educational non-profit corporation and restoring a building with such rich history, commits us to the belief that we can secure funding through grants and donations. We will provide an attractive destination for the many dollars that corporations and organizations donate on a regular basis. We will also plan numerous public fund raising activities.

The key to securing the capital needed for this project is a long term agreement between ICBC and CHRS. As part of this agreement, CHRS would occupy the portions of the building not

used by ICBC for a token lease payment per year. CHRS would secure funding and oversee the restoration and operation of the facility. CHRS would be responsible for the routine maintenance of the structure and grounds as needed on a continuous basis. ICBC would have its property totally restored and expertly maintained without any capital outlay. They would be the proud owners of a graffiti free historical gem. ICBC would also benefit financially, due to the tax advantages of having their property occupied by a non-profit corporation, as well as no longer having to bear the expense of grounds and building maintenance. Additionally, the enhanced visibility and improved security for ICBC's property would be significant. And, after 28 years, The California Historical Radio Society will have a home.

We know that there many issues that need to be discussed before any agreement is formalized. But, we hope this basic proposal conveys our desire to create a new era in Bay Area radio history and to do it with the help of our most significant benefactor, Inner Cities Broadcasting Corporation of Berkeley.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Steve Kushman, President, CHRS

CHRS Meeting Minutes - July 6, 2002

St. Anne Church of San Francisco,10:30 am, Attendance: 40 people.
Steve Kushman, President: Meeting called to order; Introductions of officers and staff in attendance. Welcome to visitors Ricki and Marv Glassman from SCARS.

2001 Doc Harrold Award:

Henry and Sharon Rogers of the Western Historic Radio Museum, 109 South F Street, Virginia City, Nevada. For their contributions to preserving radio history. See web site: http://www.radioblvd.com/HomePage.html.

Treasurers Report

All bills are paid. Treasury balance is $12,053.50
Discussed raising swap meet sellers fee to $10.00. Voted, passed.

The CHRS Journal

Steve Kushman reported that the journal is coming soon. As usual, its been very difficult to get finished. We still need an editor to collect the bits and load them into Quark. Steve Parr plans to do a template to help in the process of getting out two journals per year. Steve asked for a volunteer.

Special Announcement - New home for CHRS

Steve Kushman passed around photos and a proposed agreement between CHRS and Harvey Stone, President, Inner Cities Broadcasting Corporation of Berkeley to occupy, restore and maintain the historic KRE radio station building, 601 Ashby Avenue, Berkeley. Steve gave the history of how he found this opportunity via a neighbor. The main building has remained vacant for eight years, with a portion currently devoted to active transmitters for stations KVTO (Cantonese programming) and KFRC. Steve reported that we should have the keys to the building in about two months. A round of applause for Steve.

Steve: Funds for maintenance and restoration must come from donations and grants. The key to success will be recruiting volunteers.

Various uses for the new space were discussed: Museum for school kids, displays, radio repair classes, audio/video format transfer services, swap meets, etc.

Discussed renting to an individual who would reside on the property - Possible problems with Berkeley regulations.

Meeting Closed

Special thanks to John Wentzel for arranging our meeting space today.

Adjourned: 11:35AM

Submitted by Bill Wray, Secretary

Notes from the Library -

Technical advise by Larry Clark, CHRS Librarian & Technical Advisor

Larry Clark, our technical advisor and librarian is looking for **Riders** radio, vol. **#20** through **#23**, and more of the **Specialized Series** of **Sams**, (transistor radio, tape recorder, etc). He would like to have books w/ schematics for WWII equipment. He also would like to have the technical articles from old issues of **ARC** and the **AWA Old Timers Bulletin**. Also he is looking for back issues of **Vacuum Tube Valley** and **Glass Audio**. **Larry** offers technical advice, or reprints from **Riders**, **Sams** or anything in the library to our members. Call **Larry** for advice at **(707) 745-9132**. For reprints send $1 and a SASE to:

Larry Clark, 438 York Dr., Benicia, CA 94510

*The following are examples of advice and information that **Larry** has given:*

Letter - from Helena, MT. In April he asked for help on an All-American Mohawk. I annotated schematic and wrote two page letter explaining what/how/where to test. Also how to convert from high impedance speaker (missing) to modern. Guess everything worked.

This time - wrote two page letter explaining Crosley circuit and checks/tests to see if crystal is the fault. Explained two different J.B. models 62, with same tube line-up. Constructed table/chart of voltages to find which model.

Call from Taft, CA. He had early Fisher console - not listed. Gave him suggestions to get it running. Called back week later - had it going - gave some more advice - mailed info. on changer.

Antique store in Pasadena called - had English AM/FM/LW/SW similar to 60's German sets. Gave him info. on LW/SW bands - refered him to SCARS.

Member in Berkeley had two 60's FM tuners - knew make but not model. Had him make sketches of chassis and front panels. Spent about 30 min. each day for two weeks digging through Sams. Finally found both - one was kit.

Member in Pleasanton wanted me to diagnose set over the phone. I listened to crackles and pops while he pulled one tube at a time. Narrowed problem to I.F. xfmr.

Member sent pix of "mystery" phono pickup. Determined it was 4-button carbon mic. used as part of Magnavox direct (no tubes) amplifying system. He later sent copy of original sales info.

CHRS Membership Directory,
CHRS Repair Directory,
and CHRS Classifieds
omitted from the on-line issue.

Reprinted with the author's permission

M.H. Dodd's 1912 Wireless Station

(Discovery, Research and Reassembly)

by:

Henry Rogers

Western Historic Radio Museum

Virginia City, Nevada

1913 photo of M.H. Dodd at his Wireless Station

As owner and curator of the Western Historic Radio Museum, I am always searching for the most complete, most original and best-documented items for the museum. A rare radio on display can be very interesting but if that rare example also has a provenance that can be verified through documentation, its interest and importance to collectors and the general public is significantly enhanced. The 1912 M.H. Dodd Wireless Station, discovered November 27, 1999, inside a steamer trunk stored in a backyard shed in Reno, Nevada, met all the criteria - that is, very complete, all original and with impressive documentation. Here's the story of this exciting find.

The Discovery

"Can you be in Reno tomorrow morning about seven-thirty?" The voice on the telephone belonged to Steve Williams, a life-long Reno resident and fellow antique and relic finder. He was calling on Friday evening and asking if I would travel the 25 miles to Reno the next morning. Steve continued, "I just bought you a whole bunch of old radio parts from the twenties. All of it needs work but there is a pretty good Radiola 26 included."

Of course my question was how much had he spent. When Steve told me the very reasonable price of $250 for the parts and the Radiola 26, I began to get more enthused about the next morning's adventure.

Steve continued, "You get ALL of the radio equipment and ALL of the parts in this deal."

"Okay. Where at in Reno?"

Steve gave me the address and we agreed to meet there the next morning.

When I arrived at the location in the north part of Reno, near the University of Nevada's campus, there

appeared to be a yardsale already in process. At 7:30AM! Well, earlybirds do get the best deals, I guess. Steve was already there and ready to start loading equipment.

"All of the radio stuff is in that corner of the yard." Steve pointed to a large mound that was covered with an olive-drab tarp. Pulling away the tarp revealed a pretty nice Radiola 26 and matching battery box, a decent Atwater-Kent 40, three twenties-type crystal sets and many boxes of radio parts from the twenties. Also, a very heavy oak box with handles was on the ground and was part of the equipment to be taken. We loaded the van with everything that was in the corner of the yard. Then, as I usually always try to obtain some provenance or history on items found for the museum, I struck up a conversation with Pat Doherty, who was running the yard sale.

"Oh, you have a radio museum.....well, you know, my step-father had a radio station before WWI. He was a balloonist and in the Signal Corps during WWI." Pat continued, "He was interested in radio up into the twenties but then dropped it. He was always trying new things." Pat paused for a second and then added, "You know, I think he had some old tubes in a trunk in that shed over there," pointing to an old metal backyard storage shed that had been "off limits" to the yard sale.

We followed Pat into the shed. On the floor amidst old furniture and junk car parts were three large steamer trunks, all with several layers of sheet metal and debris piled on top of their lids. After moving the obstacles from the top of the first trunk, we found it contained personal papers, letters and envelopes. The second trunk was found to be empty. After moving the miscellaneous junk from the top of the third trunk, I opened its lid. Wow! The first thing I saw was an enormous spark era helix! Then spark coils and a large antenna switch! It was extremely difficult to remain composed! The trunk was literally "full to the top" with the parts comprising a very early spark-gap type wireless station. I asked Pat if this equipment went with all of the parts we had already purchased and loaded in the van.

"Sure. If you don't take it, it's probably going to end up at the dump."

