

Archives and Library Report, 2021

By Bart Lee, K6VK, Archivist (v4)

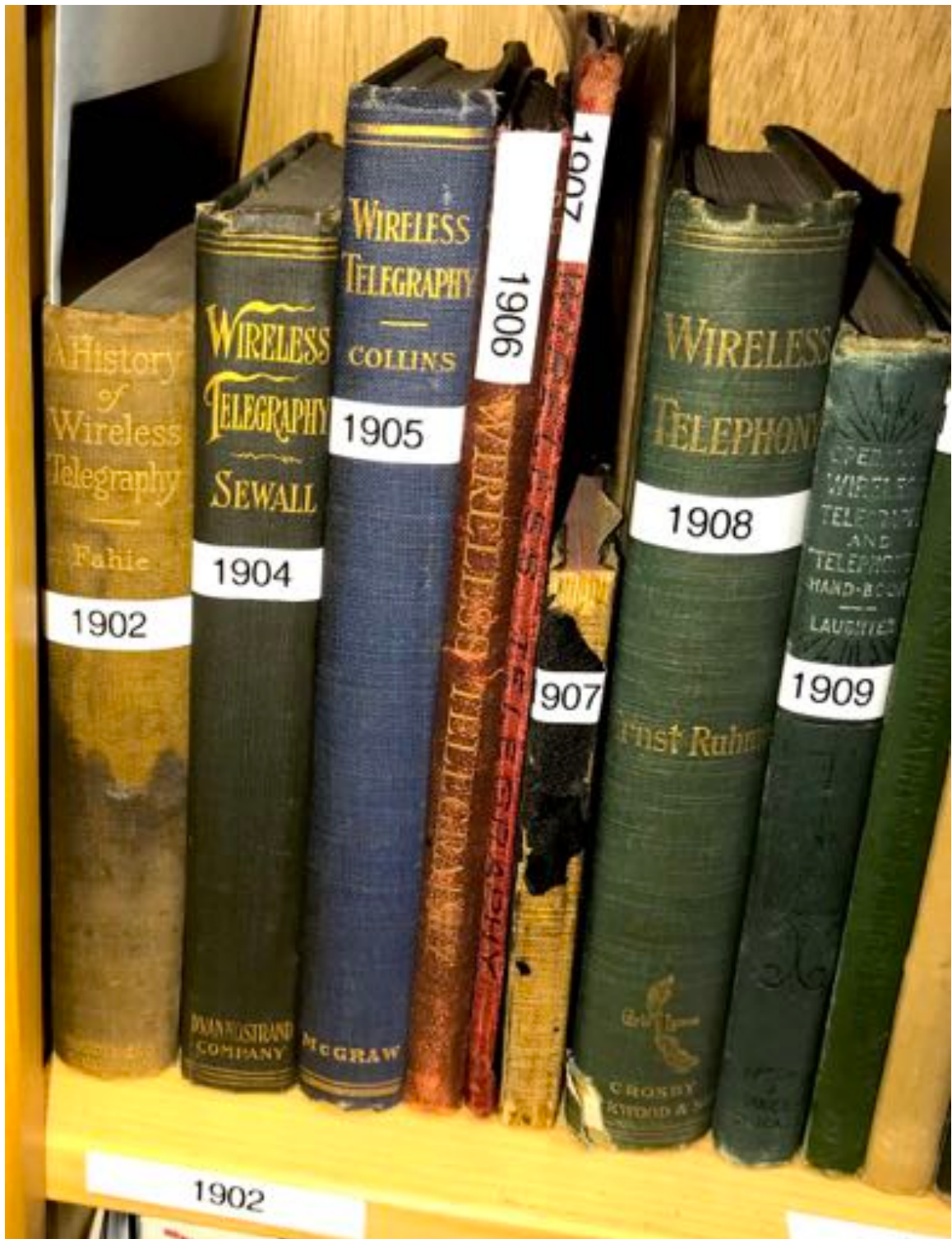
A Lethal, World-Wide Pandemic seems to have slowed us down some. Still, the Library and Archives of the California Historical Radio Society remain organized and available for use when safe. So, to Assistant Librarians Hil Hampton and Dave Harris, Deputy Librarian Judith Girardi and Deputy Archivist Bob Rydzewski:



