

4. THE SPACE AGE

For the reason just mentioned, the next few years are a blank in my log-book record of DXing. However, the Soviet Union was making history, with the Sputnik satellite in 1957, and the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin in the Vostock (1961). I vividly remember the announcement of the latter over Radio Moscow, with the recorded voice of the astronaut sending greetings to listeners on Earth. By this time I had acquired an excellent reel-to-reel taperecorder, the semi-professional Ferrograph of British construction, and capable of reproduction at 7½ and 15 i.p.s. (this was referred to as the high-speed model.) Quite a few radio clubs had sprung up for the shortwave enthusiast, and at one time or another I was a member of the BSWL, ISWC, ISWL of London, and the Swedish club, Malmo Kortvagsklub; these organisations all issue some form of bulletin or newsletter, which were invaluable to the keen DXer.

I started keeping logs again in 1960 and by now my horizons had expanded! I had an FM tuner and was fascinated by tropo and sporadic-E openings, logging quite a few European countries, with signals from Holland, France, and Germany NWDR regular events. Shortly after these explorations of the dial, I purchased an old used VHF Hallicrafter communication receiver, another veritable "boat anchor" with which I was able to receive television sound signals, and broadcast stations up to 98 mhz in the FM band II. The loggings included Italy, Spain, Soviet Union and Scandinavia; but after a while the limitations of this type of DXing became apparent and my attention - as always! - drifted back to shortwave. Although I still maintained a strong interest in Latin America, my interest now shifted to Asia and Indonesia. I put in much time on the tropical bands, especially 60 metres, and had a good haul of regional Indians, Soviets, and Indonesians (mainly Sumatera). The latter would peak around 15.30 - 16.30 UTC. Also heard were JOZ Tokyo (Nihon SW) and ZBW Radio Hong Kong, both on the 90 metre band. I made a tape of YDP Medan, Sumatera on 5030 khz, closing at 16.30, and sent it to Radio Sweden; this was then broadcast in the famous DX programme "Sweden Calling DXers", which was everybody's favourite!

Some special DX loggings at that time included: CR6RY Novo Redondo, Angola (Radio Clube do Cuanza Sul). HI5C San Francisco de Macoris, Dominican Republic, TGRT Flores, Peten, (which I visited much later!), Elisabethville, "Radio Katanga", and XERR Mexico City, Radio Tricolor on 19 metres. This last one was quite a regular and played some wonderful Mariachi music, which I recorded.

Perusal of the log-books confirms that these years were very good indeed for the reception of Ecuadorean stations in the tropical bands. For instance, the following are notable: HCJC5 Ondas Azuayas, HCOB5 Ondas Azules, (both in Cuenca - very confusing!), La Voz del Norte in Ibarra, HCBK2 El Mundo in Guayaquil, HCJR6 Voz del Colegio Mera in Ambato, HCJT1 Radio Tulcan, HCMX4 Radio Cenit, Portoviejo, HCMQ1 Radio Atahualpa, HCCD1 Luz de America in Quito, and HCAH3 in Zaruma, Radio Trebol ("Clover leaf Radio").

This last station, in response to a report, initiated a long correspondence with the Director, Sr. Jorge Reyes Samaniego, which was most enjoyable. At that time the station ran 2 KW, and was costly to maintain. It was associated with a local sports group. I gather he fell on difficult times, due to some political changes in the region; our letters ceased, as is usually the case unless one can make personal contact.

It reminds me however, that my long affection with the Spanish speaking world had led me to study the language. I went to the local college (night school) once a week, for three years. The teacher was a fine Spanish lady from Zaragossa, and she encouraged us to work hard and take the examinations of the Institute of Linguists, an Internationally recognised organisation. I passed the Student and Intermediate Grades with Honours, but we left England before there was time to reach the Final Grade. At age 40 this study was not so easy !...but the results were worth all the effort. It helped greatly in understanding station announcements, and the enjoyment of music. At a later moment, the knowledge made a great difference in my career.

Another facet of this study was the creation of a local Anglo-Spanish Club, so that we Brits could gain more experience and of course, friendship, with Spaniards resident in England. We soon had a group of about forty people from the class, and Spanish nationals (there were quite a lot of young people teaching Spanish and learning English, over in England for a year or so.) It became very popular idea, and we used to meet about every three weeks in someone's home for coffee, wine and refreshments. We even had one Spanish couple get married after their contact in the Club!