Since Pat wanted to keep the trunks, we proceeded to transfer all the contents into cardboard boxes for loading into the van. I really didn't get a chance to examine too much of our find at the time but was able to glean some more information from Pat about his step-father.

"My step-father's name was Marion Henry Dodd. He had lived here in Reno since moving down from Lake Tahoe in the sixties. He died about fifteen years ago and we're down here from Idaho to clean out the property."

The yardsale was beginning to get very busy so Pat was not able to give anymore details at the time. I reimbursed Steve (he had actually paid for all of the parts the night before.)

" I would like one of those crystal sets for finding you all this stuff." Steve was always interested in acquiring another crystal set after he had sold his Martian Set a few years earlier.

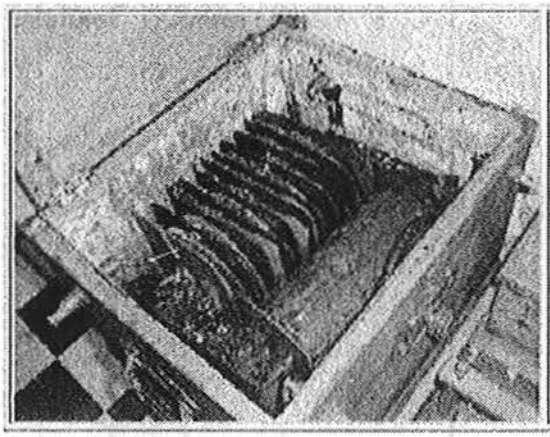
"I'll pick out the best one for you." I said, as I started the van and proceeded to leave Reno and head back to Virginia City.

Researching the Dodd Wireless Station

As I went through all of the boxes I began to realize just how much of the Dodd Station was present. Most of the major parts had been in the steamer trunk, e.g. the helix and spark gap, the variometer, the variable condenser and the antenna switch. One of the other boxes contained the detector board. Another cardboard box held the remains of the transmitting condenser, telegraph keys and small boxes of detector minerals. Even some of the original wiring was found in one of the boxes of miscellaneous

parts. There were several boxes to search through and each one seemed to hold a fascinating piece of the puzzle.

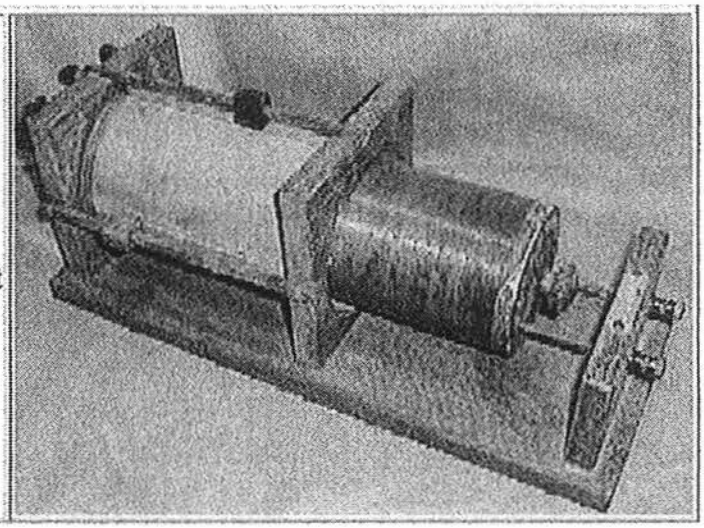
I was beginning to wonder what Dodd had used to power his transmitter. His stepson had said that the large oak box with handles (that had been setting on the ground at the yard sale) was his step-father's "radio station power supply." It was an oak box about eighteen inches square and about one foot high. Its hinged lid was closed and locked! A little gentle persuading defeated the lock and opening the lid of the box answered my question. Inside was Dodd's homebrew spark transformer, the core of which was partially submerged in rosin and paraffin. Since the wooden box was also lined inside with galvanized sheet metal, Dodd must have filled the box with oil to act as an insulating medium. The odor that emanated from the box, which was a combination of old oil, rosin and paraffin, was powerfully unique, to say the least!



The 26KV Spark Transformer with the inspection lid raised. The box is lined with galvanized metal allowing the transformer to be submerged in oil for insulating purposes. The core is held in place by a mixture of rosin and paraffin.

Monday, I received another call from Steve. "I found you another part that goes with that station. Some photographs, too!" He was excited as I was. Steve had gone back to see Pat Doherty about some items that he was interested in purchasing. Pat had been cleaning out the shed and had found the loose-coupler in the back corner among the old car parts. It was a homebrew oak frame with two Electro Importing Co. sliders and, as with all of Dodd's equipment, the workmanship was first rate. The photographs were all from WWI and were of Dodd with groups of men in the signal corps. No photos of the Spark Station had turned up yet but that was about to change!

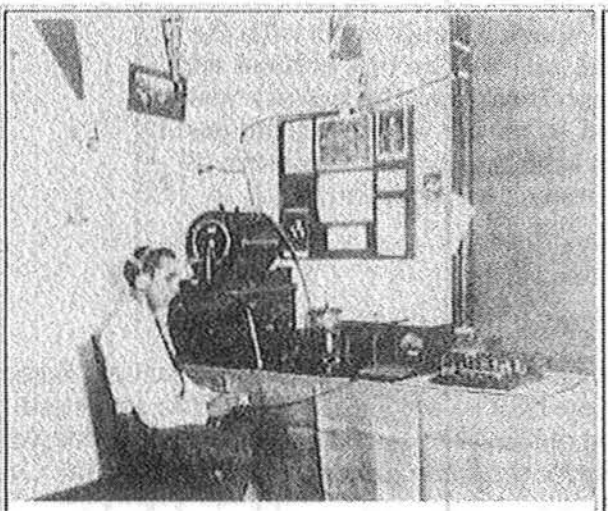
The Loose Coupler was found in the back corner of the shed among the old car parts and sheet metal pieces.



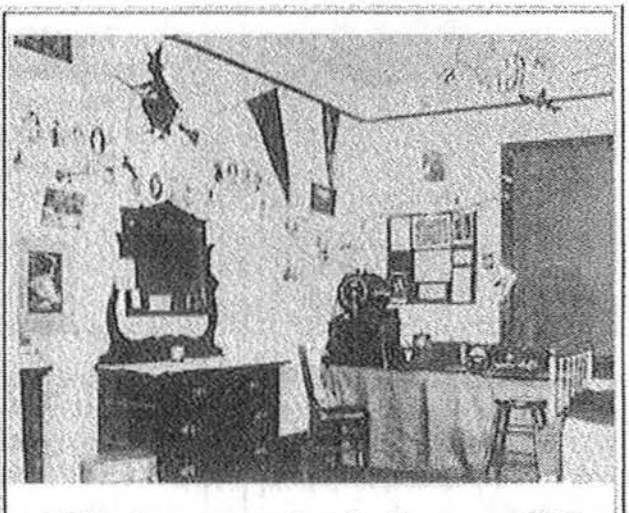
Another call from Steve came the next day. "You have to get with Ted Moore. He bought a photo album at that yardsale and it has pictures of the station. He says there's even one of Dodd with headphones on!"

Steve was really a big help on finding information. His position as manager of one of Reno's largest antique malls allowed him to have daily contact with many of Reno's antique dealers and the general public.

Ted Moore was also an antique dealer. In the past, I had helped him pricing radios so we were acquainted. Ted loaned the album to me for photographic copying of all of the relevant photos. There were four important photos, taken between late 1912 and early 1913, showing the station, (Dodd is in three of the four photos.) Besides the four photos of the 1912 Wireless Station, there was one photo of Dodd at his 1910 Station, one of his Antenna Change-over Switch and three of his Aerial system. Also, included in the album were literally one thousand other photographs dating from 1910 to about 1917. Dodd was interested in motorcycles, automobiles, airplanes, photography and radio. He was a prolific photographer of much of the pre-WWI technical world that interested him. Unlike many photo-albums that contain only family shots, Dodd's album included many technical and nature photos. The album provided a myriad of information on M.H. Dodd, his wireless stations and life in pre-WWI Southern California.



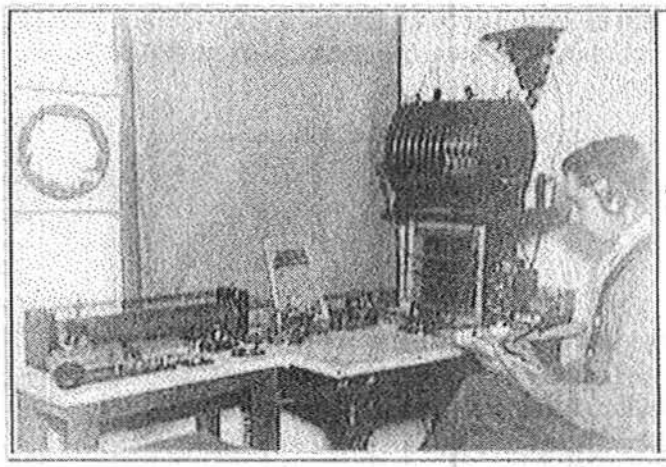
This is the earliest photo of the station



This photo was taken in January 1913

The 1912 Wireless Station

Only a few pieces of Dodd's 1910 station were found among the boxes of parts. The receiver tuning inductance, a couple of spark coils and a few detector stands were identified from the single 1910 station photograph.

