



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 41, Issue No. 1 • Winter 2015-16

AH, MEMORIES

By: Wally Footz

In 1951, after five months of training with the local Station Agent, I was hired by the Canadian National Railway as an Agent/Operator on the Mountain Region. My career went from Agent/Operator to Terminal Transportation Planning Officer over the 36 years. I had many experiences and events that made my life interesting. I recall two events with some international flavor, both happening just months apart. In those days, we still had Passenger service.

In 1955, I was working as the night operator at Vermilion, Alberta. Train number 5 arrived about 2 a.m. with the usual passengers, express, luggage and mail. I did my normal duties, putting away express, checking the yard, and book work. About

three hours later, I noticed that there was a lady sitting in the waiting room. I asked her if she was waiting for someone as I was locking up for the night. With what sounded to be a Texas drawl, she

said Mr. __ was to meet her. I recognized the name as being a small local farmer. I told her I would wait with her. He did show up about an hour later with his small truck. We loaded up her two trunks and off they went.

The next night I came to work at 10:00 p.m., and there she was, sitting in the waiting room with her two trunks. When I opened my ticket wicket, she was there and asked to buy a one way

ticket to __Texas. Before I even had a chance to check the route and fare, she started telling me her story. Apparently they got together through an Ad



A young Wally Footz served as Station Agent at Ribstone in 1957

continued on page 5 ➡

Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

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Note: If possible, please include a copy of an obituary and other available information about his/her career and relationship to telegraphy and/or the telegraph industry.

Donations of telegraph instruments, telegraph ephemera, historical materials or requests for assistance with museum exhibits, telegraph demonstrations, or other consultation should be directed to:

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General correspondence, which doesn't fall into the above categories, should be directed to the International Secretary/Treasurer:

Position open to anyone interested

Local Chapter Members: Members of local chapters should send all correspondence regarding address changes, membership renewals and similar information to their local Chapter Secretary/Treasurer. If you do not know your Chapter Secretary/Treasurer, please inquire with the International Secretary/Treasurer to obtain the necessary contact information.

Your Articles and Stories: MTC is always looking for original photographs, stories and articles about your experiences in telegraphy or radiotelegraphy. Please send articles and news stories to the Editor of *Dots & Dashes*.

Telegraph Talks and Demonstrations: If you or your local chapter should schedule any demonstrations, talks or other special events, please notify the International President so he can publish your event in our on-line calendar.

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The next issue of *Dots & Dashes* is scheduled for publication on March 30th, with submission deadline three weeks prior to that date.

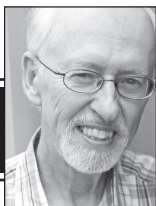
☛ This ad runs routinely in the *World Radio News*:

Morse Telegraph Club Landline Morse is Alive and well!

Dots & Dashes newsletter
The Ace Holman national telegraph office & hub
Internet Telegraphy Railroad Telegraphy
Morse Telegraph demonstration

Learn more about the history of the telegraph or
simply enjoy using American Morse Code and
authentic telegraph equipment.

www.morsetelegraphclub.org



Sidewire

Comments from the
Editor of *Dots & Dashes*

By Jim Wilson



Welcome to a new year with its new opportunities. During 2016, I urge you to look for those often hidden opportunities to demonstrate the electric telegraph and to tell the world about the revolutionary invention that changed the world that we live in today. Also, during 2016 I ask you to tell a friend about the Morse Telegraph Club and invite that friend to your local chapter meeting or to a telegraph demo. I have faith that YOU can do it!

The Morse Telegraph Club will again have an exhibit booth at the Dayton Hamvention in Ohio on May 20-21, 2016. MTC invites you to come join the fun.

An MTC International Secretary-Treasurer is desperately needed. Currently, President Jim Wades is shouldering both his job as MTC International President and the temporary job of International Secretary-Treasurer. If you have the time and the skills, please submit your resume for this extremely important volunteer job. In addition to the millions of dollars per year salary, (more or less), the satisfaction of a job well done will be your payment!

During 2016, you will be able to view the documentary film, "Great American Railroad Journeys," featuring MTC International President Jim Wades and Washington-Baltimore Chapter President Hubert Jewell. Recall that this British Broadcasting Film (BBC) was made in September 2015, with some of it filmed in Baltimore, Maryland at the B&O Railroad Museum [front page article, Fall 2015 issue]. I'll advise you of the dates when this BBC film will be aired.

If you know of a book or movie about the telegraph and you want to share these with our members, please write a review and send it to me, or tell International Vice President Chris Hausler about the book or movie so that Chris can write a review. Read Chris's current lively book and movie reviews on pages 16-18.

And please continue to send me your articles and stories and photographs. Your life stories, treasured information, make *Dots & Dashes* the exciting reading that it has become. This issue includes some of your exciting life adventures.

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



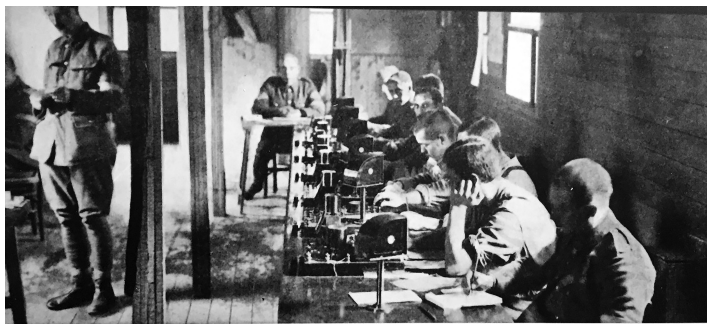
Accuracy in Museum Displays

The stories of inaccurate telegraph displays at museums are legion. Hardly a month goes by that a MTC member doesn't tell the story of a museum display utilizing ham radio gear in a railroad depot, displaying the wrong code, or referencing period incorrect photos and the like. Such errors are not limited to small museums. Sometimes, major museums with an International reputation are the worst offenders. An excellent example was seen at the 2006 International Telegraphers Reunion at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village at Dearborn, Michigan. There, in the railroad depot, stands a large glass panel displaying the Continental Code rather than the contextually correct American Morse Code. When this error has been pointed out to staff and management at The Henry Ford, the response can only be described as "arrogant denial."

On a more humorous note, one can't help but laugh a bit at situations in which a curator feels he must know more than the man or woman who was actually employed in the commercial telegraph or railroad industry simply because he has a degree in history! Taken the right way, this can be the source of almost endless laughter.

Of course, most errors in museum annotation and exhibits result from the best intentions. No one is an expert in all fields and the history of a highly specialized industry, such as telecommunications, is likely confusing at best. All too often, museum management turns to individuals with whom they are comfortable for answers. This may be a nearby ham radio operator or a friend or relative who is only slightly better informed than the person responsible for developing the display.

Recently, while on a trip to North Platte, Nebraska for Union Pacific, I stopped at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum and Library. Hoover is a fascinating man who is often given short shrift by history that is still tainted by partisan politics. Because Hoover's entry into public life (he was a mining engineer by profession) began with the outbreak of World War One, the museum was featuring a temporary exhibit covering the "Great



Wireless Radio

"Land-line" telegraph operators described as "wireless" operators in annotation at the Hoover Presidential Museum and Library.

War." A surprisingly large component of the exhibit involved World War One communications. As usual, a variety of errors were present. A photo of a World War Two field radio was incorporated into annotation about World War One communications. Annotation described a large land-line telegraph relay office as a group of wireless operators, and so forth. Sadly, such errors could have been easily corrected simply by sending a draft of the annotation to our organization. A simple phone call could have explained the errors so that corrections could be made.

While it is easy to dismiss such small errors as "unimportant," one can also argue that such errors, when taken collectively, diminish history. Small errors compound each other over time to create a false narrative in which the role of older technologies are often diminished in favor of more recent developments that are closer to the collective memory of the current generation. This is particularly true of telegraphy, which is often dismissed as irrelevant in today's Internet-centric World.

As MTC members, we have a responsibility to politely point out such errors. Occasionally, one's concerns may fall on deaf ears. However, the more responsible

museum curators may listen to such concerns and seek wise counsel before they develop a similar exhibit in the future. In particular, they should be referred to MTC as a resource for expert advice from people who actually worked in the telegraph and telecommunications field.

In the coming months, MTC will begin a systematic process of reaching out to museum organizations to offer our services as a resource for expertise in the area of telegraphy and telecommunications. If we don't have the answers, we know of other individuals and organizations that can provide accurate information and verification for future museum projects.

As individuals, we can also do much to promote the accurate history of telegraphy. Share a few copies of "Dots and Dashes" with your friends in the industry. Talk about MTC at your local Amateur Radio club or historical society. Demonstrate telegraphy or display telegraph instruments at your local library or other public institution. Make a point of engaging in some type of community outreach once per year.

There is much we can do as individuals to promote

the accurate history of telegraphy and telecommunications. It starts with simply talking about it!

Reminder to Pay Dues!

Just a quick reminder to pay your MTC

dues. Local chapter members should contact their chapter secretary/treasurer to submit 2016 dues. Grand Chapter members ("members at large") can find the MTC renewal form on www.morsetelegraphclub.org or request one from the International President via e-mail, jameswades@gmail.com or telephone, (269) 548-0215

Remember....chapter dues go to the chapter secretary/treasurer. Dues for members at large

("grand chapter") go to the International Office at Morse Telegraph Club, Inc., PO Box 192, Buchanan, MI. 49107

73,
Jim Wades

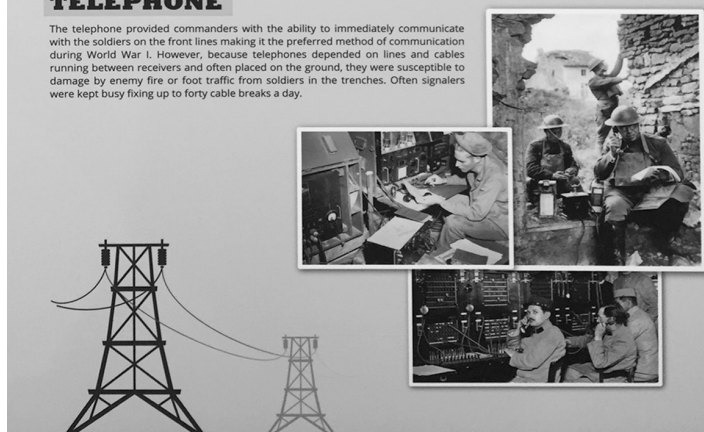


A World War Two radio operator is shown in annotation about World War One telephony."

