



Dots&Dashes

What

Hath

God

Wrought

The Official Publication of the Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Vol. 42, Issue No. 2 • Spring 2017

THE BERMUDA RAILWAY

Written by MTC Member Pat Kelly

The islands of Bermuda consist of about seven main, and numerous smaller islands. The archipelago has a length of approximately twenty four miles and is about one mile in width. It lies about 660 miles east-south-east of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. It was uninhabited prior to its discovery in 1505. Spanish navigator Juan Bermudez, while on a voyage to Spain from Hispaniola, (now The Dominican Republic and Haiti). As far as known, Bermudez did not land on the island but took careful note of its position. He returned in 1515 and landed a number of pigs there for the benefit of possible shipwrecked survivors.

On 1609, Admiral Sir George Somers, a skilled and daring British seaman, sailed from England in the vessel Sea Venture, with a seven-ship fleet carrying several hundred passengers and supplies to relieve the starving colony of Jamestown, Virginia. A vicious storm scattered the fleet, and only a one or two ships reached their destination. Somer's ship, carrying some of the expedition's leaders and supplies, finally sighted Bermuda. The ship was driven on a reef, but all made it safely to shore. There they remained for ten months living off pork and the sea's bounty. During this time two small ships were constructed and in 1610 they set sail for Jamestown. A few members of the expedition apparently chose to remain on the island. Somers returned later that same year and died there shortly after. He is buried in his native town of Lyme Regis, Dorset, England. Since that time, Bermuda has been continually inhabited.

The Somers Isles is another name for then group. In fact during World War II, a Canadian naval base, HMCS Somers Isles, was established near the east end of the island and served our forces during the last war. HMS Malabar was the British

naval establishment and dockyard on Ireland island, in the west.

Prior to 1931, island transportation was by horses, carts, carriages, bicycles and boats. Cars, trucks and buses had been banned in 1908. Island officialdom believed that most visitors were in need of peace and quiet, away from motorized traffic and the hustle and bustle of life in cities. It was assumed that the tourists and other visitors would welcome the leisurely lifestyle of these sub-tropical isles. This served fairly well until the 1920s. After World War I, tourism increased significantly and this, coupled with the steady rise of the resident population, made it abundantly clear that some new and better form of transit must be considered. After much debate a commission was formed to investigate a possible route for a light railway system to better serve the island. It was proposed that a 3 ft 6 in. narrow gauge, single track steam rail line be built, following the route laid out by the commission. This was not totally acceptable by the island's governing body and again more discussion followed. Opposition to the line came from several areas, especially the owners of horses and the carriage and livery trade who stated that a train would panic the animals, resulting in severe accidents. Another group forecast that if a railway was implemented, wealthy tourists would find other places to spend the season and their money.

All this came to a head when the Bermuda Railway Company Act was passed by the House of Assembly in 1924, allowing the newly formed Bermuda Railway Company to build a rail line from end to end on the islands. Construction finally began in 1926. Due to the lay of the land, cost of material and labour, construction expenses mounted hugely, including the expense of having to build bridges and trestles connecting the

Dots & Dashes

The official publication of

The Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.

Jim Wilson - Editor, *Dots & Dashes*

2742 Southern Hills Court • North Garden, VA 22959
(434) 245-7041 • telegraphjim@gmail.com

www.morsetelegraphclub.org

www.facebook.com/morsetelegraphclub

www.morsekob.org

Dots & Dashes is published quarterly as a benefit of membership. Nonmembers may subscribe at prevailing membership dues rates. Articles in Dots & Dashes (unless copyrighted or are themselves reprinted from other sources) may be reprinted, provided proper credit is given. A copy of the publication would be appreciated.

MTC Contact Information

Jim Wades
International President
16041 Brookside Drive
Buchanan, MI 49107
(269) 650-0215
jameswades@gmail.com

J. Chris Hausler
International Vice President
100 Citation Drive
Henrietta, NY 14467-9747
jchhausler@earthlink.net

Lavina Shaw
Past President
#112 2357 Whyte Ave.
Port Coquitlam, B.C., Canada V3C 2A3
(604) 942-2184
LavinaShaw@shaw.ca

George J. Nixon, Jr.
Retired International Vice President
16064 S. Timber Brook Dr.
Draper, UT 84020
(801) 607-1041
n9ejs@mindspring.com

Grand Chapter members should send address changes and annual membership renewals to:

Morse Telegraph Club
C/O Management Decisions, LLC
Gaye Gardner Hobson
2621 Carpenter Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI. 48108
gaye@mandecllc.com

If notifying MTC about a deceased member (Silent Key), please notify:

Jim Wilson
Editor, *Dots & Dashes*
2742 Southern Hills Ct.
North Garden, VA. 22959
telegraphjim@gmail.com
(434) 245-7041

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:

James Wades
International President,
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.
PO Box 192
Buchanan, MI. 49107
jameswades@gmail.com
(269) 548-8219

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

Richard Williams
International Secretary-Treasurer
PO Box 181591
Coronado, CA 92178
runnerrichard@hotmail.com
(703) 407-7461

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

ARTICLES

The Bermuda Railway <i>By Pat Kelly</i>	1,4
The First Wireless Distress Message Sent from a Ship <i>By Pat Kelly</i>	4,5
Evolution of the Evergreen Chapter <i>By Kevin Saville</i>	14
Canadian Pacific Railway Training Procedures <i>By Jack G. Harris</i>	15-16
Telegraph Employed in Civil War Spy Work <i>By Donald E. Markle</i>	22

IN EVERY ISSUE

Sidewire	3
President's Line.....	3,9
Letters To The Editor.....	6-9
Chapter News.....	10-13
Book & Movie Review	18-19
Silent Keys	20-21
Do You Know?.....	22
House Track.....	23

The next issue of *Dots & Dashes* is scheduled for publication on June 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*

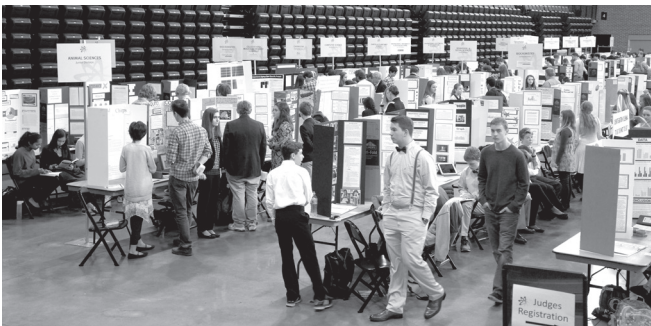
By Jim Wilson



Ah, spring! During this optimistic time of year, let us all participate in a telegraph demonstration, if you can, telling the public about the electric telegraph. Recall that this simple invention was the first practical use of electricity and that it marked the beginning of our electronics' revolution.

A friend of mine suggested that I ask you to send me your stories about how you became interested in telegraphy and how that interest may have influenced your careers. So, please do write down your personal telegraph stories and email or mail your brief stories to me for the next issue of *Dots & Dashes*. You might include a description of the most important telegraph message that you ever sent or that you ever received. You might name your telegraph mentor. I'll be listening for your reply.

Last week, I served as a volunteer judge in the Piedmont Regional Science Fair here in Charlottesville, Virginia. This annual event in March is always rewarding and fun. This was my fifth year as a judge. This year's science fair included 347 projects prepared by 415 students, with entries from 41 regional high schools. The goal of the 112 judges was to evaluate student projects and, more importantly, to encourage each student with the hopes that he or she might make a career in science. These high school students may find a future cure for Alzheimer's disease or for Parkinson's disease or may solve the problems of poverty or of global warming. Creative ideas by these students were rampant. I snapped the attached photograph for you.



Some of our chapters are struggling. Read Letters to the Editor for details. If you can, please volunteer to serve your chapter as an officer and participate in a telegraph demonstration. MTC needs you.

Jim Wilson

President's Line

Jim Wades, President
Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.



Over the past few years, we have seen some MTC chapters struggle. As our membership ages, fewer men and women feel they have the stamina and health to take on chapter leadership positions. The result is often the dissolution of a chapter when no one steps forward to take a leadership position.

Even when chapters remain intact, travel to events, such as "Morse Day" is becoming increasingly problematic for our older members.

Fortunately, the MTC Constitution and By-Laws gives the International President significant latitude for dealing with such events. In a couple of cases, we have kept local chapters on the books, despite the loss of leadership officials. The idea is that perhaps a younger member will step forward to take the reins and keep things moving.

While we continue to obtain new members, primarily from the ranks of Amateur Radio and former military radio operators, many of these men and women do not live near a chapter. After all, our chapters were often established around cities, which once had significant telegraph infrastructure. This meant that many of the chapter members knew each other from the profession and these individuals formed the basis of a chapter.