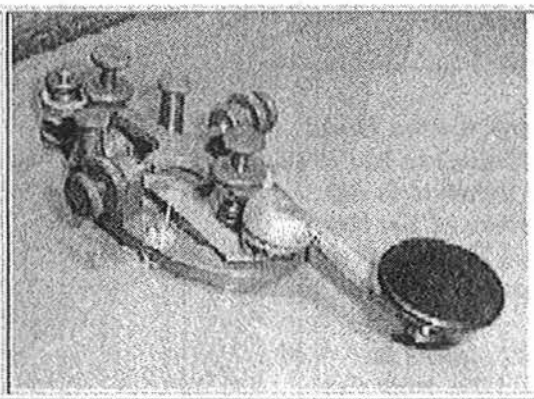


The Photograph of Dodd at the controls of his 1910 Wireless Station.

The majority of the 1910 parts were used in the construction of Dodd's 1912 station. The 1912 station consists of the following equipment:

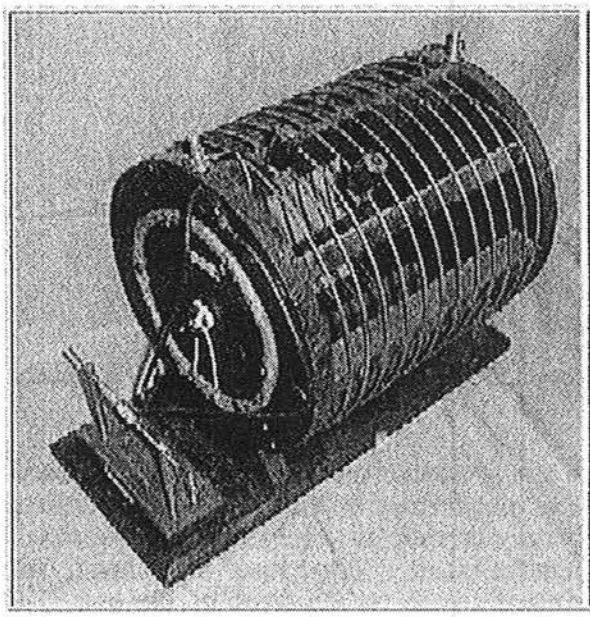
The transmitter is a damped-wave, stationary spark-gap type that is transformer energized with a closed circuit consisting of a helix and transmitting condenser. The transformer is homebrew and utilizes a tapped primary for adjusting the secondary output. The secondary is made of twenty separate "pancake" coils connected in series. The transformer is mounted in paraffin inside a large, sheet metal lined, oak box which was filled with insulating oil. By using the primary switch on the front of the box it is possible to adjust the transformer output from a low of about 10KV to a maximum of about 26KV. From the photos, it appears that Dodd always kept the transmitter at maximum power! The voltage input to the transformer is 110vac in series with an electrolytic interrupter keyed by a modified MESCO telegraph key that uses silver dimes for contacts. The Change-over Switch allows AC to only be present on the key when in the "transmit" position.

The modified MESCO telegraph key. Due to the large amount of primary current switched through the contacts, they are made from silver dimes held in place with solder.



The electrolytic interrupter is an electrochemical apparatus for raising the apparent input frequency of the AC input, thereby increasing the rate of charging of the condenser resulting in increased efficiency and a very intense spark discharge. The interrupter is a glass jar containing dilute sulfuric acid (10% solution, usually) and two electrodes of different materials,(lead cathode and platinum-wire anode was common, as was carbon and brass.) When current is flowing through the solution it creates bubbles which "interrupt" the flow of current and thereby increase the apparent frequency. DC voltage can also be used with an Electrolytic Interrupter with good results. Dodd also had partially built a variable impedance inductor. This device would allow the operator to vary the quality and strength of the signal for the best performance by somewhat "smoothing" the erratic interruptions by giving the operator some control over the higher frequency output from the Electrolytic Interrupter. The variable Z inductor would have been connected in series with the interrupter but even in the original photos it is not finished - just as it remains today. The transmitting condenser is a glass and foil type consisting of two condenser blocks in

series. The helix is homebrew and quite large. It was built in 1910 but later, for the 1912 station, a pickup loop with a small incandescent lamp was added for an output power indicator. Also at that time, the stationary spark gap was mounted to the base of the helix.

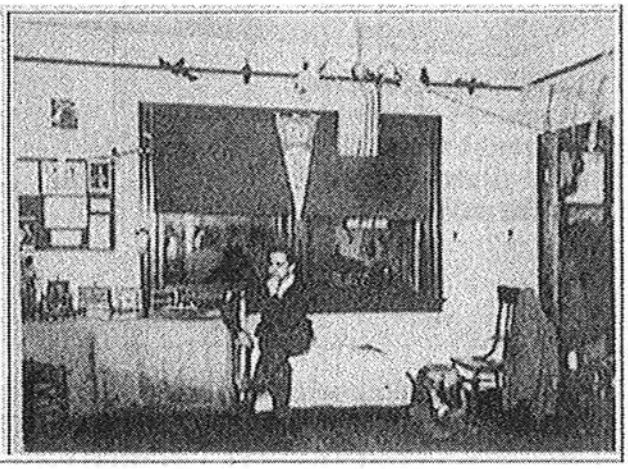


The fantastic transmitting helix used at the Dodd Station. Probably made around 1910 but modified in 1912 for Dodd's new station. The additions are the pick-up coil that is connected to a small incandescent lamp, (used as an output indicator) and a newer spark gap, (home made.)

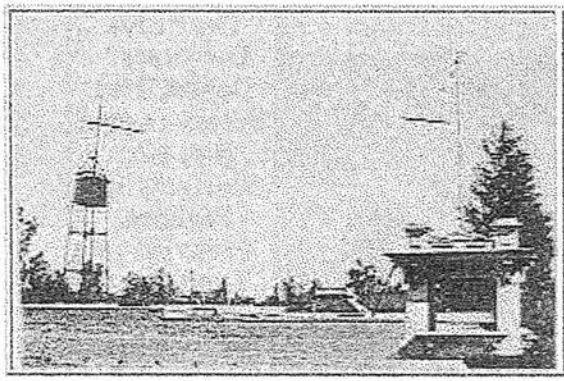
The receiver antenna lead was routed to the change-over switch, however, the transmitter output from the helix is routed up to an anchor gap which is then connected to the antenna lead-in. The anchor gap is homebrew and its use prevented the antenna from being directly connected to ground through the helix but allowed for draining off static charges and also provided some lightning protection. The Transmit-Receive Change-over Switch serves to connect and disconnect antenna lead-in and ground to the receiver and totally removes the primary voltage from the sending key during receive.

This Photograph shows Dodd seated on his bed next to his 1912 Station. The location is the upstairs quarters of the San Bernadino Fire Dept., (photo probably taken in early 1913.)

Note the fireman's boots and coat on the chair. Also, note the "WESTLAKE" pennant hanging in front of the window.

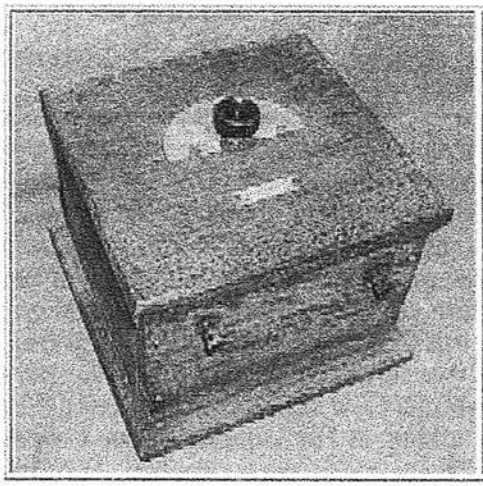


We are fairly certain from close examination of the photographs that Dodd's 1912 Wireless Station was set up in the San Bernardino Fire Department's upstairs quarters. When one thinks about the noise that an open spark-gap station creates and the fact that most young operators figured "louder is better", it's not surprising that the station would not have been in Dodd's house. He was married and most likely his wife and possibly neighbors objected to the din that the wireless station made. It is also possible that the SBFD allowed the station in the upstairs quarters as an experiment for the use of wireless for fire-related or emergency communications. The antenna was a three wire flat top with single feed line suspended between a mast mounted on the roof of the cupola on the SBFD Building and a tall observation tower that was erected near the back of the property.

