

History of the Ogden Amateur Radio Club

Established: May 1921

ARRL affiliated: 30 January 1937

On July 12, 1982, Gordon Howes, KE7QV, and Lee Ernstrom, WA7HQD, talked with Dr. W. G. Garner, W7SU, at his home. The following is an excerpt of a story written by the hand of Dr. Garner, which relates how the Ogden Amateur Radio Club was formed. His story marks the OARC as one the oldest organized amateur radio clubs in Utah, perhaps even in the nation.

In order to make the record more complete and perhaps better understood, it is necessary to delve into a bit of personal history and some of the early day history of amateur and commercial radio activities, as I know them from personal experience, and early association with these arts and sciences in amateur and commercial fields.

As far back as I can clearly remember, it is difficult to relate to a time or era in which I was not deeply interested in means of communication, other than by personal contact.

I learned the old Morse telegraph code at the grand old age of nine years (1911). I designed and built my own telegraph key and sounder the following year and communicated by telegraph over a land line strung on fence posts, with a neighbor boy living four houses away. I read everything I could lay my hands on relative to the then rather new means of communication, "wireless telegraphy". Marconi's experiments and inventions in wireless communications intrigued me greatly. I then resolved that someday, somehow, I would have my own wireless receiver and transmitter, and become a part of that wonderful means of communication in an amateur way. Many advances and discoveries were to take place in this new field, until my dreams of accomplishment in low power wireless communication could be realized.

Before high speed, reliable code communications could be achieved, on a worldwide basis, it was necessary for stations in the United States, (most of them government owned and operated) to make drastic changes in the characters (dots and dashes) of the code in use by such stations. I am sure that most of you know or have heard of the great sea disaster, the sinking of the steamship "Titanic". This was at the time (1912) the largest and greatest passenger steamship ever built, "The Unsinkable Titanic". Its maiden voyage terminated by its sinking in the North Atlantic as a result of a collision with a gigantic iceberg.

All wireless stations in most of the world, excepting the United States, had adopted the International Morse Code as their means of communication. We stubbornly held on to the antiquated old Morse code in our communications systems. (There are about thirteen letters that differ in their components, dots and dashes, of the two codes.) This resulted in a considerable amount of confusion and somewhat hampered rescue operations when the Titanic went down. As a result of this experience, the United States did away with the old Morse Telegraph Code and adopted the International Morse Code in radio communications.

I applied for examination to qualify for an operator and station license in the late winter of 1914 and in the early spring of 1915 I took and passed the examination and met the requirements for that license from the examining officer, "Mr. Redfern", Department of Commerce, Customs Office, Seattle, Washington, and was issued the station call of 7EW, Evanston, Wyoming. My first transmitter consisted of a Ford automobile spark coil, home made spark gap, an old telegraph key and a six volt storage battery. The receiver was a home made tuning coil with a silicon detector, 1000 Ohm Murdock receiver, and a home made 23 plate variable condenser. With this "sophisticated home made equipment", I was able to hear a ship at sea communicating with two other amateurs, (unlicensed) in the area. At the time, a transmitter that was deemed incapable of

transmitting signals across state lines did not require a license from the Department of Commerce.

My next transmitter consisted of a 1/2 kW Thordason transformer with a secondary voltage of 10,000 volts, a large fixed spark gap and a heavier key for forming coded characters in dot and dashes. The old tuning coil in the receiver was replaced with a new home made variable coupler with primary and secondary windings, a new 43- plate condenser from Sears and Roebuck and a new and improved crystal detector known as a "crystaloy" detector. This device was adjusted by simply rotating a disc, instead of fishing with a "cat's whisker" for a sensitive spot in the silicon or galena detector.

About this time, Lee de Forest invented and developed his first two element vacuum tube to replace the silicon and galena detectors then in use. This was followed by the addition of a third element, called a grid that greatly increased the tubes detecting ability.

De Forest tubes were prohibitive "cost wise" to the amateur fraternity, but in a few months the audio-tron was produced for amateur use. This device was a cylindrical vacuum tube containing two elements for creating the electron stream, (one was a spare in case the other burned out). Three wires at one end protruded from the tube to form the connections for the double filament, and at the other end two wires protruded for the grid and plate connections. These tubes cost about \$5.00, a whopping sum for young experimenters in those days (1916). With the addition of this new detection device (vacuum tube detector) and my 1/2 kW transmitter, connected to a 40 foot two element antenna about 30 feet off the ground, I was able to make one of the first interstate communications between an amateur in Wyoming, and another in Utah. Myself in Evanston, 7EW, and Marvin S. Andelin, 6JT was the first Utah Amateur station with the power and capability of conducting interstate communications. I was happy to be a participant in the first Wyoming-Utah amateur radio contact.

With the entry of the United States in World War I, all amateur stations were ordered closed down and completely dismantled. All amateur radio activity ceased in the United States until a few months following the close of World War I.