One evening at the dial, for once on the AM medium wave band, I came across a wonderful programme entitled "Amigos en la Noche", (Friends in the Night) from "Radio Vida" the Seville outlet of COPE = Cadena de Ondas Populares Espanolas on 1097 khz. This programme was especially for Spaniards abroad, so it seemed an ideal medium for our Club to utilise.

Accordingly I prepared a tape of our members sending greetings to their families back home and this was broadcast over the station! It was a big success and initiated a long correspondence and friendship between the programme director Sr. Jose Manuel del Castillo and myself. This was to be cemented by a visit to Seville and to the station to see the studio where they produced the broadcast, every Saturday night at 1 a.m. or more correctly Sunday morning! Later also, my eldest son, a University student would visit and become a friend of Jose.

Unfortunately, some time later the programme was effectively killed, when idiotic bureaucracy shifted all the frequencies in Spain, and EAK2 was moved to 1502 khz, under the massive powerhouse of Warsaw Radio Poland at 250 KW!! Obviously the great minds at work behind this scheme were not DXers!

Many other friendships were made in these latter years of residing in England; through the radio clubs, particularly the ISWL of England, there were occasional get-togethers of DXers (though such meetings were much less popular than in North America.) I had a good friend in Brian Ayres, the editor of the SWBC column in the magazine. One special occasion was a club meeting when we had a visit from the legendary Arne Skoog of Radio Sweden. Some of you may remember him as producer of one of the best-ever DX programmes for listeners: "Sweden Calling DXers". He was a great character, a very friendly personality. I was now beginning to understand that this hobby was a much bigger thing than mere knob-twiddling!

The period from mid 1965 to 1966 was a time when I really became very interested in AM medium wave reception, with evening listening for the more low power Spanish stations, and early morning for Transatlantic DX. Reports sent to Spanish stations had a high return ratio, including many very colourful pennants. Indeed in my collection of these, Spain is the country which produced the greatest number, over 20. The remainder have come from many different Latin American countries, and a few from other regions.

Spain has always been a country with a large number of radio stations compared to the size of the nation. In those days there were several networks, such as SER Sociedad Espanola de Radiodifusion, COPE (above REM Red de Emisoras, and the "Radio Juventud" stations which I believe were designed to provide experience and encouragement to young people

with a view to their taking up a professional career in radio. There were also a number of private broadcasters without network affiliations. An occasional station represented Trade Union affiliations, with slogans like "Emisora Sindical"; finally the large Government network covered the country with numerous "Radio Nacional" outlets, including the International shortwave service (now known as Radio Exterior de Espana). In modern times however, many stations have shifted to FM, or added such an outlet.

Transatlantic DX included many Canadian stations in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland; while East coast U.S. stations were well heard. KMOX St Louis was the furthest U.S. station logged on medium wave; other DX include St. Pierre & Miquelon, XEW, XEJP, YVPF, YVKE, Radio Belize, CX16, and ZBML. These were virtually all logged using the indoor loop antenna.

Shortwave logs were immensely aided by the Foreign Broadcasting Information Service book which was a very accurate frequency list of the world's stations. Originally this was a present from a good friend, Roger Legge, who I had first contacted through one of the radio clubs. A DXer with a legendary reputation, he became one of the staff of the VOA, and I had the privilege of a visit from him shortly after the war; in later years he specialised in the USSR shortwave stations, editing a newsletter on this region. When the FBIS list ceased publication, our "bible" became the WRTH. Other valuable sources of information were the National Radio Club (MW) bulletin, and the Newark News Radio Club (SW and more); there was also the West coast bulletin, the Universal Radio club I believe. There was a dearth of good magazines, such as had existed in pre-war days.

One sensational catch was recorded in 1963 (Boxing Day).. that was VLT4 at Port Moresby, New Guinea. This was on 4890 khz (their current frequency!) at the extraordinary time of 12.30 U.T.C. in broad daylight! I could hardly believe my ears when I had the clear ID as "THIS IS THE A.B.C....shortwave...VLT4" As far as I was concerned, that was the DX event of the year!

I must say that at this period in my life, our knowledge and understanding of radio wave propagation was very sketchy and inadequate. I had learned from listening experience some basic facts such as the relationship of wavebands to time of day; the tropical bands were only really good during darkness; the peak pre-dawn and early dawn reception period for Peru, Ecuador & Colombia...and so on.