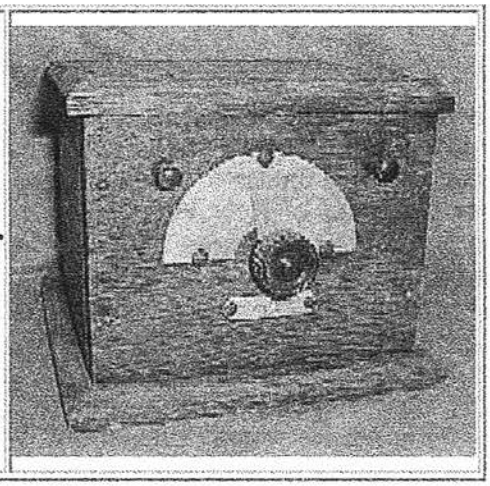


This photo shows Dodd's three-wire flat-top antenna. The mast in the forefront, which may be a flag pole, is mounted to the roof of the cupola of the SBFD building. The rear mast is secured to an observation tower near the back of the property. Though it looks like a water tank, the structure at the top is actually the "crow's nest."

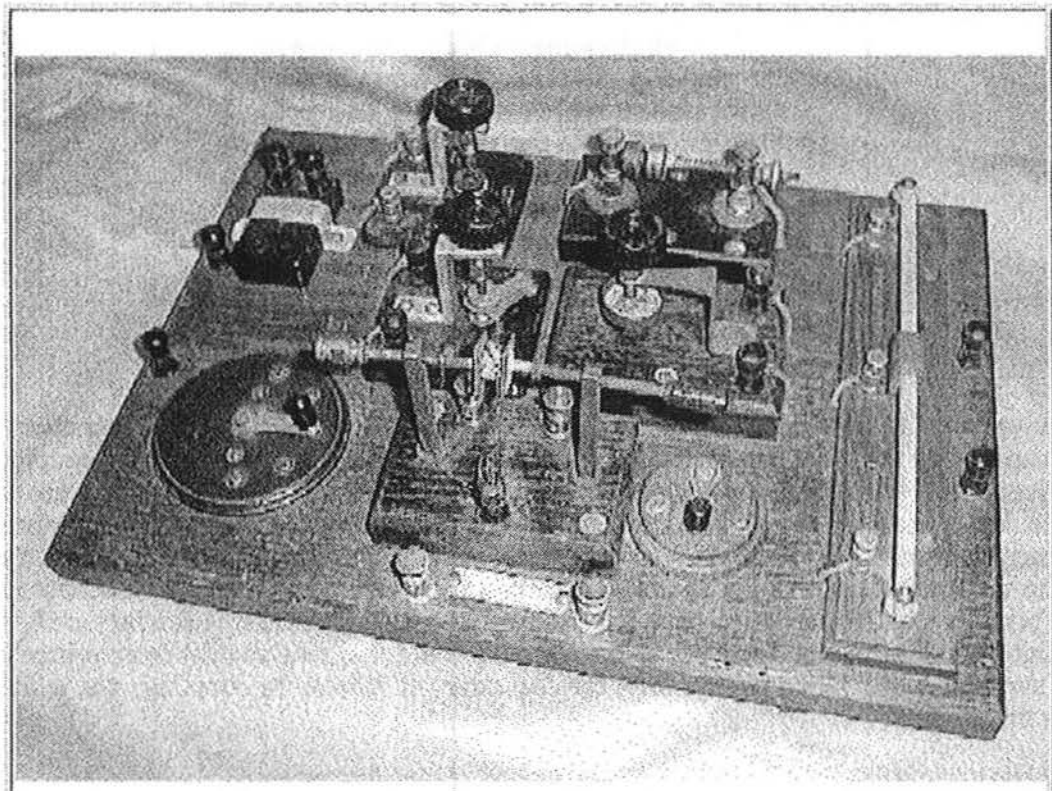
The Dodd Station receiver uses a homebrew variometer in series with the antenna lead and a homebrew variable condenser in series with the ground connection of the primary coil of a homebrew loose coupler to tune the antenna circuit. The variometer and variable condenser are housed in oak boxes with arced aluminum scales. The loose coupler does have two 1910 E.I.Co. rolling-ball sliders for further adjustability of the antenna circuit. The secondary of the loose coupler untuned. By using the rotary switch one can vary the number of turns in the secondary. Coupling is varied by sliding the secondary coil in or out of the primary coil. Essentially, only the inherent capacitance in the secondary coil is available to resonate that "tuned" circuit and one has to hope for the best for signal transfer from primary to secondary. It's not surprising that Dodd always kept the secondary at maximum coupling, that is the secondary fully within the primary.



The Variable Condenser (l) and the Variometer (r) from the 1912 Dodd Station



The secondary circuit feeds a detector board that has five different types of detectors available at any time by merely moving the switch arm. The different detector types are as follows: **Electrolytic** - this is an electrochemical detector consisting of a dilute sulfuric acid into which platinum wire is immersed. A 1.5 vdc dry-cell is needed to provide a potential for the detector to work. **Peroxide of Lead** - This is a mineral pellet mounted between two contact plates that have a special plating on their surfaces. A 1.5 vdc dry-cell is required for potential for the detector to work. An E.I.Co. potentiometer is installed on the board to adjust the potential required for these two detectors. Also a switch is included to allow the 1.5vdc dry-cell to be disconnected when not in use. **Perikon** - this is a detector that uses two different minerals, usually zincite and chalcopyrite, in contact with each other for detection. **Iron Pyrite**- a single mineral detector that, at the time, was thought to be easy to use and fairly sensitive. The last detector is a stand that can accept any type of mineral for experimentation. A five position switch is provided for selecting the various detectors. There is a phone condenser and terminals for connecting the earphones. The entire detector circuit is mounted on a beautiful oak board.



The "Five Detectors" Board. The detectors are (l-r, t-b) Electrolytic, Perikon, Peroxide of Lead, Iron Pyrite and the "various minerals" stand which has a Silicon mineral mounted in it. The E.I.Co. potentiometer is on the right side and the detector switch is on the left.

The all homebrew construction of Dodd's 1912 station was almost a necessity since very few companies at that time provided any equipment of the power that this station was capable of, (the power input was probably in excess of one thousand watts.) Most of the purchased parts used by Dodd were from Electro Importing Company of New York, (E.I. Co.) Although the transmitter is not very efficient (and the actual distance probably was more limited by the receiver), a range of 100 miles would have been expected from a set up like Dodd's. All components that were homebrew have a small metal tag mounted that simply has "M.H. DODD" embossed on it. There is one missing component to the station and one incomplete component. The incomplete transmitting condenser is missing its original box or housing. We do have the glass and foil condenser itself but not whatever it was mounted in. The condenser was kept under Dodd's operating bench so it is not visible in the photographs for a replication reference. The missing component is the electrolytic interrupter. When we were talking to Pat Doherty about a week after the yardsale, we asked about a glass container with perhaps some metal parts attached. He said, "Yeah, that was in one of the boxes or trunks. The glass was broken in several pieces so I threw it away!" The photographs show the interrupter well enough that a duplicate could be made but it would have been nice to have the original, even if it was broken.

M.H.Dodd about the time he moved to Reno, Nevada

Marion Henry Dodd

Marion Henry "Hank" Dodd was born on March 1, 1888, in Cortland, New York. His family moved to southern California in 1907, settling around San Bernardino. Hank Dodd became interested in radio about 1910, probably when going to Baptist College in Westlake, California. One of his first jobs was with the San Bernardino Fire Department. The radio interest was just part of many hobbies that he had. Others included photography and taking trips on his Indian motorcycle. When the US became involved in WWI, Hank Dodd joined the Army and became a Lieutenant in the 316th Field Signal Battalion, 91st Division. After WWI, radio was still the primary interest and Dodd became involved in a radio business in Los Angeles. Soon, though interest in the fast evolving radio technology was replaced with an automobile dealership for the Wood's Mobilette. Only seven Mobilette automobiles were built and the business went under. Staying with autos, Dodd opened an Automobile Repair Garage in San Bernardino. After that, he started into the real estate business with the Dodd Reality Company, in Los Angeles. In 1922, he and his wife took a belated honeymoon trip to Lake Tahoe spending the night camped at Homewood. After many subsequent trips into the Sierras, the Dodd family finally moved to Lake Tahoe in 1945. Opening a Dodd Reality Company (in Tahoe), Hank became quite successful in the area. An accomplished photographer, many of his photos were used in G.W. James' book, "Lake Tahoe." After several years, the harsh winters became too much for Hank Dodd. He moved to Reno around 1960, bringing along a lifetime collection of material and equipment that he had saved and stored in trunks since before WWI. Dodd died in September, 1979, at the age of 91, leaving the bulk of his well-documented lifetime of hobbies and interests stored in his Reno house and the backyard shed.