Wired Communication

TELEPHONE

The telephone provided commanders with the ability to immediately communicate with the soldiers on the front lines making it the preferred method of communication during World War I. However, because telephones depended on lines and cables running between receivers and often placed on the ground, they were susceptible to damage by enemy fire or foot traffic from soldiers in the trenches. Often signallers were kept busy fixing up to forty cable breaks a day.



continued from front page

in some LOVE magazine and after corresponding, she decided to travel to Canada to marry this rancher, hook, line, and sinker, as the story goes.

When he drove her to his ranch, which consisted on one quarter section of land, a few cattle and a shack for a house, she quickly changed her mind before even unloading her trunks. He drove her back to the railway station, where she sat until I arrived. She and her two large trunks left on the next train and hopefully she had a safe journey back to Texas and later found her true love.

A couple of months later, after the passenger train had left, I did my usual duties. Again I noticed an elderly lady sitting in the waiting room. I asked if someone was to pick her up. It appeared she did not understand a word I said. She replied in a foreign language, which I recognized as Slavic. So using hand signal, I pointed to her large purse, hoping to find some documents to give me an idea who was to meet her. She handed me a letter addressed to her in Yugoslavia.

It was 6 a.m. by now. Luckily, I knew a local livestock buyer in town who spoke several European languages. I signaled her that I would make some telephone calls. I called this friend and he immediately replied, "I'll be right over." When he entered the waiting room and spoke to her, I am still touched by the tears of joy by this mystery lady.

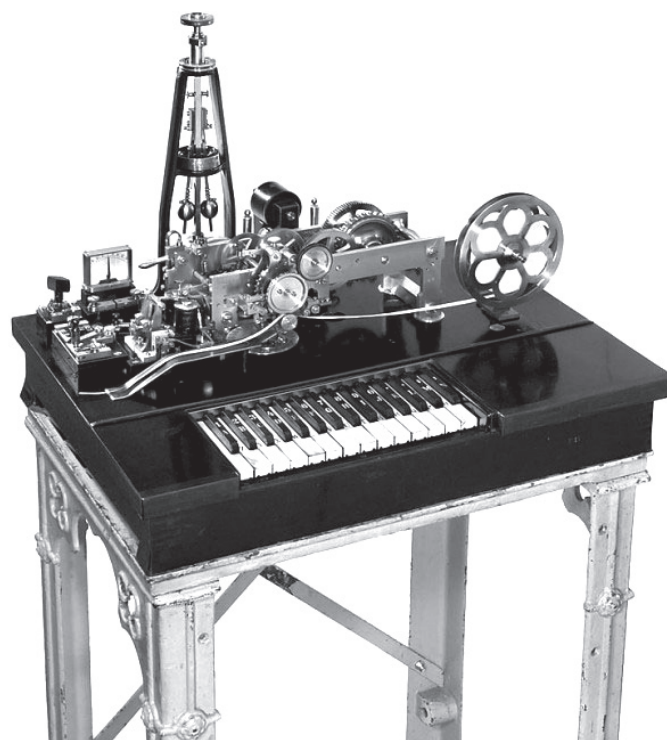
After checking her documents and speaking with the lady, my friend told me she arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia by boat and it appears the Ticket Agent issued her a ticket to Vermillion, Alberta, instead of to Vermillion Lakes, Ontario, some 2,000 miles further west.

Then I called my Chief Dispatcher in Edmonton and he put me in touch with the ticket office, which authorized me to issue her a ticket back to

Vermillion lakes, Ontario, getting her to the Trans Continental train at Wainwright at 4 p.m., some 60 miles south of Vermilion.

Because I knew the hotel owner across the street from the station, we arranged a couple of meals for her and a room for a few hours of sleep. Then I called the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and arranged for them to drive her to Wainwright that afternoon, accompanied by my friend.

The woman's husband had immigrated to Canada three years prior. After earning enough money working in a lumber camp in northern Ontario, he had made arrangements to bring her to Canada. I hope she had a happy and wonderful reunion with her husband despite the ticket mix-up, and hope that she remembers the livestock buyer, the hotel owner, and the RCMP for their Canadian pioneer spirit.

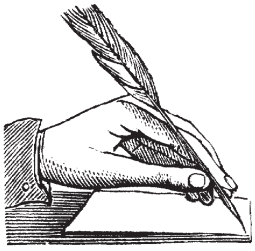


DO YOU KNOW?

Do you know what the terms amps, watts, volts, and ohms mean and how they are related?

An amp is the abbreviation of ampere, which is defined as a current of electrons moving through an electrical circuit. A watt is a unit of power. A volt is a measurement of electrical pressure. Ohm is a measure of the amount of electrical resistance between two points.

These quantities are related by the formula $I=E/R$ where I is current in amps, E is voltage measured in volts, and R is resistance measured in ohms. The formula $W=IR$ states that the power in watts is equal to I the current in amps multiplied by R, the resistance measured in ohms. Using simple algebra, you can rearrange these formulas to find any of the unknown units in an electrical circuit.



Letters to the Editor

November 3rd

Hello Jim,

This is a little incident from the past, about telegraph, but came to me by hearsay, and friendship of a family named Don & Mary Yohe. You can look it over and see if it is worth printing, but here goes:

Back in 20's or 30's, a lady who I met once or twice but do not know her name. She was a relief operator for the Milwaukee Road, and at one point she was sent to relieve at Clayton, Iowa. For some reason that I do not recall, she decided to give up her career and make her home in Clayton, Iowa, which is along the Mississippi River. Probably what happened was she must of met a man while stationed there, they ended up getting married. Don Yohe also lived in Clayton as a boy. And when the lady and her husband started a family they had a couple sons who were about the age of Don and they were friends and played together. One day the boys said to Don, you have to come to our house, and see what we have. When he did the boys showed him their new little sister, named Mary. Well as time went by Mary became a young lady and she and Don got married as well. I knew Don and Mary quite well as Don was a teacher in Ackley, Iowa, where one of my cousins was a student of his and who later tried out for the NFL, but medical problems got in the way and the Yohe family moved to Colfax, Iowa and we became their friends, Mary passed about 3 years ago and Don just lately out in Arizona where they retired to. But while they lived in Colfax, Grandma, (Mary's mother came to live with them) she had her own quarters on the second floor of this large home, and being she was a Morse operator, and so was Don, he wired up a sounder and key between first and second floor and that is the way they communicated, so Grandma would not have to come down the steps unnecessarily. so that is the end of the story. I see now it would not fit into the space in the magazine, but you can enjoy the story as I remember it. Sorry do not have anything right now, but I may think of something later.

Best Regards,
Ron Kollmann BCNU, RJK,
Newton, Iowa.

P.S. I emailed our grand daughter in Fredricksberg to see how far she is from your city.

November 9th

The fall issue of *Dots & Dashes* came today and received a very warm welcome from me. One item of special interest was the Silent Key reference to James C. Smith, formerly of Omaha, Nebraska. [Fall issue, page 23]. My railroad career was somewhat like his, and we certainly had similar experiences during World War II. It doesn't say if the transportation company he was with was a Company of Railway Operating Battalion. Anyway, I was a Tech Sergeant in the 743rd Railway Operating Battalion.

Our job for several months was the movement of rail cars, the cargo of which had been loaded on to such cars from ocean going vessels having arrived in the port of Antwerp, Belgium to a Classification Yard a few miles away. Our engines then brought empties back to the dock area. Another railroad battalion took the loaded cars on from the classification yard to the front.

This, our first stay in Antwerp, lasted for several months during which we underwent frequent buzz bombing. Not like a rainfall, but with enough frequency of bombing, we strove to experience some semblance of normal life. I remember one day one of our officers commented that Liege was undergoing bombing.

After the end of hostilities in Europe, we were transferred to the Ruche section of Germany where we operated a 97 mile division, including over a new bridge crossing the Rhine River. This bridge was constructed by Army engineers after the previous bridge had been destroyed by bombing.

Our next assignment was back in Antwerp where we were involved in sort of a supervisory role of military traffic. Later, with a few others from the 743rd, I was on detached service in Louvain, Belgium. Still later with others from the 743rd I was in Rouen, France for a similar overnight role emphasizing the movement of troop trains to French ports, the men on such trains being on their way home.

As time went along, there were quite a few transfers out of and into the 743rd, but I was in the 743rd from its origin until my discharge at

Camp Atterbury, Indiana on February 14, 1946. This was the only real outfit I was in prior to going into the 743rd at its inception at Camp Plauche, Louisiana, near New Orleans. I was only in a reception center at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and a classification center at Camp Shelby, Mississippi before the 743rd was organized.

My basic Army training was taken at Camp Pulaski. We took what was called "technical training." On the Arkansas Division of the Roan Island at Little Rock, Arkansas, the outfit itself having stationed at Camp Robinson, Arkansas as a dispatcher trainee there, I put out some orders by Morse. We had a telegraph school at Camp Robinson in which I was an instructor, but we never used Morse overseas.

I really would like to contact Andrew Smith. James Smith, age 91, lived from October 23, 1923 until May 16, 2015, so he was older than me. My wife, Betty, and I were married on June 26, 1943, before I went into the Army in December 1943. We still live at home in Chattanooga. We had seven children.

Another item of particular interest was Ronnie Kollman's "Letter to the Editor." [Fall issue, page 6]. Although I was not a Western Union employee, I did handle Western Union telegrams at several railroad stations, such handling being typical at smaller towns which didn't have their own Western Union office. At Stevenson, Alabama, I sent and received Western Union telegrams by Morse, but telephone was used at other stations which handled Western Union telegrams. I surely would like to contact Ronnie also. Only his city and state was shown. I certainly enjoy my membership in MTC. Gene Wood and I correspond and talk often. I am writing him about his want ad.

