

VWOA NEWSLETTER

Email Issue #38

Francis T. Cassidy Editor

2008



The **2008 VWOA AWARDS LUNCHEON** held on **Saturday, April 26, 2008** on the Top Deck of the Seamen's Church Institute in Manhattan not only was informative and provided enjoyable companionship, but also produced a flurry of communications I felt the VWOA Membership would like to hear about.

----- Original Message -----

From: [John Curtis](#)

To: [Francis T Cassidy](#)

Subject: Re: VWOA AWARDS LUNCHEON

I read the Yearbook and showed it to the XYL. She chastised me for not making the trip to accept this distinguished and unexpected award.

I want to again thank the Association for this singular honor and am sure your banquet will be a nostalgic reminder of the Morse art that has served the world from the mid-1800's.

John Curtis

My contribution began almost accidentally. When preparing for my Extra Class Amateur license examination in 1968, I used the new art of integrated circuits to perform the logic for an iambic paddle code generator *. (Remember the "Brown" paddle?) It seemed logical to me, but a few OTs who tried it convinced me it was unusual. On their advice, I decided to market it from my garage. Many other models evolved and as they say, the rest is history.

I later incorporated and produced additional products primarily for memory programming and later for the newly emerging cellular telephone industry. Luckily, this commercial business paid the bills until April, 2000 when the company was disbanded and I retired. The keyer portion of the business was sold to MFI Enterprises who carry on the name and style of keyer.

Your plaque will be the permanent marker of this era for my family and friends.

Again 73's,
John

* And at some risk, used it for the sending portion of the test.

Mr. Frank Cassidy, Chairman

Members of the Veteran Wireless Operators Association

Greetings:

First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting my wife and me to your annual awards banquet. We enjoyed meeting the members, and I always enjoy a chance to talk about my work on the ARRL 500-kHz experiment. We thoroughly enjoyed our trip to New York City, and though it was a brief visit we managed to squeeze in a number of interesting activities, including navigating the New York City MTA.

Second, I would like to thank the VWOA for selecting me for the DeForest Audion Gold Medal. This was a real surprise, and I consider it a real honor for my work to be recognized by a group of real radio people. The short-wave radios and book were great gifts. The radio has given me a chance to be an SWL again.

Finally, I am looking forward to keeping in touch with the VWOA in the future. I hope our work on the 500-kHz experiment will indeed result in a revival of 500 kHz with the band shared among amateur and historical stations. This will allow CW to continue to be heard on 600 meters, and also allow us to continue its finest tradition, providing emergency communications.

73, Fritz, W1FR
Frederick H. (Fritz) Raab, Ph.D.

NOTICE OF VWOA SILENT KEY

It is with great regret that we must announce the passing of a long-time club member,

LEWIS COE W9CNY SK 03-03-08

The family had a private ceremony. Lew was 96 at the time of his passing on March 3.

Lewis was born on September 14, 1911 in Galva, IL, the only child of Willard and Mary Coe. He worked as a telegrapher in the Galva Post Office until moving to Crown Point in 1935 and working for U.S. Steel as a Draftsman. He was employed by the US Government during WWII in various classified positions. An avid Ham Radio Operator and member of the Lake County Amateur Radio Club and published articles in CQ Magazine and the Antique Weekly. He also authored four books on the history of the telephone, wireless and the heliograph.

LEWIS COE as told to Ed Pleuler:

Born September 14, 1911 in Kansas City, Missouri. Earliest childhood recollections are of the tall, spidery antenna wires in the backyards of “wireless” enthusiasts. Of course, at that time I had no idea what it was all about.

I grew up in Galva, Henry Country, Illinois, starting about 1918 and saw the beginnings of the “broadcast boom.” Started building receivers and eventually got one that actually worked after many attempts. Started listening to amateur radio telephone stations on the old 200 meter band. Decided this was the way to go and finally put together a station of sorts and received my amateur license W9CNY, in February 1927.