Reassembling the Dodd Station

We have located the 1912 Dodd Wireless Station in the Vintage Ham Shack section of the Museum. This was done so we would have the necessary room to recreate Dodd's original set-up as accurately as possible. Though we lacked the high ceilings of the SBFD's upstairs quarters, at least we had the floor space to build a bench and have a back drop similar to the original station. The ceiling height limitations resulted in a backdrop that is somewhat different from the original but all of the items are displayed and are generally in their proper place. I also decided to replicate the missing Electrolytic Interrupter. We chose to build a Wehnelt Interrupter as Dodd's books show the plans for this type and the appearence is very much like what is seen in the original photos of the station. By using only vintage parts and materials to construct the replica, it is as close as we can come to having the original piece and results in

the station having a complete transmitter. The vintage light fixture, while not exactly like the original hanging light bulb, is an authentic old fixture with clear bulb for the proper ambiance. I have also added some pre-WWI magazines, more Dodd photographs (of 1910-1912 airplanes and motorcycles) and wireless books from Dodd's collection to the display, creating what I call the "lived-in look." Dodd had a thin layer of what looks like white canvas under the Loose-Coupler and the Five Detector Board (probably to protect the table from the dilute sulfuric acid needed for the Electrolytic Detector.) We have properly placed a very similar piece of "aged" canvas that was found in one of Dodd's boxes under the Detector Board. The single Kellogg earphone is from Dodd's 1910 Station (as we could never find the original 'phones shown in the photos.) Of course, all the components of the Dodd Station are wired as original, using Dodd's vintage wire and parts that were found in the various boxes obtained along with the station. Even an early 1900s nickel-plated AC wall-lamp socket outlet is used for the AC input to the wireless station and the brass-ceramic AC plug/adapter is genuine 1912 Dodd Station equipment. All AC wires are routed through the table using vintage ceramic feed-thru insulators, as Dodd had originally wired his bench. Careful examination of the original 1912-1913 photos revealed that the Dodd Wireless Station evolved from photo to photo. Obviously, the photos were taken at different times and show that Dodd was changing the station for better performance or possibly trying new "hook-ups" for better results. We selected what appeared to be the latest of the photos, (shown in the title header), as the primary reference for the set-up and wiring of our exhibit. Using the photos for reference and by thorough study of Dodd's 1909-1913 wireless books hopefully has resulted in a very accurate reassembly of Dodd's original 1912 station. Visitors now have the opportunity to see one of the most authentic and best documented Wireless Stations in any museum.

The 1912 M.H. Dodd Wireless Station as displayed in the Western Historic Radio Museum

Conclusions

From our inquires, we have concluded that Hank Dodd never obtained an official "ham" call-sign. Before 1913, hams were not required to be licensed and there were no regulations regarding wavelength, power or sharing "air time." After the Alexanderson Bill became law (the 1912 Radio Act, effective in 1913), Dodd himself and his Wireless Station would have been in violation of several of the "new" laws regarding amateur licensing, operation and equipment. Our conclusion is that Dodd probably packed the station into the steamer trunk sometime in 1913-14. During his lifetime, Dodd apparently never threw anything away. He saved and stored all of his possessions in trunks or boxes. When he died in 1979, his Reno house was filled with a life-time of treasures.

As an up-date on other information that has become available on the Dodd Station, I have located three more books that were from the Dodd estate. A 1909 Wireless Book published by the H. Twining of the Los Angeles Polytechnic H.S., a 1911 ICS Telegraph & Telephone Handbook and a 1921 Department of Commerce Amateur Radio Station Callbook. It seems that many of the "local dealers" found these items at the yardsale and are now selling them.

Also, I did give Steve the nicest crystal set from the collection of Dodd's other equipment. It was a J.K. Company "Universal" with a nice mahogany box and engraved bakelite panel in very nice condition. Also, I rebuilt his very nice 1939 Zenith 6-S-321 three-band radio for him. Somehow though, it doesn't seem like enough for all of his help in the discovery and research of the 1912 Dodd Wireless Station.

References:

1. Manual of Wireless Telegraphy for the use of Naval Electricians, 1913 - Robison

2. Wireless Hookups, 1911 - G. Rudolph

3. How to Make Wireless Instruments, 1912 - Various Writers

4. Construction of Inductance Coils and Transformers, 1912 - H.W. Secor

5. Electro Importing Company, Catalog #2, 1910

6. Wireless Telegraphy & High Frequency Electricity, 1909 - H. Lav. Twining

7. M.H. Dodd Photographic Album - 1910-1917

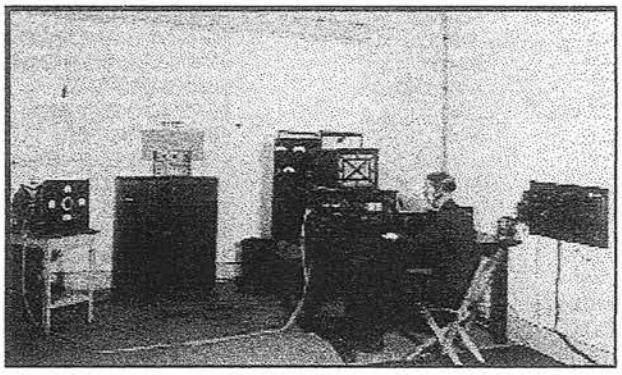
8. Sierra Magazine, Special Issue 1963, "Men Who Match Our Mountains"

Henry Rogers July 27, 2000 - Revised, edited and additional info added: December 9, 2001, July 30, 2002

Reprinted with the author's permission

The History Of KRE, Berkeley, California

The call letters KRE are full of radio history. They were first issued, in the beginning years of the twentieth century, to the side-wheeler steam ship "Bay State", operated by the Eastern Steamship Corporation.[5] Early in the morning of September 23,1916, the "Bay State" ran aground in heavy fog at the entrance to the harbor at Portland, Maine, where she had been bound from Boston. All of the ship's 150 passengers were rescued safely, but the ship was damaged beyond repair and decommissioned.[6] Because of naval superstition, the ship's call letters were abandoned, not to be used again on any vessel. Thus, the call letters KRE became "grounded".

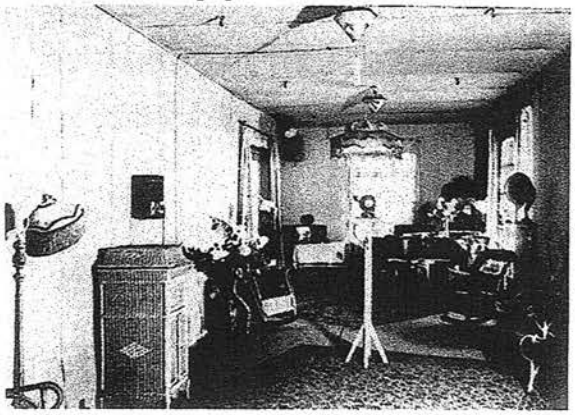


In 1922, the Department of Commerce re-issued them to the Maxwell Electric Company, a small radio store on Adeline Street in Berkeley. Maxwell Hallauer owned the establishment, and assigned the job of operating the station to employee Thomas A. Fite.[8] A small transmitter was built and installed at the Claremont Resort Hotel in the Berkeley Hills, and a studio was assembled on the second floor. The station began broadcasting March 11, 1922.[7]

However, in those days before advertising, the cost of operating a radio station was probably too much for the little company. The station was sold to the "Berkeley Daily Gazette" newspaper in May of the same year, although the Maxwell Electric Company continued to operate the station.