*Sincerely,
Mark S. Womack
Chattanooga, Tennessee.*

Mark's letter was hand written. I hope that I correctly translated all words and place names correctly. ~Editor Jim

November 17th

I was interested in the letter from Merle Shockey regarding the Canoe River train wreck file. [Fall 2015 issue, page 7]. My late husband, Earl Shaw, wrote up the defense for John Diefenbaker. Earl knew the dispatcher involved when he worked in Kamloops, also as a train dispatcher. Diefenbaker

used this, and then put in his election brochure that he defended the operator and was a "Friend of Labour." He got elected and became Canada's Prime Minister.

I was also interested in John Barrow's article, "Marriage by Wire." [Fall 2015 issue, page 12]. I also met my husband, Earl, on the "original chat line." I was a commercial operator in Saskatoon and he was the operator at Melville, SK. We corresponded by Morse while we both were transferred from job to job, meeting each other once in a while and we eventually got married.

*Lavina Shaw,
Former International MTC President*

December 8th

"Morse Day" at Boyce depot will be on Saturday, April 30, 2016. If you are able to attend, there will be a cook-out as in past years. I don't know if this is the same date that other sites will observe, but it is an open date for the MRS library. Building repairs will be completed and I hope visitors will enjoy looking around the agent's office. The cook-out and demonstrations will be between noon and 4 PM. Please mention this in the next *Dots & Dashes*. All are welcome!

*Dr. Frank R. Scheer,
Curator, Railway Mail Service Library, Inc.,
117 East Main Street,
Boyce, Virginia,
202 268-4996
www.RailwayMailServiceLibrary*

December 23rd

George Stafford Parker (1863-1937) was a telegrapher and also ran a telegraph school in Janesville, Wisconsin. The fountain pens his students used plugged up or leaked, interfering with their copy. Dismayed by the unreliable writing pens, he perfected a better fountain pen. George went on to found the Parker Pen Company. By 1908, his pen factory on Main Street in Janesville, Wisconsin became one of the world's premier pen brands and one of the first brands with a global presence. Today, the high school in Janesville, Wisconsin is named the George S. Parker High School.

*MTC Member,
Gil Wiedenhoeft*

CHAPTER NEWS

Florida Chapter

Although summer is normally a slow time for Florida Chapter activities, Chapter President Robert Feeney and his father, Chapter member John Feeney, broke that mold with a flurry of demonstrations, all except one, at amateur radio venues. First was the annual Amateur Radio Field Day in Fort Lauderdale, FL on June 27th, then came the South Florida DX Association, also in Fort Lauderdale, on July 8th, followed by a visit to the Plantation, FL Historical Museum on July 11th and the Gold Coast Amateur Radion Club in Fort Lauderdale on July 28th

At the Field Day event, radio operators and visitors alike were fascinated at the simplicity and style of the early telegraph instruments being demonstrated and on display, as they learned about the history of the electro-magnetic telegraph and its impact on the development of the United States and Canada.

At the DX Association, a connection was made to the Morse KOB Internet "wire" and many members and visitors heard for the first time what a working landline telegraph circuit sounds like. As at the Field Day event, they were surprised at the simplicity of the circuit, especially compared to the equipment required for an amateur radio operator to go on the air. Visitors and members were informed of the role of the landline telegraph in the development of railroads, and thus, the economy, of North America.

At the Plantation Historical Museum, a replica of the German cypher Enigma machine, along with German radio, telegraph and telephone equipment from the World War II period were on display and demonstrated as Chapter members told how the German cypher code was broken by the British during World War II, along with a discussion of German military communications practices during that same conflict.

At the Gold Coast event, a connection was again made to the Morse KOB Internet "wire" to demonstrate how a telegraph circuit actually worked. This activity was enhanced by contact with other MTC members in other locations, who conversed over the "wire" much as would have been done back in the days when such circuits were common. This demonstration was used as an opportunity to talk to those present about the role

of the telegraph in the development of the railroads and also how it impacted nearly every aspect of society.

Chapter Vice-President Don Andrus did not let the fact that he was a long way from home keep him from displaying and demonstrating his self-made replica of the Western Electric Special Events Set, often referred to as a "Secret Sounder," at the July meeting of the Colorado Radio Collectors Club in Denver, CO. Don told the group, which has a strong interest in the history of radio broadcasting, how the device was used in broadcasting at events where the sound of a sounder would have been disruptive. The demonstration created considerable interest from the group.

At another Colorado event, Don had his replica Titanic Wireless Room display set up and in operation at the annual Boulder Amateur Radio Hamfest in Longmont, Colorado Sept 27th. Since the Titanic operators used Continental code, Don took the opportunity to pass out Florida Chapter's handouts, which contain code charts of both American and Continental/International codes, with an explanation of why the Continental code came about. It is surprising how many amateur radio operators have no idea they are not using the original Morse Code.

Florida Chapter members shared responsibilities as station agent, telegrapher, and docents at the well preserved Seaboard Air Line Rwy Sulphur Springs depot, now located on the grounds of the Pinellas County Heritage Village in Largo, FL during the Pinellas County Historical Society's annual Country Jubilee. Turn out was again heavy for this event, requiring Chapter members to perform nearly continuous telegraph demonstrations throughout the day, giving many of the younger generations the chance to experience American Morse telegraphy first hand.

The annual Fall Jamboree, held this year on November 7th, is one of the premier events hosted by the Pioneer Settlement in Barberville, FL, drawing a huge number of visitors who come to hear the many musicians and entertainers as well as explore the many buildings and contents which have been moved onto the grounds of the settlement. Among those buildings is the historic ACL RR depot from Pierson, FL. Florida Chapter members had the telegraph instruments in the

CHAPTER NEWS

depot activated and successfully competed with the music in attracting visitors who came through the depot in a steady stream all day. Chapter members taught many of the younger visitors how to send their name in Morse Code and explained to all of the visitors the significant role that the telegraph played in the history of the United States and Canada.

The sound of Morse code on a sounder operated by Florida Chapter members, never fails to attract a large number of visitors, curious to see what is creating the sound and then to ask numerous questions about telegraphy. Chapter members are always ready to answer the questions and to demonstrate the instruments and equipment. The annual Ocala Country Days event, hosted by the Silver River Museum, a part of the Marion County School District, and held this year November 10-15, provides an ideal venue for such demonstrations. The focus of the event is on 19th Century history in Marion County, including demonstrations of occupations and crafts typical of that era. The event is exclusively for school children during the week, but is open to the general public on weekends. It never fails to draw large crowds, and this year was no exception, with attendance on Saturday being the largest in the history of the event. One of the visitors said that her mother had been the telegraph operator in their village in Cuba.

On the weekend of November 14-15, Florida Chapter members participated in the annual World War II event aboard the Florida Railroad's Von Kessenger Express on its run from Parrish to Willow through make-believe Occupied France during World War II. One chapter member played the part of an Allied Secret Agent, complete with a clandestine wireless set, while another Chapter

member played the part of an officer in the dreaded secret state police, and a third Chapter member portrayed a radioman in the occupying army with an Enigma machine.

During the weekend Chapter members discussed the donation and installation of a complete interactive telegraph display for the Florida Railroad Museum's new depot at Willow. The museum had planned to have some type of telegraph display and museum officers were delighted when the Florida Chapter offered to furnish and install it.

Thanks to Warren McFarland, Secretary-Treasurer of the FX Chapter, for this report.

Edmonton "MO" Chapter

The Edmonton MTC Chapter has completed its volunteer services for the year 2015. Yet, there is still a possibility that a school or other organization may decide to request a telegraph demonstration.

Thirty-five people, including members, wives, and widows of members, attended our annual fall banquet.

Our spring lunch meeting is typically held at one of our member's homes. Members decided that next spring; we should go to Bill Wilson's place in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. Bill owns and operates the Alberta Central Railway Museum on his farm. So, members can look forward to riding Bill's train, munching on barbecue sandwiches, and enjoy the fresh air. In case of rain, there is plenty of shelter available.

Thanks to Bill Tchir, Secretary-Treasurer of the MO Chapter, for this summary.

Save the Date!
Civil War Camp Day
at Fort Ward
Saturday, June 4, 2016

ARRL NATIONAL TRAFFIC SYSTEM FOR TELEGRAPH DEMONSTRATIONS

By James Wades

As each year passes, the Morse Telegraph Club sees more radio amateurs join its ranks. This has allowed us to carry on our educational and historical mission as many of our long-time members encounter the vicissitudes of aging. Many of these younger radio amateurs are avid historians and some are even learning the “mother tongue” (American Morse Code).

During the ARRL 100th Anniversary Convention at Hartford, Connecticut, we originated quite a few congratulatory telegrams from the convention floor. These messages were transmitted by telegraph to Ed Trump of Fairbanks, Alaska, who refiled them to the ARRL National Traffic System (NTS) for subsequent routing and delivery.

For those unfamiliar with the NTS; it can be described as a system of layered radio networks, which facilitate the transfer and delivery of radiograms (radio-telegrams) to locations throughout the United States and Canada. NTS networks operate using a variety of modes, but the most common methods are radiotelegraph, radiotelephone and automated digital networks utilizing “PacTOR” technologies.

NTS is an ideal resource for telegraph demonstrations. It allows one to originate message traffic from a telegraph demonstration to one or more individuals serving as “gateways” or a “relay office.” The telegrams are then transferred to the NTS as radiograms, which are routed through the network to a delivering station located near the addressee who is responsible for delivering the telegram.

The use of NTS serves several functions. First, the NTS message format is essentially the same as the commercial telegram format. This allows one to educate the public about the appearance, structure and components of commercial telegraph messages. Second, most individuals have never seen a telegram transmitted in Morse. By originating telegrams using Morse, one can demonstrate the relative speed and efficiency of the process compared to such modern methods as e-mail and texting. Third, and perhaps most

important, the origination of telegrams from a demonstration allows the visitor to take an active, personal role in the process.