It wasn't easy to get started in those days. There was virtually no practical information available, in contrast with the flood of information available today. By some miracle, the local news stand started carrying QST and my progress was speeded up with that source of information. I say miracle because at that time I was the only amateur in town and probably the only customer for QST at 25 cents a copy.

While in High School, started learning the American Morse code and by the time I graduated in 1929 was able to go to work for the Postal Telegraph Company as a vacation relief operator. Was appointed Manager of the Postal Telegraph office at Galva in 1930. In 1933 got a transfer to the Mackay Radio Division of IT&T. Mackay was pioneering a new domestic radio telegraph service between New York, Chicago and San Francisco. The Chicago receiving station was located at Merrillville, Lake County, Indiana and I reported to that station in the fall of 1933.

Early work at the receiving station consisted of monitoring the various signals from the Mackay transmitters at New York and San Francisco to determine which would be most suitable when commercial service opened. At that time, there was a great shortage of telegraph facilities between key cities and the radio circuits were kept busy from the start. About 1938, became Chief Operator at the St. John transmitting station which was the

companion transmitter for the Merrillville receiver. This station was located near St. John, Lake County, Indiana and remained in operation until June 1942 when all domestic radio circuits were closed by war-time order. The Indiana stations of Mackay Radio were taken over and operated by the Signal Corps, U.S. Army. The Signal Corps used the stations to establish a circuit to a projected air base at Churchill, Hudson Bay, Canada. I had been "loaned" to the Signal Corps to help operate the former Mackay Stations.

When the Canadian project was cancelled, it was my job to dismantle the receiving and transmitting station and ship the equipment to the Mackay station at Brentwood, Long Island, New York. There it was overhauled and shipped to a station that Mackay was establishing at Algiers, North Africa. The remainder of my time with Mackay Radio was spent at the company headquarters at 67 Broad Street in New York. One of my last jobs for Mackay was to reactivate the New York harbor transmitter WSF. The WSF transmitter was located on the roof of the 35 story ITT building at 67 Broad Street. It was remote controlled from an operating room on a lower floor of the building.

The WSF transmitter on 500 kHz used a pair of tubes in a push-pull self-rectifying circuit with 500 Hz AC plate supply. The 100% modulated signal of WSF was beautiful to copy but devastating to the obsolete TRF receiver in

the Navy training planes that were flying in the New York area. The FCC finally decided that communicating with the many ships entering New York harbor was just as important as anything the Navy was doing and WSF continued to operate.

After leaving Mackay in 1945, returned to the Midwest and worked at a variety of jobs in the electrical field. Final job before falling into the gentle clutches of Social Security was Purdue University from 1968 to 1972. While at Purdue was involved with some of the early education television systems.

After "officially" retiring in 1972, took up free lance writing and published many articles in "Antique Week" and other magazines.

Wrote my first book:

"Great Days of the Heliograph" in 1987.

The heliograph book was self-published and my last three books were published by McFarland & Co., as follows:

The Telegraph: A History of Morse's Invention and Its Predecessors in the United States
1993

"The Telegraph A History of Morse's Invention and Its Predecessors in the United States" by Lewis Coe, a review by Gregory Raven

McFarland & Company, Inc. 1993

TK5115.C54 1993

621.383-dc20

This book is a general history of the telegraph from the perspective of its development in the United States. Lewis Coe was himself employed as a telegrapher on the Rock Island Railroad. Mr. Coe is also a member of the Morse Telegraph Club, and some of the material in this book was drawn from the quarterly publication Dots and Dashes, which is its official publication.

The book begins with a brief history of the precursors of the electromagnetic telegraph, meaning various methods of visual signaling. Coe has done more than the usual research on this subject, having previously published the excellent "Great Days of the Heliograph" which covered the use of reflected sunlight as a means of communication. The surprising overlap of visual and electromagnetic signaling techniques in the 19th century is explained, and the story proves to be quite fascinating.