Fortunately, the requirements to retain chapter status are minor. Essentially, it involves collecting dues and holding a Morse Day meeting once per year. For some of our younger members, these duties will not prove particularly problematic. If you are relatively young and in good health, and you can step forward to take on the chapter secretary/treasurer position, you would be providing a great service to your fellow telegraphers.

For the time being, it will remain our goal to retain chapters on the books whenever practical. Either way, our goal is to continue to serve our fellow members to the best of our ability. In that spirit, we will hold chapter charters in force for as long as possible while looking for solutions to this emerging problem.

More Museums

Believe it or not, we are running a bit low on telegraph instruments. Thanks to several museum projects, we have donated a considerable number of telegraph relays, sounders and other equipment to various museums throughout the US and Canada. In the near future, I will be meeting with representatives of two additional museums who would like to have an authentic telegraph office constructed.

continued on page 9

various islands. Private and other land had to be expropriated and owners fairly compensated.

As the line was being built, orders were sent to the Drewry Car Co. in England for the necessary rolling stock. Eight gasoline-powered, 120 HP, self propelled coaches were acquired and over time, six first class or "Pullman" coaches, and some standard or second class cars. Later, came two diesel locomotives from the U.S. and some freight cars were added.

The 22 mile long line was opened for business with much fanfare, speeches and general excitement on October 31st, 1931. Over the years it was much used by school children, commuters, shoppers and the general public. During the war the line also served the many and various armed forces based on the island.

After the war, all the railway equipment, including track and rolling stock was becoming very much in need of repair and maintenance and this would prove very costly indeed. Use of the train by the public was falling off due in great part to the 1946 introduction of automobiles, trucks and other road vehicles that now were becoming so prolific on the island. A decision had to be made, and so perhaps, somewhat reluctantly, it was decided to close down the service. And so on May 1st, 1948, the train made its final run. Most of the old railway line is now a very scenic and much used biking and hiking trail, but no doubt many Bermudians still remember with pride when they had a unique and useful rail line, if only for seventeen years.

THE FIRST WIRELESS DISTRESS MESSAGE SENT FROM A SHIP

Written by MTC Member Pat Kelly

For the first wireless distress message ever transmitted from a vessel we must review some of the events leading up to this epic occurrence.

During the late 1800s, Guglielmo Marconi had been conducting many experiments in radio transmission in the U.K. and abroad with varying success. In 1898 he opened a factory in Chelmsford, Essex, employing about fifty workers manufacturing radio equipment required for his electronic work.

It so happened that in May of that year, Lloyd's Insurance of London, offered Marconi a contract to set up a wireless connection from Ballycastle, County Mayo, Ireland, to Rathlin Island, a small piece of land nine miles off the coast from Ballycastle. Ships inward bound from North America, en route to Liverpool or other British ports, passed by the island where the light keepers kept a record of vessels sighted. How to relay this information to London, where it was required, had long posed a problem. Previously, semaphore flag signalling had been employed but this was on no use in fog or stormy weather conditions. Carrier pigeons were also tried, but these proved unreliable due to predators and the small amount of information a bird could carry. Underwater cables were laid, but owing to frequent breakdowns due to water pressure causing short circuits etc.,

this method too, was abandoned. Lloyd's contract would prove to be very valuable to Marconi, both for the financing it would provide and the wide recognition he would receive.. Unable to come to Ballycastle himself, he sent his chief assistant, George Kemp to set up the necessary apparatus. During the month of June, 1898, Kemp worked tirelessly travelling back and forth to and from the island, devising ways to complete his task. With the help of a few island men, several types of antennas and other equipment were tried and various experiments were carried out. On July 6th a further transmitting test was made and Kemp in the Ballycastle coast guard house received a short signal from Rathlin. This date is usually accepted as the first commercial use of wireless telegraphy. During July and August more trials were scheduled and by late August signals between the two stations were considered satisfactory. On the 27th of that month, in spite of thick fog, twelve ships were reported to Ballycastle from Rathlin and the information duly passed to London. This was certainly a triumph for Marconi and his wireless work. About this time, Marconi, busy man, was commissioned by the Dublin Daily Express newspaper, to provide radio coverage and reports on the progress and results of the prestigious Irish yacht races to be held at Kingsdown, (now Dun Laoghaire), The editor, a Mr. T.P. Gill, chartered a

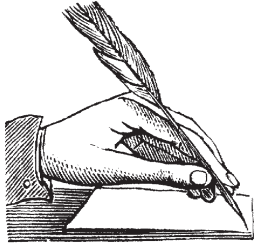
steam tug, the Flying Huntress, on which Marconi installed his equipment. The race was held on July 28th. Everything went well and Marconi was able to follow the race and quickly report the results to the Harbour Master's office in Kingsdown, who then forwarded it to Dublin. Not long afterward, the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, suffered a severe knee injury and was confined aboard the Royal Yacht, Osborne. This vessel was based in Cowes Bay, Isle of Wight. The imposing mansion of Osborne House, nearby, was the site of one of Queen Victoria's residences.. Marconi was invited to set up his wireless gear on board the yacht and also in Osborne House itself. For the next three weeks he maintained communication between these two points, sending frequent reports of the progress of the Prince's recovery, which were reported to the Queen. The distance between the two stations was never very far, but as the yacht moved about the area a good deal, high hills intervened at times between the two stations. This was no obstacle to the wireless signals which continued uninterrupted throughout.

At this point mention must be made of the Corporation of Trinity House. Briefly, it is an establishment based in London, England, founded in 1514 by a charter from Henry VIII as a charity dedicated to the safety of shipping and providing navigational information, education and welfare facilities to mariners. It is also responsible for all lighthouse and lightship maintenance in the British Isles.

The Corporation had long sought a means of reliable communication between their shore base and offshore vessels. Several methods had been tried over the years, and to say the least, had proved unsatisfactory. Marconi saw an opportunity to try and solve this problem using his wireless telegraphy system, and in 1898 offered to give a ship-to-shore wireless demonstration to the Corporation. This was accepted by the Trinity House Elders on a trial basis, and in December work was commenced installing radio telegraph equipment on the East Goodwin Sands light vessel, anchored on the treacherous Goodwin sands, near the town of Deal, in Kent.

He also installed a wireless set on the South Foreland lighthouse, twelve miles distant on the mainland. Again the valiant George Kemp was in charge of operations, and on Christmas Eve of that year, Kemp, on the light vessel, communicated successfully with the operators on South Foreland. Season's Greetings were sent to the editors of all

leading newspapers, and to friends and relations of the lightship's crew and the wireless staff. It appeared that all was proceeding very well indeed. From now on, regardless of weather conditions, communication would be maintained between the two establishments by the miracle of wireless. Not much time was to pass before the true value of the new service was shown in a very practical way. At 2 A.M. On March 11th, 1899, the German three-masted sailing ship, Elbe, en route from Nantes to Hamburg, lost its way in thick fog and grounded on the Goodwin Sands. The wireless operator on the East Goodwin lightship, quickly made contact with South Foreland lighthouse who promptly telegraphed news of the accident to the appropriate authorities. Soon after, the lifeboats at Deal and Ramsgate were alerted and put on standby in case of need. As it happened, the Elbe was able to be re-floated with the assistance of a tug, the Shamrock, aided by a rising tide, and proceeded on its way undamaged. This incident marked the first time that lifeboats had been informed by wireless of a possible call-out. Shortly after, on April 28th of that year, the East Goodwin lightship itself was involved in an accident. Again, a dense blanket of fog covered the area. The steamship R.F. Matthews, on its way from Newcastle to Genoa with a cargo of coal, rammed the lightship at her moorings. The damage was very severe as the bow of the lightship was badly smashed, planks split and much of her upper works carried away. Fortunately, none of the seven-man crew were injured. Apparently the steamer had not made allowance for a strong tidal current running at that time and had been carried into the lightship. The Matthews, herself suffering damage, stood by until assured that the injured vessel would stay afloat. The lightship immediately sent out the following message to the South Foreland lighthouse: "We have just been rammed into by the steamer R.F. Matthews of London. Steamship is standing by. Our bows are very badly damaged." This message was received by a Mr. Bullocke, Marconi's assistant at South Foreland, who then contacted Trinity House personnel. They soon made arrangements for their vessel, the Warden, to bring out a replacement lightship and then tow the damaged vessel into base for the extensive repairs required. Thus it was that on this historic date, April 28th, 1899, the first true distress call was sent from a ship at sea, by wireless telegraphy.



Letters to the Editor

January 25th

While I am not a member of the Morse Telegraph Club, I happened to run across a copy of *Dots & Dashes* at ACAC in Charlottesville (VA) and began reading the American Morse at the top of the pages. So, I thought I would get in touch and see what this is all about.

