

The Beginning of the Cleveland Amateur Radio Club

By

Larry G. Ledford KA4J

There had been an interest in Radio in Cleveland even before the First World War. W.O. Horner, an optometrist and jeweler in Cleveland had a station in his office to communicate with and receive time signals from the Elgin Watch Company in Elgin Illinois. In the very first issue of QST, the official magazine of the American Radio Relay League, published in 1915 there was an ad for an audio amplifier that contained a testimonial from Mr. Horner. So he had set up his station before that. The Horner family is still in business in the same location, although they no longer sell jewelry. There is a photograph of Mr. Horner's shop in the waiting room of his grandson's office. His wireless equipment can be clearly seen. He had help with his station, James Hancock was an operator and Mark Taylor who was a maintenance man at the railroad helped him construct his station and erect an antenna.

Newspapers in the larger towns carried construction articles that taught builders how to make simple receivers and transmitters. These newspapers were sold all around the country. There were also magazines that had construction articles in them.

Licensing was an informal thing before 1912 when the Commerce Department began issuing licenses. Before that an operator used his initials as his call sign. Spark transmitters were used with a coherer and later a crystal detector for a receiver. Even the spark coils from Ford Model T cars were used although they were very low powered with a short range. Most hams operated on a wavelength of about 200 Meters which is in what is now the AM broadcast band. The term frequency was not much used as there was not an easy way to check frequency. The actual frequency was mainly determined by the antenna, which was made as high and long as possible. Everyone tended to be on or near one frequency. Range was short even when the spark transmitter was running 1000 watts. When Edwin Armstrong's regenerative circuit for receivers was developed in 1915, ranges became longer. And when low power vacuum tube CW transmitters were used after World War one, great range was possible. It was discovered that 5 watts of CW could work farther than 1000 watts of spark.

The short range of the early stations was the reason the American Radio League was formed. Its goal was to link stations together and relay messages to distant locations.

The government created the Federal Radio Commission to clean up the mess and required amateurs to be licensed and take tests. They were required to operation on the "useless" wavelengths above 200 meters. The FRC did a poor job

of managing broadcasting so the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) replaced the FRC in 1934.

In 1914 several young men in Cleveland became interested in radio and Mr. Horner taught them radio theory with John Hancock, a Railroad telegrapher teaching them the code. The men were: JD Slaughter, Andrew Herring, Philip Lang and Lym Neil.

Before the First World War the Commerce Department required stations to have a license. There were no tests. The license was more to keep the amateurs out of Navy and commercial wavelength than anything else.

When the U.S. went to war in 1917 all amateur stations were shut down. A government inspector would visit the home of the amateur and the equipment was placed in a container that had a seal placed on it. Dire warnings were given to anyone that opened the container. This was a precaution to stop any spying by the Germans. One of the older hams in Chattanooga, Hack Van Hoosier was given a complete spark station that had been hidden by a German immigrant. It was speculated the man was in communication with Germany His daughter found it in the attic and gave it to Hack in the 1940s.

After the war, the Navy did not want to give the frequencies back to the amateurs. They felt that they were too valuable to give away. Intensive lobbying by the American Radio Relay League resulted in the bands being reopened in 1920.

JD Slaughter and William Roddy set up a jointly owned station and operated it until Mr. Roddy moved to Chattanooga in 1924. Mr. Roddy kept the call that later became W4AM. Roddy was very active and was noted for communicating with a Mr. Stigall, a missionary in the Belgian Congo. The call W4AM is now used by the Frye Amateur Radio Club in Chattanooga.

Slaughter then got a call of his own, W5AMF. Tennessee was at that time in the 5th call area. When it was moved to the 4th call area in 1926, he was issued W4MU. Slaughter helped other to get their licenses: C.P. Carroll W4OV, Bill Stewart W4BDB, and William Fox W4DRI. Carroll also had the call W4FIQ for a station he had at the National Guard Armory.