Moving on to the early beginnings of electrical signaling, the efforts of European scientists and inventors are prominently acknowledged. This second chapter titled "Quick as Lightning" is interesting in that its intention is to discuss numerous telegraphic topics while simultaneously avoiding the discussion of Morse. It seems as though this chapter's purpose is to document many important facts to get them out of the way before proceeding with the rest of the telegraph's history. It is very interesting reading, however, it is important to note that this book is not a chronological history.

"Father of the Telegraph" is the story of Samuel F.B. Morse and his contributions to telegraphy. This has to be the most balanced presentation of this subject I have encountered. Most histories tend to paint Morse as the sole idea man and implementer of the telegraph. Morse had plenty of help, as Coe describes in detail. Probably the most significant contributor was Alfred Vail, both financially and technically. Coe gives Vail as much credit as possible, with the caveat that it will never be known just how much Vail contributed due to the contractual agreement whereby all credit was assigned to Morse.

Coe's chapter on the invention of the Morse telegraph is very readable and balanced. It is interesting to note that Morse is more generally known as a distinguished early American painter. Included at the end of the chapter is a list of Morse's best known paintings and their current location.

The remainder of the book covers various facets of the history and application of the telegraph. Also included is a chapter that explains how the telegraph worked from a very practical point of view. Coe's experience as a telegraph operator allowed him to write in detail on subjects a non-operator historian simply could not touch. "Learning the Trade" is short, but is a fascinating explanation of how Morse code was taught to prospective operators. The history of the transcontinental

and undersea telegraphs are well covered, as well as the association of the railroad and the telegraph.

Coe concludes his book with a chapter on the emergence of wireless communications, and finally the explanation of the replacement of the manually operated telegraph with modern automated technologies. A short discussion of the collecting of telegraph instruments is included and is accompanied by several photos of instruments in Mr. Coe's collection. I consider "The Telegraph" the best general history of Morse telegraphy that is available today. Unlike books written by academics the text is highly readable, and yet the facts presented are well documented. An appendix and bibliography are included. Coe's experience as a telegraph operator obviously added much to the book and his insights into the training and life of a telegraph operator are much appreciated. This book should prove entertaining and informative to anyone interested in any aspect of the telegraph, and I highly recommend it.

**The Telephone and Its Several Inventors
A History 1995**

Lewis Coe

ISBN 0-7864-0138-9

photographs & illustrations, appendices,
glossary, bibliography, index

240pp. library binding 1995 Description

On March 7, 1876, the U.S. Patent Office issued to a young inventor named Alexander Graham Bell what is arguably the most valuable patent ever: entitled "improvements in telegraphy," in truth it secured for Bell the basic principles involved in a telephone.

On the same day that Bell filed his patent application, a caveat (a preliminary patent document) was filed by Elisha Gray. This coincidence sparked the first of many debates over whether Bell was the true inventor of the telephone. In the early 1860s Johann Phillip Reis developed a version of the instrument, but his claims against Bell were hampered by the bungling of his lawyers in demonstrating his instrument in court. This work is a first look at the many men who developed the telephone and an examination of their claims against Bell's patent. A lay description of the phone is also provided, as well as a history of the development of the telephone system.

About the Author

Lewis Coe of Crown Point, Indiana, is also the author of *Wireless Radio* (1996) and *The Telegraph* (1993).

Wireless Radio A History 1996

All of my books are available through public libraries.

MARCONI MEMORIAL GOLD MEDAL OF ACHIEVEMENT

LEWIS COE

Born September 14, 1911 at Kansas City, Missouri. Graduated from high school at Galva, Illinois in 1929 and entered the employ of Postal Telegraph as a Morse operator. The Postal office at Galva had been established in 1891 and the original 12 line cross bar switchboard was still in use when the office closed in 1933. Transferred to the Mackay Radio division of I T & T and took part in the start-up of Mackay's point-to-point service between Chicago, New York and San Francisco. Served successively as chief operator of the Merrillville, Indiana receiving station and the St. John, Indiana transmitting station. While at Merrillville took part in receiving tests to hear VHF signals from the high altitude balloons launched at the strato-bowl in South Dakota.