I was born in Milwaukee in 1927 to a father who worked as a car clerk on the Chicago and North Western Railroad. After completing my service in the U.S. Navy during WWII, I began looking for a job. With the help of my Dad and the GI bill, I enrolled at Fennimore, WI to learn telegraphy and how to handle a railroad station.

After about three months under the eye of Glenn Thomas, I was sent out into the wide world to really learn Morse. At that time, I probably was up to about 8 words per minute. My first job was as second trick at Adams Yard, where I was to receive the “consist of trains” starting up out of Mitchell Yard in Milwaukee. This would be given to the Yardmaster, who would use my information to break that train into component parts. The operator began sending the consist and I began breaking him about every fourth or fifth letter. Finally, when the consist was half received, the Yardmaster came and said, “Don’t worry, Bob, the train just arrive and I have everything I need from its conductor.” He laughed and added, “Not bad for someone just starting. You’ll learn.” And learn I did.

From May 1947 to June 1948, I worked the extra board on the Madison Division of the C&NW RR. But, there were just too many guys on the “extra board” to have any steady work. The only telegraph operator who seemed to get steady work was the son of the Chief Train Dispatcher. So, I was sent to Waukesha for two weeks, relieving the first trick operator while he was working as acting agent. Western Union called with a “long press.” My heart sank, because I knew I wasn’t good enough for that yet. Luckily, there was a sounder in the agent’s office and the operator, who had been an AP operator before coming on the road, sat down and typed the whole thing as I watched with envy.

In the summer of 1948, one of my friends, a conductor on No. 511, a passenger train, told me both the Galena Division and Lake Shore Divisions out of Chicago needed operators. So I got a wire pass and went to Chicago. The Galena Division offices were first out, so I stopped in and talked to the CTD. He told me that he had two openings, which I could bid on after one day on the job. Since at that time, I had a year and a half of seniority, it carried to the Galena Division. One was Sterling/Nelson swing (two stations five miles apart), and the other was DeKalb/Proviso swing (two stations thirty miles apart). After going back to the Madison Division and letting them know I was leaving, I began working the Sterling/Nelson Tower. This entailed first trick at Sterling on Sundays, first at Nelson on Monday, second at Sterling on Tuesday, second at Nelson on Wednesday, third at Sterling on Thursday and third at Nelson on Friday. Thus I got off work at Nelson at 8 AM on Saturday and reported to Sterling at 8 AM on Sunday to start the whole thing over again. That was the beginning of fifteen years as a telegrapher and sometime agent on the C&NW, working from 1947 to 1961. At that time I quit the railroad to go on a different career as a Professor of Economics in the State University of New York system.

Recently, I got on YouTube and typed in “American Morse.” This led me to a number of places sending Morse code. One was an annulment of a freight out of South Pekin, Illinois to Nelson, Illinois. I worked Nelson twice since. I also worked third trick from 1954 to 1956 before bidding in second trick DeKalb in 1956, so I could go to Northern Illinois University to better myself. I found, even though I haven’t had an opportunity to hear Morse since 1961, that I can still read it with no problem. Of course, I am not as fast as I was fifty years ago, but I guess once you have it, you don’t lose it.

I’d be interested in any information that you might give me regarding this organization.

Thanks.
Robert Haseltine
Charlottesville, Virginia

February 3rd

I noticed with interest the photo of a Western Union manual from your father (Page 14 of the winter issue, he article titled “Elements of Telegraphy”). I have a 40 volume set of probably the same book, covering all segments of the construction of telegraph equipment from one end to the other. The total set takes up about 18 inches on my book shelf.

Back in about 1960 or so, when I was working the Waterloo, Iowa Western Union office as an automatic operator, there also worked a gentleman named Everett Rainbow. He had originally worked for the Postal Telegraph, but he was retiring to Sun City, Arizona. Before Everett moved away, he wanted me to have that set of books. Now they just sit in my living room in my book case, which covers one whole wall. Now I have no use for them, and sometimes I wonder what will happen to them when I am gone. Also, I wonder if you ever did a write-up on the life of Samuel Morse. I read this with interest in a World Book. He was born in 1791 and he wanted to become an artist. I guess he was quite good at it. You probably know all this as well. These are just some random thoughts.

*Best regards and 73 to you,
Ron Kollmann
Newton, Iowa*

February 4th

Many years ago, I was a telegraph operator at a certain unnamed railroad station. My duties at this station, in addition to the usual telegraph work of blocking trains and OS'ing, were to meet the morning passenger train which handled U.S. mail, Express Company freight and baggage with corpses in caskets quite often, and to receive mail from the RPO car and baggage from the baggage car.

Usually, prior to the arrival of the train, there was a group of four of us gathered around the old pot belly heater, staying warm, while we roasted and ate peanuts that were supplied by one of the four men who was a government inspector who occupied space in the adjacent warehouse. Others included myself, the Express Company Agent, and an older railroad employee who always arrived for work early and waited for his supervisor.

One morning, the Express Agent, Peanut man, and I were standing around the potbellied stove, just enjoying each other's jokes and stories of the past. On this morning, the oldest of our group

was sitting at one of the desk with his head in his hands. He seemed to be in deep concentration and not paying much attention to us three. Suddenly, he pounded his fist on the desk and shouted: “I DON'T GIVE A DAMN WHAT ANYONE SAYS, I KNOW YOU CAN CATCH THE CLAP FROM A COMMODE SEAT, BECAUSE MY WIFE DID!” That broke up our conversations at the heater! What could be said by any of us? Peanut man said, “I see a customer who I've got to take care of.” Express Agent said, “It's time for me to get my truck out.” That left me alone with the older employee. What could I say? Boy-O-Boy, was I glad to hear the passenger train's engineer blowing for the crossing. We four kept making our morning meetings, but this subject was never mentioned again.

For obvious reasons, this writer wishes his name to remain anonymous as he shares his embarrassing but humorous story with us.

February 17th

The “SK” MTC Chapter needlessly dissolved on December 31, 2012. This was certainly not due to Del Kalkken or myself and two other members who did 99% of the work while the rest of them refused to do anything. Then, Del and I transferred to the “DI” Vancouver chapter because of our longtime friendship with Earl and Lavina Shaw. Del and I did telegraph events at Ritzville, Toppenish, Washington and Wallace, Idaho. In fact, our last event was the NPRR convention at Wallace on September 14-17, 2016. That was the last telegraph event ever in the northwest, so far as I know. Only one other member could participate, but his wife refuses to allow him to do telegraph events. After Del passed away, at 2 AM on October 6th (I was his nurse), later that year, I notified Lavina that I would not renew my membership in the MTC.

*Sincerely and 73,
L.R. Keith
Ritzville, Washington*

February 20th

It has come to my knowledge recently that some members don't know that when I worked for the CNT, my last name was McPhedrain and I was nicknamed “Massie.” Not many knew me as “Lavina.” I signed “MA.” I came from a telegrapher

family. My father, grandfather, brother, uncle (McPhedrains) and two uncles on my mother's side (Morgan). Then I married Earl Shaw, whose brother and father were also telegraphers.

73,
Laina Shaw
Previous MTC International President

February 20th

My name is Gerry Maira and I am a member of the MTC. I have been a collector of old telegraph equipment for many years and was a friend of Roger Reinke. It was very sad to hear the news when he passed away in July. I used to see Roger every year at the Antique Wireless Association (AWA) meets in Rochester, NY back in the 90's. Roger was the undisputed authority on early equipment and I always looked forward to reading his "Key and Telegraph" column in the AWA's "Old Timer's Bulletin."

Roger helped me out with information many times. I know that Roger had a very extensive collection and as a collector myself, I have been curious to know what's to become of his collection. Other collectors have been wondering too, as you might imagine. I read in your "Sidewire" column in the winter issue of D&D that Roger's collection is being catalogued and distributed. Can you tell me a little more about what's going on, such as what Roger's family plans are for the collection or how it is being distributed? I've been wondering if anything would be for sale, if there would be an auction or maybe it's all being donated to a museum or organization. Can you tell me anything about what's going on? Please feel free to forward my message to Roger's family.

Thank you and 73,
Gerry Maira

Roger's son, Brian, told me that the family is in the process of evaluating and distributing his father's extensive collection of telegraph equipment. ~Editor Jim

March 5th

I am a member of the Terre Haute Chapter of the Morse Telegraph Club and I did not get a renewal notice last fall. Then I found out that our Secretary-Treasurer, Howard Eskridge, had passed away early last December. Howard's widow, Judy, was nice enough to reply to me and let me know what was going on. Goodness; we are losing so many good men lately.