In the meantime, my family moved from Evanston, Wyoming to Ogden, Utah, (366 32nd Street) where in the early spring of 1918 I again applied to the Commerce Department for a new post-war amateur radio license and was issued the call letters and license 6OT for the Ogden address. I was then serving my apprenticeship with the Lighthouse Electric Co., under the Supervision of George E Wilson and Clair Ecklund, owners of the Lighthouse Electric Company. After the required period of service and the qualifying examinations, I was awarded my journeyman electricians ticket. While at the Lighthouse Electric (approximately 2470 Washington Blvd), which at that time was located next door north of the old Washington Market, I received permission to install my radio equipment in a spare room above the store, and my antenna on the roof of their building. I applied for a license for this address and was issued the call 6OZ. The transmitter power had been increased one full kilowatt with the addition of a Benwood rotary spark gap and a sophisticated four tube receive one stage un-tuned R.F. amplifier, a regenerative detector and two stages of audio amplification were all home assembled from available commercial parts. The sensitivity results attained with this receiver were remarkable. In sensitivity, it was almost equal to the later sophisticated multi-tube jobs, available at a cost of several hundred dollars. With this equipment, communications were conducted with amateur stations in most of the United States and the Territory of Hawaii. One reliable contact was with Major Lawrence Matt, on St. Catalina Island off the coast of California.

In 1921, I became well acquainted with Glen Quillinan at 2264 Lincoln Avenue. I had coached Glen in preparation for his radio license, which he acquired in the summer of 1920, call letters, 6AEZ. Since I had no permanent place to install my equipment, and Glen had no equipment, we built a cozy shack adjoining his father's garage. I installed my equipment there and operated under his call, 6AEZ. I was chief operator and Quillinan, the second operator. There were a few

other young men in Ogden, some of whom had equipment or were in the process of acquiring some. One who had recently ordered his equipment was Ralph Flygare, who lived next door north of the old Weber Academy. Another was a young man named "Cook". I can not recall his first name. He had a 1/4 kW spark outfit at his father's residence on 24th Street between Adams and Jefferson, north side. Another was "Gene Crawshaw" K7LAA. We called him "Chickey". He was closely associated with Cook. There was one other located on Riverdale Road near Roy. I don't recall his name or call letters.

In the spring of 1921, I suggested to Quillinan that we call the known amateurs in the Ogden area together for the purpose of forming an active radio club, for the purpose of exchanging ideas and discussing progress and recent developments in the field of amateur radio communications. Quillinan thought the idea an excellent one and I personally contacted all the prospective members I knew. The meeting was called for a Saturday afternoon, about the middle of **May 1921**.

Those attending were:

W. Glen Garner

Glen Quillinan

Cook

Ralph Flygare

"Chickey" Crawshaw

One other (forgot name)

Updated history 07 May 2007.

The following information was researched/found by Tim Larson, Ph.D. of the University of Utah. He found their names in the RSUS Edition July 1, 1916 (Radio Stations of the United States).

This information was then provided to Kent S. Gardner, WA7AHY, OARC Historian updated as follows:

W. Glen Garner

Glen Quillinan

Ralph Flygare

Gene "Chickey" Crawshaw

George W. Cook (6CW) 208 27th Street, Ogden, UT (.5 kW)

Howard D. Harris (6AJA) Ogden High School, Ogden, UT (1.0 kW)

As the founder and organizer, I was elected President, Glen Quillinan, Vice President and Treasurer. No secretary or historian was elected at that time. The President was to assume the duties of Secretary. The name of the club, by unanimous vote, was to be **Ogden Amateur Radio Club**. Meetings were to be held once a month, at some specified place and time. The time, preferably Saturday afternoon, since most were available then. Thus then and there the Ogden Amateur Radio Club was born and remained active for the next few years.

I went to work for the Redfield Electric Company in charge of their radio department. While there I designed and built the transmitter, antenna and other equipment for radio station KFUR, Ogden's first broadcast station, which in later years became KLO. At that time I became studio director and chief announcer for radio station KFWA. ~~W~~Browning+brothers station on Hudson Ave, Ogden, which position I held until the station was sold to an Idaho firm and moved to Idaho Falls, Idaho.

Radio Station and operator licenses held by Glen Garner cover a period of 67 years: 7EW, 6OZ, 6S1, 6ZAM, 7SU, Army 6SI, NAVY NOSJH, Air Force AF7SU, AFA5EW.

I suppose this pretty well qualifies me as being the oldest continuously active Amateur Radio Operator in the State of Utah.

NOTE:

OARC became an ARRL affiliated club: 30 January 1937

Credits

The following is a list of persons who in some way contributed material or past articles in the Watts New, which contributed to this project.

Project Inception and Original Author Brian K8BR
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Project Consultant for Club Activities Jerry WA7ADK
Historian Gordon KE7QV
Repeater Trustee & Repeater Engineer John KC7UB
Final Edit, Layout and Typesetting Eric AC7K

Club Officers

1921

President W. Glen Garner & Secretary
Vice President Glen Quillinan & Treasurer

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Update ð received from Lee Ernstrom March 2015 via Val Campbell, K7HCP.

My call sign is WA7HQD (Lee Ernstrom), and Gordon Howes call was KE7QV.

I worked for Culligan Water Conditioning for 32 years and Dr Garner was one of my portable exchange water softener tank customers. This is how I got to know him and was able to arrange the interview with him. I also took a photograph of Dr Garner sitting at the controls of his ham station. I believe I still have that photograph if the club is interested, however, I may have given the photo to Stan Sjol, W0KP.

This "Chickey Crawshaw" referred to in the article on 24th street was actually Gene Crawshaw, K7LAA, and he was the guy who administered my Technician Class license test to me back in 1967 from which I got the call sign WA7HQD. The George Wilson, owner of the Lighthouse Electric Company was my uncle, married to one of my father's sisters until she died and then he married Electa. I just knew her as Aunt Elaine.

Lee (Doc) Ernstrom WA7HQD
Syracuse, Utah

Editor's note: A unit mentioned above was identified as a Thordason transformer. I did a search and found that it was probably a Thordarson transformer, but left the text as is to preserve what was probably common vernacular in those days.

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