During World War II was on the staff of Haraden Pratt, Vice President and Chief Engineer of Mackay Radio. One of the last assignments at Mackay was to re-activate the New York harbor transmitter, WSF, which had been closed during the war. Left Mackay in 1945 and worked at a variety of jobs in the engineering field, including building a prototype of one of the first auto focusing process cameras used in photo engraving. Last employment was a Purdue University working with educational television. After retirement in 1972 took up free lance writing and have been a regular contributor to *Antique Week* since 1983. First book was *Great Days of the Heliograph*, published in 1987 and devoted to the mirror instruments used for "sun telegraphy." Currently hold a general radiotelephone license, and amateur extra class W9CNY. Live with wife, Alice, on a small farm near Crown Point, Indiana.



In honoring his many valuable contributions to the art of radio communications and author of a number of books on land telegraphy, the Veteran Wireless Operators Association is pleased to award the
Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Achievement
to Lewis Coe

NOTICE OF VWOA SILENT KEY

WILLIAM CLAYTON WILKINSON JR N2HOH

SK 01-16-08

WVOA Author featured in NEWSLETTER #16

entitled *MY FIRST MESSAGE*

William Clayton Wilkinson Jr., 93, of Princeton, died January 16 at home in the company of his family. He was a retired engineer and active genealogist and historian.

Born in Jasper County, Indiana, he grew up wearing button shoes, using kerosene lamps in the evening, and making trips to the store in a buggy or bobsled. After graduating high school in Oxford, Ind., he worked to save enough money to go to New Orleans in 1934 to radio school, to become a shipboard radio operator.

He returned to Indiana in 1937 to attend Purdue University, graduating in 1941 with a degree in electrical engineering. Three days after graduation he started work for RCA in Camden, N.J. He was relocated to the Princeton area in 1942 when the RCA research group moved into the new RCA Laboratories on U.S. 1. His first project at RCA was on the team that developed the first airborne radar system. Later, he served as project director for

the development of the antenna systems used on a series of satellites and space missions, including Relay, Lunar Orbiter, Lunar Excursion Module, Lunar Rover, and the Viking Mars Lander. He retired from RCA in 1980, then worked as a consultant to RCA until 1988. He wrote, "For 53 years I was paid to do what I enjoyed doing."

His pastimes included a lifelong interest in genealogy, the results of which he presented in an extensive series of self-published monographs and several journal articles. This work led him to explore other historical subjects. His last publication was "Memories of the Klan in North Judson," published in the Indiana Magazine of History in December 2006, in which he recounted his memories of when, as a ten-year-old boy, he witnessed the Klan's attacks on Catholics in his community, where he was a student in the Catholic school.

An amateur radio operator for 70 years, he was also a longtime supporter of Princeton High School sports teams and the Chicago Cubs.

In 1946, he married Virginia Mary Corio. They lived briefly in Trenton, then Penns Neck before moving in 1955 to Princeton.

NOTICE OF VWOA SILENT KEY

VWOA Member ARNOLD R. GILMORE W1RYN

SK 04-19-08

Arnold R. Gilmore, 85, of Framingham, died Saturday, April 19, 2008, at the Lexington Healthcare Center. Born and raised in Springfield, he was the son of the late Charles A. and Katherine E. (Smith) Gilmore. He was the husband of Margaret T. (Dobles) Gilmore who died in 2007. Mr. Gilmore was a graduate of Springfield Technical High School and Indiana Technical College, Fort Wayne, Ind. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Merchant Marines as an electronic officer, prior to transferring to the U.S. Navy from 1941 to 1943. Mr. Gilmore worked for Raytheon, Northrup and Westinghouse as a field engineer in the Defense Electronic Division. He was a member of the Middlesex Lodge of Masons in Framingham, Scottish Rites, in Boston, Society of Wireless Pioneers and Veteran of Wireless Operators. Mr. Gilmore is survived by his two sons, Brian Gilmore and his wife, Judy, of Reno, Nev., and Rodney Gilmore of Framingham.

