



***Inside
Three Books on
Samuel Insull
&
ARCI
Officer Elections***



BEST WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

UPCOMING OUTDOOR MEET DECEMBER 11, 2016

AMERICAN LEGION HALL
570 South Gary Avenue, Carol Stream, IL

December 11, 2016

7AM – 11AM

Peoples' Choice Contest: Awards For 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place

Donation Auction

BUSINESS MEETING

Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast / Free Coffee, Juice & Cookies
50/50 Cash Drawing Raffle



2017 ARCI MEET SCHEDULE

February 12, 2017	7AM-9:30AM Indoor Swap Meet People's Choice Contest, Officers' Meeting 9AM	American Legion Hall Carol Stream, IL (See Map)
April 30, 2017	7AM-11AM Outdoor Swap Meet Inside Business Meeting 9:30AM	American Legion Hall Carol Stream, IL (See Map)
June 18, 2017	Outdoor - Gates Open 7AM Combined Meet With 6-Meter Club of Chicago	DuPage County Fairgrounds Wheaton, IL (See Advance Ticket Form & Map)
August 4-6, 2017	RADIOFEST	Medinah Shriners/Addison, IL
October 8, 2017	7AM-11AM Outdoor Swap Meet Business Mtg./Officer Election 10AM	American Legion Hall Carol Stream, IL (See Map)
December 10, 2017	7AM-11AM Indoor Swap Meet Business Meeting 10AM	American Legion Hall Carol Stream, IL (See Map)



ARCI

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS



PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR MEMBERSHIP:

<u>Membership Option</u>	<u>Dues</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
Annual Membership	\$ 20	Full benefits: ARCI News subscription, Fee Discounts At Events, Seller Privileges at ARCI Events.
Spousal Annual Membership	\$ 10	Discounts at Events.
Student Annual Membership	\$ 5	Must Be 18 or Under, Full Benefits.
Lifetime Membership	\$340	Full Membership Benefits For Life (non-transferable).

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Warmest Holiday Greetings from your ARCI President! After all the excitement and turmoil of this past Fall, I think it might be a great time to finally settle down and concentrate on what is really important this holiday season! Never mind the Cubs winning the World Series or President-Elect Trump. Your radio collection that you know you have been neglecting for many months now, once again beckons for your undivided attention! And, ARCI has just the thing coming up on December 11th to get you back on track, but, more on that a little later.

The October 2nd meet at the American Legion Hall in Carol Stream was another great one. The heavy rain that occurred during much of the previous week finally ended on Saturday evening, leaving us with a cloudy but very mild and dry Sunday morning. We registered a total of 27 seller spaces, above the average for an October meet. There were some really tempting items for sale, including a selection of really nice Bakelite radios at great prices. I resisted the urge and concentrated on searching out parts for my various repairs in waiting. On the list was a pair of 6EU7 tubes for a Heathkit amp repair and a small multi-band radio to give as a Christmas gift. Mission accomplished on both accounts! Another real score for me was finding a box full of new old stock Germanium transistors for a very reasonable price. For anyone working on early solid-state equipment, these are must-have parts, and they are becoming as rare as hen's teeth.

The donation auction was quite large with donations of numerous items from two different sources. Dan Ogilbie, an older gentleman moving out of his long time home into smaller quarters, donated a rather large quantity of interesting items, including a Hallicrafters TV, Tektronix 422 scope, other test equipment, various pieces of ham gear, Zenith wood table sets, and so on. Meanwhile Art Bilski drove up with a trailer full of items from an anonymous donation of test equipment, parts, radios, and miscellaneous items. With all these items ultimately finding new homes, the club ended up with an additional \$675 in its coffers.