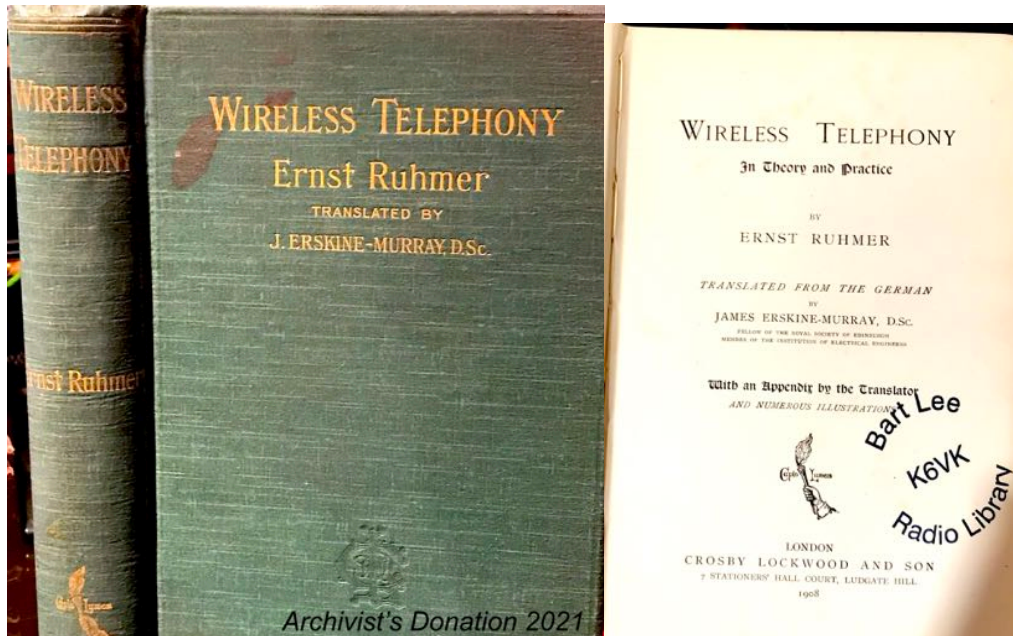
Most recently, the oldest radio books have been shelved and arranged chronologically (as per the Antique Wireless Association system). The idea is to be able to read and see how radio technology evolved year by year, into the 1940s. The earliest volume is A HISTORY OF WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY, by J.J. Fahie (1902). The end of the

sequence by chronology will likely be F.E. Terman's radio frequency engineering books (circa 1943).





Ernst Ruhmer, WIRELESS TELEPHONY (1908) is both rare and expensive as a first edition and is a recent donation. (Happily, there are reprints.)

