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OLD RADIO

Collecting History: Logbooks and *Callbooks*

Old logbooks contain information about ham radio of the past. Many of these old logs have been lost, but some show up every so often. I have a small collection of station logs and find them fascinating. Many contain notes by the station operator, effectively creating a diary of early equipment and interests.

Old *Callbooks* contain the names and addresses of amateurs throughout the country. Using them in conjunction with logbooks increases your understanding of their activities and friendships. Sometimes you feel like you were there, operating those great rigs of the past.

Recently my friend Ray Chase, KA2JQG, purchased a quantity of antique Amateur Radio gear discovered in an attic in Trenton, New Jersey. The collection originally made up the station of William Burroughs Jr, W3AID, and included some nice early homebrew and commercially made radios, station accessories, magazines and books. He also found Burroughs' early logbooks and passed them on to me.

From W3AID's 1930 Logbook

Bill Burroughs Jr received his license and started operating on August 11, 1930. His first transmitter was a single WX-112 tube oscillator in a TNT circuit. A Pilot Wasp receiver rounded out his station. His first call was a CW test on 80 meters at 8:45 PM. He noted that the transmitter was running cool and everything appeared to be okay. The next evening he tested again, this time on phone with his friend "Clyde," W3EM, also of Trenton.

For the rest of the month he contacted W3EM almost every night. On August 27 his power supply went bad and he substituted a 45-V battery. On the August 29 he was back on with a new power supply. Starting in September he worked stations in Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts.

On November 30 he noted that Robert Durrett, W2CEE, of Brooklyn "doesn't QSL, so that's that! GRRR!"

As he gained experience his station changed. January 1931 brought a new homebrew receiver to the shack, "Built A.C. Receiver, Screen-grid Detector 1 stage (227) impedance coupled audio F.B. all aluminum except doubler which is a copper box I constructed."



The station log of William Burroughs Jr, W3AID.

September's station included, "using TNT Oscillator using 201A. Antenna Hertz 134' long end fed. W.E. Single Button 'Mike' 2-27 Speech Amp transformer coupled 2-71s in parallel as Modulators."

In January 1932 he noted, "Have rebuilt receiver. Now using 1 stage '24 untuned RF Shielded 1-'24 Det shielded."

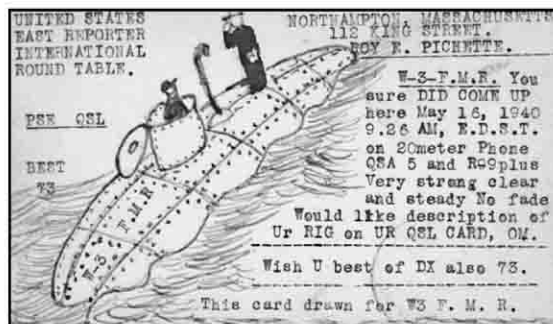
In July 1932 his new transmitter was, "Built Tuned grid Tuned plate xmitter using '45 tube with about 250 V. Seems to be plenty of Soup in the outfit." At this point his log begins to indicate contacts with more distant states in the 1, 3, 4, 8 and 9 call areas.

The last two entries in this log were on January 26, 1934, "11:15 A.M. W2GGW, 5-8, 5-7. Had quite a QSO. Had to QRX a minute while guy was in insurance. 11:40 A.M. Signed off QRM heavy WX getting sunny and warmer." Even though there were many more empty pages, it ends here without explanation.

Ships and Coastal Stations Log

His other logbook chronicled his monitoring of ships at sea and coastal stations. It was started on December 20, 1937. Even though this is a SWL logbook, he indicated his call letters as W3AID, so I assume he was still active in ham radio. A typical entry read, "Call WTCH 'Robert E. Lee' 600M, QSA 4-5, WX cool, 12:52A, Nice note."

On June 22, 1941 there is an interesting entry, "WCWM, name not listed, 600M, 5-8, WX hot, 4:00A, called WNW. Did not learn nature of distress at this



W3AID received this hand-drawn QSL card that depicted submarine activity—a subject on the minds of many as war enveloped the world in 1940.

time. While listening to this heard Germany declared War on Russia. Signed off at 4:34 A.M."

He continued listening almost every day until December 7, 1941 where he commented, "600M Listening with Clyde at 8:30. Nothing of Importance." Then he noted, "1st day of War."

On January 14, 1942 he reported the first of many war-related entries of "Sending SOS said ship torpedoed." On January 19 he reported another torpedoing.

January 29, "KUDQ 'Gulfwax' Reports SOS, 100 miles from Barnegat Light, being followed by low light heading 60 degrees true speed 12 knots."

April 4, "HPKT 'Halcyon' 34N20 59W16 being bombarded by Raider."

February 18, 1942 a sad entry, "KUTS 'Vacuum', SOS, being followed." Apparently the ship came under fire and the following comment was entered, "This was the 'Vacuum' and the op is my friend Paul Solomon, W3GRW." (I don't know if W3GRW survived the attack or not. There were no further entries about him.)

World War II

During WW-II many hams served as radio operators, both in the armed services and in the Merchant Marine. Many did not come home.

It is my assumption that W3AID was listening for SOS calls that might not be answered, so that he could assist in some way. His log, long forgotten in a dusty attic, is a personal testament of radio history.

QST