



April 2011



### ***A NOTE FROM DAVE***

I would like to thank all the members of our great group for helping me to make this last year such a great success, especially for all the help we received during our move. We were to be moved by April 1, and we bettered that by two weeks.

Our society has grown nicely in the last few years, and I hope we can continue that growth. Our continued success will depend on participation of all the membership. Come see our new home and find out how you can help make it better. Give Dee all the support you possibly can and also the other club officers and members.

Thanks also go to Alabama Power for the continued help they provide. Bring everyone you can to see our museum, so the APCO folks can see how much the space they have provided is appreciated.

Support Robert's classes and let anyone you know how great they are. Our library is really coming along, and we hope will be much better since we have more space and Reggie Olsen has it much better organized.

I would like to say that, even though I am no longer president, I intend to work even harder for our success.

*Dave*



### ***A NOTE FROM DEE***

Hello folks,

This is the first letter you will receive from me as your new president. Looking back to February 2006, I began my first newsletter that highlighted old radio shows. My love of these old shows remains as strong now as it did in the beginning of my journey with the

AHRS. Now, I have taken on new responsibilities; however, I won't forget the *Theatre of the Mind*.

This past Monday night Dave Cisco turned over the gavel to me, and I outlined some of the things that I hope we can accomplish over the next year or two. I won't go into detail in this newsletter, but you will be hearing from me shortly about plans for the future.

In closing, I would like to extend my hand in gratitude to Dave for his years of tireless service to our club. I hope to work closely with Dave and all of you in the coming months to mold The Alabama Historical Radio Society into something of which we and the entire State of Alabama can be proud.

Thanks, and I'll be seeing you soon.

*Dee Haynes*

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### **NOTE FROM DAVE CISCO**

The article below is the first part of a three-part article for the newsletter, which was written by well-known author and photographer, Joe Veras. Joe has written several books, written for **CQ** and **QST** Magazines, and is on the ARRL publishing staff. He recently produced a calendar of old radios for ARRL and included a Tuska radio that AHRS owns. I am proud to have him contribute to our newsletter.

### **JAMES MILLEN – Part One**

By Joe Veras, K9OCO

A common thread runs through many of us in the amateur and antique radio hobbies. We first became fascinated with radio and electronics in our early teens. That fascination followed some of us into our careers, while others have maintained the interest at the hobby level for a lifetime.

James Millen's story was cast from a similar mold. He left his name on one communications equipment company and an indelible mark on another. An active amateur, Millen became an industry and hobby icon, though a controversial one. Today, more than two decades after his passing, his name is still well-known to us in the amateur and vintage radio hobbies.

The world of communication intersected with James Millen's life when he built a spark transmitter/galena crystal receiver station in Forest Hills, NY in 1916. The 12-year-old Millen (he was born 11 June 1904) immediately set out to improve the performance of the apparatus consisting mainly of some large RF coils, an automobile spark coil, along

with a crystal and cat's whisker. World War I interfered with on-the-air activity for several years, and he did not actually sit for the amateur examination until 1921. He was issued the call sign 2BYP.

Taking a decision that would set the cornerstone of his product design philosophy, Millen chose to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He enrolled at Stevens Institute (Hoboken, NJ) in 1922. Before Jim completed his degree, however, his father died, forcing the younger Millen to draw upon his own resources to meet tuition expenses. He turned to something requiring little capital investment yet had provided him an income while still a schoolboy. Jim Millen created his college tuition with words and a blank sheet of paper.

At age 12 he was already a published author. The October, 1916 issue of *Popular Science Monthly* (now *Popular Science*) carried an article by young Millen on a device for the home workshop. One hopes that when the youngster purchased a copy from among the first to hit the newsstands, he was not terribly shattered to notice his article had been credited to one James Mullen, Jr.

By the mid-1920s, publishers spelled his name correctly, both on the bylines and checks they sent him for magazine articles, as well as a newspaper column in which he solved technical problems submitted by readers. All this published writing was not only a source of ready cash but also a terrific public relations tool for spreading the Millen name. Marketing types today would call it branding or name-recognition. Whether Millen was conscious of that or not, he graduated from Stevens with a string of contacts, having become well and widely-known in the industry through his prolific writing. He parlayed this into consulting contracts with a number of businesses, among them the National Company of Malden, Massachusetts.

His penchant for mechanical innovation and product development were evident early on too. While still at school, he conceived, patented, and arranged for the manufacture of a screwdriver with a special tip. The tool was designed to hold the screw, making it easier to insert and start into a hole. Millen sold them himself, buying ad space in the classified section of hobby magazines. He made and sold radio receivers the same way.

The things he learned in his quest for tuition money and his post-graduate consulting work were great additions to his degree from Stevens. He soon narrowed the focus of consulting to one client, National, and in 1927 the company offered him the position of General Manager and Chief Engineer. The principals behind National wanted to increase its involvement in the radio business; they had hired the right man. Up to this point, National's radio product line was limited to sets for the broadcast market. Millen not only continued development of these TRF sets, but stepped into exciting new territory: regenerative shortwave receivers.

Part Two will recount James Millen's days at National.

## ***MEETING TIMES***

We meet nearly every Saturday of the month at 09:00 at the Alabama Power Building on Parkway East (aka Centerpoint Parkway) in Huffman. The organization's space is accessed from the rear of the building, so park around the back (by means of Huffman Road, which runs parallel to the Parkway). Entry is via the door on the right.

**Come to the Monday Night Meetings, TOO, on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 7 PM!**

## ***FREE ELECTRONICS CLASSES***

The first Saturday of the month, there are electronics classes free to members. Topics include test equipment, Resistors and Capacitance testing, Inductors and coil winding, to name only a few subjects!

We hope to see you there!



## ***DUES ARE NOW DUE***

Membership dues are \$25 a year, payable beginning in January. If you have questions about your dues, you can contact Tom at 205-967-7000.

Dues can be mailed to AHRS @ P.O. Box 131418, Birmingham AL 35213.

## ***WHO TO CONTACT***

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