After purchasing the station, the newspaper's pages suddenly came alive with news of radio. Regular radio columns helped publicize the fact that the little station was now broadcasting an hour every Sunday night. The initial program under the management of the Gazette was held May 23. The Gazette reported afterward:

> *Much interest was displayed Sunday in the dedicatory program of the Gazette radio broadcasting station at the Hotel Claremont. A program of songs sung by local vocalists was given, and during the concert several radio fans telephoned their congratulations, declaring the concert to be one of the best ever received locally. An excellent equipment made possible the clarity of tone, and the efficient management of operator Thomas Fite did the rest.[8]*



The added financial backing and influence of the Gazette brought several improvements to KRE during the ensuing months. The studio was rebuilt and hung with draperies to improve the acoustics, a piano was loaned to the station by Benjamin's Music Store, and a phonograph by White's. A 50 watt breadboard transmitter, nicknamed "Big Mike", was constructed by Maxwell Electric and installed by Fite. It began operating in August.[8]

The antenna used at the time was a vertical wire, suspended from two poles at the top and bottom of the hotel tower. From the bottom of the tower, directly above the porch, several counterpoise wires stretched out in all directions. The antenna was so situated that it faced towards the San Francisco Bay, so it would project its signal across Berkeley and Oakland and into San Francisco.[1]

Program content was also improved. Programs were expanded to two hours every Sunday. Fite did the announcing, and for program content the station enlisted Mrs. Wilda Wilson Church, head of the drama department of the Cora L. Williams Institute, an all-girl school in Berkeley. Mrs. Church prepared a weekly variety of music and poetry reading, drawing primarily upon students of her own college, students from Mill's College in Oakland, and students of private music teachers in the area.[8] She was to benefit greatly from this introduction to radio, and would leave KRE and the school in 1924 to become full-time dramatic director for the "KGO Players" at the General Electric radio station in Oakland. She would go on from there to NBC, and would become one of the nation's better-known radio drama producers in the thirties.

As listener response to KRE's programs grew, programming time increased. In early 1923, Wednesday night was added to the schedule. Raymond Boyd and Frank Smith from Maxwell Electric were added to assist Fite in the operation of the station. Program experiments were tried, usually with favorable results. On New Year's Eve, 1922, the microphone was moved to the hotel's main ballroom, and KRE broadcast the music and activities of the New Year's Eve party there from ten o'clock until twelve thirty. On April 8, 1923, KRE aired its first dramatic production. Members of the University of California's Mask and Dagger Society gave a performance of "Dulcy" on the station, after three successful performances on the university's Berkeley campus. The station's usual musical repertoire consisted of classical music, but this was abandoned from time to time for programs of jazz. In July of 1923, the station initiated a series of educational programs with a discussion entitled "Stars and Planets" by Dr. R. B. Larkin.[8]

Prior to 1923, all radio stations had shared two frequencies. But in April of that year, because of the increasing popularity of the infant radio industry, the Department of Commerce assigned individual wavelengths to each station. KRE received an assignment to 278 meters (1079 kc) In the next few years, the station would also occupy 1170 and 1370 kc.

By late 1923, programming began to fall into a regular pattern. Music was usually provided by Vart Toujian's "KRE Serenaders". Wilda Wilson Church had left the station, and the Gazette now had to arrange the programs itself. The station became less of a new experience and more of a burden to the newspaper. Maxwell Electric Company dropped out of the operation in December of that year, and the operation was taken over by L. H. Kettenger and G. B. Flood of the U. C. Battery and Electric Company.[8]

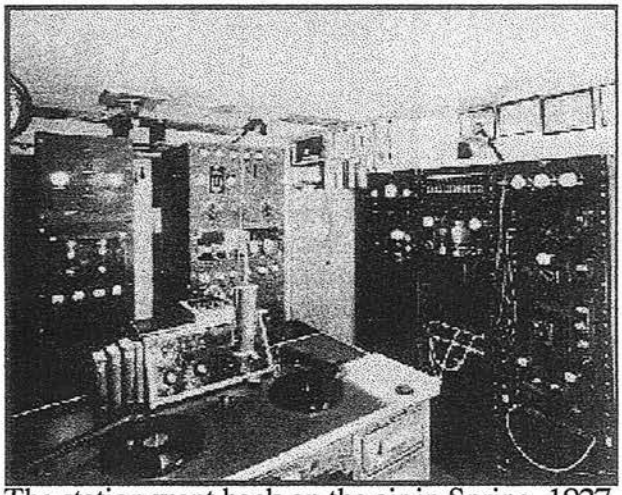
By the mid twenties, programming had become even more of a burden. Stations were now required to be on the air more than just a few hours weekly, and KRE was operating a weekly schedule of fifteen hours. Programs heard during this period included Horace Heidt's Claremont Orchestra with regular dance programs. (Heidt was another person associated with KRE that later went on to national fame with the networks.) Also during this period, the "KRE Players" offered several dramatic productions weekly. Thursday night was "educational night"; and every Wednesday afternoon, "Aunt Polly and Big Brother" presented their children's program.[8]

Finally, the Gazette decided to rid themselves of the yoke around their necks. In January, 1927, they took the station off the air and put it up for sale.[8]

Meanwhile, the First Congregational Church in Berkeley was thinking about doing some broadcasting. They were investigating the possibility of leasing phone lines and airing weekly programs over KTAB in Oakland when they heard KRE was available. The church council minutes for January 19, 1927, show the following entry:

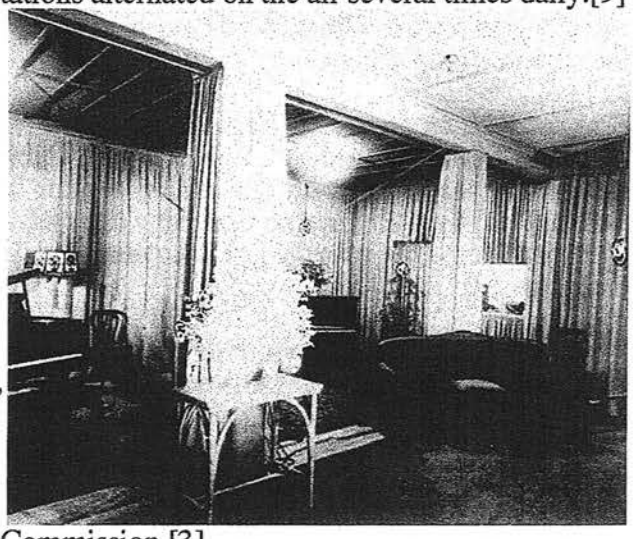
> *A motion was made that we authorize the trustees to do whatever may be necessary for the establishment of the broadcast station at the earliest possible date on our church property.[9]*

By the end of January, KRE had been purchased. The church shared in the purchase with the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, and the two were also to share in the use of the station.[8] KRE was off the air for several months while the equipment was moved and installed in the church building, at Dana and Durant Streets. A steel tower was erected, and an L-type wire antenna was strung from the tower to the church steeple. Underneath, a counterpoise was strung in an erratic manner to different parts of the building.[1]



Inside the church, the studio was less than attractive. The transmitter and studio were combined into a single compact room behind the pipes of the church organ. A 100 watt breadboard transmitter was spread around the room, most of it mounted on top of a kitchen table. The Claremont Hotel was retained as a remote studio and tied to the church by phone lines.[1]

The station went back on the air in Spring, 1927, under the direction of Lawrence F. Moore. It shared its frequency with station KZM in Hayward, and the two stations alternated on the air several times daily.[9] Programming was a mixture of religion and serious music. Where up to this time KRE's music had been almost exclusively live, music programs were now strictly from phonograph records.

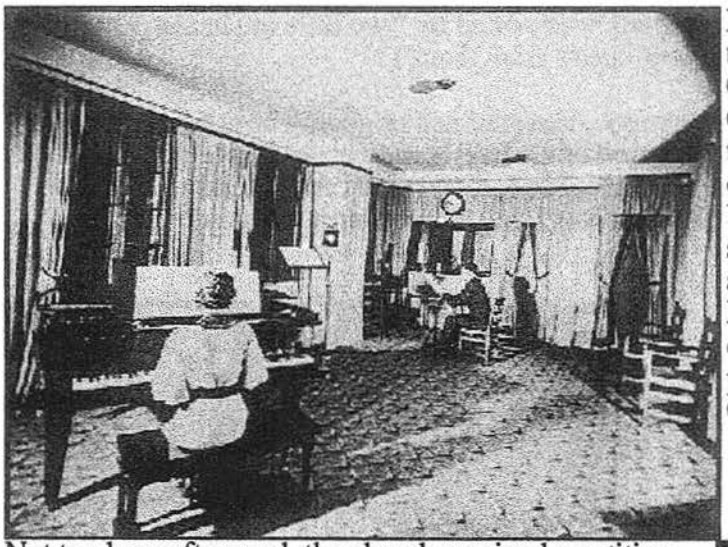


By 1929, the year of the Great Depression, the operation of the station left something to be desired. Funds were low, and the church admittedly knew very little about the operation of a radio station. Finally, the church had decided it could no longer operate KRE alone. It entered into an agreement with KLS in Oakland, whereby that station would also operate KRE, with an option to purchase it at a later date. However, after about five months, the church was not satisfied with the arrangement. KLS was not doing a credible job of operating the station, and KRE had received several off-frequency citations from the Federal Radio Commission.[3]