However, the idea of "grayline" DXing, sunset enhancement of Tropical band reception or medium-wave areas, was a blank area in my mind. It should be emphasised tho', that MW DXing in Europe is very different to North America. There aren't the huge numbers of semi-local stations, and most countries have a relatively few stations, mainly government operations, and using huge power in comparison to the U.S. and Canada. Many broadcasters put out between 250-500 KW, and this flattens numerous low-power transmitters.

On shortwave in those days, the phenomenon of "jamming" was in full thrust. The cold war had become a sad reality, and the Communist world did their very best to ensure that their citizens should not listen to any foreign capitalist station. This was certainly more effective at upsetting DXers than the political desired result! It was quite common to have most of an entire broadcast band (say 31 metres) wiped out as far as any enjoyable listening was concerned. It was relentless and persistent for years a most disheartening state of affairs. The spread of a single jammer station could affect quite a wide frequency span, even though it was most potent on its actual target channel. When I am tempted to moan about QRM these days, resident in North America, it is salutary to remember the past! Any jamming we have today is microscopic compared to the past.

Listening contests made an appearance in these years, and I duly entered the ISWL event for short-wave broadcast stations; the first attempt resulted in third place, which was very satisfactory. In the 1963 contest, which was divided into continental zones of residence, I won the European zone competition. This was enough, thank you!... since I discovered that one needed to do a lot of preliminary work (listening for the regulars and times of ID) if one was to have any chance of a top placing. Forget the idea of casually twiddling the dial, it simply is inadequate in competing against experienced DXers! I also came to the conclusion that such events, though useful and interesting, are not in truth a direct measure of the relative capability of a listener; many factors go to make up a winning combination, especially location, which is the one variable that cannot be fairly equalised. Even two houses in the same street may give slightly different reception patterns! If one obtains a place in the top five or six, one can be satisfied that the antenna and receiver are performing adequately (as well as the brain!). Now that points to the crucial factor - it's what is between the headphones that is the

most important feature in identifying stations. The experienced listener with a simple receiver and antenna will always out-perform the beginner with an expensive communication receiver.

However I would like to stress that "competitiveness" between DXers can be very misplaced and damaging to personal relations. This is in essence a friendly hobby; all of us I'm sure like to build up an impressive list of "countries heard/verified" but how much time and sleep loss you want to endure is a personal choice; one should not let the hobby ruin one's life!! Finally, in any reporting situation, it comes down to the individual's honesty (did you REALLY hear that identification slogan??!!). The savage edge of competition can result in what is in effect, total nonsense; such as, reporting and "verifying" reception of Samoa on the MW AM band in England at midday on a frequency with nearby high-power European stations. Performances like this simply discredit the "joker". Arranging special broadcasts from countries not usually on the air on certain wavebands, and then NOT informing the DX clubs and journals, also can be classed as discreditable to those concerned, but with a meaner edge!

When we consider reporting one's logs to clubs and magazines, integrity really does matter. Someone who mis-identifies stations frequently quickly becomes recognised by the DX fraternity; I can read a bulletin, and as soon as I see a name of such a reporter, I automatically "delete" the log as irrelevant. I believe that club editors should adopt a much tougher line, and either reject such logs, or put in a strong qualifying comment! If a club member is deliberately cheating to enhance their reputation I believe they should have their membership terminated. Now of course, ANYONE can make an honest mistake—we all have— but consistently making errors is at least a hallmark of carelessness.

Then again there is the question of location; some people believe Hawaii is one of the best sites for DX; or New Zealand; or wherever! I don't know about this except to say a "country" location away from city electrical QRM is helpful. Of course, if you are at sea in the Navy, you can stack up a big list of countries, simply by hearing the remote station while in port in that country! Perfectly honest and "legitimate" but what is the comparative worth? "Nuff said"!

To return to the history; at the end of this time segment, I had a Hammarlund HQ180, an RCA AR88, and two Ferrograph reel type tape recorders. We were selling our home, and packing up to emigrate to Canada! Of this decision, only time would be the real judge!

Radio Atalaya

EMISORA SINDICAL DE CABRA (CÓRDOBA)
ESPAÑA

Sr. D. Dr. T. B. Williamson 11,3,65.

Agradecemos su control de fecha 8 de Marzo 1.965 de nuestras emisiones del día 28 de Febrero del mismo año. Su comunicación ha sido de gran interes para nuestros tecnicos. Puede escucharnos todos los sabados hasta las 3 de la mañana, hora española. Le enviamos folletos y mapas de España.