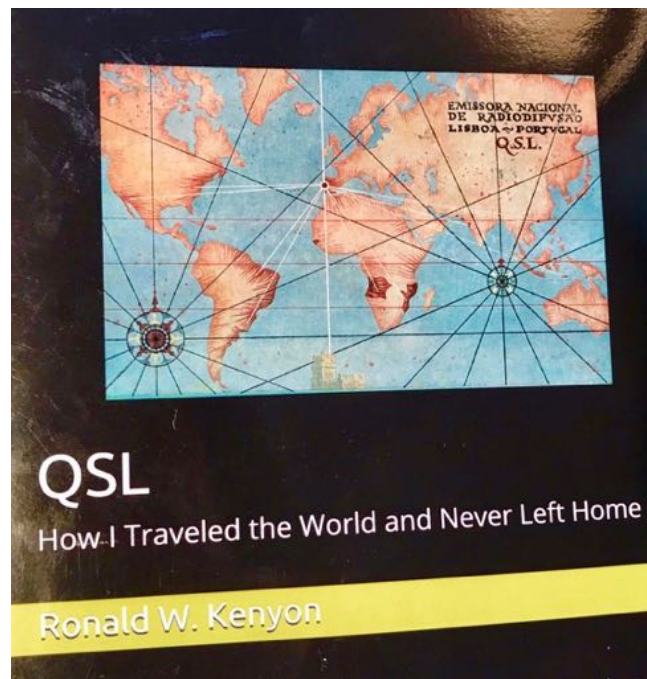


Judith Girardi has organized the juvenile radio fiction. Mike Adams donated most of the books. He researched them for his RADIO BOYS AND GIRLS (2015 – available on Amazon).



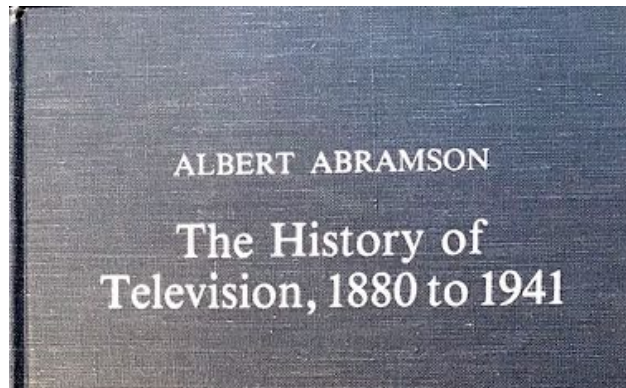
The Library has just acquired several new books. Most books have been donation but some like these two are purchased.

QSL - HOW I TRAVELLED THE WORLD AND NEVER LEFT HOME by Ronald Kenyon (2020) is a picture and text collection of one young shortwave radio listener's responses to his requests to shortwave radio stations for their QSL cards. He started decades ago, and many of us will recognize the results. It's a wonderful book for radio-nostalgics. The Archives hold three collections of shortwave radio station QSL cards dating back to the 1930s.

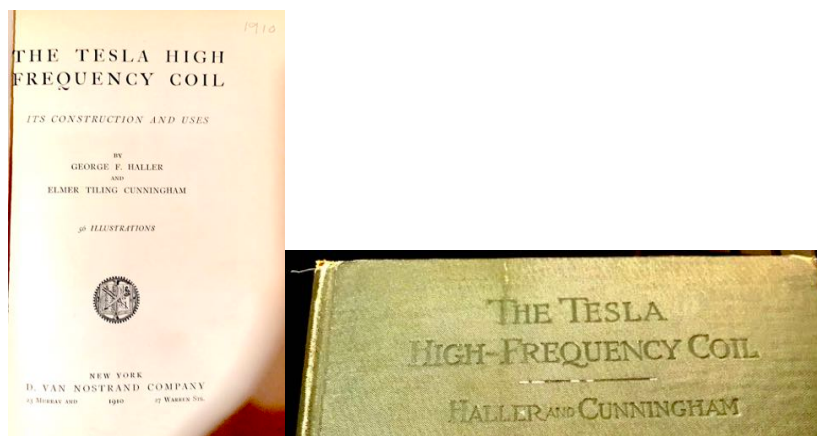


Another new acquisition is Albert Abramson, THE HISTORY OF TELEVISION, 1880 TO 1941 (1987). And it's all there in granular detail, and if you will forgive the

metaphor, it's eye-opening. He concludes Zworykin first invented the television camera (shortly followed by Farnsworth) but that Farnsworth first put together a working all-electronic television system with his Image Dissector and cathode ray tube display. He is, however, so devoted to (welcome) detail, that he buries his conclusions in the endnotes.



Elmer Cunningham had many vacuum tubes bear his name (*e.g.*, the 301), and rose to a high position in RCA. He partnered with George Haller in the Hal-Cun marine wireless equipment made in San Francisco *circa* 1916. In 1910 they wrote a book on the Tesla Coil, a recent archivist's donation to the library.