By 1962 there were perhaps 24 hams in Cleveland. But there were many more that were interested but did not know how to get into it. According to call book records I have found, the following were licensed by 1962:

W4BDB Bill Stuart,
WN4BTE Ben Chism
WN4CGC Dixson Kerr
W4EXG Horace Goins

W4BEK Bill Lange,
WN4CBG Charles C. Rhodie,
WN4EJL John Martin
W4FSG Glynn Markham

**W4GZX Bill Collett
W4IYU Bob Carr
K4MJX Frank Olesson
W4MSJ John M. Lile
W4PEH Donald B. Batchelor
W4UCW B. Glynn Rogers
W4UOZ John D. Cavett
W4WON John Atchley**

**W4HQO James Gibson
W4JJK Thomas Gibson
K4MQI Bill Grigsby
W4MU J.D. Slaughter
K4SLO Charles H. Dailey
W4UKI Charles Daugherty
K4UZK James E. Mann
W4ZEX Ernest L. Ingram**

My list may not be complete. I should note that Mr. Slaughter passed away before 1962. The WN4 calls were novice stations. Many of these names and calls are unknown, I suspect that some moved away, died or just lost interest in ham radio. A strong club could help hold interest in the hobby.

Amateurs that were no longer listed in the call book but were known to have been licensed previously were:

**W4OV/W4FIQ Charles Carroll W4IUC Winston Coffey
W4MND William Turner W4FSG Glynn Markam
W4PLV Jack Seaborn W4QDR Glenn Williams
W4DRI William Fox**

Some of these passed away and at least two moved away.

The Cleveland Amateur Radio club had its beginning in 1962. In January, an article in the Cleveland Daily Banner announced that a course in Amateur Radio would be held in the city courtroom above the city jail. It was sponsored by the Bradley County Civil Defense office. The news release told that anyone interested could come and that no previous knowledge of radio theory was needed, only a desire to become a "Ham". Instructions were to be given both in radio theory and in the Morse code. At the end of the course, FCC tests would be given. The fee was a modest \$3.00. The students were required to purchase the American Radio Relay League's license manual, which was available in Chattanooga for 50 cents. I was a senior in High School and along with two other classmates decided to attend. One other student could not afford the cost of the classes and the extra gas to attend twice a week.

At this time a simple test of 50 questions on radio theory and government regulations and a sending and receiving test in Morse code at 13 words per minute was required to pass for the conditional class license. Licenses were issued by the Federal communications Commission. The actual testing was supervised by local volunteer licensed amateurs.

Civil Defense was looking for radio operators to provide communications in case of natural disasters or war with the Russians. This was in the midst of the

“Cold War”. Mention was made at the sign up session that radio equipment would be made available to anyone that would work with the Civil Defense.

About 40 people showed up for the sign up but many did not sign up because they thought that they would be given licenses like the ones for the Citizen Band or that they could learn to repair radios. Perhaps thirty did sign up but many of them dropped out. I think 13 finished the course and received a license.

Bob Carr W4IYU who was a radio engineer and announcer at radio station WCLE taught most of the theory and all of the Code. Bob was also the radio officer for Civil Defense. Charles Daughtry W4UKI who was the engineer at WBAC and ran a radio and TV repair shop did the rest of the theory classes.

Bob started the code instruction by teaching about five letters at a time and making simple words with them. When he had introduced all the letters and numbers, He would record lessons in code on a reel to reel tape recorder and would play them. One of the students was Fred “Smitty” Smith who had been a signalman in the Navy in World War Two. He had not learned code by sound but could read it by flashing light. The tape recorder that Bob used had a neon bulb that indicated audio levels and Smitty could watch it and call out what was being sent. When Bob saw what he was doing, he covered the bulb with a piece of paper and explained that he wanted everyone to copy by ear. Smitty could also send and receive by wig-wag flag.

Classes were held two nights a week and students were encouraged to practice copying code at home. Daily if possible. Some people had receivers and could listen in to the daily code broadcasts that the league sent. Some of us had records with code on it that we used. This was before cassette players were made.