The use of NTS also provides valuable business for these Amateur Radio networks. Unique message traffic provides real training value and this training value helps prepare NTS members for service in disaster and emergency situations during which the services of radio amateurs might be called upon to support relief agency operations. Recently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency has reached out to NTS to develop a working relationship. They have found the combination of a single universal methodology and the additional network management tools contained within the NTS radiogram format to be beneficial during various government disaster exercises. The result is a renewed interest in the maintenance of a nationwide messaging layer for application in a “grid-down” scenario.

Of particular interest to MTC members are the numerous NTS “section CW nets.” Most states (“ARRL Sections”) maintain CW traffic nets. These nets often function on a professional level, with snappy procedures, brevity and attention to detail. Once the radio amateur becomes proficient on NTS CW networks, he will chuckle to himself quietly while monitoring many of the garden-variety “ARES” networks and independent “public service” networks, which, in contrast, sometimes sound like a fool’s parade.

Most importantly, participation in NTS CW nets not only allows one to support his community in time of emergency, it also allows one to develop the skills necessary to originate and receive telegrams at Morse demonstrations. Active participation in NTS CW nets also allows one to leverage the support of fellow NTS members who can serve as a point-of-contact for telegraph demonstrations.

Some tips for using NTS for telegraph demonstrations:

- Use a common text for all messages originated. This allows one to “book” message traffic, thereby greatly speeding the process. A common text

such as “Greetings via telegraph from the Upper Peninsula State Fair Historical Village. Wish you were here” or something similar is an ideal generic text for one’s telegrams.”

- Originate telegrams with as complete an address as possible. This includes name, address, telephone and, if available, an e-mail. This ensures the delivering station has as many options as possible for message delivery.
- Use the opportunity to educate. Explain how telegrams are structured, how telegraph networks were arranged, and how this resembles the structure of today’s Internet.
- If visitors can’t provide the name, address or phone number for a friend or relative because they “rely entirely on their smart phone,” use this as an opportunity to explain that in a disaster scenario, the cellular network may be damaged or inoperative and encourage them to have the address of an out-of-state contact written down or memorized for use in time of emergency.
- Make up a nice telegram blank. Old postal telegraph blanks, Western Union blanks and the like work very well. We also have some custom telegram blanks available for MTC members, which are in “PDF” format. These can be printed two to a page on a standard black-and-white printer. The use of a neat, customized telegram blank adds an air of professionalism to the event.
- Obtain a self-inking, incrementing stamp. This allows one to quickly assign a message serial number to each telegram as it is originated. These stamps are readily available at office supply stores such as Office Max or Staples.
- It helps to have two or three message “clerks” available to interface with the public and supervise the completion of the telegram blanks. This allows the operator to concentrate entirely on the business of transmitting the message traffic. For example, during the annual Saginaw Michigan “Santagram” events, it takes three clerks to handle the line of customers and to “feed” the operator with traffic.

Typical “radiogram” format:

Here is an example of a properly formatted radiogram:

21 R WB8SIW 14 MONTICELLO IL VIA
TELEGRAPH DEC 12
SAMUEL F MORSE
500 25TH STREET
BROOKLYN NY 11232
718-555-1202

GREETINGS BY TELEGRAPH FROM THE
MONTICELLO RAILROAD MUSEUM HOLIDAY
PARTY
WISH YOU WERE HERE

LINDA HARRIS

One will note the similarity in structure to the commercial telegram format. A couple of points about the structure of the radiogram:

- For routine radiograms, a time of origin is not required. The time of origin is an optional component in the message preamble and is typically used for time-sensitive traffic, such as served agency messages, weather data, and similar messages.
- One will note the group-count or “check,” which, in this case, indicates there are 14 words (groups) in the text.
- “Via telegraph” is included in the “place of origin” to indicate that the telegram started its journey on a network other than NTS.
- When hand-writing a radiogram, most write five words to a line. When using a mill (typewriter), it is common practice to type ten words to a line, leaving an extra space or two between the first group of five words and the second group of five words. This speeds confirmation of the group count.

NTS CW Net Procedures:

There are a number of excellent resources on the web covering the proper procedures for transmitting a radiogram on NTS nets. The definitive resource is the official “Methods and Practices Guidelines” (“MPG”) published on the ARRL web site. However, for most new NTS participants, the best way to learn the proper procedures is by monitoring the better operators for a few days or a couple of weeks and imitating their procedures.

Ham Radio CW operators will discover that NTS CW nets are wonderfully efficient. They require a minimal time commitment and the elegant choreography and efficient procedures will “spoil” one for other ham radio net activities. With just ten or fifteen minutes a few nights a week, one can quickly learn the net procedures and develop the skills needed to use NTS for local telegraph demonstrations.

Living History:

The history of telegraphy is a decidedly human story. One cannot fully convey the story of the

telegraph without including the story of the countless individuals who were employed as operators. By actually demonstrating telegraphy on a Morse wire, one can tell the story of telegraphy in a manner that is far more complete than simply displaying a few instruments.

While all public outreach is educational, nothing surpasses seeing a skilled telegrapher at work. The process of originating or receiving message traffic conveys a variety of information without lengthy

explanation or error.

We strongly encourage our MTC members to not only get active on the "MorseKOB" wires and the "HN Hub," but also, for those who are radio amateurs, NTS CW nets. Let's get out there and demonstrate the process of telegraphy. A ten word telegram is worth a thousand words of explanation!

30

THE POSTAL TELEGRAPH & CABLE COMPANY

By: J. Chris Hausler

For the 2015 AWA Convention last summer I put together a display on the Postal Telegraph Company, as I like to call it, the "other" Western Union. Although they are somewhat rare, over the years I have managed to acquire several instruments associated with Postal Telegraph and I finally had a sufficient number for a small display. My original plan was to just display it during the show & tell always held at the end of Tom Perera's "Key & Telegraph Seminar". This seminar, hosted by Tom, has been held annually at this convention for quite some years. It is always very enjoyable and educational, and I have occasionally done other such small telegraph displays during it at previous conventions.

A Postal Telegraph display is not one I would normally do as part of the more typical telegraph displays I do for the general public. Although most people at least recognize the name "Western Union", when I have mentioned "Postal Telegraph" at public events, all I have ever gotten was blank stares. The attendees at the AWA convention on the other hand are quite knowledgeable about communications history, as you might expect, and so a more specialized and detailed display was appropriate.

The show & tell during the Key & Telegraph Seminar only lasts for about half an hour. At each convention the AWA also has an old equipment contest. Just so that my Postal display would be viewable for another day, I decided to enter it in the contest. I was surprised to learn that it had won a "first" in its category. As you readers of *Dots & Dashes* are also more knowledgeable about

communications history I think you might enjoy this brief look at Postal Telegraph as well. So here goes...

In 1883, James Gordon Bennett, Jr. and John William Mackay formed the Commercial Cable Company to compete with Western Union. Bennett was the son of the founder of the New York Herald and proprietor of it since his father's death in 1866. Mackay, was an Irish immigrant miner from California who was one of the four "Bonanza Kings" who made their fortune from the Comstock Lode. Both found themselves having to live in Paris France but still needing to manage their business affairs in North America. At that time Western Union was charging 75 cents a word for cablegrams and both of these men objected to this charge. When they could get no relief, they formed this competing company and laid their own cables in 1884.

Postal Telegraph had originally been formed in 1881 to exploit patents for a "harmonic telegraph" by Elisha Gray. This required high quality lines, "paired and transposed" to eliminate crosstalk and Postal used a then new type of wire developed by Chester Snow which was steel clad with copper and today known as "Copperweld". The harmonic telegraph proved impractical with the technology of the time (today you would recognize the device doing it as a "modem") and the company converted to using standard Morse technology. As Commercial Cable Co. was not able to rely on W.U. for inland delivery, Mackay purchased a controlling interest in Postal Telegraph in 1883. The resulting merged company was known as the

Postal Telegraph & Cable Company.

The resulting rate war with W.U. drove cablegram prices down to 25 cents per word. At that time the infamous speculator Jay Gould held a controlling interest in Western Union. He was heard to complain, "There is no beating John Mackay. If he needs another million or two he goes to his sliver mine and digs it up!"

Despite building an impressive plant including a trans Pacific cable, Postal never gained more than about 20% of the telegraph business. Purchased by IT&T in 1928, it was merged into W.U. in 1943. By this time W.U. was already mostly teleprinter and so most of Postal's Morse instruments were junked, making them rare collectibles today. Given

that they were mostly brass I wonder how many of them ended up being melted down to make shell casings for use in World War II.

As part of my research, I acquired a print of an old news photo complete with the teleprinter output of a reporter's description of the merger pasted on the back of the print. This suggests to me that my print was made within a day or two of the event. The photo was taken on May 13, 1943 in the office of Western Union President Mr. Albert N. Williams. It shows Mr. Williams, on the right in the photo, and Edwin F. Chinlund, Chairman of the Board of Postal Telegraph signing an agreement consolidating the two companies. Under the agreement Western Union acquired all the assets of Postal and assumed all its liabilities. The legislation which authorized the merger also required Western Union to divest itself of all its cable business and continue employment for all Postal workers hired before March 1, 1941.

It is mentioned above that both Bennett Jr. and Mackay were living in Paris. What I did not

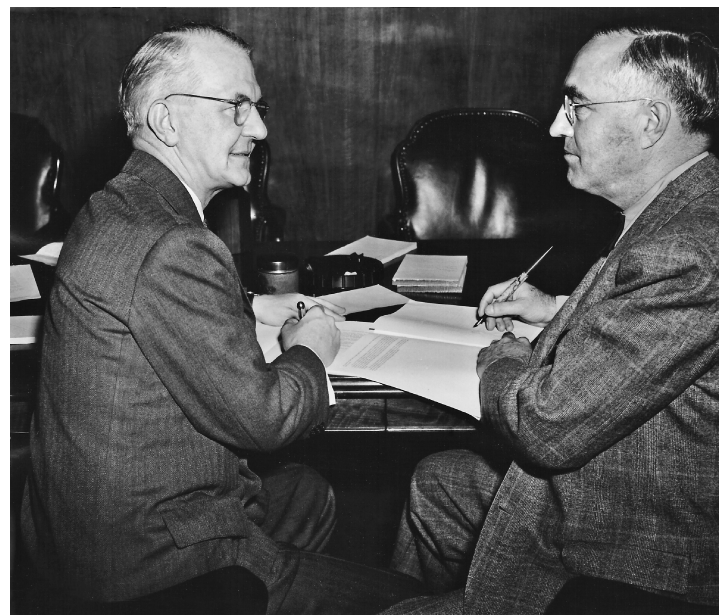
mention as part of the display is why they both found themselves in Paris.