Hugo Gernsback started *Modern Electrics* in 1908, in connection with his Electro-Importing Company in New York. The wiki says:

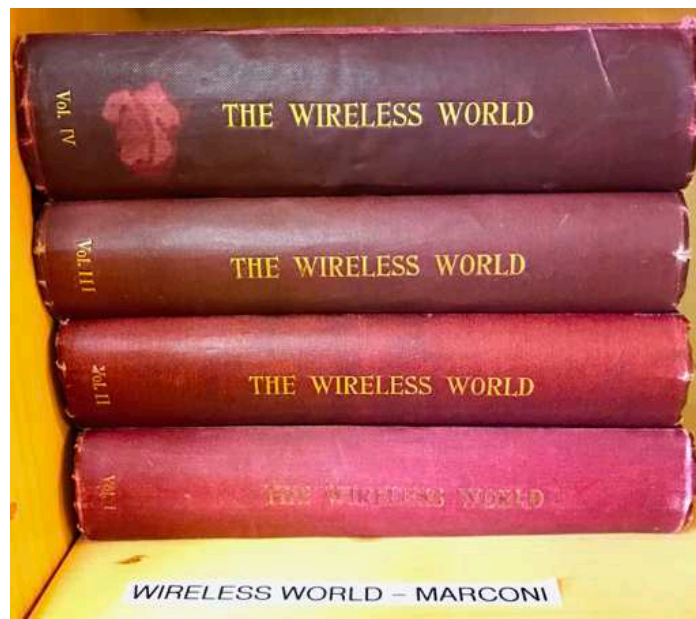
“April 1908 he founded *Modern Electrics*, the world's first magazine about both electronics and radio, called "wireless" at the time. While the cover of the magazine itself states it was a catalog, most historians note that it contained articles, features, and plotlines, qualifying it as a magazine.” *** “The circulation for this magazine increased rapidly, starting at 2,000 and increasing to 52,000 in 1911. In 1908, the magazine announced the ‘wireless registry’, a listing of radio owners, their call letters, and the type of equipment they owned and how it was operated.”

Modern Electrics has recently been recognized as one of the most important American magazines. See Michael Dolan, “Cover Story” [American Magazines], *American History*, August 2021, page 44 at 48. The library of the California Historical Radio Society enjoys an extensive run of *Modern Electrics*; we are still looking for issues from 1908. The bound volumes are an Archivist’s donation.



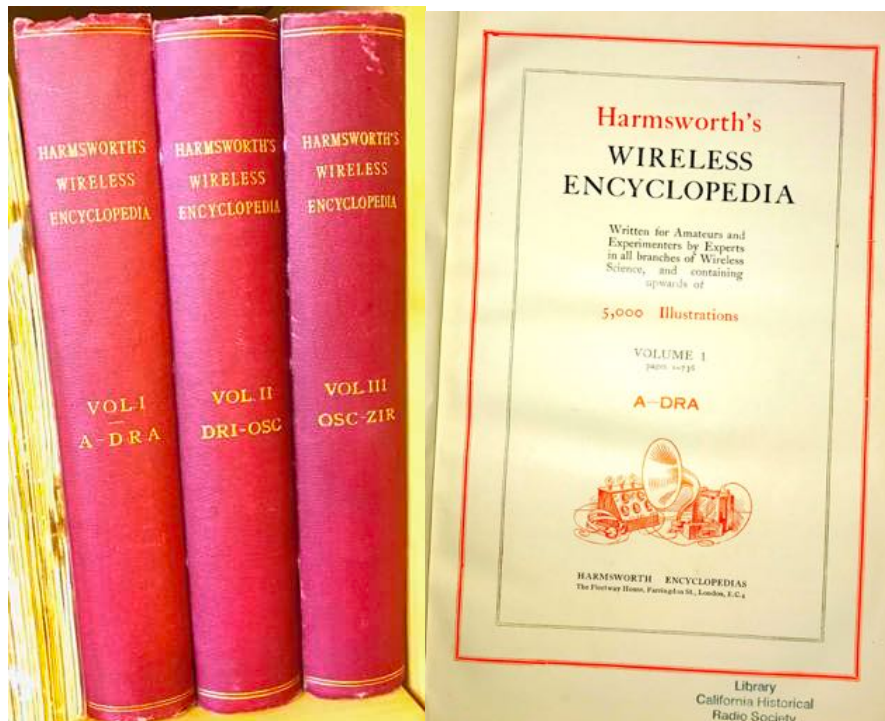
This pioneering popular technical magazine kept the country up to date on the state of the art in wireless telegraphy and associated arts from 1908 on. In these early days, it sometimes took a while for the science to catch up to the technology. It is the ancestor of *Radio News*, *Popular Electronics* and today's radio websites and publications, including much of YouTube. Hugo Gernsback could (and often did) envision the future. It took a while for a lot of the future to catch up with Hugo Gernsback.

