

Stockton Calif. November 16 1960.

OK

Mr. Ed. Marriner
La Jolla Calif.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter dated yesterday. Thank you for the same. I am sure you do not realize what a gabby and verbose septuagenarian you have invited to write to you. He is on the verge of 71, who lives much in retrospect. Still he may have some interesting facts for you.

First I want to know who Jack Slater is. Is he the John Slater who once lived in Alameda and who married Pearl Christenson? If he is, I remember him.

Yes. I was one of the old timers who hammed and then went into Radio professionally before 1918. In fact my first license is dated 1911. It was headed "Certificate of skill in Radio Communication" and was signed by Lieut. Fawell who was stationed at Mare Island and who was authorized to give govt. examinations. Joe Hallock went with me to take the examination. He was asked the question, "What is a pure wave". His answer was prompt. He said, "A pure wave is a wave that isn't humped." I think Joe has been a Radio Inspector for many years.

My first ship was a little steel steam schooner named the Falcon. She was what was known as a two islander, having a poop deck and forecastle. My radio shack was on the poop. I was operator on her for three months and don't remember a day at sea on her that I wasn't sea-sick.

The chief operator in San Francisco was Lawrence Malarin, who I loved like an attack of diabetis of the porthole. However, he did me the favor in 1910 of transferring me from the Falcon to the J.A.Chanslor, a large oil tank. Her skipper was Capt. George MacDonald. I sailed with him between Coast ports for about a year. During this time I established something of a reputation for accomplishing long distance communications. Malarin wanted someone to sent to the Orient on the Pacific Mail passenger steamer Asia, someone who could get the messages through the long distances. He gave me the job.

My first trip to the Orient was without any outstanding incident. The second trip was the Asia's last voyage. On the morning of April 23rd 1911 she piled up on a great pile of rocks just south of Formosa and tore out her bottom.

It was 5.30 in the morning. I was sound asleep. My first intimation that something was amiss was the bouncing rattle of the engine going full speed astern. I was just rolling out of my bunk when she struck. The sensation was almost



indescribable. She bumped up and down mightily, then heeled 45 degrees to port where she finally settled.

Daylight found us surrounded by a dozen large junks and sampans which the Captain said were Chinese River pirates. When they brought their craft too close to the grounded Asia, the captain, who was watching proceedings from the bridge, warned them away. When they did not obey, he fired at them with a large caliber pistol.

Remembering the lessons I had received as to my conduct in case of shipwreck, I realized that I was supposed to report to the captain, get the ship's position from him and broadcast the news of our mishap and our location.

I grabbed my pants from the foot of my bunk. Then I pondered the propriety of rushing immediately to the bridge unclothed; or should I first don my pants? Finally the urgency of the situation impelled me to dash out onto the bridge carrying the pants in my hand, my sole garment being a short shirt.

I rushed up to the Skipper who was busy shooting at the so-called river pirates. As I neared him his pistol appeared to jam. "What is our position, sir?," I asked him in a voice wavering from fright and excitement.

"None of your bloody business! Get off the bridge!," was his reply.

I started to leave. Then I realized the importance of getting our position so I could send it out. I turned back to the skipper who was hammering the hammer of his big pistol with the handle of his pocket knife. Suddenly the pistol discharged. The bullet splintered the wooden grating on the floor of the bridge. Splinters stung my bare legs. I danced about the captain and tried to get over the idea that we ought to broadcast our position. It finally penetrated. He gave me our location and I hastened back to the Radio Shack to send my SOS. As I entered the radio room I was surprised to find a couple of inches of water on the floor. The floor was still many feet above the level of the sea. I wondered but didn't waste time in pondering the phenomenon. Bare-footed I waded through the liquid on the floor to my operating table. I tried the main motor-generator which was located in the engine room. No results. It must be flooded. Then I started the 1 KW motor generator which got its power from a 110 volt storage battery which was located in my radio room. The 1 KW auxiliary turned over ok. I sent out my SOS and position. Replies came thick and fast. Several ships reported heading our way.

Meanwhile I had become conscious of pain and burning under my toe-nails. I examined my bare feet. Suddenly the smell of acid made me aware that the "water" I had been wading around in was battery acid. Due to the heavy list of the vessel it had spilled out of the glass battery jars and covered the floor. Fortunately for me there was a rack of old fashioned round bottomed fire buckets in a rack just outside my door. Into the salt water these contained I plunged my feet and got relief.

I find myself rambling on just the way you would expect an old fellow like me to. Well, I will enclose some photos of the wreck and some clippings from The S.F. Examiner and Chronicle dated April 25 1911. Please send them back as I prize them.

To continue with a brief outline of my radio career-- I spent several months on the Norwood, a small wooden Steam Schooner. Then I got a job as radio operator and freight clerk on the Pac. Coast S.S. Co Beaver which ran between San Pedro, S.F. and Portland. Was on the Beaver for about a year.

In 1912 I was second trick operator at KPH out in Daley City.

Later Arthur Isbell, who was Supt. of Construction for the Marconi Co., Gave me a job putting radio gear on the ships in the S.F. Bay area.

Until 1915 I was employed as a radio technician by Marconi, RCA and the Federal Tel. Co.

In 1915 I went to work for George Hanscom, the big man in radio at Mare Island Navy Yard. In 1918 I transferred to Bremerton Navy Yard in Washington.

(This typewriter gets worse by the minute.)

During WW no. 1. I acted as Radio Inspector for the U.S. Shipping Board - - - (The mill crapped out!)

Was Radio Engr. at Pearl Harbor during w.w. no. 2. Went through attack.

A year after the attack I returned to usa and worked at Berkeley Cyclotron with Dr. Lawrence during 1943-

Back to Navy after that until 1948 when I retired.

Served on a 46 ft power cruiser in this Delta country until last Spring when I sold the boat.

Last June my brother, Irwin, also an old time radio op., got together as many of the real old timers we could contact and had a nice reunion at Stockton. Present were Henry Dickow, Les Grogan

Ray Newby, See Sasset, Cliff Cannon
Brother Irwin, and myself. We hope
to have even a greater number of the
old guard attend this coming summer.
~~At~~ Perhaps you might have some
suggestions in this matter.

Excuse this horribly messy
letter. The mill went haywire
and I was interrupted repeatedly.

Regards,

George Hubbard
1621 West Charter Way
Stockton
Calif.

Please return old album
SSH.