Atentamente le saluda
Radio Atalaya

SPAIN ON THE MEDIUM WAVE BAND.



RADIO NACIONAL DE ESPAÑA

Distinguido amigo:
Gracias por su carta de recepcion a nuestros programas.

Puede seguir sintonizándonos en 854 Kc. 351 metros.

Atentamente le saluda
Tomas Gallego
Director

MURCIA - Centro Emisor del Sureste



Dr. T. B. Williamson

24 Cla Fold View

BARNET, HERTS / ENGLAND



EAJ 15 59
RADIO ESPAÑA
DE BARCELONA

E A J I




LA EMISORA DE

R.
N.
E.

SAN SEBASTIAN






INTERNATIONAL SHORT WAVE LEAGUE

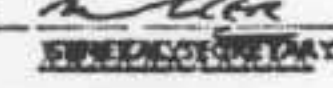
This is to Certify that

Dr. T. B. Williamson, ISWL G5813, was placed First (Europe)

in the 1963 Broadcast Bands Contest

Date 25. 4. 63.


 Chairman



A lot of preparation went into this win!

AIRMAIL POST CARD

Dear Sir,

Your report on reception dated 26-12-63 has been examined.

This confirms that you were listening to VL74 on Thursday 26-12-63 at 2230 A.E.S.T. 1230 G.M.T.

This transmitter is located at Port Moresby Papua N.G. and operates on 4890 kc/s, 61.35 metres. 2 kw's

Thank you for your interest in reporting on our transmission.

Yours faithfully,
The AUSTRALIAN
BROADCASTING COMMISSION

AB20-A/68

Address only

1/4

Dr. T. B. Williamson

24 Old Fold View

Barnet

Herts

England

An incredible signal at noon in broad daylight!

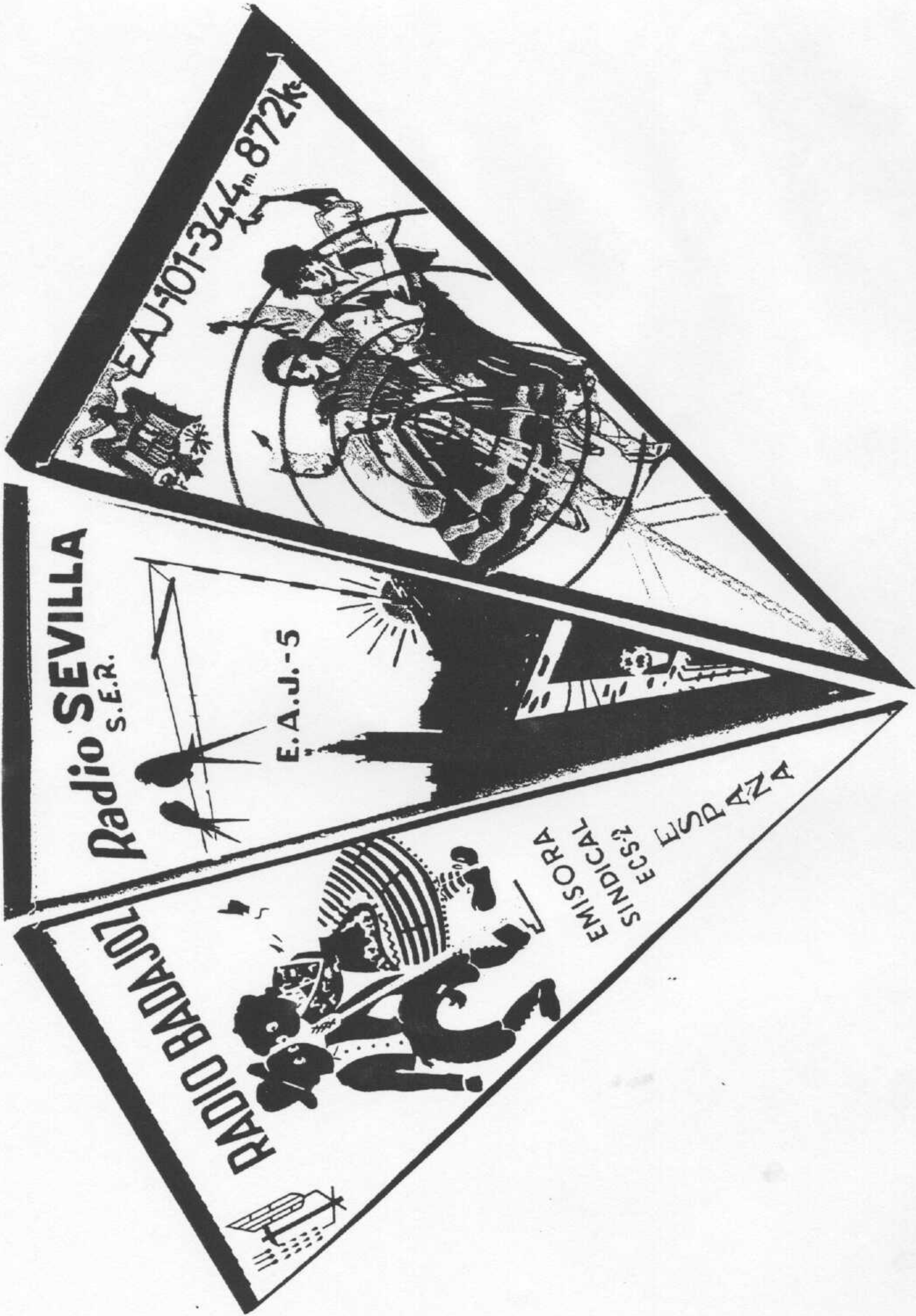
Memories of an eventful relationship, several Saturday night listening schedules, many friendships with visiting Spaniards, and a final visit to Seville to meet my friend Jose manuel, who arranged the broadcasts. (see text).