We have also recently shelved the Marconi Company's *The Wireless World* magazines from 1913 on.



The library also holds the Marconi Company YEARBOOK for 1914 and for 1915. These and related holdings illumine the growth of the radio telegraphy industry in less than 20 years from three clicks heard in Newfoundland to a world-wide communications system.

By a generous donation from CHRS supporter Bengt Svensson, SMØUVG in Sweden, a principal of radio station SAQ, we have shelved the English HARMSWORTH'S WIRELESS ENCYCLOPEDIA. It features 5,000 illustrations of the state of the art in the mid-1920s and several wonderful charts. (He also donated an early Telefunken crystal set).



Mike Adams and Bob Rydzewski have recently posted on the CHRS websites two articles from the Archives, prepared for publication by CHRS Archivists:

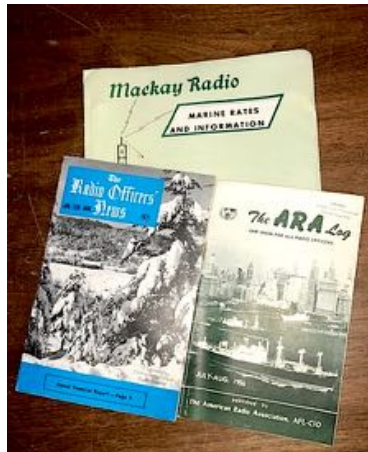
1) WILLIAM J. CLARKE AND THE FIRST AMERICAN RADIO COMPANY by H.L. Chadbourne (1982). The late H.L. Chadbourne was a member of the Society of Wireless Pioneers as a Technical Associate. Hal Layer, CHRS, provided the typescript of the unpublished book; and

2) Project OSCAR, Past, Present and Future [by W. W. Eitel W6UF; June 28, 1967]. This tells the story by a principal of getting amateur radio into space in the 1960s on the Orbiting Satellite Carrying Amateur Radio (“OSCAR”). It all started right here in what became Silicon Valley.

The library also has a collection of books relating to maritime radio, for example:



We also have, in the archives, a ship’s radio log from 1940 of a voyage to Alaska, and just recently, a Radio Officer’s union correspondence. Along with that came several magazines.



Working conditions led to many a gripe. The library also holds a good run of the 1930s *CQ* magazine for maritime radio operators. This sheds a lot of light on the gripes.

Despite the challenges, Bob Rydzewski has maintained the Society of Wireless Pioneers website (www.SoWP.org). He regularly publishes from the SoWP archives. There are many file cabinets yet to be researched.

The CHRS Radioana archives have been slenderized. We now maintain a mostly chronological radio ephemera database of hard copy. It, too, is a goldmine for history. Eight drawers of maybe 12 appear below:



A primary task, beyond gross organization, is preservation and protection of the items. As many as practicable have been ensconced in acid-free clear sleeves.



In the library, the thousands of magazines (and many, many books) have been organized and labeled by Hil Hampton and David Harris. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude. They earned their Fellowships in Preservation.

We look forward to continuing to organize the CHRS Library and Archives materials. The plan is to index it all and post the index, along with many of our interesting and important texts and graphics relating to radio history.

73 de Bart, K6VK, Archivist (v4, 31 XII '21) ##