Bennett Jr., again, was the son of the founder of the New York Herald, a successful newspaper. His father, Bennett Sr., in fact was also one of the founders of the New York Associated Press which was formed by several New York newspapers in order to share telegraph costs. As a result, Bennett Jr. was raised in an environment of wealth and

privilege. Although his father managed to instill in him a fair amount of newspaper business sense, he is the one who sent Henry M. Stanley to Africa to find Dr. Livingston, he led the life of the playboy and was noted for outrageous behavior in public.

Bennett Jr.'s bad behavior apparently came to a head

at a gala New Year's Eve party in 1877. It was to be announced at this party that Bennett was to be engaged to a prominent society girl, one Caroline May. Bennett, in not atypical behavior became



rather inebriated at the party and depending on reports either urinated in the fireplace or the piano in full view of the guests. Well, as you might imagine, the engagement was called off before it began and the girls brother, Fred, accosted Bennett as he was entering his office the following day and publicly horsewhipped him. Bennett then challenged May to a duel. It was held on an old dueling grounds in Delaware near the Maryland state line favored because, as dueling was illegal, the participants could then flea across the state border to escape prosecution if necessary. Anyway, both men fired, missed, shook hands and then retired to a nearby tavern.

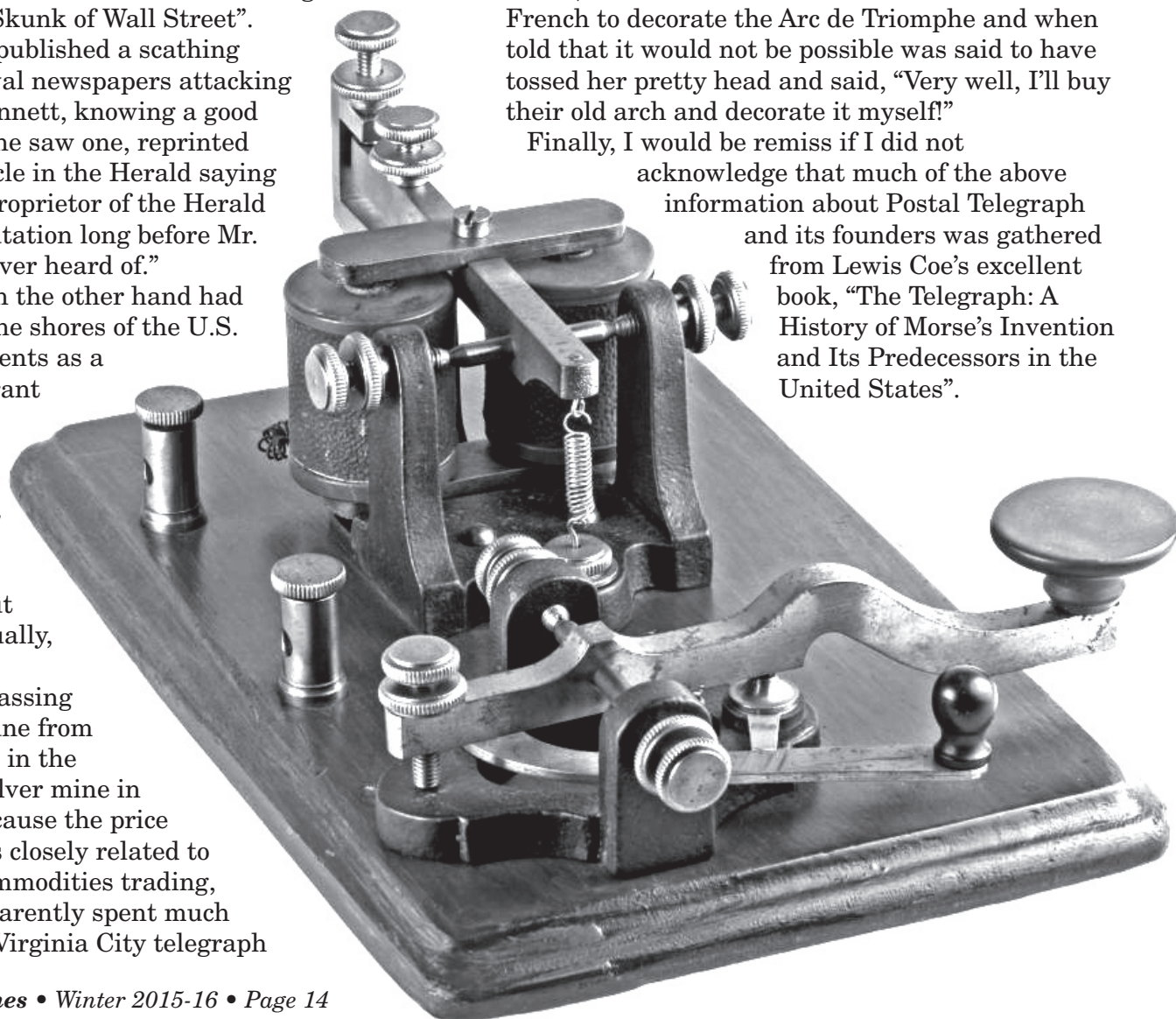
To in some manner escape his bad reputation in New York, Bennett removed himself to Paris later that year but then ran up large cable bills keeping his North American businesses running. Bennett appealed to Jay Gould, who again was in control of Western Union and its cable operations, for a special discount. Rebuffed by Gould, Bennett printed an article in the Herald calling Gould the "Skunk of Wall Street". Gould then published a scathing article in rival newspapers attacking Bennett. Bennett, knowing a good story when he saw one, reprinted Gould's article in the Herald saying that, "The proprietor of the Herald lost his reputation long before Mr. Gould was ever heard of."

Mackay, on the other hand had arrived on the shores of the U.S. with his parents as a poor immigrant child of 9. First gaining employment in the shipyards he moved out west, eventually, after some failures, amassing a large fortune from investments in the Comstock silver mine in Nevada. Because the price of silver was closely related to far away commodities trading, Mackay apparently spent much time in the Virginia City telegraph

office, even, it is said, learning to read Morse Code. In 1867 with his new found wealth, he married an attractive young widow, one Marie Hungerford Bryant, who, with the Mackay millions at her command found the primitive and rugged environment of Virginia City and even North America not to her liking and removed herself to Paris. Poor indulgent Mackay if he wanted to see his wife had to become a regular transatlantic commuter and ran into the same problem with cable costs as Bennett had. Although from widely divergent backgrounds and experiences, this common interest drove them to join forces and form what became the Postal Telegraph & Cable Company.

One more funny story needs to be told about Mrs. Mackay. With her husband's wealth she became one of the most celebrated hostesses in Paris. For a reception in Paris for U.S. President Grant in 1877, not needing to economize in any way, she had every piece of her furniture reupholstered in red, white and blue silk. She even wanted the French to decorate the Arc de Triomphe and when told that it would not be possible was said to have tossed her pretty head and said, "Very well, I'll buy their old arch and decorate it myself!"

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that much of the above information about Postal Telegraph and its founders was gathered from Lewis Coe's excellent book, "The Telegraph: A History of Morse's Invention and Its Predecessors in the United States".



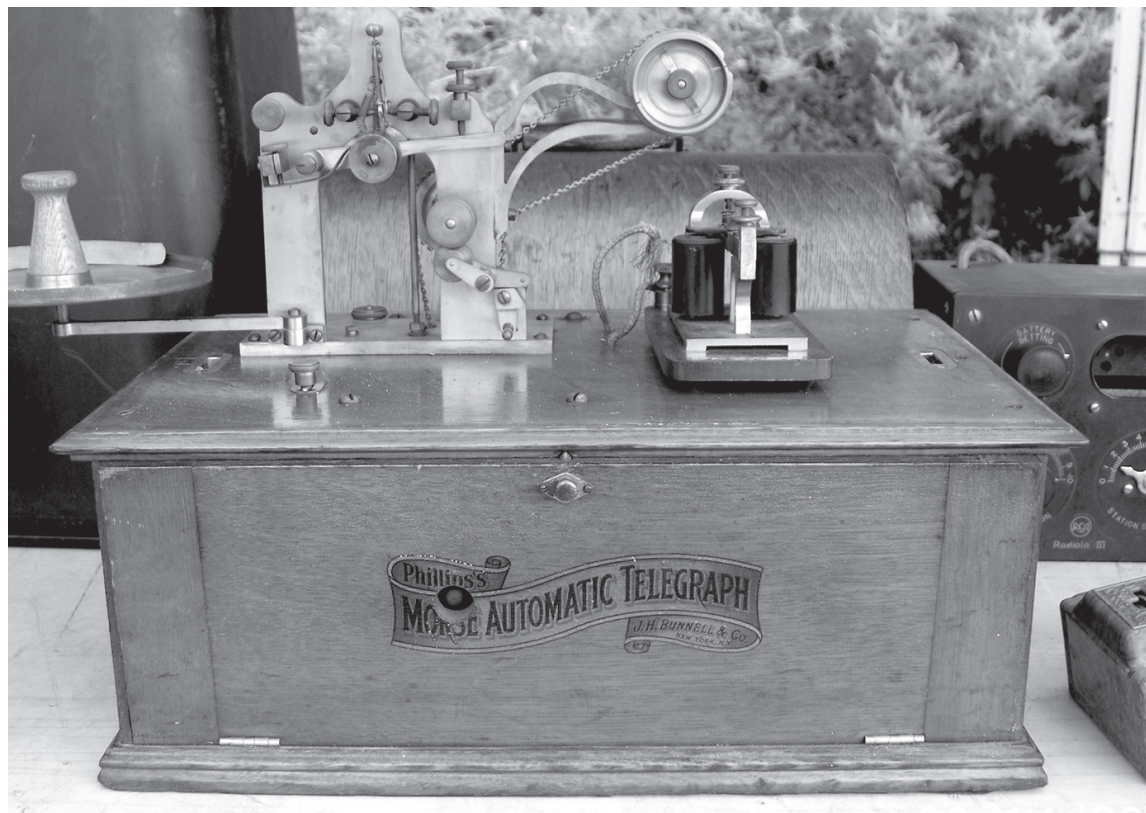
PHILLIPS'S MORSE AUTOMATIC TELEGRAPH REVISITED

By: J. Chris Hausler

In the spring 2015 issue of *Dots & Dashes* I reviewed two books by Walter P. Phillips, creator of the telegraph shorthand "Phillips Code". In my review I mentioned that, to me, it appeared the second book, "Sketches Old and New" was a thinly veiled advertisement for the "Phillips's Morse Automatic Telegraph" manufactured by J. H. Bunnell. I also mentioned that previous to reading this book I had been totally unaware of this device. Later I did some further research and discovered some brief data about it on John Casale's excellent web site "Telegraph History" in the article on Horace G. Martin, the inventor of the Vibroplex. Martin, obviously, would favor any automatic system which allowed telegraphers to work using standard keys and sounders. Unlike others the Phillips system did, so Martin had worked to help sell this Phillips system. This entry can be read at this link: www.telegraph-history.org/horace-g-martin/hgmp2.htm.