Meanwhile, the Chapel of the Chimes, a crematorium and mausoleum in Oakland, wanted to expand the audience for its program of organ music being broadcast from the chapel over KTAB in Oakland. Arthur Westlund, president of the chapel, arranged with KLS for the program to be broadcast simultaneously over KRE. However, after only two broadcasts, KRE went off the air and remained off for three days because of equipment failure. Westlund talked to directors of the church and found them to be unhappy with the operation of the station by KLS. Westlund offered to operate the station himself, and the church promptly agreed. On January 4, 1930, the Chapel of the Chimes took over KRE, and Westlund became chairman of the church radio committee.[3]

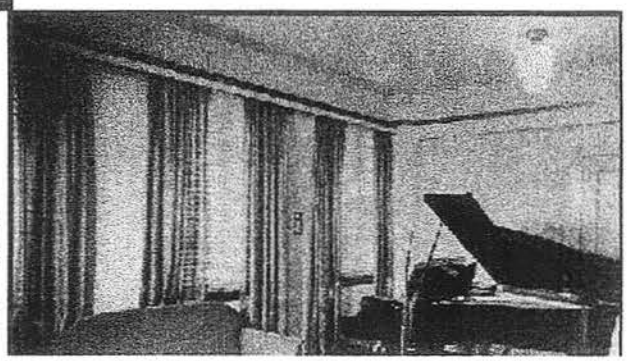
Westlund took upon himself the task of placing KRE back into efficient operation. And it was a formidable one. According to the lease agreement with the church, the chapel would keep all the profits, as well as absorb any losses. KRE had attempted little on-air advertising up until this time, so Westlund began the station's first full-time advertising campaign. At first, he discovered he had a bad reputation to combat. According to Don Hambly, a KRE employee for many years, "the joke was that the manager would throw his hat into a store, and if it didn't come flying back out, he would go in and try to give a sales pitch. It had that bad of a reputation!" Hambly also described KRE's transmitting equipment: "It had a breadboard transmitter scattered all over the room. To see if you were on frequency, you'd listen to the thousand-cycle beat oscillator over in the corner. If you wanted to tune the transmitter, you'd take a pool cue and hit the trimmer condenser with it, because your body capacity would put the transmitter out of tune if you got too close. It was a miserable mess."[1]

Westlund's Chief Engineer Ad Bideman replaced the transmitter with a 100 watt DeForest factory-built transmitter. Programming was geared toward the people of Berkeley. For example, KRE became the official station of the "Daily Californian", the University of California's daily newspaper. This usually amounted to student Henry Schacht coming to the station every morning and reading the newspaper on the air for fifteen minutes.[1]



In 1931, additional studios were constructed at the Capwell Central Market in downtown Oakland. This was a supermarket owned by Capwell's Department Store, and located across the street from the store. KRE's studios and offices were on the mezzanine floor, on a balcony overlooking Telegraph Avenue. The station broadcast from here during the daytime, and from the church and rebuilt Claremont Hotel studios at night. One of the programs emanating from the Capwell studios during this period was live country music by the Smokey Oaks Hillbilly Cowboys.[1,4]

Not too long afterward, the church received a petition from its neighborhood residents, complaining that the studio monitor speaker could be heard all over the neighborhood at night, through the station's open window. The church asked Westlund to move the studios out of the church. Because they could not use their Capwells studios at night, this necessitated a move to a full-time location. In the winter of 1933, the studios were moved to the Glenn-Connoly Building on Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley. The transmitter remained



at the church.[1]

The year 1934 brought the Communications Act, and with it the Federal Communications Commission. Things changed rapidly after that, usually to the little station's benefit. KZM had left the air in 1930, but KRE had been given only an additional three hours of air time by the old Federal Radio Commission. In 1934, Westlund applied to the FCC for full-time operation. It was granted, and KRE became the first 24-hour station in Northern California. Jack Roseberg, a Berkeley college student, was recruited for the first all-night position.[1,3]

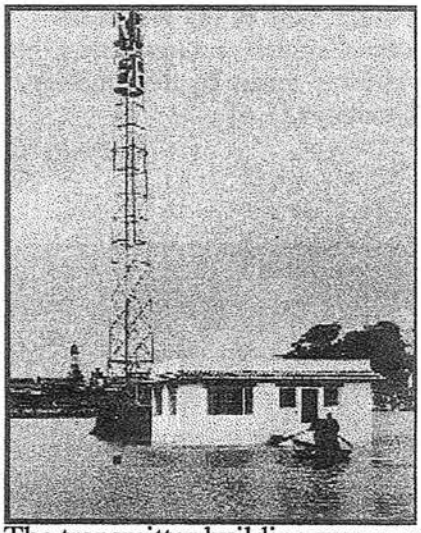
In 1935, the station was authorized to increase its power to 250 watts during the daytime, and the station's engineers constructed a home-brew linear amplifier. The station continued to operate at 100 watts nights until the winter of 1939, when it was authorized for 250 watts full time.[1]

A 1935 ruling by the FCC expressly prohibited the operation of a radio station under a lease agreement such as the one between the Chapel of the Chimes and the church. Thus, an application was made to the FCC for the sale of KRE to Central California Broadcasters, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Chapel of the Chimes. The sale was approved in December, 1936.[9]

One of the terms of the sale agreement stipulated by the Congregational Church stated that certain religious programs would be maintained by the station. These continued to be aired for a few years, until the FCC also declared this to be illegal, ruling that all program material must be in control of the management.[1]

Because the transmitter was still located at the church, a new transmitter site needed to be found. Westlund decided that the best location from a technical standpoint would be the bay shore. He asked Don Hambly to conduct an investigation and find out what Berkeley waterfront property was privately owned. He discovered that the only piece of private property was at the southeastern edge of the city, and was entirely under water. As Hambly recalls, the property was owned by "two little old ladies. They evidently had to do quite a bit of dickering to get the property from them"[1]

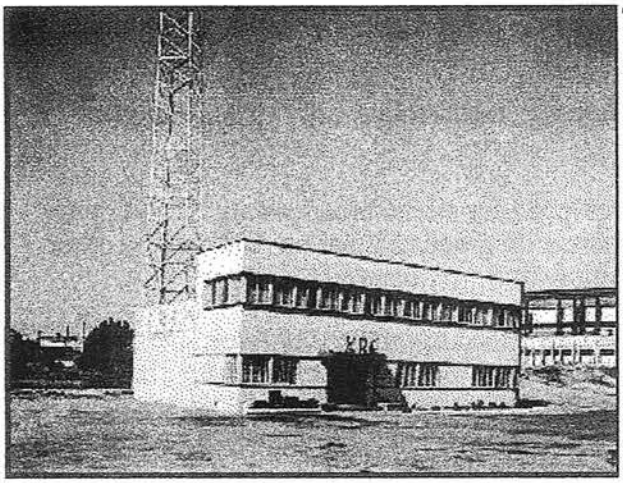
Thus, KRE acquired the site known as 601 Ashby Avenue. The land had originally been tideland, and had been landlocked by the land fill from the construction of the bayshore freeway. The land had to be filled, and management filled only enough land to hold a building, tower and a small parking area. This was located in the middle of the water, and a narrow road was filled in to connect the building to the shore.[1]



The transmitter building was completed in June, 1937. It contained the 250 watt transmitter moved from the church, plus audio equipment, a small control room and a workshop area. A 180-foot self-supporting

tower was constructed, and the station's call letters were mounted on its side in large illuminated letters. "Broadcasting" magazine at the time commented, "six miles of ground wire were laid in the salt water near the tower to increase its efficiency." The results were promising: calls from listeners indicated that KRE's coverage had nearly doubled.[1,4]

Within the following year, the owners began constructing studio and office facilities at the site, turning the existing transmitter building into a state-of-the-art "art deco" facility. Hambly recalled that the sound of pile drivers crept onto the air quite frequently during this period. Finally, the entire operation was consolidated under one streamlined roof in November, 1938.[1]



The building was one of the very few in the area constructed specially for broadcasting at that time. It included a control room and large studio, and an elevated announce booth that looked over the studio from a large bay window. No expense had been spared in soundproofing the studio. Westlund was a member of the radio committee for the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island, and was in charge of constructing radio studios at the fair grounds. He had hired some of the nation's top engineers to design the studio, and managed to railroad them into designing KRE's studio as well, at no extra cost. It was built exactly to their specifications. There was actually a room within a room -- a floating studio. The inner walls of the studio were insulated from the outer walls by a three inch layer of insulating material. A three-inch thick, lead-lined door was the only access to the room. It was, at the time, considered a dream studio.[3]

However, even a dream studio isn't always perfect, as Herb Caen pointed out in the "San Francisco Chronicle" in early 1941. The station was located directly adjacent to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks, and the sound of a roaring freight train would rumble through the studios seven times daily. It was Don Hambly who finally conceived of a solution. The railroad was contacted and an advertising agreement was signed. Technicians installed a microphone on the roof of the building. Every time a train rumbled past the studios, the engineer would blow his whistle, and the announcer would fade out the record and ad lib a Southern Pacific commercial![10]

