

The Radio Hotel – Amazing Things We Take for Granted by Rick W5RH

There was a time in radio's history when today's common radio knowledge was a ground breaking discovery. I recently finished reading a few books about some of the radio pioneers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Heinrich Hertz, H.P. Maxim, A.C. Collins and H.H. Beverage; just 4, so far, in my post-retirement quest to read more.

Can you imagine having a "unit of measure" named after you? **Heinrich Hertz** of Bonn, Germany certainly made the grade and rightly so. He discovered the basics of electromagnetism. Today we say KiloHertz, MegaHertz and GigaHertz, but it used to be Kilo "cycles", etc. until 1960. This physicist was using coils of wire and Leyden jars in the 1860's to produce experiments which led to the discovery of and mathematical derivation of electromagnetic radiation, also known to us as RF. Flat out amazing.

Hiram Percy Maxim is recognized as the Father of Ham Radio. He put it all together, with help, from a few other radio enthusiasts. He talked the pointed heads in Washington into allowing us to have our bands and they theirs. He founded the ARRL and became its' first president along with being the first president of the IARU. At that time, message "relay" was the way things worked. He was 1AW and part of the relay network. He was a Ham, yes, but also an automobile inventor, a gun silencer inventor and manufacturer, a movie script writer, author and many other things. His ham station call, W1AW, is now the call sign for the ARRL's flagship station. Also, flat out amazing.

Harold H. Beverage was a young lad living on an island off the coast of Maine. Fascinated with radio, he chased an electronic education and a radio research job with RCA. He designed and installed many an HF commercial station worldwide. He also installed radio telephone stations on presidential yachts and steam liners. These commercial stations, used for CW based message traffic, needed interference free and noise free reception. Beverage's work in this area of radio diversity reception earned him a place in the illustrious list of antenna types. His 1920's invention, the Wave Antenna, was aptly given the moniker the "Beverage Antenna" and is still in use by hams and long distance HF commercial stations today. Wish I had an antenna named after me because HHB's invention is amazing.

Arthur C. Collins, head of Collins Radio, was the first major implementer of SSB – Single Side Band, along with many other radio inventions (i.e. auto-tune transceivers and high Q mechanical filters). He started building transmitters for other hams when he was a teenager and continued into business in AM, FM and SSB radio, avionics and computers – right alongside of IBM and Burroughs. Then finally, after being bought out by North American Rockwell, Collins faded away. But Collins ham gear is still sought after by many, (rock guitarist Joe Walsh, included). Collins is one of those names in radio that everyone knows. Amazing accomplishments for a boy from Oklahoma and Iowa.

EMR/RF, ARRL, Beverage Antennas and Single Side band are concepts and inventions envisioned and implemented some time ago. As Hams, we use these things and many others every day and, fair enough, take them for granted. However, next time you use your "Eleyecomplexwood" transceiver, please give a thought to the technology and its' historical path beyond the front panel.

Enjoy your hobby. 73...Rick – W5RH