Next, here is some preliminary information about *Radiofest 2017*. We have already secured the venue and hotel, and are now in the process of assembling the teams that will manage the various events. Here is the news so far: Our dates for Radiofest 2017 will be Friday-Sunday, Aug. 4-6. We will maintain the same schedule as last year: opening with the auction on Friday evening; holding the outdoor swap meet on Saturday through mid afternoon and on Sunday morning; the speaker programs, display, and contest setup will take place during the day on Saturday; and, an awards event (TBD) will be held on Saturday night. There will be the usual donation auction on Sunday morning to close the event. *Radiofest 2017* will again be held at the Medinah Shriners facility in Addison, Illinois with the adjacent Hilton Garden Inn providing overnight accommodations. We are very much looking forward to returning to these superb facilities that provided us with such a wonderful experience last summer. We have already secured a block of rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn for Thursday-Sunday at the same great \$95 rate that we had last year. Online and over-the phone hotel reservations will be opening up soon, and we will keep you up to date on all the developments as they occur. So make sure to mark your calendars for *Radiofest 2017*!

I hope to see all of you at our next meet on December 11th! This will be our third annual Janet LaVelle Holiday Party, and as in the past, it promises to be another great one. Our December meets have historically been some of our best, with lots of sellers and a great donation auction. So, come on out to Carol Stream and buy yourself or someone close to you a nice holiday gift! And don't forget about our business meeting following the meet. This is an important meeting, and we invite all ARCI members to attend. In addition to numerous topics of discussion, we will be holding the final votes for our roster of 2017 club officers. If there's anything you'd like to suggest for discussion regarding club activities or policies, this is an ideal time to bring it up.

On a closing note, I want to inform you that this will be my final installment of the President's Message in the *ARCI NEWS*. Effective December 11, I will be resigning my position as ARCI President, and a new candidate for president will be voted into office at the upcoming business meeting. It has truly been an honor to serve as your ARCI President over the past two years, and I want to thank all of you for your great support. I have learned a lot during my term and have made a great many new friends in the process. I look forward to seeing all of you at our future meets. I will no longer be your club president, but I do plan to remain very active in the club over the coming years!

Let me close this President's Message by wishing each of you all the best for a happy and healthy Holiday Season!

See You At The Next Meet,
John Stone
ARCI PRESIDENT

ARCI UPDATE

The President's Column ~ All The News That's Fit To Print

OFFICERS FOR 2017

ARCI will hold its annual business meeting and officer elections at the December meet. The following people are nominated to serve another year:

Board of Directors

Dr. Barry Janov, Chairman

David Bart

Art Bilski

Harry Blesy

Ed Huether

Tom Kleinschmidt

Steve Muchow, Advisor

Robert Piekarz

Olin Shuler

John Stone

Officers

Jeff Aulik, President

Jim Novak, Vice President

Keith Schreiter, Secretary/Membership

Rudy Hecker, Treasurer

VOLUNTEERS FOR 2017

ARCI has been fortunate to have a great team of volunteers over the years who have faithfully and generously served the club. They deserve your thanks and recognition for all the support they provided. Remember, ARCI is your club and we need your help too! As we all pitch-in, the club will continue to improve for everyone's benefit. Please talk with one of the officers, Board Members or current volunteers for more information on how you can lend a hand. ARCI looks forward to working with the following during the upcoming year.

Nicholas Tillich, <i>Radiofest</i> Auction Coordinator	Jim Sargent, <i>Radiofest</i> Auctioneer
Jim Novak, AR9CI Ham Radio Station	Tom Kleinschmidt, Donation Auction
Ed & Judy Huether, <i>Radiofest</i> Coordinators	Rudy Hecker, Signage, People's Choice Contest
Elaine Hecker, Registration	Jim Rajkovic, Webmaster
Art Bilski, Public Relations	Cindy Fudge, <i>ARCI Newsletter</i> Publisher
Julia & David Bart, <i>ARCI Newsletter</i> Editors	Karl Johnson & Pete Nauseda, Parking and Information

YEAR END 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

By John Stone, ARCI President

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

I am happy to report that ARCI has remained on solid ground throughout fiscal year 2016, with respect to membership, activities, and finances. Our membership levels remain solid, our meets are well attended by both buyers and sellers, and our finances have continued to strengthen. Here are some additional details about each of these areas:

Membership: ARCI's paid membership is now approximately 260 members, and continues to remain mostly stable in an environment where many other clubs are experiencing substantial attrition. Due to our year round membership renewal schedule, there is considerable short-term variation in the number of active paid members. While renewals do occur on a year round basis, the bulk of them take place in the time period from just prior to *Radiofest* through our December regional meet. Between mail-in renewals accompanying *Radiofest* applications and on-site membership renewals at *Radiofest* itself, we have totaled approximately 100 *Radiofest*-related membership renewals alone. We also hope to see somewhere between 20 and 30 total additional membership renewals taking place during the December meet. Please check your membership expiration date! If your membership has expired, please help your club by remembering to renew at the next meet or by mail. Your membership dues are critical to the health of our club and we cannot continue without your financial support! Thanks to all of you for your support of ARCI over these many years.

Activities: Our meets, including both regional meets and *Radiofest*, remain very popular and well-attended events. Our regional meets in Carol Stream have an average of 25 seller spaces per meet and approximately 75-85 buyers and sellers in attendance, depending on the time of year. One of our most popular regional meets is our December indoor Janet LaVelle Memorial Holiday Party, that features around 30 sellers and a large donation auction. *Radiofest.2016* was a highly successful and well-attended event. Our new venue and hotel were a “smash hit”, and we anticipate a repeat performance in 2017. Over 125 individual selling spaces were sold in our swap meet lot, with more than 500 estimated buyers in attendance from 20 different states plus Canada. Our main auction tallied gross sales of nearly \$34,000, our second highest result ever. Items consigned to our main and donation auctions helped us fully finance the costs of our auction facilities and support. This, in conjunction with our registration fees, enabled us to completely self-fund *Radiofest 2016* without tapping directly into the club's cash reserves.

Finances: One of the most important tasks for any ARCI president is to ensure the financial health and stability of the club. I am very happy to report that the club's finances are now on very solid ground. During the course of FY 2016, we have improved our club's bottom line by nearly \$6,000. Much of this increase can be attributed to club proceeds from our huge *Radiofest 2016* auction that helped make *Radiofest* self-funding in total, and the cost savings we have realized through our arrangements with the new Medinah Shriners *Radiofest* venue. We have also saved significant money on how we handle our AV requirements, and by carefully selecting other vendors that offer us the highest value for our money. These savings give the club a much-needed financial buffer to weather issues like increasing costs for *Radiofest*, membership attrition, and other unforeseen challenges.

THE HISTORY ZONE

An Occasional Column About Radio Topics

By Olin Shuler

MOTOROLA RADIOS MADE IN QUINCY ILLINOIS 1948 - 1975

The Quincy Museum in Quincy, Illinois presents an extensive display of over 90, vintage Motorola home and auto radios, manufactured in Quincy. The display is part of a collection on loan from retired Motorola employee and ARCI member Olin Shuler, through December 2016. The radios are shown in five related groupings with examples from: 1948-1952, 1953-1956, 1957-1962 and 1963-1973. Twenty five years of technical progress, styling trends and use of decorator accent or matching colors are presented in these “genuine plastic” beauties, along with transistor portables and some significant car radios. (Car radios are most scarce since most go to the “crusher” along with their car bodies.) Included is America's first FM car radio and an early production 1967 Eight Track Stereo Tape player”, both having had their first-ever production runs at the Quincy includes extensive explanatory plaques, posters, and vintage advertising.

Operating from 1948 to 1976, Quincy, Illinois was the site of Motorola's first manufacturing venture outside the Chicago area. Millions of home and car radios were produced there. In the mid 1960s it was the world's largest active radio-only manufacturing facility. In the early 1970s employment peaked at over 4200 people. Closed during the oil-embargo energy recession of 1976 and later, it's present owners operate the 900,000 sq/ft building at 1400 North 30th Street as an industrial condominium, warehouse, or home to several local businesses.

Quincy is located approximately 300 miles southwest of Chicago, accessible via the Chicago-KC Expressway Route 110, or via I-55 and I-72, or AmTrack. See the Website: www.thequincymuseum.org, or telephone 217 224 7669. The museum is located at 1601 Maine Street. Visiting hours are from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM daily except Tuesday. Admission: Adults \$5.00, Children \$3. For other points of local interest, and lodging information please visit <http://seequincy.com>.