KRE's frequency up until this time had been 1370 kc. In 1941, the FCC ordered a widespread re-allocation of frequencies, and KRE moved to its present location of 1400 kc.[4]

KRE's programming during these years had evolved considerably. Although still mainly a music station, the programming was divided into blocks of different kinds of music. The evenings featured mostly classical music. The afternoons were devoted to a program called "Open House", hosted by Bert Solitaire, which was an important part of KRE for 25 years. This was a jazz request program, emphasizing big band jazz, especially the "hot clarinet" sound exemplified by Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. The organ in the Chapel of the Chimes was featured several times daily, for fifteen or thirty minute intervals. And, Italian and Portuguese programs were aired from two to three hours daily. Weekends were almost entirely devoted to religious and foreign language programs.[2]

There was very little news on the air during this period. The format was almost entirely music of one form or another, with the announcer ad libbing informally between records.[2]

KRE's music format was a success, and the station rode the crest of popularity through the forties. After the war, Les Avery joined the announcing staff, and his evening program of classics, "Music of the Masters", developed a tremendous following through the late forties and fifties.[2]

KRE was one of the first stations in the Bay Area to obtain an FM license. It constructed a transmitter site atop Round Hill Mountain in the Berkeley Hills, and KRE-FM went on the air Valentine's Day, 1949, simulcasting its AM programming on 102.9 mc. The FCC did not yet allow remote control of transmitting equipment, however, so an engineer had to be stationed at the transmitter site at all times.[1,4]

Public response to FM was disappointing, despite the number of stations on the air, and KRE soon found its FM station to be just an added expense, especially the cost of maintaining an engineer at the transmitter. Within a year, the transmitter had been moved to the AM site, and the land and tower were sold to the telephone company. Shortly thereafter, the FCC approved remote transmitter operation, but KRE-FM had already forfeited its prime transmitter location.[1]

About this time, a second story was added to the studio building, consisting mostly of additional office space.

Stereo became the latest audio craze in 1957, and KRE equipped for stereo broadcasting. It was one of the first stations in the Bay Area to broadcast in stereo, transmitting one channel on AM and the other channel on FM. This continued until 1959, when FM multiplexing was allowed.[4]

Disaster struck KRE April 17, 1957. A sudden windstorm descended upon the Bay Area, and did considerable damage. KRE operator Jack Dunn walked out the back door in time to see the station's tower falling toward him. Luckily, the wind shifted and the tower twisted around and fell in the other direction. It broke off twenty feet above the base and stuck into the mud like a toothpick. The wind had apparently picked up the tower by the huge call letters mounted on its side.[1,11]

The station was off the air for several days until a temporary long wire antenna could be strung from the building to a nearby telephone pole. The station operated from this antenna for six months until a new tower was installed. The coverage was pitiful, and the station could not be heard with an adequate signal in downtown Oakland.[1]

In December, 1961, KRE's daytime power was increased to its present 1,000 watts.[4]

Up to this time, the station had been under the continuous management of Art Westlund and the Chapel of the Chimes. However, Westlund decided it was becoming too formidable a task to try and manage both the chapel and KRE. And so, on March 15, 1963, the station was sold to the Wright Broadcasting Company, owners of the successful New York area station, WPAT, Patterson, New Jersey. Howard Haman became the new manager.

KRE thus became KPAT on April 29, 1963, at twelve noon. The format was a duplicate of WPAT -- continuous good music. Programs were divided into six program blocks, titled simple "KPAT Music One through Six". Each music block was introduced by the ticking of the KPAT metronome.[4]

KPAT-FM raised its power from one thousand watts to fifty kilowatts in December, 1963, and broadcast multiplex stereo for the first time in June, 1966.

To increase its AM coverage, a taller tower was needed. So, in February, 1965, a 449-foot guyed tower was completed. In 1968, San Francisco's KFRC moved its transmitter to the Ashby Avenue site, and the two stations began transmitting from the same tower.[4]

KPAT experimented extensively with its format in the ensuing years, but was not able to gain a significant foothold in the competitive San Francisco radio market. Finally, in 1970, KPAT was sold to Horizon Communications of California, Inc. Dale Moudy, manager of KNBR in San Francisco, became the new station manager, later replaced by Ollie Hayden. The station's new programming was called "Radio Eastbay", and in many aspects it recreated the successful Eastbay-oriented KRE programming of

decades before.

On June 11, 1972, KRE celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a huge celebration. In an unusual event, the FCC gave permission to KPAT to revert to its previous three-letter call sign. So "Radio Eastbay" again became KRE, alive and well and living in Berkeley!

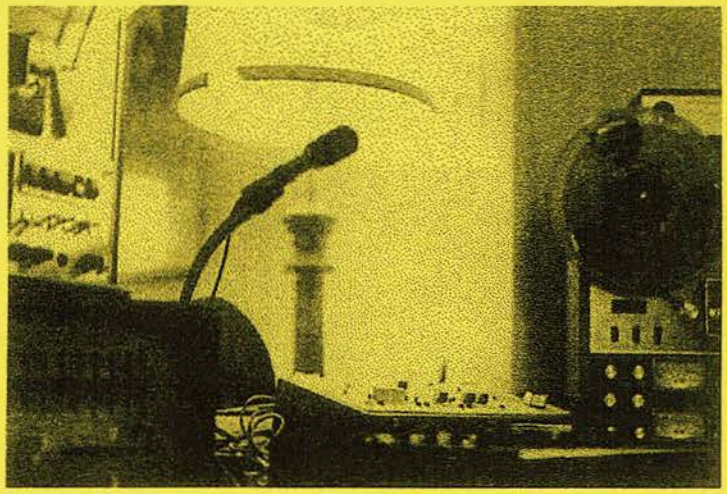
POST SCRIPT: This article was written by the author in 1972, to commemorate KRE's fiftieth anniversary. It was printed in the November 1972 issue of "Performing Arts" magazine. KRE has had numerous call letter changes since, becoming KFDN, KBLX, KBFN and finally KVTO.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Interview between Don Hambly and author, Nov. 17, 1970
[2] Interview between Les Avery and author, Sept. 24, 1970
[3] Interview between Art Westlund and author, March 23, 1971
[4] "KRE/KPAT History", a term paper by Patrick J. Hilliard, written Dec. 9, 1966 for the College of San Mateo, California.
[5] "U. S. Government Callbook", July, 1916.
[6] "New York Times", Sept. 24, 1916
[7] "San Francisco Examiner", March 26, 1922.
"Radio Service Bulletin", Bureau of Navigation, Department of Commerce, May 1, 1922. (Listed in "The History of Radio to 1926", by Gleason L. Archer; 1938, New York)
[8] "Berkeley Daily Gazette" radio column; May 20, 1922 through Jan. 12, 1927.
[9] Congregational Church Board of Trustees minutes. Supplied by Eugene Frickstadt, clerk of the First Congregational Church. Minutes for the meetings of Jan. 19, 1927; Feb. 1, 1927; May 8, 1927; July 10, 1934; June 11, 1935; Aug. 13, 1935; Dec. 8, 1936.
[10] Herb Caen, "San Francisco Chronicle", January 14, 1941
[11} "San Francisco Chronicle", April 17, 1957.

CHRS is preparing the historic KRE site for our World Headquarters

"This is Stephan Ponek signing off... be good to one another"



Our Friend Stephan
(1939 – 2001)

This is your 2003 CHRS renewal form. Please fill it oput completely, cut at the dotted line, & send it back along with your $20 dues, & any donations. Please correct any address problems on your label on the other side. If you copy this form, write your name on the back.
Cut here and mail to: CHRS, P.O. BOX 31659, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 91431

Add me to the CHRS email list, (no spam)_____

! will contribute a **"Special Donation"** to the KRE Restoration project $_____ (minimum $1000)

1. My 2003 membership dues of $20 is enclosed.....( ) .....I am pre-paid.....( )

2. I will volunteer time to help CHRS .....( ).....or serve on the Board.....( )

3. I am donating $_____ to the CHRS General fund.....( ).....$_____ Museum fund.....( )

4. I will help with the KRE Restoration Project.....( )

5. I will write an article for the CHRS Journal.....( )

6. Cancel my ad ( ) Continue my ad ( ) My new ad for the next CHRSJournal:_____

_____

_____

7. List me in the CHRS repair and restoration guide as follows: _____

_____

_____

8. Order me a New CHRS name badge: _____

(Please enclose $9) _____

9. I have the following suggestions, recommendations or comments for CHRS: _____

_____

_____

CONTENTS

California Historical Radio Society
P. O. Box 31659
San Francisco, CA 94131