I need to explain that there was very little radio equipment in Cleveland. Only hams or would be hams had equipment and most of them valued it highly and would not part with it. There were two stores in Chattanooga that sold used gear on consignment. If you could afford it, it could be obtained by mail order. There was Radio Shack but it had only one store in Boston and sold radio parts, war surplus and new gear by mail.

When the director of the Civil Defense office, Morris Green was asked about the radio gear that we had been promised; he explained that the gear would remain the property of Civil Defense. Furthermore it was World War Two surplus that would require conversion to operate on house current. What he wanted to do was to stock the fallout shelters around the county with this equipment. The conversion was beyond the capability of most of the members and they declined to take any. This led to some hard feelings towards the CD director.

After the lessons, discussions were held on prior experiences and any gear that a student might have. These discussions created a fellowship that we wanted to continue after the course was over. It was suggested that we form a club. Don Rose

was the main organizer and got the ball rolling. Don worked at Bowater and began meomographing all sorts of handouts with circuits and important information. A constitution was written and voted in on June 22, 1962. And so the club was born. Jimmy Still was elected the first President.

There was much speculation about possible calls. We all wanted W4 calls but they had been exhausted and WA4 calls were issued. In those days you had to wait until the FCC sent your license to know for sure what the call was. Except that you were likely to receive a small plastic plaque with your new call on it from one of the mail order houses and a catalog with your new call on the address.

Those that passed:

Don Rose WA4GOM	Jimmy Still WA4GJU
Henry Gatlin WA4 GJW	Jim Hay WA4 GOL
Larry G. Ledford WN4HPE	Glen Clayton WA4HFD
Fred Smith WA4HLS	Jack Stewart WA4JET
Warren Pirkle WA4GJX	Mike Pierce WA4GJV
Joe Wilson WA4GYU	

I do not think this list is complete, I recall one other man by the name of Spruel that passed and there may have been others.

The club wanted a club call to use during contests and at a later club station. The call of JD Slaughter was requested but was denied because he had passed away before the club was formed. Instead we were issued the call sign WA4VNP. We used it until one of our members, Bill Collett passed away. We requested his call, W4GZX and received it.

The club began meeting in the Civil Defense office in the basement of the old courthouse. It was a dingy place in the 1890s building. I remember having to sit on wooden shipping boxes and large wooden spools, as there were few chairs. There was a small side room for the radio operation where Bob Carr was converting an Army transmitter to use on the low bands. Later that year the building was demolished and we met again in the city courtroom above the jail. After the meeting we would stand around out side the entrance and talk. We were drawn to the coke machine in the hallway. We noticed that people driving by would slow down and look at us. We finally figured out that they thought we were visiting friends or relatives in jail!

When the new courthouse was finished we again started meeting in the new Civil Defense office until we out grew it and had to meet in one of the courtrooms. The club members helped build a partition in the basement for a radio room. It had a feel of an unfinished basement. It had been designed for use as a fallout shelter but was normally used as a garage for courthouse employees. We later were given permission to meet in a house behind the North Rebel Drive-in. The house and restaurant were owned by Emary Bryant WB4BSD. We shared the building with

the rescue squad. We had a back room all to our selves and made a radio room out of it.

The club and the rescue squad out grew that building and we moved to a metal building behind Bradley Memorial Hospital. This site was known as the Zulu building because that is what the rescue squad called it on their frequencies. This building was also used by the Highway patrol. We again had our own room that we made into a ham shack. The club started acquiring equipment. We had a Heath HW-100 low band rig. We had a burglary one night, the HF rig and a two meter rig was taken along with microphones, a wattmeter and SWR bridges. Strangely most of the equipment was returned. One of the rescue squad members found a box sitting next to the door with everything but the wattmeter inside. It is still a mystery as to who took it.