1948 - 1952.



1953 - 1955.



1959 - 1970 Portable radios.



*1956 Mono Portabe Hi-Fi
(Last year before stereo).*



Auto radios, FM & 8 Track, 1952 - 1973.



1956 - 1963.



1964 - 1975.

RADIOZONE

**An Occasional Column About Topics Of Interest
By David Bart**

THREE BOOKS ON SAMUEL INSULL

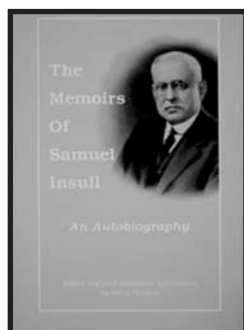
[EDITOR'S NOTE: The following books have been suggested as interesting reading or as useful resources. The following review does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by ARCI. We welcome suggestions and recommendations from ARCI's members regarding book suggestions to share with ARCI's membership. The scope can include technical, regulatory, or other subjects. We encourage you to send your suggestions to David Bart at jbart1964@gmail.com for publication in a future issue of the ARCI News.]

Three books on one topic: Obsessed? No. Intrigued? Yes. Purposefully read in this order? Lucky. Electric power is the foundation of the modern world and underlies the circuitry of all radio and electronic communications. As participants in the radio and wireless fields, we all have some inkling about the giants who developed electric power generation. I long have been curious about Samuel Insull. He seems a forgotten figure. Was he really the evil business mogul whose practices contributed to the Great Depression? How close was he to Thomas Edison? Was he a world class huckster, or was he a knowledgeable and important contributor to the development of electric power? As a resident of Chicago, I knew a little about him as the founder of Chicago's Commonwealth Edison and the builder of the Civic Opera House, but what was the rest of the story?

The Memoirs

After two years sitting on my shelf, I finally picked up and read my copy of *The Memoirs of Samuel Insull: An Autobiography*. I discovered an interesting and introspective tale about Edison's right-hand businessman. I learned how Insull went on to become one of the richest men in the world, was pivotal in the birth of General Electric, and instrumental in the creation of the modern metropolis through his development of the modern power grid—which still fuels today's major urban areas. Insull wrote his autobiography as he waited for the first of three spectacular Federal trials over allegations of defrauding investors from the sale of worthless stock.

The Memoir describes how Insull left England in 1881 with \$200 in his pocket to become Edison's private secretary and stenographer. It recalls Insull's great admiration of Edison and offers a very personal glimpse into living and working with the inventor. It describes how, as a young and eager employee, he helped Edison light up New York, and how he became, in many ways, the business organizer and developer of Edison's commercial interests and corporate empire. He talks about the creation of General Electric, leaving Edison and moving to Chicago, where he built up his own electric and gas empires, and consolidated the electric-traction (rail) system throughout the Chicago region. Insull's reasons and motives are explained in a well written and readable dialogue. He is not apologetic. He conveys the story with simple expression and a forthright presentation.



The Memoirs of Samuel Insull: An Autobiography. Samuel Insull and Larry Plachno. ISBN-13: 978-0933449169 ISBN-10: 093344916X. Transportation Trails, 1992. Hardcover, 302 pages.

The recollections close as Insull's empire collapsed on a scale similar to today's Enron, Worldcom and Lehman Brothers, and as he lost everything in the Great Depression. The collapse of his companies made him the scapegoat of newspapers and politicians, who amplified the derision of his now destitute shareholders. His travels across Europe to avoid or delay federal prosecution seem almost surreal, even staged and the stuff of movies as he is finally kidnapped in Turkey and returned to the U.S. The story ends on a contemplative note that makes one wonder what comes next for the business tycoon. The question begs: was this autobiography an apology or, the ruminations of a man waiting for trial? Or are they a canny and purposefully told tale from a master salesman and powerbroker? What do other more objective perspectives indicate? What did history actually conclude?