As I explained to Judy, I am a little too young to have been a Morse man. At age 55, I am at the end of the Baby Boomers. But I was lucky to spend a lot of time with railroad operators before they were all done away with. Many shared their stories with me. Sadly, a lot of them are gone now too. I am with three railroad museums and try to keep the awareness of Morse alive, but it's not easy with the latest generations. I work for a wireless Internet service provider, and have always liked the old technology. If I had been born earlier, I like to think that I would have been a Wire Chief somewhere!

Bill Dunbar was a friend and we met up often at Monticello Railway Museum. He was a true gentleman and I sure do miss him. Also, I was good friends with Bob McQuown and try to keep his memory alive at the Watseka, IL museum of the C&EL Historical Society. I don't know what will happen with all the railroad and T&T history when my generation is gone. But it doesn't look good. We talk all the time about losing generations now who even knew someone personally who worked in the steam era or new a relative that got on the train to go to war. Time is removing those first-person experiences.

So, is the Terre Haute Chapter pretty much done now? I figured that time would come eventually. How can I keep my membership current?

Thanks,
Doug Nipper
Danville Illinois

PS: I am not a ham operator, but I plan on taking my Technician test next weekend just for the heck of it!

March 6th

I am sorry to have to tell you that at our November 2016 semi-annual meeting the members voted to no longer be a member of the Grand Chapter and to exist as just an informal local group. They were aware, of course, that since they would no longer be paying dues, their subscriptions to *Dots & Dashes* would cease. I have decided to remain a member of the Grand Chapter, and about 5 or 6 weeks ago forwarded my dues to GC management. I find the articles in *Dots & Dashes* to be very interesting and would not like to give them up.

Best Wishes,
Len Solomon,
President and Secretary-Treasurer
former Saskatoon KN Chapter



March 13th

Attached is a photo of the Baltimore Western Union Office staffed for the Democratic National Convention. Based on the telegraph equipment and the women's fashions, I believe this to be the 1912



convention, which was held from June 25 to July 2 of that year. The convention required 46 ballots to nominate Woodrow Wilson as the Democrat candidate. Political conventions before our modern era of highly scripted “political theater” conventions were undoubtedly fascinating. Imagine the debate and drama that required 46 ballots to nominate a candidate! Imagine the swelter heat of July in Baltimore in an era before air conditioning.

The detail in the photo is fantastic. A close examination allows one to identify specific brands of instruments, the approximate model of Self-Winding Clock, and numerous other features. The switchboard alone is impressive. One can't help but wonder what happened to such an incredible arrangement. Most of all, one can now only imagine the bedlam of multiple telegraph sounders, typewriters, the stock ticker and the like in those Halcyon days of telegraphy. Such a wonderful noise will never be heard again.

...“I only know that summer sang in me a little while, that in me sings no more.” (Edna St. Vincent Millay)

73,
Jim Wades,
International President
Morse Telegraph Club

President's Line continued from page 3

If members have any spare telegraph instruments they no longer use, I would encourage you to donate one or two pieces to the club. They will be held in storage until needed for a museum project. Most museum projects do not require rare instruments. Garden-variety 20th century instruments are almost always sufficient. This includes sounders, relays, keys and bugs, jack-boxes, switch boards, and the like.

Any donation of an instrument is tax deductible and a receipt for a donation will be provided upon request.

Another item we are soliciting are photographs of telegraph operators at work, telegraph offices and other telegraph subjects. These can be submitted by mail or as electronic scans. Such photographs are ideal for publication in Dots and Dashes or for use in museum annotation and the like. Thanks to modern technology, even aging or damaged snapshots can often be enhanced, repaired and enlarged for publication or display.

If you can help in these areas; please contact your International President.

Civil War Re-enactments

We have been receiving a lot of inquiries requesting telegraph demonstrations at Civil War encampments and re-enactments. Of particular interest is the support of two to three major events each year.

Such events would be ideal for some of our younger members. While the use of American Morse Code would be ideal, those who are radio amateurs could certainly utilize the Continental Code. It would only be necessary to explain the difference when interpreting telegraph history for the public.

I would like to put together a list of individuals who would be interested in assisting with the occasional request for a Civil War telegraph exhibit. It is assumed, of course, that those participating will have some proficiency with either American Morse Code or the Continental (International) Code. It would also be helpful to know if you have done any re-enactments in the past or if you have equipment arranged for such activities. Let's get a database together to allow us to coordinate activities and perhaps leverage our membership to support at least one or two high-profile events each year. Please drop an e-mail to your International President if interested.

Dues

Just a reminder; if you haven't paid your 2017 dues yet, please do so at your earliest convenience. We typically stop mailing Dots and Dashes during the third quarter, so be sure to get your dues paid soon. Grand Chapter members (members at large) pay directly to the International. Local chapter members send payment to the local chapter secretary/treasurer.

73, Jim Wades
International President
Morse Telegraph Club

CHAPTER NEWS

Florida FX Chapter



In 2016, International MTC President Jim Wades asked the Florida chapter to assist in setting up and staffing an MTC booth at the Orlando HamCon, an event billed as the third largest amateur radio convention in the United States. Jim previously participated for a number of years in the annual Dayton Hamvention, considered the best of amateur radio conventions. The Orlando convention was a new experience for the Florida Chapter, so some of us were apprehensive as to whether radio amateurs would have much more than a passing curiosity about landline telegraphy. We were pleasantly surprised.

This year, the Florida chapter took it upon ourselves to participate in the 2017 HamCon. Building on what appeared to attract the most attention in 2016, we chose to have more operational vintage telegraph keys, sounders, and other related items on display for visitors to study. These, along with the Chapter's mini-telegraph office, proved to be irresistible eye-candy to a surprising large number of hams. Thus, we were overwhelmed on the first day. Reinforcements were scheduled for the second day to help answer the barrage of questions about both landline Morse, and for many, that odd American Morse code; you know, that code that makes the clicking sounds, and is so different. A little demonstration on a KOB and two large, side by side code charts allowed comparison of the two codes and helped clear up the mystery for many visiting hams.

For the any hams who prefer semi-automatic

key operation, they could try their fist on a Coffee Vertical Pendulum or Mecograph semi-automatic key. Also operational was a double key, the type used for Cable Morse on undersea cables. This double key fed a Cable Morse register, recording the negative and positive Morse currents on a paper tape. All the instruments were operational and there were many moments when every key had a hand operating it while others waited patiently for their chance to send on this vintage style land line equipment.

Needless to say, the Chapter's setup at this convention created considerable interest amongst the amateur radio community. Many folks left having a much better understanding about American Morse and the beauty of the instruments used with it. If the story of American Morse and the role it played in communications history is to survive and not just fade into the footnotes of history, it may well be hams who pass on the marvelous story. Members of the MTC should take every opportunity to cultivate this resource before it is lost. Although many hams are strictly phone operators, most of them do hold great respect for the Morse code and how it pioneered and shaped the radio technology they use today.

Florida Chapter members who participated in this and in similar events know the great feeling of satisfaction in having given the time and effort to share this marvelous old technology with others. The rewards come in the form of their great appreciation and invitations to attend and represent the Morse Telegraph Club at future



CHAPTER NEWS *continued*

events. The Florida Chapter hopes that other Chapters and MTC members join in similar activities to keep the interesting Morse story alive.

Thanks to Don Andrus for this exciting report and for the photographs.

Washington-Baltimore WA Chapter



WA Chapter
President
Hubert Jewell
and his son
Buz prepare to
greet visitors at
"Frostfest 2017"

Three folks represented the Morse Telegraph Club on Saturday February 4th at the annual "Frostfest" in Richmond, Virginia. Frostfest is a large event in which dozens of informational and sales tables are set up, mostly to display amateur radio equipment for sale. Hundreds of people attend this event. Representing the WA Chapter were WA President Hubert Jewell and his son Buz Jewell and WA Secretary-Treasurer Jim Wilson, your editor.

Weather was amazingly decent for February, which encouraged many more folks to attend this event. (One year the Frostfest was cancelled due to a heavy snow.) Lots of curious folks visited the WA MTC table, asking questions and leaving with a sample copy of *Dots & Dashes* to read and study.

Ninety-two year old Hubert told visitors about his career as a railroad telegrapher, using the American Morse code daily on his job with the RF&P Railroad. Hubert and his son Buz, and Jim chatted with dozens of interested passers-by, managing to get at least one new member for the chapter. They informed dozens if not hundreds of other ham operators about the value of early telegraphy. Recall that the American Civil War broke out in 1861, less than twenty years after the electric telegraph had been demonstrated to Congress in 1844. The telegraph

was used extensively by both the Union and the Confederates during that disastrous war. If not for the telegraph, the Union might not have won the war. And if the telegraph had not been invented, ham radio would not have been created. This important technical evolution, invention of the electric telegraph, was emphasized by Hubert and Buz and Jim. If all goes well, Lord willing, Hubert and Buz and Jim plan to set up a table again next February at Frostfest 2018.