The club encouraged it's members to go mobile on six meters and that was used to help provide communications for the oral polio vaccine drive that was organized in the early 60's. Some of the members also went to Chattanooga to help with the March of Dimes telethon for Polio. The club also began operating as a club in the VHF contests sponsored by the ARRL and by CQ magazines. The best ones were done on outings to the mountains of Polk County. Oswald Dome and Sassafras Knob were the usual spots. Initially the club had no equipment of its own but relied on the members to take their equipment on the outing. It was a hassle to have to take down a member's so the club bought a six meter yagi, a rotor, a "push up tower" and several lengths of coax. We also bought a footlocker and had numerous lengths of rope to guy the antenna. When we discovered that we were missing many contacts on two meters because of a lack of a rig, the club bought a used Gonset "Gooney Box" transceiver from Amateur Radio Electronics in Milwaukee. We got a eleven element Yagi from Curle's Radio in Chattanooga that cost about \$15.00. The first time we used two meters on a contest, there was an opening in to the mid West that raised our contest score.

Two meters opened a new vista to us. Several members purchased "Twoers" from Heath and I got a Clegg "22er". We set up a net and had several people on the air. All operation was on AM and there were no complaints of TVI.

Later we began to operate Field Day. Once we used the Clubhouse and another time we used the cabin at Johnson's woods.

In 1962 Amateur Radio was different from today. On the lower bands AM was being replaced by Single Side Band. With many AM carriers on the bands, heterodynes filled the bands. The new Sideband signals used no carrier and took up only half the bandwidth. There was almost a war conducted by the older hams that ran AM who did not want to change. I think there were two reasons: Most of them had built their own gear many years before and were reluctant to learn the new sideband technology. While you could build sideband transmitters, they were complicated and required test equipment most old timers did not have. The typical

ham that operated sideband, used an exciter, which was a low powered transmitter. He had to use an amplifier to get his power up to a usable level. He used a separate receiver. The older hams tried to copy the sideband signals but it was difficult with an old receiver with drifting oscillators and without proper filters. And if he was using a homemade regenerative receiver it was next to impossible. Most of the older hams were retired and did not have the money to buy new gear. You would hear comments on the air of people using "Ancient Modulation" and the AM users complained of the "Mickey Mouse" sounds of sideband and called it single slop bucket. Transceivers were just coming into use with the Collins KWM-1 and KWM-2. And those made by Hallicrafters and National. But they were expensive. The Heath Company began producing quality kits that were affordable and relatively inexpensive. They helped many people to get on sideband. All gear was tube type. The first rig to use transistors was the SBE-32, which was a hybrid with tubes for the driver and final.

The most popular band was six meters. With almost all operation on low power crystal control AM. Five watts of power and a small beam antenna would give you local coverage of 50 to 75 miles and when there was an opening, you could work all over the country and Canada.

The downside of six meters was TVI or television interference. Six meters was right next to channels two and three. If the TV set owner had an older set and a less than perfect antenna, interference was very likely. And many hams built their own six meter transmitters. These often had little or no shielding or filtering and were a major source of interference. There was a transmitter that was built by Bob Carr and had been traded around town. Each owner kept it until the TVI became impossible to live with. It earned the nick name of "the Monster". It ran about 75 watts to a 6146 and was a good rig except for the fact that it caused interference on all channels. It was rumored to cause interference even when it was unplugged and turned off.

There was another smaller transmitter that I traded for that ran about 15 watts and was much cleaner on the air. It was quite ugly though and was nicknamed "The little Monster". It had been built by one of the salesmen at Curle's Radio in Chattanooga.

The club soon started a net on six meters. A frequency of 50.2 Megacycles (as it was called then) was chosen. Chattanooga had a net on 50.4. Crystals were ordered and cost a whopping 50 cents each. These were War surplus also. There must have been several millions of them made. Jack Stewart WA4JET started a club CW net for novices on 40 meters (7165 KCS). It was called the Bear Net and Buddy Kimsey WA4NIV also served as net control.

FM was not used except by a very few on the westcoast. It did not become popular until the late 1960s when Hams started converting commercial units that were surplus from police departments and other public service users. Then

imported transistor transceivers became the rage. These were called "rice boxes". A separate crystal for each frequency was required, one for transmit and one for receive.

In the 1980s the club negotiated a lease with the city for property on Johnson Boulevard and we had several fund raising efforts and were able to build the present clubhouse. We contracted for the block masonry but the members did all the rest of the work of roofing, plumbing, electrical and painting. We begin meeting weekly as the work was being done and also on Saturdays. When it was finished we went back to twice a month.