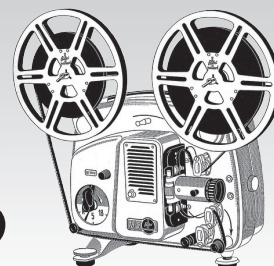
Imagine, then, my surprise at finding one of these devices available for sale in the flea market at the summer 2015 AWA convention. No, I didn't buy it, it was beyond my budget, but I did take some photos. One thing Casale's Martin article implies is that the same unit was both the embosser and reader. Examining the device I could easily see how it read the embossed tape but could find no mechanism for embossing the tape. Other than the sounder on the deck there was no receiving magnet. As the device appeared identical to the sketch which appears in Casale's Martin article, maybe I missed something but I remain somewhat confused. The offered device also included several already embossed tapes and just like the original Morse register, the recorded code was embossed in parallel three times across the tape, probably for reliability in playback. I do wonder, however, how many times the tape could be played back before the embossing on the tape would be damaged beyond readability.

Finally, in the box underneath the deck is just a more or less standard wind-up phonograph motor with speed governor to power the works. Looking at the label on the face of the box, it can be seen where the crank to wind up the spring would be placed. The photo also shows the hump backed wooden cover for the device behind it and the removable crank was also included. An interesting find!





J. Chris Hausler's BOOK & MOVIE REVIEWS



Many books and movies these days may be described as “high tech thrillers” in which fictional characters use new technologies to gain some nefarious end. New technology itself is neutral, it can be used for either good or evil. The basis for the story line in these books is the friction between those who would do evil with new

technology and those, most likely trying to thwart their actions, who use it for the good of society. All a modern author has to do these days is look at what is happening on the Internet and many possible story lines become immediately apparent.

As true as this is today it was true one hundred plus

years ago as well. Back then, however, the “new technologies” in play were the railroads and the telegraph. Although by the early 20th century the newer technologies of electric power and the telephone had made their debut, they were still pretty much local phenomena. For breadth of story line and “action at a distance” no technologies at that time could beat the telegraph and the railroads. They were omnipresent, the nerves and the arteries of the ongoing industrial revolution. Just like modern authors, authors back then based their technological thrillers on these “new” technologies. Such a book is, *The Wire Devils* by Frank L. Packard, originally published in 1918. Packard himself had gotten his start in life as a civil engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1897 so his descriptions of the railroad environment ring true. Packard wrote several such stories and other authors of the time did as well. You may be seeing reviews of some of these other

stories in these pages in the future.

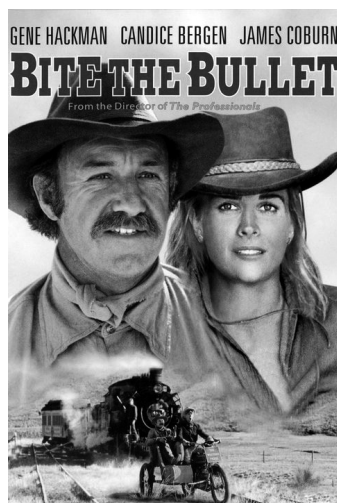
As the *The Wire Devils* opens, we read in the local newspapers that a notorious criminal recently released from Sing Sing prison, named Harry Maul but better known by his alias “The Hawk”, is believed to have moved “out west” and to be in the area. Railroad officials think he might have been drawn to it by the previous successes of a local band of desperadoes, who have been robbing the railroad blind. Further, these desperadoes, nicknamed the “wire devils”, have been coordinating their efforts by using the railroad’s own telegraph system to surreptitiously transmit secret coded messages. When the railroad tries to cut off their access to the telegraph they threaten the railroad with physical damage and disaster. What’s worse, counterfeit bills have been appearing locally and it is believed that these too are due to the efforts of the local desperadoes. This leaves the railroad officials in a quandary. Into this scene steps the Hawk. Most of the story is told in the first person from the Hawk’s point of view.

Although it is never explained how, it seems that the Hawk has figured out the secret telegraph code used by the desperadoes. By intercepting their coded messages and thus knowing their designs ahead of time, he plans to get to the “goods” before they do. This he repeatedly accomplishes, apparently relishing in his successes. Naturally this infuriates the band of desperadoes. Also over time the railroad’s officials come to suspect that the Hawk might be the band’s leader. It seems that now everybody, both good and bad, wants to get their hands on the Hawk and eliminate him. Throughout the book he has some close calls with pursuers from both sides. We also learn, as the Hawk does by listening in from outside the roundhouse window, that the railroad’s officials have been told that a secret service agent by the name of “Birks” is to expected on the scene at any moment due to the presence of the counterfeit money.

As the story plays out, the reader begins to suspect that the Hawk isn't exactly what and who he seems to be. He appears to be stalking the wire devils, to some extent teasing them to learn more about their organization and their methods. Further, the Hawk's ability to repeatedly be in just the right place at the right time and to escape close situations at just the last moment suggests that he has an amount of luck greater than reality would provide. But this keeps the story moving at a brisk pace so even considering these improbabilities the story is still a good read. If you want to learn more, however, you're going to have to read the book. I'm not going to spoil the surprise ending. Reprints of the *The Wire Devils* can be purchased from Amazon. Digital copies can also be downloaded for free from the Internet Archive at: archive.org/details/wiredevils00packgoog. Enjoy!

The film I'm reviewing this time is *Bite the Bullet* directed by Robert Brooks and released in 1975. The basic plot for the film revolves around a cross country horse race. This plot was loosely based on an actual race sponsored by the Denver Post newspaper in 1908 and run from Evanston, WY to Denver. You can read about the actual race here: www.lrgaf.org/journeys/great-horse-race.htm. A number of the events depicted in the film were at least inspired by events from the actual race. The race was widely reported and followed and gambling on it was heated. The race was run in daily heats and several specific riders were favored to win. A train was provided for the reporters, spectators and others who accompanied the race and the railroad, the Union Pacific, provided watering stations at the checkpoints every 50 miles along the way.

So much for fact, the film itself is completely fictional. It is sort of a buddy movie in that it features two former friends once both members of Teddy Roosevelt's "Rough Riders", Sam Clayton played by Gene Hackman and Luke Matthews played by James Coburn. Separated by time they come together once again at the beginning of this race. Luke is a contestant but Sam is just



delivering a wealthy man's horse for another contestant and initially has no interest in the race. Eventually, however, he becomes a contestant as well. Sam is described by Luke as: "Champion of dumb animals, ladies in distress, lost kids and lost causes". Because of this Sam starts a fight with the young buck contestant, "Carbo", played by Jan-Michael Vincent, when Carbo knocks out a mule just for the fun of it. Luke joins in the fight. When it is over, to me one of the funniest lines in the movie is spoken when Sam says, "Just like old times" and Luke responds with, "Yea, you start trouble and I start bleeding".

Another contestant in the race and the only women, played by Candice Bergen, is "Miss Jones" described as a former prostitute. Although apparently in the race for the prize money, \$2000, as are the rest of the contestants, Miss Jones has an ulterior motive. To find out what that is you'll have to watch the film. A "hell on wheels" is also following the race on the train and run by a madame named "Rosie" played by Jean Willes. She provides gambling, booze and girls to the contestants and camp followers at the end of each day's heat and apparently was also a former employer of Miss Jones.

The phrase, *Bite the Bullet* comes from history and usually means enduring a painful or otherwise unpleasant experience and the race is certainly a grueling one but there is a minor subplot in the film as well involving one of the contestants, a Mexican with a toothache, and Sam and Miss Jones, fashion a protective cover for the man's tooth using a spent rifle cartridge. I'm not sure which inspired the title for the film and it seems to me that they were stretching for a title.

There's a fair amount of railroad action in the film which is another good reason to watch it. Much of it was filmed on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad which is still in operation today as a tourist line and was formerly a part of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad's narrow gauge operation. Some scenes at the start of the race were shot at the C&T's Chama, NM facilities. The story, and the race itself, proceeds along in a somewhat muddled manner. There are almost too many subplots. All sorts of events both good and bad occur and there is no lack of action to keep the film interesting. It was nominated for two academy awards for "Best Music" and "Best Sound Mixing" and got mixed reviews from the critics.

As is usually the case, the telegraph action in the film is limited. Probably the best telegraph scene

is right at the start of the film, in fact interspersed with the opening titles, where the representative of the sponsoring newspaper, the *Western Press* is aboard one of the rail “business” cars on the train and telegraphing in a report. You see a key and Acme pedestal resonator with the sounder clicking. When he is done he disconnects the wires and hands them out a window of the car so that they may be disconnected from the tap on the pole line. Unfortunately then, instead of seeing the wires disconnected from a break iron or wrecking clamp as would be correct, we see one of those poles used to bridge a phone pair being disconnected from

two wires. So much for accuracy. The only other telegraph action happens before the start of the race where there are a number of telegraph set-ups (keys and Acme pedestal resonators) on tables in a large room being used both to send out of reports on the race and for the reception of wagers.