Grand GC Chapter

The year 2016 kept your International Vice President reasonably busy supporting various telegraph events.

Early in 2016 a local friends of the railroad group of which I am a member informed me that the Ontario County Historical Society (<http://www.ochs.org/>) was planning a year long exhibit to be titled, "Planes, Trains and Automobiles: 20th Century Transportation in Ontario County" and was looking for material for the exhibit. I contacted them and offered to provide some telegraph materials for their display. The end result was that I loaned them a 15B sounder and 2A key and in addition provided descriptive material both about the instruments themselves as well as a write-ups on the use of telegraphic train orders and of telegraph shorthand. These were all incorporated by the museum staff in the portion of the exhibit about train transportation. This display runs through April 1, 2017.

With guidance and material assistance from our International President, Jim Wades, I prepared a telegraph presentation for a local girl scout group last spring. This included a PowerPoint presentation on the history of telegraphy with a special emphasis on women telegraph operators, a demonstration of land line American Morse telegraphy using MorseKOB, a demonstration of "wig-wag" flag sending using International Morse, including excerpts from a 1920's era Girl Scout Handbook on flag signaling, and finally a hands-on experience practicing sending and receiving with International Morse using code practice oscillators. For this last the girls were divided up into groups, each with a parent to provide guidance and structure, and each group was provided with a code practice oscillator. Being single with no children

CHAPTER NEWS *continued*

and thus with little exposure to girls this age I was somewhat worried as to how well this would go. However, by the end of the evening the girls were on the floor in groups on opposite sides of the room having a grand time sending to each other (or at least trying to). One of the parents commented to me that the code practice oscillators would be good things to have for use during girl scout “sleep overs”. I also suggested that the group could plan a summer afternoon outside event where they could practice flag signaling.

In early June I provided assistance with a land line telegraph display which was part of a larger display put on by the Antique Wireless Association at the Rochester Amateur Radio Association’s one-day annual hamfest at Kodak Park. Although I have been a member of the AWA (and RARA) for several decades and have attended their annual convention for most of the last 20 years, I have otherwise not previously been active in this organization. For this display I set up a computer running the “Mill” driving some instruments they provided.

I was asked by the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery (www.fomh.org) to put on a one day telegraph display on Saturday June 18th in honor of Hiram Sibley, principal founder of Western Union, who is buried in this cemetery. This was to be part of a larger historical event that day. This group sponsors frequent events at, and tours of, this cemetery year round. This came about because one of their members had seen a telegraph display I had put on elsewhere the year previous. My display was

set up in their historic north gate house which is directly across the north entrance way from Sibley’s burial plot. The display was pretty much my standard display with some additional signage about Mr. Sibley.

My efforts with the AWA at the local hamfest led to the most involved request for telegraphic assistance I received this year. This was to help configure a “Western Union” telegraph office at the AWA museum in East Bloomfield, NY. This included the set up and wiring of a four wire telegraph desk, complete with cordless jack box. This was in preparation for the grand opening celebration on August 17th of this new permanent exhibit in their museum. The AWA had been the benefactor of donations from both Ace Holman’s collection a few years back as well as more recently the Stuart Davis collection which itself had included part of the former Western Union museum collection. The Stuart Davis collection had been held by a private individual since Davis’ passing. Upon this individual’s passing, his family donated the collection to the AWA and members of the family attended the grand opening. I used instruments and other equipment from these collections to populate and configure the desk. The telegraph office exhibit has been named the Davis-Wolf Station in honor of both Mr. Davis and

the donating family. There is a plan to have permanent MorseKOB connections eventually set up as part of the exhibit (achieved early 2017). Much more work remains to be done for the exhibit and I will continue to be involved. For the grand opening event



CHAPTER NEWS *continued*

I had both a MorseKOB “wire” running as well as a second telegraph source using the “Mill” connected to the desk. In mid November the telegraphic office with me as operator were featured in one of several short segments broadcast on a local morning TV show live from the AWA museum.

In addition, at the annual AWA convention, held at a local hotel for the several days following the grand opening of their new telegraph office exhibit last August, I reprised my part of the MTC display from the 2015 Dayton Hamvention.

Finally this year during my usual fall train trip I managed to visit the Wells Fargo Museum in Portland, OR. If you recall from my article in last summer’s issue of *Dots & Dashes* it was the manager of the Portland Wells Fargo museum, Steve Greenwood, who had first contacted Les Kerr in 2013 about the possibility of building a

telegraph network for the Wells Fargo museums. The photo shows Steve looking over my shoulder as I attempted to contact another of the Wells Fargo Museum telegraph offices.

Although so far I have managed to organize and present many telegraph displays in this area over the last decade, I am always looking for help. If there are any MTC members in the central or western NY area or its environs interested in helping with my efforts in the future or who have suggestions for other such events which



they are willing to arrange with my assistance as required, please feel free to contact me. More hands make the work light and can add immeasurably to the fun.

J. Chris Hausler



EVOLUTION OF THE EVERGREEN CHAPTER

Written by Kevin Saville

The Morse Telegraph Club's Evergreen chapter was founded at the start of World War II by A. B. Emmons and other Washington State telegraphers. The chapter has consistently held two meetings every year: on Morse Day in April, and in late October, traditionally at the Poodle Dog Restaurant in Fife, Washington.

With the passing of time, the original long membership roster has faded substantially, but it is still healthy with over 20 members. New members are always welcome, but are hard to come by. The Evergreen FX Chapter recently lost two prominent members: Allan G. "Bud" Emmons in 2015, who loved to demonstrate telegraphy and build exhibits, and James M. "Jim" Fredrickson in 2016, who loved to photograph and document Pacific Northwest railroads.

The FX Chapter meeting of April 2016 was perhaps the last to be held at the Poodle Dog restaurant. It was attended by only five chapter members and one guest. A tribute to Jim Fredrickson was presented by chapter president Kevin Saville. The chapter's October 2016 meeting was held at a new location: The Foss Waterway Seaport Museum in Tacoma. This museum is primarily marine-oriented, but it has a splendid railroad heritage section built and operated by the Tacoma Chapter, National Railway Historical Society (TCNRHS). The TCNRHS invited the Evergreen Chapter to meet at the museum, a plan

that worked very well for this initial meeting. This museum was originally a mile long rail seaport warehouse built in 1900 by the Northern Pacific railway. But after many years of neglect, a section was renovated into a magnificent museum. This October meeting was attended by six Evergreen Chapter members and two guests. Attendees included all chapter officers: President Kevin Saville, Vice President Gary Emmons, Secretary-Treasurer Betty Watterson, and Historian Ruth Eckles, as well as former President Ed Berntsen and longtime member Ed. Eckes.

Railroad museum curator and TCNRHS member Bud Thompson gave a presentation on the history of the building and the Evergreen Chapter members Ed Berntsen, Gary Emmons, and Kevin Saville worked together to build a very successful MorseKOB telegraph demonstration in the Foss Seaport Waterway museum. This exhibit remains operable 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Also in 2016, chapter members had working telegraph demonstrations at a number of Civil War reenactments in Washington and Oregon as well as a JBLM military event and the "Great Oregon Steamup." Chapter members also enjoyed having an excellent telegraph exhibit at Puyallup's Great Train Show in November, and at the Washington State History Museum's Train festival in December.



CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY TRAINING PROCEDURES

In response to my request in the winter issue of Dots & Dashes for your stories, MTC member Jack G. Harris of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan sent us his telegraph story. Please consider writing YOUR STORY for a future issue. ~Editor Jim

This story is really about the lack of any training procedures on the CPR, explains Jack

While growing up in the Canadian National Railway town, Aylesbury, Saskatchewan, I spent a good deal of time at the railroad station. The north bound passenger train from Regina used to arrive at 12:10. I used to rush to the station from school to get in on the action. And oh did that waiting room use to be wonderfully warm on those cold winter nights.

I was encouraged by several people to carry in the coal for the agent, Edwin J. Pallansche. Friends suggested that I could do errands for Mr. Pallansche and that in turn, he would teach me the code and some station procedures. The opportunity was there for me, but I never took advantage of it. Instead, when I graduated from high school, I joined the Navy, and guess what; I joined as a telegrapher. During my three years in the Navy, ten months were at the Navy school learning International Morse and radio procedures. The next two years were spent aboard ship sending and receiving the code. While at sea, I became a good operator. We worked 4 hour shifts; the code came fast and steady with no breaks in transmission.

After several years in the Navy, my father suffered a heart attack and was bedridden. He owned a pool room and barber shop, so he needed some help and I was eager to get out of the Navy. So I applied for and received a compassionate discharge, reducing my Navy time from five to three years.