Notable Members

Jim Hay WA4GOL

Jim was one of the founding members and served as president for several terms. In my opinion, he was the best president we ever had. Jim had served in several civic clubs such as the Lions and the Kiwanis clubs as president and knew how to conduct a meeting under parliamentary procedures. He would not allow anyone to sidetrack motions by discussing some other matter. His meetings were short because of his discipline. He would tell everyone that the time for rag chewing was after the meeting had closed. Jim was well into his seventies when he got his ticket. He had run a laundry on Central Avenue for many years. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

He told the story of when he got interested in ham radio in the 1930s. He knew JD Slaughter very well. Slaughter had constructed several simple 5 meter transceivers and had loaned one to Jim. He would call him on the phone and get Jim to talk on the radio. This was bootlegging and was illegal but done in many areas. It was a long way to the FCC's office and it is doubtful if he would have been caught but Jim took the radio back out of fear.

Jim said that one night he got a call from Slaughter who was working Australia on the 20 meter band. He had Jim get up and come to his house to hear the contact. Jim said that he had already gone to bed but got up to go. He slept in a nightshirt and just left it on and stepped into his pants. He stayed for a while and had to go back to bed. He had to go to work early and when he went to put his clothes back on he discovered that his undershorts were missing. He was afraid that if his wife noticed that they were missing she would think his late night visit was to some other place. He surmised that they had gotten down into his pants leg when he had gone to Slaughters. He drove over to slaughters house and found them lying in the grass wet with dew.

When he got his license Jim bought very good equipment for the time. He used a Hallicrafters HT-37 transmitter, a Drake 2B receiver and a Heath amplifier. Jim lived on a small lot on Parker street and was able to erect a dipole for 75 but didn't feel he had enough room for a tri-band yagi so he bought one of the Hy-Gain

“Hy-tower” verticals. It was struck by lightning one day, destroying a Cushcraft “Blit-plug” lightning arrester. It was vaporized. It also damaged a coil in the front end of his receiver. He placed a large knife switch at the base of the antenna to short it to ground. He would often forget the switch was shorting out the antenna and would wonder why he could not hear anyone.

For six he had a sixer for the local nets. He was very active on all the bands and on the 3980 Tennessee net. He had a son that lived in California and he would work a ham there who would allow his son to come over and talk. The Ham that he talked to was the granddaughter of former President Hoover.

When he was in his mid 80s, Walt Craig, one of our younger members was teasing him about his age and asked him, “Jim, at about what age does a man lose interest in women?”

Jim smiled and said, “You’ll have to ask someone older than me!”

Bill Collett W4GZX

Bill had been in the Air Force during the Korean War and stationed in Japan. He was traveling in a transport plane that was forced down into the Yellow Sea. He spent three days in the water before he was rescued. This exposure ruined his health. He was able to go to work in Oak Ridge but had to quit because of his health. In Oak Ridge he worked with JD Slaughter who helped him get his ticket. He was never a CW man and got a “Technician” license. He had to go on disability.

Bill was an experimenter and builder. He was constructing transistor logic circuits before TTL was invented. I remember him building a seven segment digital readout made with transistors, light bulbs and strips of Plexiglas. This was before LEDs and liquid crystal displays.

Bill never married and lived with his family on Spring Place Road. He had a ham shack built into the rear of a garage. It was a comfortable operating room. Being a technician, he could only work six meters.

After the club was formed he was invited to join the club, which he did. He died early when he was in his 40s from diabetes. The club asked his family if the club could apply for his call for the club’s station. They approved it.