E. A. K. 2

TRAJANO NUM. 39 - TELEFONOS 228805 - 228806

Sevilla 12 de octubre de 1965.-



THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO PENNANTS! Mainly from Latin America, but Spain produced many beautiful specimens, from their huge spectrum of medium-wave stations.

DEAR LISTENER:

YOUR LETTER REPORTING RECEPTION OF THIS STATION

ON 9/19/64 AT 23:00 ADST IS ACKNOWLEDGED.

CHSJ RADIO 1150 ON YOUR DIAL



First station in Canada's first City

10,000 WATTS DAY
5,000 WATTS NIGHT
~~24-HOURS OPERATION~~

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA.

PER *T. Reid Dowling*
T. REID DOWLING, Chief Engineer.

THIS IS TO CONFIRM YOUR REPORT
OF RECEPTION OF WTIC RADIO

ON December 4, 1964

FROM 9:48 - 10:17 EST

HERMAN D. TAYLOR
CHIEF ENGINEER



THE
BROADCASTER



WTIC RADIO 1080

50,000 WATTS - NBC AFFILIATE
BROADCAST HOUSE, 1 CONSTITUTION PLAZA
HARTFORD, CT, CONNECTICUT



100% LOCAL SINCE 1926 70% LOCAL

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

X AM NEW DAY AND NIGHT GATES SMTR

FM NEW REF. SMTR 100' ANTENNA

RECEIVED DATE: Aug. 9, 1964 TIME 0400-0417 GMT

VERIFIED BY *T. Reid Dowling*

Thanks for your report and compliments. It's always nice to hear from far away places.

We thank you for your interest in KYW.

We are happy to confirm your reception on
November 7, 1964, at 10.5 - 11.5 o'clock, E.S.T.

STUDIO LOCATION: 1403 East 6th Street
TRANS LOCATION: 6600 Broadview Road, Parma, Ohio
TRANS POWER: 50 KW
ANTENNA TYPE: Franklin Vertical
ANTENNA HEIGHT: 905-Foot Tower
1000 Feet Above Average Terrain
FREQUENCY: 1100 KC. Directional

KYW RADIO 1100 GROUP



WOR new york, n. y.
AN RKO GENERAL STATION

We wish to thank you for the report and we are glad to verify your reception of our programs from Station WOR.

WOR operates on 710 kilocycles from its 50,000 watt, high-fidelity transmitter at Carteret, N. J., 16 miles southwest of New York.

WOR also operates Frequency Modulation Station WOR-FM and Television Station Channel 9 WOR-TV. We hope you will continue to receive and enjoy our programs, and we appreciate your comments.

Medium-wave DX in England naturally favoured East Coast U.S. & Canadian stations.....