VWOA Life Member Lester A. Clark W1NWA

SK 11-22-07

WENDELL'S NEWS CORNER

Frank:

This is what appears on David Ring's web site. It is all in cw and the broadcast ends by saying we will listen for one hour after this broadcast before pulling the big switch. This was in Dec 1982.

To actually access the site and hear the tape go to URL:

<http://mikea.ath.cx/www.n1ea.coastalradio.org.uk/index.html>

Still another URL to visit:

Final Day of Los Angeles Radio/KOK -
December 1982 - recorded by

Pat Ballante, KF1S

"I was stationed at NMQ/Long Beach a couple of years and always liked listening to the melodious bug sending of a couple of their operators (uniquely swinging KOK). Sorry about the poor recording - I thought I had lost this tape long ago, but recently came across it in the back of drawer but was able to convert it to an audio file.

73/Pat Ballante"

Interesting Research with Radio Frequencies:

Non-invasive Targeted Radiofrequency
Cancer Treatment Destroying Cancer Cells
with Radio Waves

Subject: Kanzius Cancer Treatment - A
Possible Cancer Cure

> <URL:

<http://www.kanziuscancerresearch.com/> >

Submitted May 7, 2008 by VWOA President
Alan Ehrlich

Frank and Wendell:

When I cruised the Norwegian coast in late
April, I visited the Lofoten War Museum in the
port of Svolvær (which is above the Arctic
Circle.)

The Lofoten World War Memorial Museum first
opened 15th June 1996. It was a realization
of a lifetime achievement and interest by its
founder William Hakvaag.

I spoke with Hakvaag and took some photos. I
suggest that you visit the site at URL:

<http://lofotenkrigmus.no/>

Among the many uniforms and artifacts,
almost hidden is an exhibit about the US
Liberty ship Henry Bacon and, above that are

two oars from the Isthmian Line SS Fairfield
City.

The only other exhibit relating to the ships that
passed through Norwegian waters enroute to
and from the USSR, was a copy of a painting of
the bombing of a convoy. It was mounted
behind other items so it was hard to
photograph.

Also included were Captain Moore's entries for
the two ships.

I am sending the ships' information to the
museum. Since the English in the exhibits is in
need of refinement, I am also sending some
suggestions.

Regards, Miles D. MacMahon

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKE AT THE
2008 VWOA AWARDS LUNCHEON
held on **Saturday, April 26, 2008**



Frederick H. (Fritz) Raab, Ph.D. receiving from
VWOA President Alan Ehrlich the DeForest
Audion Gold Medal Award at the Luncheon



David Ring, Eli Morawiec & Bob Marzen



Frederick H. (Fritz) Raab, Ph.D. & our new Reverend Douglas S. Stivison, VWOA 2nd VP



J. Michael Shaw reads the Email acceptance response from VWOA Marconi Memorial Plaque awarded to John Curtis



David Ring & J. Michael Shaw



Wendell R. Benson & John Chooljian



Mrs. John Fauske, Liv Aune, Diana Eigen
and John Fauske

We at the VWOA Newsletter would like to hear from you and try to pass along to the rest of the VWOA stories of events that you have experienced and that you feel the rest of the membership would enjoy hearing about. Send us a picture or two and we will try to include it in one of our Email Newsletters.

We would prefer to hear from you by Email at:

ftcassidy@optonline.net

or

wenben@nyc.rr.com

but if you must, send mail to:

VWOA

PO Box 1003 Peck Slip

New York NY 10272-1003