JD Slaughter W4MU

While he was not a member of the club, JD was the first licensed Amateur in Cleveland. He studied with Mr. Horner and was a very active Ham. In the 1920s when broadcasting began he helped popularize it when he would listen in to prize fights, ball games and elections and provide the results to the local newspapers. He worked at the Tennessee Power Company. During World War Two and afterwards he worked in Oak Ridge. He made many friends overseas with his contacts with the

Hams there. One of them in South America sent him a pet; a small monkey that caused a problem. It was JD's habit as it was with many others to operate late into the night on the 75 Meter phone band, in what is called a roundtable. Each ham would take a turn to talk about any subject they wanted to, all the while drinking beer. His monkey had the run of his ham shack and JD made a comment on the air about how he thought that the monkey had urinated in his beer. Only he did not say urinate but a more common term. Some one at the FCC monitoring station heard this and as the word he had used was forbidden, JD had his license suspended for six months.

As a painter, I worked for his daughter, Mrs. Jones and asked her about his ham shack, which was in a separate building behind his house. She told me that she was only in it a few times. He made her unwelcome and she was not invited to stay. JD's grandson is local businessman Allen Jones.

JD was responsible for many people getting their licenses.

Don Rose WA4GOL

Don Rose was the spark plug that got the club off on a solid foundation. It was a democratic club and was well run. \$5.00 a year was the set dues. The money was immaterial, It was too little to do much bur it paid what expenses we had. Don was multi talented: he could build and repair radios and would set up antenna parties for new hams to erect their antennas. He helped recruit members for Air Force Mars, built and tuned teletype converters to use with machines we received from Mars. He operated VHF and HF Mars and he served as net control on VHF and was the local Mars assistant Mars Director. He was a talented carpenter and was building a new house while our school was going on. He was a good mechnect as well. When the club started schools to train new hams and upgrade others, he was one of the teachers.

Smitty WA4HLS

Milton Fred (Smitty) Smith was one of the original students and founder of the club. He had a dynamic personality and a great voice on the air. He was active in all the nets and was always there on field day and VHF contests. He served as president and as secretary. He had one misadventure on one of the contest outings to Bean Mountain. As he was rounding a curve on the steep last mile up the mountain, the steering arm on his car broke and he went off the road with his car coming to rest on its side against a tree. This all happened during a rainstorm. When we went to see about him he had got out of the car and found cover inside the trunk of the car. He was squatting down with a tent over his head to keep dry. He was not hurt and came on up to operate in the contest.

Jessie McCreary WB4BKF

For several years the club had a male only membership. This was not because women were not welcome but because none had expressed any interest. The first lady member was Elaine Anderson and shortly afterwards Jessie attended one

of our classes and got her license. She wanted to be a ham to talk with her son in Florida. He was Bill Turner W4MND who had been a ham when he was a teenager in Cleveland. After collage he went to work for NASA in Florida. Long distance calls were expensive so she got her ticket. Jessie had a problem with the written tests but was a whiz on code. She could easily copy 20 words per minute but said that the written part of the tests were worded "tricky." Because of several scandals of fraud in test taking by mail, The FCC now required everyone taking a conditional test or higher to take in in front of a FCC official either at their office or at one of the remote locations that they visited on a rotating basis.

Jessie had been widowed twice and worked in her own beauty parlor. As she got older, her vision started to fail. She had given herself a permanent and her hair turned a light green. To day it wold not stand out but in the 1960s it did! Jessie was recording secretary for several years and was often the only female at the club. But that did us a favor...it kept the language cleaner as she would not allow cursing or off color jokes in her presence.

Her son gave her a Swan 500 low band rig that she had trouble getting on frequency for her skeds with him. I would have to go by often to get it back on frequency.

When she was unable to take care of herself, she moved to Orlando to live in an assisted living facility. She died there.

Henry Gatlin WA4GJW

Henry Gatlin had been an Army radio operator during World War Two. He was one of the first Americans into Japan after the Japanese had surrendered. He provided communications back to General McArthur. He had been wounded during one of the island invasions before that. He said that his group was being shelled and a downed log had been hit and rolled over on to him.

Henry had had a long interest in radio and had researched the activities that led to J.D. Slaughter and others getting their licenses. He must have done this while he was in high school. It was done up and printed in a Chattanooga newspaper. Henry told me that he and his father had visited an experimenter who demonstrated television to them in the early thirties. Now this was a very primitive type of television that used a scanning wheel for a screen and the signals were sent on some of the clear channel broadcast stations. Henry could not remember the man's name as he was very young. I suspect that it was JD Slaughter.