Dr. T. B. Williamson
Barnet Herts. England

WE ARE PLEASED TO CONFIRM RECEPTION

CFCF on 600 kcs.
0515 GMT on Nov. 29, 1964



MARCONI RADIO-TV

CFCF AM 600 kcs 5,000 watts
CFCF FM 92.5 mcs 41,500 watts ERP
CFCF TV Channel 12 325,000 watts ERP
CFCX SW 6005 kcs 500 watts

405 OGILVY - MONTREAL, CANADA

WJR THE GOODWILL STATION, INC.

50,000 Watts - 760 K.C. - Clear Channel

Transmitter located
at Ecorse, Mich.
Lat. 42° 18' 02" N
Long. 82° 12' 00" W
24 hr. operation
Ant. 195° Vertical
700 ft high, nondirectional

Confirming your report of reception
on 11/21/64 at 8:45 PM EST
Your report is appreciated and welcome.



"73"

SM-4-61

Thank You for Your Report of Reception of This Station On

NOVEMBER 1964

W H A S

LOUISVILLE, KY.

50,000 WATTS

CLEAR CHANNEL

840 K.C.

XERF IN CD. ACUÑA

1570 KILOCYCLOS

250,000 WATTS



Your reception report of radio station XERF dated Oct-14-7
is correct. Thank you for the report, we hope to keep you as
a regular listener.

Li. May...
RADIO STATION XERF
CD. ACUÑA, COAH. MEX.



