I know that my interest in radio was kicked into gear when I was 9 or maybe 10. I was spending some summer time in Knoxville at Aunt Fannie's house. Eddie and I had the bedroom and we were going to have fun. The house was the Corum house on Corum Hill at the end of Corum Drive. The room had two windows. I was looking out of the window between the two beds when my attention was drawn to a small Bakelite box and earphones. There was a Cat's whisker on the top of the box that was set to touch the crystal to bring in the radio stations. There was also a bright metal bar that was hinged near the lower part of the box. It had a wiper that was used to run along over the copper wire inside the box. Moving the slider changed the tuning to hear different stations. Aunt Fannie told me about how the radio worked.

All of this was making my head swim. I put on the earphones and I immediately heard stations. This was the coolest thing I had seen. There was a wire that ran to an antenna outside and a ground wire that were attached to the box. The reception could be stopped by removing either wire from the connections to the box.

Fannie told me more about the little radio. It didn't need batteries. I wanted one. I took advantage of the radio on the window sill beside my bed by listening to WNOX when I went to bed. I remember Fannie coming in to check on us and removing the phones from my head. This constant music thing was wonderful.

When I went home, I began to look for plans to make a radio like that. The best I could do was to wind a large coil of wire on a toilet paper tube. So I bought wire. Do not remember where or how I got earphones. I began going to an electronics store when I was in town,

Asheville, and asked a few questions. I was sold a 1N34 diode there to take the place of a crystal or cat's whisker. It was easy to get a nice paper tube and quickly found that winding the wire onto the tube was not as easy as I had thought. As the turns of wire began to collect on the tube, the other end of the wire was beginning to loosen and fall off the end. I didn't have or know about tape then, so I used a safety pin to push holes into the tube which would hold the wire in place as the turns went on to the tube. I did not wind a whole tube at first. I was anxious to find out just how much it would take to bring in signals. I think I would about three different coils each with more turns than the other in this experimental stage. I had a piece of flat board to build on and I used a hand drill to make pilot holes for the nails I used to keep the coils in place. Also, I discovered that simply scraping the enamel off the wire was not a good connection; even wrapping the wire tightly didn't last long enough, so I needed to learn to solder.

I had a wood burning iron that would get hot enough to melt solder, so I soon soldered the parts to gather and that was the end of putting on the ear phones and not hearing anything.

My antenna was a good one. I was able to cut open some telephone cable and get lots of 20-foot-long pieces. I put enough pieces of copper wire together to reach the barn. I brought the wire into my room by slipping the wire under the window frame. I had to be careful to not pinch the wire and break it when I closed the window, but I don't think the fit was that tight. The next wire that was needed was a ground. I solved that first by pushing the shank of a long screw driver into the yard where the rain dripped off the roof.

At my favorite toy shop in Asheville, I found a one transistor radio kit. I advertised the fact that I wanted that radio kit. I did get it for Christmas. It was a Remco Radio Craft radio kit. I put it together as carefully as I could. It worked. Later on, I was checking on something in the back of the plastic case and a lead from the transistor broke off. It was a CK722 and either I could not find one at the parts store or they were no longer available. It was a very early transistor. I would try to glue the wire to the nub that was at the bottom of the transistor case. I would hold it until the glue dried, which was a long time without that ever working. That put an end to that radio. It had been my favorite and I spent many hours listening to it in the afternoon and late at night. It was not ear phones but had only one active phone. So, I learned which ear to put down and would listen with the other one.

After that radio was out, I heard that there was a one tube radio that could be had as a kit. I was looking into that when we began making plans to return to San Diego that coming Christmas. I never found what company was making that kit, although I did get to see one that a boy in Scouts had. He liked it very much. About that time Joe Snyder and Billy Keys were making a one tube AM radio from a set of plans that had come their way. I was given a set of plans and with all of the wrecked radios in the barn, I began to collect the parts that I could from there. Joe gave me some guidance for some of the exact parts I was not able to find and I just did the best I could.

However, there was the need to find another radio that would fit my needs of portability and small size. I visited the toy shop and told the man there what I was looking for. He showed me a Wren radio. It was small and I liked it. I don't remember when I bought it or anything regarding that. Mine was a bright red case. There was adequate volume from the radio. It tuned all of the AM band. It had a wire About 10 feet long for an antenna and a short piece for connecting to ground.