Samuel Insull's House in Vernon Hills, IL is now the Cuneo Museum and Gardens.

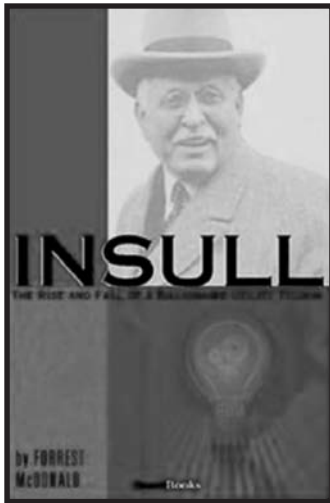
The Study

Now I was ready to read Insull: *The Rise and Fall of a Billionaire Utility Tycoon* by Forrest McDonald. This book's cover is graced by the smiling portrait of a confident and powerful Insull. Forrest McDonald retired in 2002 as Distinguished University Research Professor at the University of Alabama after a teaching career at Brown University, Wayne State University, and the University of Alabama that spanned more than 40 years.

Insull was first published in 1962 as an academic historical study. MacDonald cut through the newspaper headlines to document the facts of Insull's life. Insull at that time still was considered the most notorious person in the utility business. He was the billionaire utility tycoon from Chicago whose gas and electric empire operated in more than 30 states by 1932. Yet, his more than 1 million investors soon lost between \$2 billion and \$3 billion dollars in one of the world's largest business collapses of the Depression—a truly spectacular fall.

The book carefully documents how Insull started as Edison's private secretary in 1881, and details how he was responsible for establishing centralized electric supply. It describes how he organized the Edison General Electric Company, worked out an innovative model of nationwide distribution and promoted rural electrification. His interactions with the engineers and his understanding of the process of developing electric power enabled him to design, develop, and manage a complex network of equipment suppliers who would enable power generation on a massive scale. One of Insull's most significant accomplishments was establishing a method for effective government regulation of public utilities. MacDonald does not offer an opinion on whether Insull

was good or bad. He merely wants us to know the man for his deeds and accomplishments.



Insull: The Rise and Fall of a Billionaire Utility Tycoon. Forrest McDonald. ISBN-10: 1587982439 ISBN-13: 978-1587982439. University of Chicago, 1962 reprinted by Beard Books, 2004. Paperback, 400 pages.

MacDonald's book is still considered the most rigorous treatment of Insull and is heavily cited in subsequent literature on the topic. It is interesting and well written, anything but dry. It demonstrates how Insull was, from the youngest age, an astute businessman. It emphasizes Insull's discovery, long before Henry Ford, that "mass production" and "selling at the lowest possible cost" optimizes consumption. Insull developed and practiced these ideas long before they became popular. In addition, he successfully developed and applied the concepts of electrical load and diversity on a large scale, factors that still determine utility rates.

On the financial side, Insull devised ways to market securities that made gigantic modern corporations owned by millions of anonymous shareholders possible.. It explains how he pioneered welfare programs long before labor or even the government became aware of their importance, and that he encouraged the growth of labor unions. It also details Insull's fall from grace when he was accused of profiting personally by selling worthless stock to unsuspecting investors who trusted him because of his position and reputation. MacDonald tells the reader about Insull's sudden death on a Paris subway platform; elderly, penniless and without identification.

MacDonald's book reads as a carefully researched biography. It is well written, gripping and thorough. It does read positively, and it is clear that MacDonald admires Insull. It left me with a much more nuanced view of Insull and his many brilliant contributions; but it also prompted obvious questions and comparisons from my current vantage point in 2015, after the recent Great Recession. What was Insull's real legacy? Was he truly as benevolent and inspirational as portrayed? Was Insull reckless or appropriately defensive when he fully leveraged his companies at the peak of the market in 1929 to fight off a hostile takeover—placing everyone, including himself, at risk?