All this said, I thoroughly enjoy the film and have watched it several times. It has a too “feel good” to be believable ending but that’s part of its charm. I got my DVD copy some years ago from the \$5 bin at Walmart. New DVD’s can be had for under \$7 and used ones are readily available for 1 cent (plus shipping) both from Amazon. Enjoy!

HE’S A TRAMP TELEGRAPHER

The Norfolk Weekly News-Journal, November 25, 1910, page 6

J. P. Barnhart, day chief operator of the Western Union Telegraph company at Omaha who was recently appointed to a higher position in line of duty, is very well known by telegraphers along the Northwestern line in this territory. Chief Operator Barnhart has held the day chiefship at the large Omaha office for many years, and is known by tramp telegraphers as one of the best chiefs to work under in the country.

He is known never to forget a face or name. J. H. Owens, night chief operator of the same office, also well known throughout north east Nebraska and remembered as giving great relief to the congested wire service during the Bonsteel rush, when hundreds of messages from the Tripp country were able to move only by his expertness as a wire chief, called Mr. Barnhart the best chief operator in the country.

The Omaha office of the telegraph company employs over 100 telegraphers among them being expert operators known in the telegraph world as being on the “block” most of their lives. Many of these “rounders” are known to have applied for positions at the Omaha office fifty different times and have never been refused employment by Mr. Barnhart. A tramp telegrapher passed through Norfolk Friday and declared the Omaha office on the “bum”.

“Barney” as chief Barnhart is nicknamed by the operators, “is gone,” said the tramp. “He has given me a job over fifty times and I just blew in from Chy (Chicago) and am on the “block.”

Old time telegraphers, such as the late Andy Swan, J.P. Cody, Bert Cardwell, “Kid” Thornton, Denny Crowley, E. L. Huntley and hundreds of others who have worked up from messenger boys to Associated Press operators, will miss “Barney’s” face at the chief’s desk in the Omaha office. “Bill Rusland, the traffic chief, is still there.” said the tramp operator. “But Barney is not there to give the old timers a job. We were always good for a few hours extra in the dull season when Barney was there to hand out the vouchers, but it’s not the same “Om” (Omaha) office anymore.”

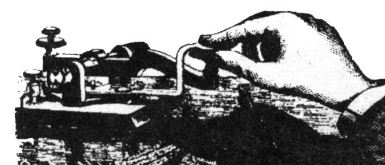
The tramp operator, who has worked on nearly every railroad line in the country as “OS” man (night operator), as a “commercial” man in nearly every large city in the states and as operator in many large newspaper offices, declared he must get “under cover” for the winter, and has now accepted an “OS” position on the Northwestern road. Probably next spring when “business picks up,” he will go back to commercial work, but he declares he will not go back to Omaha.

“Barney” is gone and it’s no use. They don’t stand for a man taking a nip anymore.

<http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/lccn/sn95070058/1910-11-25/ed-1/seq-6/>

"30" SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Maple Leaf "ON" Chapter

JOHN JOSEPH DALLAIRE of Richmond, Ontario, age 83, died on July 27, 2015. John was born in Brockville, Ontario on March 3, 1932. He learned telegraphy from the Canadian National Railroad at Trenton Junction. After working four years as an Assistant on the St. Lawrence and Belleville Divisions, CNR qualified him as a telegrapher in 1955. John was later promoted to the CNR Freight Marketing Department in February 1962. John worked at various positions until appointed in 1975 as HQ Montreal as the Train Service Officer for Marketing. Then in 1982, John became the Operations Control Officer in Senior Management, followed by his promotion in 1983 to Service Design Officer. At the end of his long railroad career, John retired on January 31, 1986. Following retirement, he worked part time in sales at the Builders Supply Center and he stayed active and happy playing golf.

Thanks to Don Laycock, Secretary-Treasurer for the Maple Leaf Chapter for this interesting information

MARION WINNIFRED DOWDELL of Edson, Alberta, age 92, died on September 27, 2015. Marion was survived by her beloved husband of 66 years, Keith, and her sons Eric and David, plus several grandchildren.

Thanks to the Edson Funeral Home for this brief information

Vancouver "DI" Chapter

JACK MACDONALD of Nanaimo, British Columbia, age 80, passed away on June 25, 2015. Here are Jack's words from his original MTC application form: "Along with many other telegraph operators, I look back in amazement that I actually did that for a living! In 1952, I was peddling telegrams for the Canadian Pacific Railroad at Yorktown, Saskatchewan. A year later, I was off to Regina, working as a clerk in the telegraph office. In 1954, I took a CPR in-house telegraph course at Regina, followed by a brief stint as a commercial operator. Seeing little future as a commercial operator, I transferred to the railway division in 1956. This

began my gypsy-like lifestyle as an operator and agent at about 30 stations across Western Canada, always bucking the spare board. My telegraph career ended in 1965 at the E&N Railroad on Vancouver Island. It was a time of unbelievable swing shifts, cold outhouses, little money, small towns and little security. "I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED IT FOR THE WORLD!"

After retiring from the railroad, Jack worked until retirement for the Worker's Compensation Board in Vancouver, and then moved back to Vancouver Island. Jack was an avid clock collector and filled his home with their "little heart beats." He also did a lot of volunteering in the community and had a life of many friends.

Thanks to Lavina Shaw, Secretary-Treasurer for the Vancouver Chapter for this information.

Lavina adds: "although I never met Jack personally, I had many phone conversations with him. He had a great sense of humor and I really enjoyed talking to him."

Winnipeg "WG" Chapter

DONALD ROY HUDSON, age 90, passed away on November 10, 2015 at Lake of the Woods Hospital in Kenora, Ontario. Don was born in Kenora on March 6, 1925. He learned telegraph there in 1953 and started as a telegraph operator with the Canadian Pacific Railway on May 23, 1953. Then he underwent training to become a microwave technician and transferred to the Canadian Pacific Telecommunications Department, retiring in 1986. Don was also a ham radio operator with the call sign VE3DZJ. He is survived by his wife Astrid of 67 years, three children and one grandson.

Thanks to Dan Kollesarich, Secretary-Treasurer of the Winnipeg WG Chapter for this information.

Florida "FX" Chapter

JACK E. GRIFFIN, a long time member of the Florida Chapter, age 88, passed away on August 31, 2015. Jack came from a family of railroad telegraphers. He and another brother both learned

telegraphy from an older brother. Jack began work on the Ocala Division of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in 1948, and then spent the next 30 years working at various locations on that division. He was Agent-Telegrapher at Groveland, Florida when he retired.

Thanks to Warren McFarland, Secretary-Treasurer of the Florida Chapter for this information.

Warren adds, "Jack was very active in the Florida Chapter, serving as Secretary-Treasurer for a number of years. He was always available for demonstrations until health issues forced him to curtail his activities. His many friends will miss him; 30"

Edmonton "MO" chapter

LORRAINE PROCYK of Edmonton, member of MTC, passed away on September 8, 2015. Her husband was John Procyk. No additional information is known.

Thanks to Larina Shaw, Secretary-Treasurer of the Edmonton Chapter for this brief notice.

THE TELEGRAPH AND LAUDANUM

By: Richard Dees

What does Tincture Opii (Laudanum) have to do with sending and receiving Morse code on a sounder? Not much really, unless the guy using the Laudanum is the town doctor, and oh-by-the-way is John Barrows. Again, oh-by-the-way Yers Trooly had a telegraph set in a hotel just down the street from the good doctor. When the

good doctor wandered down the street to the hotel, history was made! As it turns out, John and I were participating in a living history event in Bannack City, MT during the week of September 20, 2015. John was Dr. Glick, and I was Barney Hughes the telegraph operator and part time Faro dealer.

When I agreed to participate in the event as a

telegraph guy, I had no idea John was going to be there let alone play the town doctor. I know that John is a gifted telegraph guy, but a doctor? I was fearful of telling him I had any ailments because he would have prescribed Liquor



Morphiae Sulphatis (Morphine Solution) or Tinctura Ferri Chloridi (Tincture of Ferric Chloride, you know...the same stuff used to etch printed circuit boards. I saw him do a couple of amputations, and it wasn't pretty. All that aside, I want to say that I learned a great deal from John. I was really glad he was there and as a result had a terrific time.

Since this is for *Dots & Dashes*, I'll talk a little about the telegraph set up in the hotel lobby of the reportedly haunted Mead Hotel in Bannack City. I didn't see Dorothy the ghost, but as you can see from the pictures, the station is typical. There was a 4 ohm sounder, a 150 ohm relay, and Bunnell key. I also had a set of batteries on display which included an 1850 Gravity Battery, an 1880 Edison Cell, and an 1862 Daniell Cell. John loaned me a Lineman Set for display to the public. I was really glad about that. I had never seen one before. We didn't run a wire to a second station because it was raining the day I arrived and for the first day of the event. As much as I like showing the telegraph, I really didn't want to get wet stringing wire. I don't think John did either.

At the onset, we discovered something about each other that initially prevented us working a line with two stations. I only know the Continental code and John only knows (American) Morse. That might have been a show stopper for mere mortal men, but not for a couple of schemers. After a day of deep contemplation, we found that we knew just enough of each other's codes to be dangerous, but could manage to send messages with reasonable speed using cheat sheets. So...john sending me the Continental (international Morse) code using the cheat sheet

and me sending John (American) Morse code using the chest sheet, we were successful. Voila... communication happened. It is our hope that if we do that enough, we can both become somewhat proficient in both codes. Time will tell.

As the weekend continued, we had several park patrons including two schools, a couple of home school groups and folks just passing through taking in the sites of Bannack City. As they came by the telegraph office, I tried to coax them into sending their names on the telegraph. I was successful most of the time. When the patron sent their names, they were awarded a certificate commemorating their significant accomplishment. I also got a few youngsters to make electromagnets and even a potato battery...I am from Idaho after all.

