

EARLY AMATEUR RADIO ACTIVITY IN THE CANANDAIGUA AREA

Records indicate little amateur radio activity in the area prior to WWI. These were the days before vacuum tubes and shortwave. All amateur work was done around 200 meters. I say this lightly since early amateurs had no way of determining wavelength.

The first amateur operation took place in 1918-19 when John Long, 205 Prospect St., Canandaigua, came on the air with the self-assigned call "LO". A like station was set up in nearby East Bloomfield by E. O. Seiler who gave himself the call "SI". The two communicated with one another using Ford ignition spark coils for transmitters and crystal set receivers. Seiler tells me he never worked Rochester.

There was much activity after the war (1920). John Long became the first licensed amateur with the call 8BMV. He was later assigned the call 8ABX. At this time, the prefix "W" was not used and we were in the 8th call area.

Being curious, I checked the June 1921 Government Call Book and found only six other stations in the entire county all of whom were in Geneva: C. Daykin-8AFE, H. Wheat-8ABG, F. Hancock-8APC, M. VanHorn-8AWY, M. Martin-8BJS and C. Gebauer-8SI.

By 1923 all of this changed with dozens of new stations. In addition to 8ABX in Canandaigua, there were: C. Philips-8BHM (Grandview Park), D. Long-8CMC (So. Pearl), R. Miller-8CDA (Bristol St.), H. Kibbie-8VC (Parrish St.), D. Ahern-8CRA (North Main St.), W. Kinman-8BMD. E. O. Seiler (who was now 8PK) was joined by Ed Stiles in Bloomfield/Holcomb and two new stations appeared in Victor: Walt Malone-8DDL (now W2PZH) and B. North-8DSS.

Maybe it was general apathy or lack of funds for the 1930 Call Book listed only THREE stations in Canandaigua: W8ABX, W8AWG and W8MU while Geneva was reduced to only four: W8AFE, W8AQY, W8BRG and W8CPO. There were no licensed stations in Victor in 1930 other than John Long's station at the WHAM site. But, for the first time, a station was listed in Naples: a Charles Rose-W8DWX. (The same call book had my call W8ACY since I was licensed in 1929).

Now for equipment. One of the first high power stations in the county was set up at the Canandaigua Academy (Main Street) by 8ABX, 8CMC, and 8CDA where they ran a kilowatt spark rotary set to a huge 4-wire flat-top antenna. (The transformer is in the AWA Museum). The receiver was an Amrad 1-tube detector with one stage of audio. Best DX: Iowa.

This same group, along with others, established the first radio club with headquarters at the Academy. The club became defunct as the older fellows graduated and was no longer in existence by the late 20's. I believe the only living member is George Popplewell.