VERIFIED RECEPTION OF PROGRAMS
ON OCTOBER 31, 1964

W J J D

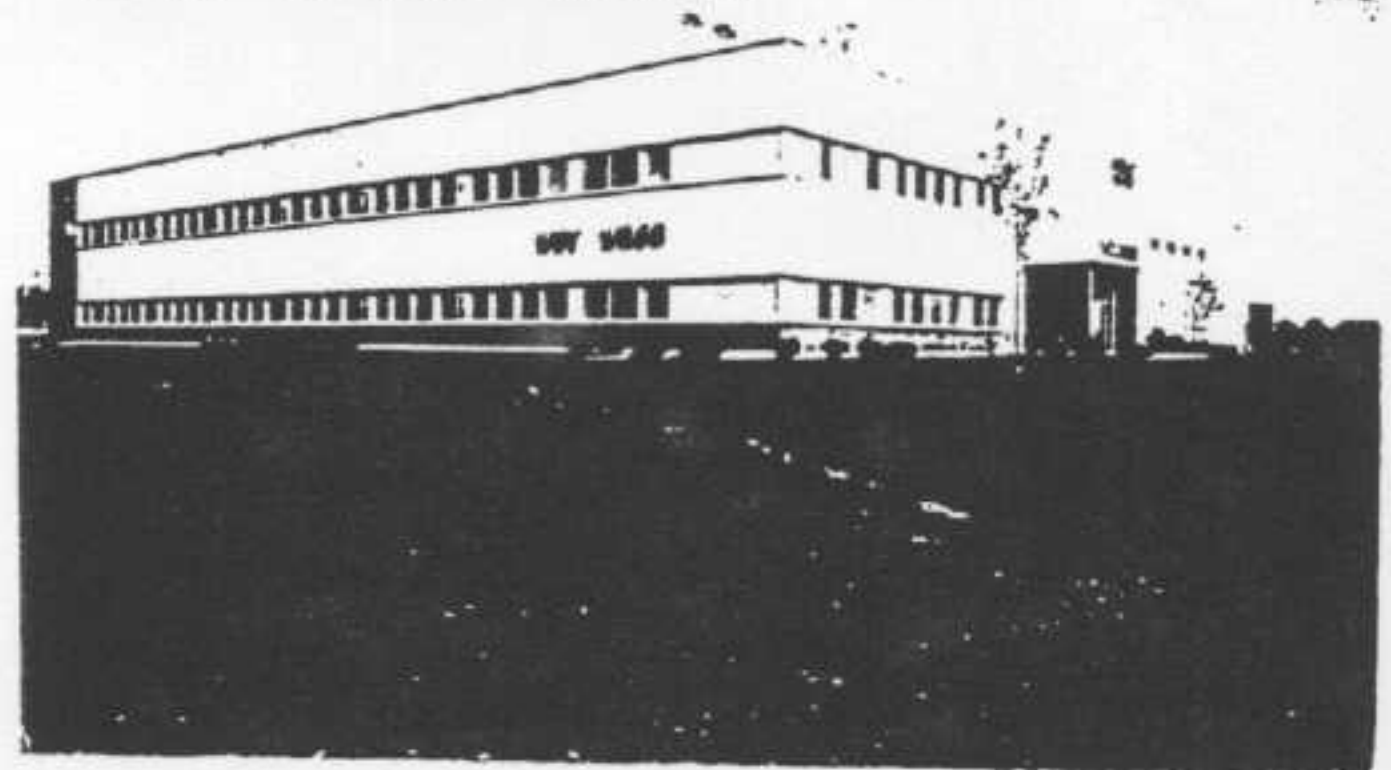
1160 kc. 50,000 WATTS

8 SO. MICHIGAN AVE.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60603

BY *William P. Durkin*
CHIEF ENGINEER

...but reception from Central area
such as Illinois or Missouri was
not too rare; also south to Mexico,
in line with some high power!