I returned home and geared up to become a barber. But after spending about three months waiting around the pool room for people to play pool and get a haircut, I determined that that was not for me. So I went over to the station and talked to the agent, Mr. Howard West. Mr. West suited me up with a practice sender, an empty Prince Albert tobacco can, and a list showing the railroad code. Then I spent hours in the pool room during the

spring of 1951 just sending code on the practice KOB. Also, I spent a little time at the railroad station, but I did not OS a train, take any train orders, or do any station work. I just felt that I was a hot operator and that would do.

My father's health was improving to the extent that he could now get back to work, so I needed to get a real job. I went to work for the CNR dispatching office in Regina and I tried to see Chief Deering. He did not even glance up at me when he responded that he had no openings. Needless to say, I was pissed off. Then I borrowed my Dad's car and drove to Saskatoon to see the CPR chief there.

I didn't get to see the chief right away, but the day operator sat me down and said he wanted to try me on the code. (I haven't stated that all my telegraphy in the Navy was done on the typewriter using touch typing.) I don't recall what he sent me, but at the end of my first line he hollered into the chief's office saying, "He's OK chief." After a short interview with the chief, I was hired.

The chief states that I have to write up the rules. He gives me a rule book and gives me a time and place to write up the exam. This I did, and when finished, reported to the chief. He says you can relieve Plumb at Insinger. So I got a pass to on #52 on August 20, 1951 to relieve a CPR Station agent when I hadn't been in any CPR station, when the exception of the one in which I was hired.

I arrived at Insinger about 20:00, the station was closed, but the agent Bob Plumb was there waiting for me. I don't know what happened in later years, but at that time there was a day transfer allowed, and both were to spend the day going over books, etc. and both would get paid for that day. Well, it didn't work that way that day or for the succeeding day either. Bob showed me around, got me to sign a transfer, showed me where he had set up a bunk for me in the express room, and off he went.

The next morning I did not know what had hit me. I had wire going for telegrams, bells ringing from dispatcher office for meet orders, track foreman at Wicket asking for lineup, and customers bringing in eggs and cream for shipment to Yorkton creamery, etc. I had NEVER copied a train order, though I knew what they were, and I had a real beast of a time getting through my first train order, then another beast of a time recopying it so that it would be legible. I also had a difficult time copying Morse code, (also called railroad code) after spending two years copying International code. Recall there are 23 numbers and letters different between the two codes.

After a train went by, usually at a lick of speed, I didn't know which direction it had gone, nor did I know how to properly report it to the dispatcher. After a couple of days of this, and me in a nervous state, it appears that the dispatcher must have told somebody that they guy down in Insinger was in trouble.

About the third day on the job, a guy comes in off a speeder and spends about have an hour with me. He was a terrific guy. He calmed me down, gave me encouragement, and just sat on the counter speaking softly to me. Even though I never learned any procedures from him, I felt I wasn't going to get fired, and that I could come through this thing. Well, I did get through it. I copied telegrams, sent telegrams, made out express tickets for express shipments, met the trains with the express truck, helped the drayman, copied orders, and even gave up orders on the hoop, all in the two weeks I was there. I also billed out cars of grain for Fort William.

I knew nothing about cash reconciliation, reporting daily, the daily grain report to the grain operator, nor had I ever pulled down, nor did I ever put back up the "block."

One day, this freight train rolled by and I noticed this guy dressed up sitting in top of the cupola. It seemed to me he was some kind of an official. I found out the next day that he was as assistant superintendent. He came back in a speeder and had a frank talk with me. It was just talk, no written report. In two weeks a rues instructor and an assistant superintendent came to see me. I had not taken down the block immediately after that freight train passed by. Somehow, I got also connected with the postmaster, whom spent time with me going over the books. He gave me a grounding in bookkeeping. Then I spent each evening and that weekend going over the books and attempting to do things right. (It is sort of ironic that 10 years later, I would be auditing books at Esso bulk stations within the Province of Saskatchewan.)

Boy was I ever relieved each day when closing time came. At last I did not have to cope with all the turmoil of bells ringing, Morse code calls for "NS" or reporting trains passing by. At the end of the two weeks, Plumb came back. I assisted him in making out a transfer, and to this day, I have never had repercussions of my training period at Insinger.

Immediately after my time at Insinger, I was sent to Prince Albert for a day as operators trick. That was a wire job only, no phones, etc. So this is my story and I am sticking to it, my story about the training procedures of the CPR.

A NEW AGE WAS SIGNALLED BY 3 TINKERERS IN MORRISTOWN, N.J

This article will amuse and inform you. It is a reprint from the Morristown, New Jersey Daily Record of January 6, 1986. MTC member Hubert Jewell, President of the WA Chapter suggested this article be reprinted for your enjoyment. ~Editor Jim

“A patient waiter is no loser.” While this pithy saying may not match the loftiness of Neil Armstrong’s famous “one small step” moon talk, the six words tapped out on a wood and metal telegraph in 1838 nevertheless signaled a giant leap for mankind.

When Stephen Vail, a Morristown businessman and judge, asked his son Alfred to tap out those words at the Speedwell Village Iron Works factory, which he owned, they formed the first electrically transmitted message in history.

On the receiving end was Samuel F. B. Morse, popularly, if wrongly, credited with both the machine’s invention and the alphabet code used to translate the symbols. This event took place 169 years ago in a factory of what is now Morristown’s Historic Speedwell Village. Two days later the machine was introduced to the public.

“This was the beginning of modern day communications,” said Loren W. Kirkwood, a Morristown historian. “It was the first practical application of electricity: the electromagnetic telegraph.”

Before that, the Pony Express served as the next best thing to being there. Judge Vail’s message was transmitted over two miles of wire strung from one end of the factory to the other end. It is still not known what he meant to say.

“Nobody knows what it means,” Kirkwood said. “It just came from Vail’s mind. I never heard anything about it being from another source.”

Two days later, before hundreds of curious observers, the telegraph made its public debut. A key was rhythmically tapped to produce a series of dots and dashes that appeared on paper on

the other side of the room. When translated, the symbols read: “Railroad cars just arrived, 345 passengers.”

A local newspaper wrote: “This exhibition is of the ingenuity of man which converts, as it were, the lightning from heaven to his wants and purposes.”

Vail and Morse proved that horses weren’t the only way to deliver a message, although it was another six years before the device was in common use.

Ironically, though, Alfred Veil’s role has been badly communicated in history. For one thing, it was Alfred Vail, not Morse, who developed the code of dots and dashes.

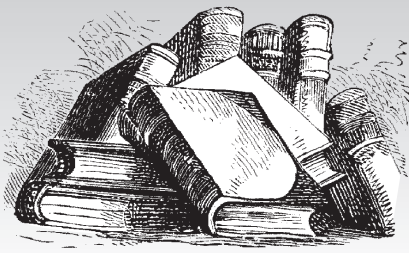
“Morse never even wanted it; he argued against it,” Kirkwood notes. The historian says Morse favored a “double translation” code where words in a message would first be converted to numbers. The numbers would then correspond to those previously assigned words in the dictionary.

“It was impractical, and Morse had to be convinced to go along with Vail’s system,” Kirkwood said.

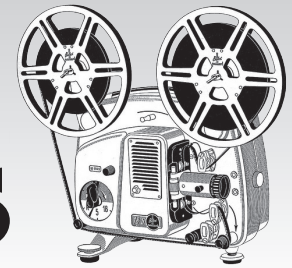
Although Morse came up with the theory and rough drafts for the telegraph, it was Judge Stephen Vail who provided financing and the technical expertise to build a practical working model.

“Vail did all the work; he should be credited,” Kirkwood said. “Morse took advantage of him.”

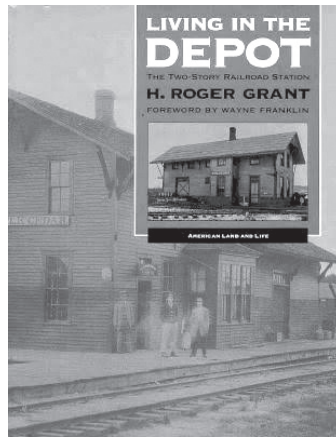
But years later, Kirkwood says Vail is slowly getting his due. Perhaps he is a patient waiter.



J. Chris Hausler's
**BOOK & MOVIE
REVIEWS**



For this issue I'm going to review a couple of books which take us down to the old depot to see what life was like back when every small town had one. The first book is *Living in the Depot, The Two Story Railroad Station* by H. Rodger Grant, part of the *American Land and Life*



series published by the University of Iowa Press. This book was originally published in 1993 and its ISBN is 0-87745-403-5. Used copies can be purchased from Amazon, the paperback ones quite inexpensively. Sections of it can also be previewed for free on Google Books.