I am sure I did have to go to the radio parts store to buy some of the parts for the one tube project. I do remember having to buy the coil form for the "tickler coil". I think they had one to sell to me. Then I decided that the tube needed a socket. I don't remember how I got that, but that the prongs of the coil could fit in holes I could drill in the wood. I gently pressed the prongs into the wood and then decided to mark the locations with a pen. The holes were drilled as carefully as I could since it was manual drill. I checked the fit and enlarged the holes that didn't match and soon I could press the coil form into the wood. The electrical connections were made in the hole between the prong and the copper wire I used to connect the parts. I just cleaned off a longer part of insulation and pushed the wire into the hole. There were times that the coil and the wires would not make a good contact, so I had to wiggle things around to get the wires to make connection to the prongs. Once that happened, the radio would come to life and I was listening again. I was always amazed by the fidelity the radio produced. It was a treat to listen to it.

The radio was powered by two voltages. B+ was 22 volts and A+ was1.5 volts. If I touched the wrong things, I could get a good shock from the 22 volt battery. I learned to not work in the dark. Needless to say this was not a quick build. I had to earn the money for many of the parts I had to buy. The 22 volt battery was over $2.00. Most of my money came from catching night crawlers with Uncle Walter and digging moss for him. It was a slow process. I think I had the radio working by the time school began at Reynolds Hi.

After moving to Pacific Beach I learned I would attend PB Jr Hi. I didn't want to go there. I had no choice, so I tried to pick classes I would like.

They did not have a geography class or Latin, so I went into Boy's chorus and Electric Shop.

I did well in Electric Shop and was soon moved to be the student foreman. That meant basically that I was in charge of safety and issued supplies from the supply room. Mr. Mc Gregor was the teacher. He never knew of my deep scrape with an aluminum chassis that I had not clamped down to the drill table. When the bit grabbed into the metal, it began to spin and took off the skin from several inches of my left arm. It did not bleed, so I just washed it in the sink and kept out of sight until class was over. I was able to enroll into Electric Shop at Mission Bay high in tenth grade.

When the class began, Mr. Copeland explained that he had gone before the SD school board and made a case for setting up the class so that we had a lot of freedom to learn from building projects in which we were interested. We ordered our kits through some fund that was run at the school. My kit was about $25.00 and I had to have it paid for by Christmas.

General Coverage Communications Receiver Kit

Made In: Japan 1957-1967

Coverage: 540 - 30000 kHz

Modes: AM/CW

Circuit: Regenerative. 2 Tubes.

Rating (1-5):

Voltages: 110-130 VAC 60 Hz

Readout: Analog

Physical: 14x6.25x6.75" 7 Lbs. 355x158x171mm 3.1 kg

Allied Radio Knight Kit model Y-258. This transformer-operated radio makes its first appearance in Radio-TV News in the Allied Radio ad of September 1958. Priced at $24.95, the ad describes the dual regeneration controls, coarse and fine, as well as the band switch, band spread, and "easy to build kit" nature of this four band regenerative receiver. This is a two-tube set (plus selenium rectifier) with very efficient use of those tubes, 6CB6 as RF amplifier/detector and 6AW8 as audio amplifier. The set is surprisingly good at picking up short wave broadcasts as well as the BC band at speaker volume with about 20 feet or more of wire as an antenna.

The kit was a knight kit that had two tubes and was a multi band receiver. I was able to read schematics by then, so the kit went together quickly. It was a nice receiver. It was a new thing to me to have all of the bands to listen to. The problem was, I had no knowledge about short wave propagation. I didn't have an outside antenna either. The AM Broadcast band was fantastic. I listened to Am most of the time. The kit had a small speaker, so I didn't have to use earphones all the time. That was about the time I got a card from Billy Keyes saying that he had his ham license and did I have mine? Duh! No, but I was interested. I eventually found a band where the local ham operators frequented and would listen to them as they drove home from work at the aircraft plants. That was fun. The more I listened, the more I

learned about what the radio could receive. SSB had not arrived in the Ham world to any large amount. My radio was designed to receive AM like the kind of signal from the Broadcast band, so I was right in the thick of things. I even joined a listener's club or such. Maybe it was a Monitoring group. Radio was definitely a major interest to me then.