Henry was married with two children and that was probely why he did not pursue getting a license until 1962. He was an insurance salesman.

Henry earned two nicknames: "Sore finger" and "Q-zed". He was working Bob Carr on six and his transmitted audio was weak. Bob asked him if he was

talking into the back of the carbon microphone. He told him he was. Bob told him to turn it over. He said he couldn't...He had been helping his wife trim the roses and had stuck a thorn in his right thumb and had to use his left hand to key the mike and that made the mike face away from his face. He was called Q-zed because when he would use the Q signal QRZ (pronounced Q R ZED) that means "Who are You?" He would shorten it to Q Zed. Glen Clayton teased him about it for years.

Henry was very good at code because of his army training but seemed to prefer phone operation. He had one of the first transistor Single side band transceivers in town when he bought a SBE 34.

Henry was a "horse trader" not in horses but in radio equipment. He was very good at it and would after a trade, ask that you not tell anyone how you had beat him in the trade. Later after thinking about it you would see how he had beat you in the trade. There was a great deal of trading and a standard was used to determine the value of equipment. Amateur Radio Supply in Milwaukee ran ads and mailed out circulars for sales of new and used equipment. The prices shown for the used gear became the standard for pricing.

Henry's health deteriorated and he was told that he had had a silent heart attack. He had to take a lot of medicine and some of it slurred his speech. People that did not know him well accused him of being drunk but he was not.

Member "X"

I must also mention one of our members who'll remain nameless. He lived in Polk County, was married with several children. His wife worked as a waitress at the Rebel Drive-in. He always was short of money. I know that Bill Grigsby, the club president at the time gave him money and clothes so that the children would not do without. He was a very likeable fellow and very friendly.

He worked as a mechanic for one of the auto salvage yards and bragged about how he and the owner could rebuild a wrecked car back into a useful condition in a week end. Well he could... but the way it was done, they bought a wrecked car and removed all the VIN numbers and placed them on an identical stolen car. The stolen car now had a new identity and could be easily sold.

One of the auto thief victims saw her car being driven by the new owner and called the police. The title and all the numbers matched the wrecked car but the victim insisted that it was her car. The car had been stripped of everything but the victim said that she had had a problem with a vibrating vent on the air conditioner and had wedged it into quietness with a piece of paper. The police inspected the vent and found a piece of paper; which was a receipt with the name of the victim on it. She got her car back and the owner of the auto salvage yard went to prison. It shut down a thief ring.

He also had a sideline: he had a propane heated moonshine still hidden in the woods near his home. Some one tipped the revenue agents as he was just starting to haul a load to a bootlegger. When he was cornered he abandoned the car and fled back to his house where he called the police and reported his car stolen. He had a mobile rig in his car, a Heath HW-12, a single band 75 meter transceiver. His car was confiscated by the state and taken to Nashville. He was arrested but was acquitted. He was able to get his car returned to him. But when he got it back, the mobile radio was missing. He tried to sue the state for a stolen Collins KWM-2, a much more valuable radio. But he could not prove he had ever bought one, they would not pay him.

We have had some other interesting members: One that was certified insane and was admitted twice to a mental hospital. He was one of the nicest guys you could ever meet but he wasn't able to cope with his life. We had a FBI agent who would not talk about his work. Another member worked for the CIA and went into Iran during the hostage crisis.

Sources:

The "Radio" file at the historical branch of the Cleveland public Library.

The call books at the club:

Volume 27 #3 Fall 1949

Volume 29 #9 Fall 1951

Volume 32 #1 Spring 1954

Volume 40 #1 Spring 1962

"Fifty Years Of A.R.R.L." 1965

"CQ Anthology II" 1962

My personal memories and records. (being a pack rat has some advantages)

This is a work in progress and will be enlarged. This part is released for the club's 50 anniversary.

Larry G. Ledford KA4J

April 12, 2012