The book specifically addresses stations constructed with a live-in apartment for the agent and his, or occasionally her, family. Although not all such stations were two story, many were and the various railroads which employed them had standard plans for building them. Most were inexpensively built of wood. It points out that such stations were most popular out in the "west" as the railroads being built out west were in advance of any serious population density and thus it was necessary to provide living quarters for their agents. Railroads being built in the east were being constructed in already populated areas and thus housing for their agents was frequently available from other local sources. But as getting good gradients sometimes required that a station be situated some distance away from the towns being served, it was sometimes still necessary to provide such quarters in the east.

The book is divided principally into three parts, the first addresses how the railroads viewed the problem of housing their agents and how this understanding developed over time. It points out that as railroads were first built in the east in

populated areas, frequently existing structures or parts of such structures would be used for stations, such as an inn or hotel lobby. But as the railroads expanded and business increased, purpose built structures became necessary. Further, where business was light, it was only economical to have one agent and thus having him or her immediately available around the clock was to their advantage, a problem addressed by providing a live-in apartment in the station.

The second part of the book addresses the relationship between the agents themselves and the live-in depot. It was a situation with both good and bad points. Most live-in apartments tended to be rather small and spartan and further, as the station was in essence a public place, agents and their families had to put up with the occasional hobo and the usual station hangers-on. With trains passing day and night, it was also a noisy place to sleep and if the family included young children, the danger of an errant child playing on the tracks was an issue of concern. Further, such stations, at least as originally built rarely had any inside plumbing either for water or waste service and frequently were not insulated against the winter's cold.

But it wasn't all bad. Particularly out in the plains where the railroad had preceded the town, the station was at the center of town and thus the most important building in town, the center of town activities. In turn, the agent/telegrapher was seen as an important personage in the town (and as a result, his children reported that they thought of themselves as special as well). This standing was enhanced because of the agent's telegraphic skills. As reported in the book, one daughter of a newspaper editor reported, "The agent was truly our link with national events, for in those days before radio and television the telegrapher got everything first, including the weather forecast. My father haunted the depot for these forecasts as well as important world events."

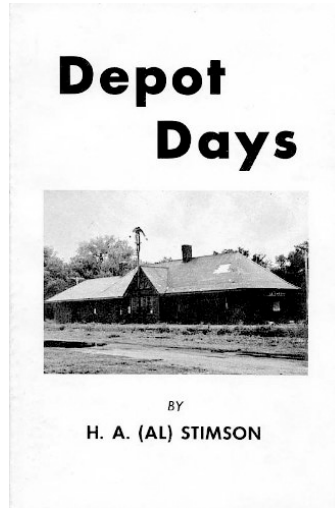
The third section of the book, "The Album", is a collection of photographs of stations and

diagrams of standard station layouts. The photos are captioned. Some of the buildings are very basic structures and other are somewhat more ornate. The photos provide possible insight or at least a flavor of what life might have been like working and living in the depot. In any case it is an enjoyable look at the past.

The second book I'm reviewing is by H. A. (Al) Stimson, an autobiography. This book was recommended to me a while back by one of our members. It was privately published back in 1972 and at first I was concerned about reviewing a book which might be hard to find. However, used copies are available from both Amazon and Abe Books as well as several other

sources. Mr. Stimson and his father were both station agents. Al Stimson learned telegraphy in the classic way by growing up in and around the depot and picking up the business of being a railway station agent from his father. His earliest memories are of the Northwestern railroad depot in Canistota, SD where his father was the agent. There is a photo in the book of Al's father at the desk in this station and Al and his sister, both at a very young age, sitting on the desk with him. Two telegraph circuits with box relays are shown.

Some of the later action in the book takes place in the C&NW depot in De Smet, SD. The depot was built new in 1906 when the previous depot burned, for a while being replaced by a box car depot while the new building was constructed. Stimson and his father worked for a while in the box car and then got to open the new depot. This

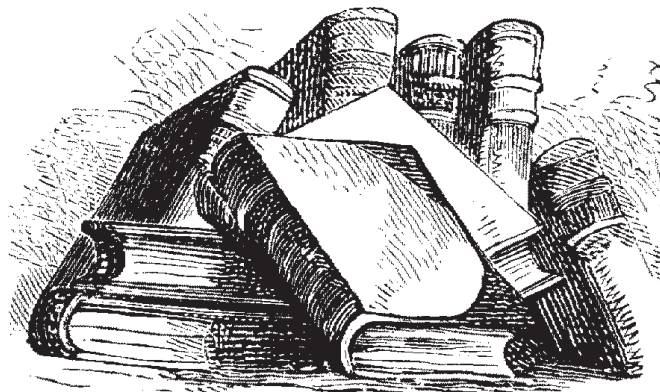


“new” depot is pictured in rather dilapidated condition on the cover of the book. The good news is that the depot has since been restored and still survives today maintained by the city of De Smet, now as a museum. However, from their web site (www.cityofdesmet.com/depot-museum) it doesn't appear that there is anything telegraphic in the museum.

The book provides a “slice-of-life” look at the job, and daily life, of the depot agent/telegrapher in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century. This includes being on the extra board and being moved all around the railroad, but it was work that Mr. Stimson welcomed. Later he became established on the night trick at De Smet. However, eventually wanderlust gripped him and he spent a season at several locations in Florida working for the FEC. He originally landed at Delray Beach and even met Henry Flagler there on one occasion. Flagler was questioning him about his opinion on early real estate developments in the area. The book thus also provides one man's view of the early beginnings of what became the Florida land boom. With Florida beginning to boom and liking his experience with the FEC, he and his wife, who was also an op, closed up their lives in South Dakota and permanently moved to Florida eventually taking the position at a brand new station in the just starting town of Lake Worth, FL. There are photos of both the FEC depots at Delray Beach and Lake Worth in the book.

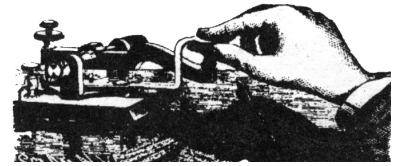
The only complaint I have about this book is that it is a continuous narration of the man's life, there are no chapter breaks providing convenient places to take a break from reading and set the book aside. That said I found it an enjoyable read.

If you have any interest in how life in the depot was back in the days I think both of these books will provide you with enlightenment as well as entertainment.



“30” SILENT KEYS

News of our brothers and sisters who have closed the key



Hoosier TH Chapter

HOWARD D. ESKRIDGE, age 71, passed away peacefully in his country home near Tuscola, IL on December 9, 2016. Howard was born on May 15, 1945 in Decatur, IL. He married twice, Kathryn (Meyer) in 1979, then to Judy (Blain) Henderson in 1986. Howard earned his BS degree in Business from Milliken University, plus a Master's degree in Public Administration from Governor's State.

Howard lived his boyhood dream of wanting to be a firefighter by spending 30 years as an instructor at the University of Illinois Fire Service Institute. He helped to develop many firefighter programs for standard and advanced level firefighter certification. As a state training instructor, his influence and expertise was often called upon. There is no doubt that Howard saved many lives through his teaching. Oh, at the age of 21, he was the youngest paid Fire Chief in the State of Illinois!

Patriotism was an important part of his life. From 1967-69, Howard was a member of the U.S. Navy Construction Battalions (SEABEES). Howard had many hobbies and talents. He taught himself to weld and to repair farm machinery. His favorite pass time was communicating with people all over the world as an amateur radio operator (K9GYI). He also excelled at writing poetry and at public speaking.

Howard was a member of the Morse Telegraph Club TH Chapter, of the American Radio Relay League, of the Arcola United Methodist Church, and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Thanks to Judy Eskridge, Howard's wife, for this interesting information.

Evergreen SX Chapter

JAMES M. FREDRICKSON, age 89, passed away on April 15, 2016 in his native city of Tacoma, Washington. Jim developed “train fever” while a boy, during the Great Depression. This was during a time when his family took train trips to visit relatives in the Midwest. His passion for photographing steam locomotives led him to spending a lot of time around Tacoma's Union

Station, a very busy place by 1943 during World War II.

It was either a conductor or an engineer who told him at that time, “You're always hanging around here kid; you might as well go to work.” So young Jim Fredrickson was led upstairs and introduced to the Northern Pacific Chief Dispatcher, Austin Ackley. Not thrilled about hiring a kid barely sixteen years old, but desperate to fill the shortage of wartime workers, Ackley put Jim to work. He offered Jim the job of callboy, working out of the dispatcher's office. (Since not everyone had a telephone at that time, callboys often had to notify crew members on foot or by bicycle.) Jim worked an eight hour shift, sometimes two in a row, in addition to attending high school.