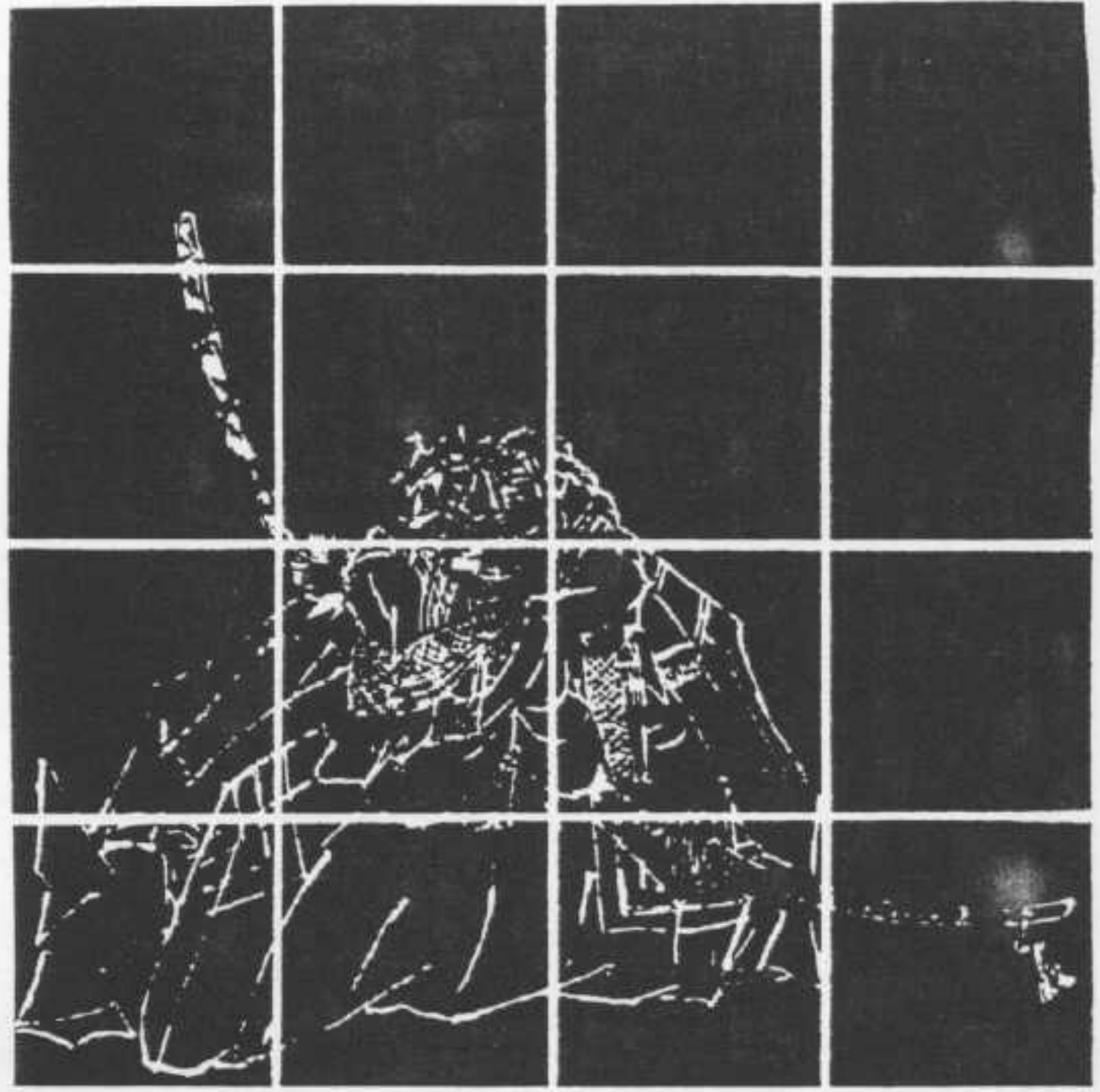
WGY - WRGB - WGFM



50,000 WATTS

This will confirm your reception on 9/11
at 0057

William P. Durkin
Engineering Supervisor



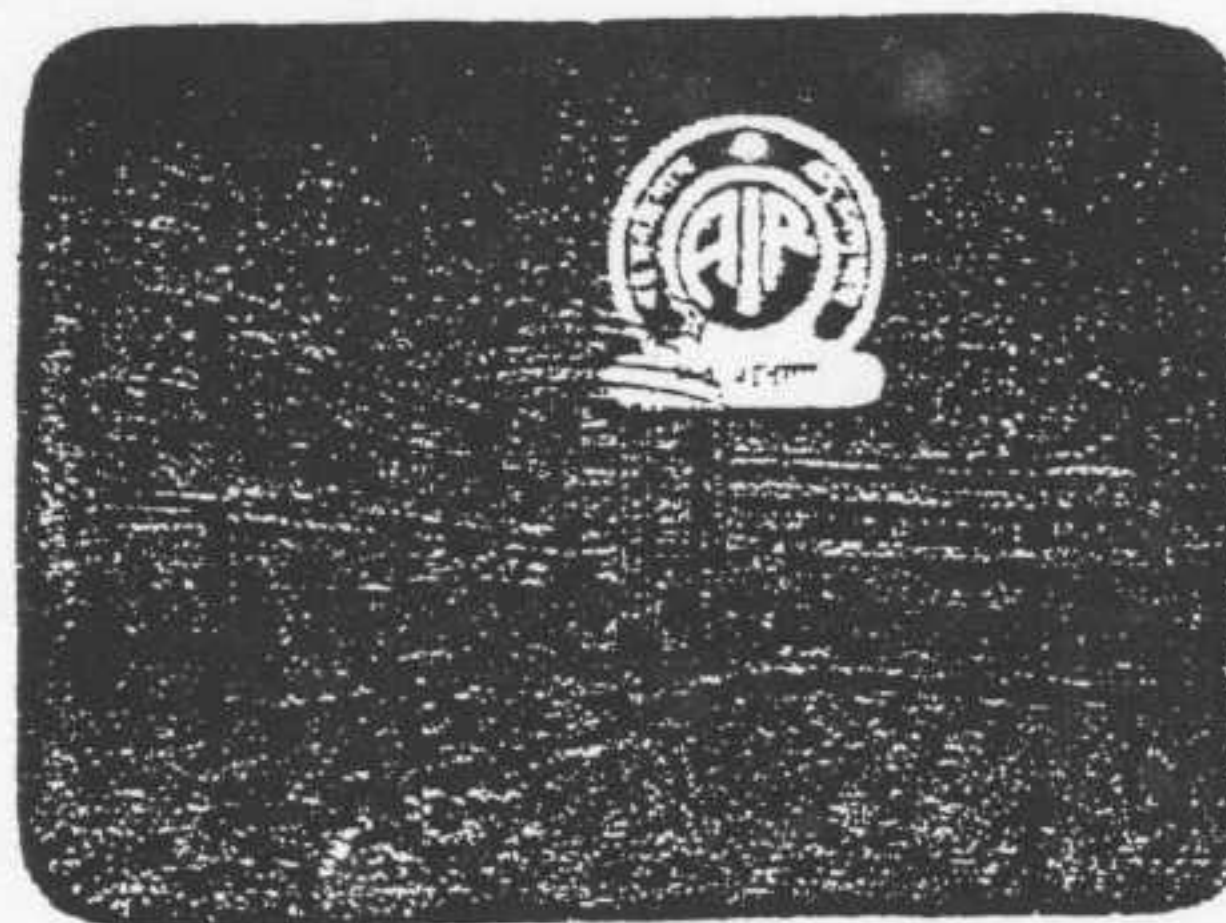
Medan veri;RRI regional stations used this card,in various colours.

NIHON SHORTWAVE JOZ had a 50KW signal

JOZ	3.925Mc	50KW
JOZ-2	6.055Mc	50/10KW
JOZ-3	9.595Mc	50/10KW
JOZ-4	3.945Mc	10KW

**All
INDIA
RADIO**

आकाशवाणी



MADRAS