As I mentioned, I had a terrific time especially with John there. I had the good fortune to meet his wife and daughter. They toured the town Saturday and took in all the sights. They didn't see Dorothy either. John and I plotted what we'll do for next time in Bannack and perhaps even an event or two in between. I look forward to the next time we'll be able to get together. Oh, and if you meet John somewhere, tell him I say "hi" but don't sit too close to him if he has coffee. Ask John to explain...he'll tell you the story.

30



THE GOOD OLD DAYS

This is the farewell speech presented by Wally Footz when he retired from the railroad in November 1987. Likely, many of our readers can relate to Wally's summary of his railroad career.

Honored guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: I've been retired for one week and the trains are still running; isn't that amazing?

When railroaders retire, their famous words typically are, "The Railways been good to me." Yes, the Railways been good to me, BUT, I've also been good to the Railway.

I've worked nights, weekends, Christmas, Easter and every other holiday that you can name.

I was given my vacation in every month, except July and August when the kids were home from school for the summer.

I was transferred in the middle of winter and in the middle of the school year.

I've lived in box cars, cabooses, snowplows, bunkhouses and yes, the good old railroad station. There often was no electricity, no gas, smelly coal and oil lamps, and no running water. I had to run a half a mile away for water and carry it back pail by pail.

I've slept on grain doors in the waiting room because there was no hotel in the small village.

I've eaten cold beans because there was no restaurant in town.

Working nights, that's got to be the greatest; try sleeping during the day with young children, the mailman, the meter man, the milkman, and always the telephone.

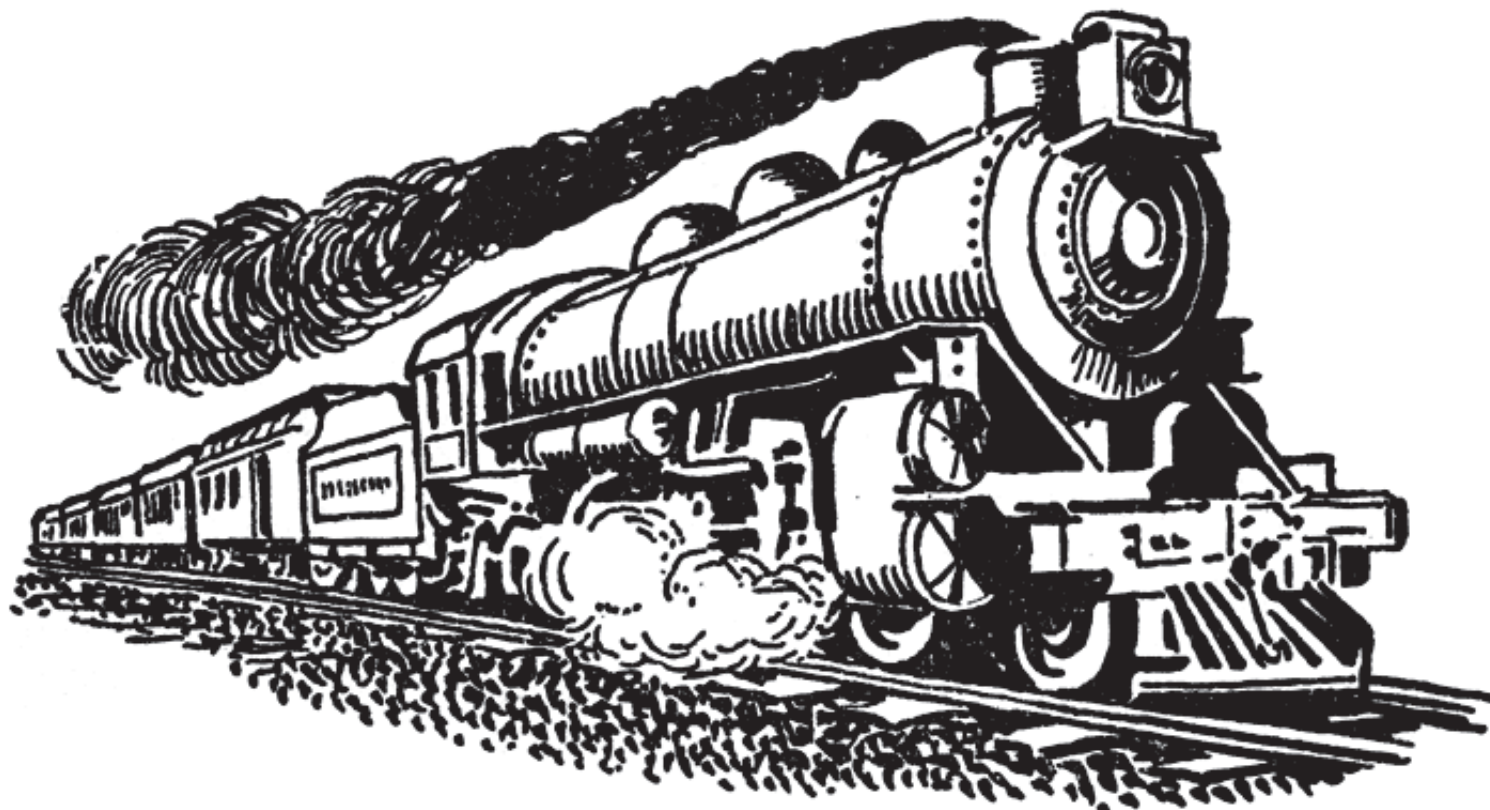
I can hardly remember when my daughter was a baby. While she was crawling and learning to walk, I was 600 miles away in Prince George, where I was working nights.

Yes, you can say the Railway has been good to me, BUT not nearly as good and as understanding as my wife and family were. They are the ones I salute tonight. I promised them this job would not be forever. Now, forever is here.

Thank you.

PS: I was hired in July 1951 and retired in November 1987. I worked as an Operator, Station Agent, Train Dispatcher, Assistant Chief Dispatcher, and Transpiration Planning Officer.

PPS: I forgot to mention that little building in the back yard with the Eaton's catalogue.



HOUSE TRACK Want Ad Section For Morse Telegraph Club Members

AVAILABLE: Book *Tales of the American Telegraph*. Issue #3 includes a photo layout. John B. Ryan, 11017 E. Sprague Avenue, Spokane, WA 99206.

WANTED: Re-enactors for Locust Grove, the Samuel Morse Historic Site in Poughkeepsie, NY. Please contact Andrew Stock, Curator of Education and Public Programs at a.stock@morsehistoricsite.org or (845) 454-4500 x13 if you are a Signal Corps re-enactor who may be interested in participation in history of telegraphy, including the annual Civil War weekend.

AVAILABLE: 2016 Railroad Calendar. The Inland Empire Railway Historical Society offers a stylish 2016 wall calendar of historic railroad events. To order a calendar, write to the IERHS at P.O. Box 471, Reardan, Washington 99029. Their annual membership is \$25.00 which includes a calendar. The IERHS is a 501-c nonprofit corporation, so all donations are tax deductible

AVAILABLE: I can duplicate small wooden resonator boxes for both 4 ohm and 30 ohm main line sounders. You will varnish or paint these to suit your desires. The cost is \$25 each. Milton Hegwood, 206 Kleven Avenue, Culbertson, NE 69024, telephone (308) 278-2152

AVAILABLE: Period attire for telegraph operators of any era. Authentic reproduction hand crafted clothing will be made to your exact fit by a certified seamstress at reasonable prices. Several MTC members already have attire provided by this talented and well educated lady. Contact Valerie Mathers at (410) 768-3162.

AVAILABLE: Pen & ink railroad drawings on stretched canvas, frame print, art print and greeting cards. See these on the website of *Dots & Dashes* member Peter Hamel at Peter Hamel Fine Art American.com. Telephone (705) 472-8860.

AVAILABLE: Book. Hubert Jewell, President of the Washington-Baltimore Chapter, offers us his biography titled, *Working on the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad*. This book is chalked full of facts and descriptions of railroading and of Morse code communications. Hubert's book is available from the RF&P Historical Society, Inc. PO Box 9097, Fredericksburg, VA 22403-9097 or from the web site www.frandp.org. The price is only \$25.15 postage paid.

AVAILABLE: Crests, "Order of Railroad Telegraphers" with emblem in the center, \$12 each. Email Mary Roy at terttu@shaw.ca or mail Mary at 3874 Winlake Crescent, Burnaby, BC V5A 2G5, telephone (604) 420-1292.

AVAILABLE: Vintage Rule Books of North American Railroads, at least 30 volumes, as far back in time as 1890. To purchase this valuable set of historic documents, call, e-mail, or write to James Gaw at 54 Colonial Drive in Kemptville, Ontario, Canada K0G 1J0, j.gaw@bell.net, or (613) 258-0243

AVAILABLE: Old telegraph and railroad books. For a list of these items, send a SASE to Eugene Wood, 104 Sunset, Madill, OK 73446. (Eugene does not have an email address).

AVAILABLE: "Morse code machine" and old billing forms from the estate of Jack Griffin. Phone Kay Griffin at (321) 231-0447 or write to Kay at 12239 Montevista Road, Clermont, Florida 34711.

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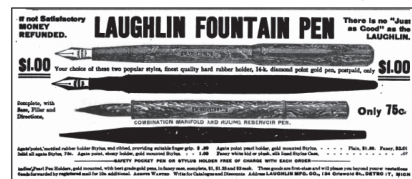
See <https://sites.google.com/site/morsekob/interface> for more information.



Flimsies & Other Forms



Contact Chip Morgan at MorgansElkCreekEnterprizes@verizon.net



Reproduction Fountain Pens and Stylus from early 1900s advertisements

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Your participation in *Dots & Dashes* is important. We need your stories, club news, announcements and reminiscences to keep it lively and interesting for everyone.

Jim Wilson

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For membership changes, address updates, dues and other information dealing with membership or with chapter operation, contact your local Chapter Secretary or:

International Secretary-Treasurer

Position currently open to anyone interested

Please do not send address changes for Dots & Dashes, dues renewals, etc., to the Editor. All mailing lists and membership rosters are prepared through the office of the International Secretary.

Ham Radio Web Sites

For those of you who are amateur radio operators, here are four current web sites that I find useful:

www.arnewslines.org

www.usrepeaters.com

www.qth.com

www.qrz.com

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