With the telegraph office next to the dispatcher's office, Frederickson spent all the time he could at the telegraph office learning the art of Morse code. By November 1943, Jim had mastered Morse code sufficiently to qualify as an “extra telegrapher” on weekends at various locations around Tacoma. His first assignment was at the Fifteenth Street Tower, at age 16. After graduation from high school, he became a full time telegraph operator, working at most of the stations on the Northern Pacific's Tacoma Division.

In 1947, Jim met and married Cereta Curtis, a 1945 graduate of the Spokane telegraph school and Northern Pacific telegraph operator in Tacoma. In the winter of 1949, Jim & Cereta and their young son Fred, moved to the New Stampede station. Jim became the Stampede station third trick operator and Cereta worked as a relief operator at various stations other in the Stampede Pass area.

Jim continued a progression of greater responsibility in the Northern Pacific, serving as a train dispatcher at Tacoma Union Station, then night Chief Dispatcher, and finally as a Burlington Northern Transportation Assistant in Seattle, handling train car availability. Finally, Jim retired from the BN in 1981 after working all of his 39 years on the Tacoma Division of the NP and BN.

Jim mastered the art of railroad photography at an early age. He continued with that passion throughout his life. His images of trains have been

published in countless railroad books and magazines. He also published three railroad books that show many of Jim's greatest railroad photos, along with a detailed descriptions of the historical significance of each photograph.

Jim was also a collector of railroadians. He began saving things he saw being thrown out at work, such as timetables, ticket stubs, company calendars, advertising flyers, and dining car menus, as well as documents in Tacoma's Union Station dispatching office and South Tacoma shops when they closed in 1973. Jim wanted his substantial collection to go to the Northern Pacific Historical Association (NPRHA), but he requested that his collection be kept on the west end of the railroad in the Puget Sound region. His request generated the initial motivation to form the Pacific Northwest Railroad Archive (PNRA) as a place to preserve Jim's valuable collection.

When the City of Tacoma and Burlington Northern wanted to tear down Union station after the last passenger train left on June 14, 1984, Jim took a lead role in the "Save our Station" movement. He was the resource person who knew everything about the station and spread his knowledge in speeches throughout Tacoma, creating community support to save the building and to make it into a federal courthouse, the United States District Court, Western District of Washington. Jim's memorial service was held in the Tacoma Union Station Rotunda on May 13, 2016.

Thanks to Kevin Saville, President of the SX Chapter, for this very interesting life story.

SAMUEL B. MCNAGHTEN, age 93, passed away peacefully on October 9, 2016 at his home in Elk, Washington. Sam was born during March, 1923 in Branson Colorado.

After graduating from high school, Sam joined the U.S. Navy and served during WWI from 1942 to 1946. Following his Navy experience, Sam went to work as a telegrapher for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. While working in Heartwell, Nebraska, he met Dee Porterfield. They were married six months later, and they lived in blessed matrimony for 70 years.

During his time with the railroad, Sam worked in many capacities in many cities during his 35 year career with the railroad. Increased responsibilities and promotions required more than 28 moves for him and Dee. Sam settled in the Seattle area for the final years of his career, retiring in 1981 from the Burlington Northern RR as Director of Transportation.

Samuel was active in his church and community. He was heavily involved in youth basketball in Kirkland, WA and was an original Seattle Seahawk Booster Club organizer and longtime member. Sam is survived by his loving wife Dee, three sons, 3 granddaughters and 16 great grandchildren.

Thanks again to Kevin Saville, President of the SX Chapter for this valuable information.

DO YOU KNOW?

What is dust?

It has been around for centuries. Today, we vacuum dust from our floors and swipe it with a cloth from our table tops, but what is this powdery dark looking stuff that we call dust? According to the April 2017 issue of Astronomy magazine, dust consists of pollen, dead skin cells, human and animal hairs, mineral particles from outdoor soil, animal dander, insect waste, plus textile and paper fibers. In addition, a small portion, less than one percent of dust, falls from outer space. Earth collects several thousand tons of meteoric dust each day as meteors collide with our atmosphere and burn up, forming tiny grains of dust particles. Air filters in our furnaces screen out dust particles to help us breathe better. And our future human fate is stated as, from dust into dust.

TELEGRAPH EMPLOYED IN CIVIL WAR SPY WORK

*Originally published in the Washington Times for October 30, 1993,
this article by Donald E. Markle will interest our MTC members. ~Editor Jim*

In the Civil War, new technology changed the face of espionage.

Clever spies went aloft in balloons, photographed enemy positions and stole telegraph messages to give their general an edge in the battles ahead.

Hot air balloons had been around since 1703, and the French military had used them successfully in 1794, making them a tempting device for observation of the enemy in the Civil War.

Professor Thaddeus Lowe on June 10, 1861, demonstrated their utility in Washington for President Lincoln. On that auspicious ascent, Lowe also took a keying device with telegraph line extending from the balloon to a ground station – the first air to ground communication.

The message transmitted that day read, “To the President of the United States: This point of observation commands an area nearly fifty miles in diameter. The city with its girdle of encampments, presents a superb scene. I have pleasure in sending you this first dispatch ever telegraphed from an aerial station, and in acknowledging indebtedness to your encouragement, for the opportunity of demonstrating the availability of the science of aeronautics in the military service of the country. (Signed) T.S.C. Lowe.”



HOUSE TRACK **Want Ad Section**

For Morse Telegraph Club Members

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: 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: "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.

AVAILABLE: RR car passes & trip passes, also old Union (ORT) cards, (some over 100 years old), Postal & Western Union paper items and some WU copied on RR telegram blanks. Send a SASE for a list to Gene Wood, 104 Sunset, Madill, Oklahoma 7346-2051

AVAILABLE: Six "bugs" including 2 Dow and 3 Vibroplex, (one old with no markings), all working well, two sounders - relay, resonator box - many blank, train order forms, defunct Northern Alberta Railways schedules and many other Railroad items. These will make an excellent start or an addition to any museum or personal collection. Price \$500 Canadian. Contact Al Renflesh in White Rock, British Columbia at (604) 531-1082.

AVAILABLE: Book titled *Principles of Telegraphy* by the Department of the Navy. Teletype - Printing Telegraph Systems. Description and Adjustments, Signal Distribution Test Set Teletype - general description and theory or operation for Model 28 printers. Teletype Adjustments (2) Type Bar Printer Page Printer Models 15 & 20. Maintenance Track Bulletin

#248. Parts Transmitter Distributor Bulletin 1041. Tele printer Circuits and Equipment by the U.S. Army. Call Hubert Jewell at (540) 423-1014 and make him an offer on these rare items

WANTED: Old telegraph keys to be restored. I restore vintage telegraph keys from the 1800's to the turn of the century, no cheap or contemporary keys and you must have all of the major parts. No steel lever Triumph keys please. Send me a photograph of your key and I will get you an estimate of the cost to restore it. Edward D. Biter, Jr., 320 Walker Road in Dover, Delaware 19904.

WANTED: A Vaughn automatic telegraph instrument which runs off a reel to reel tape recorder. This gadget causes the sounder to click away with no operator present. Years ago, Sid Vaughn, a professor from Iowa, made a batch of these. If you have one available, I would like to purchase it from you. Donald Mahoney Telephone (608) 444-0898, 1237 North Westfield Road in Madison, WI 53717.

AVAILABLE: Thirty-nine items from her husband's collection or telegraph and ham equipment. For the list, contact Judith Ann Eskridge at 424 County Road, 1250 North Tuscola, IL 61053-9302, (217) 578-2594 or Judy.Eskridge@netcare-il.com.

Reproductions & Other Items for Telegraph Demonstrations and Displays

Turnkey MorseKOB Interface

- Fully assembled and tested
- Integrated USB adapter - no external cable adapter required
- Also available in RS-232 version

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



Flimsies & Other Forms



Contact Chip Morgan at MorgansElkCreekEnterprises@verizon.net



Reproduction Fountain Pens and Stylus from early 1900s advertisements

Always willing to discuss and address unique requirements

KEEP IN TOUCH...

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

Editor

Dots & Dashes

2742 Southern Hills Court
North Garden, Virginia 22959
Tel: 434-245-7041
E-mail: telegraphjim@gmail.com

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

Richard Williams

International Secretary-Treasurer

PO Box 18191, Coronado, CA 92178
(703) 407-7461, runnerrichard@hotmail.com

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.arnewline.org
www.usrepeaters.com
www.qth.com
www.qrz.com

NOTICES & INVITATIONS

**Morse Telegraph Club, Inc.
Dial-Up Information**

U.S. (KB) HUB

1-269-697-4506/4508/4513
(Michigan-Ace Holman)

CANADIAN (HN) HUB

1-888-822-3728 (toll free)

MORSE KOB PROGRAM

on the web at www.morsekob.org

DUES

U.S. First Class postage \$20.00

E-mail delivery \$12.00

Canadian is now by chapter

Foreign Air Mail postage \$26.00