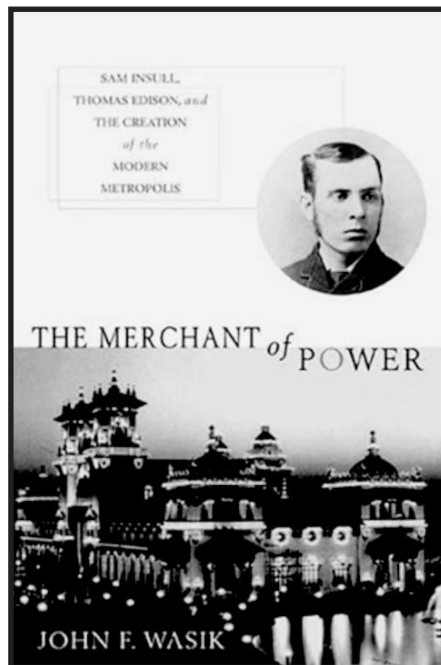
The Civic Opera House in Chicago.

The History

Finally, I read John Wasik's *The Merchant of Power: Sam Insull, Thomas Edison, and the Creation of the Modern Metropolis* for a third perspective on the story. This 2015 book caught my eye in a used book store shortly after I finished reading the first two biographies. I was intrigued by its focus on the cultural, business and industrial impact left by Insull. The author is a columnist for Bloomberg News. He was awarded the National Press Club Award for Consumer Journalism. He had unprecedented access to Insull's archives (donated by Insull's son to Loyola University), which included significant private correspondence with Edison. Wasik focuses on the broader origins and the extraordinary fall of a man who defined his time.

The Merchant reveals a cautionary tale about the excesses of corporate power but also provides the best overall explanation of how Insull created the modern power industry. It shows how Insull's talents, youth, and drive became a foundation that allowed Edison to create and manage his own business empire, and how Edison eventually sold it all to focus on his research interests. The book tells how Insull's innovations in electric power distribution were critical to building Chicago from a tough, dirty cesspool of a prairie town into a world-class city. It unveils Insull's consolidation of disparate smaller power and gas companies, his construction of the world's largest power plants, and his support for the 1893 Columbian Exposition, the world's fair that brought Chicago onto the world stage.

Wasik outlines how Insull's expansion of mass-produced power drove down consumer costs, which ultimately allowed the electric utilities to sell modern home appliances. It describes Insull's benevolent leadership and support for his employees, as well as his patriotism toward his adopted country during World War I. It explains his motives in democratizing cultural institutions and his construction of the Civic Opera House. It also outlines Insull's layering of holding companies, and his motives for having employees invest their retirement savings into their own companies.



The Merchant of Power: Sam Insull, Thomas Edison, and the Creation of the Modern Metropolis. John F. Wasik. ISBN: 1403968845. Palgrave Macmillan Trade, 2015. Hardcover, 287 pages.

Insull also dabbled in radio. Through his long association with Chicago's Civic Opera, Insull thought the new medium of radio broadcasting would be a way to bring opera performances into people's homes. Upon learning about Westinghouse's efforts to establish a radio station in Chicago, he contacted the company. Together they arranged for a radio station to be built in Chicago that was operated jointly by Commonwealth Edison and Westinghouse. KYW's first home was on the roof of the Edison Company building at 72 West Adams Street in Chicago. It went on the air November 11, 1921, as Chicago's very first radio station. The partnership came to an end in 1926 when Westinghouse bought out Commonwealth Edison's interest in KYW.

But, Insull's interest in broadcasting did not stop there. He formed the Great Lakes Broadcasting Company in 1927 and purchased Chicago radio stations WENR and WCBN, paying \$1 million for WENR alone; he merged the two stations on June 1, 1927. Insull then moved the stations into the Strauss Building, and next into the Civic Opera House, where WENR became an affiliate of the NBC Blue Network. Insull's Great Lakes Broadcasting Company also included a mechanical television station, W9XR, which began in 1929 after the company installed the first 50,000- watt radio transmitter in Chicago for its two radio stations. When Insull's fortune started to fade, he sold both WENR and WCBN, along with W9XR, to NBC in March 1931. Two years after its purchase of the radio stations and the mechanical television station, NBC shut down W9XR just as it had done with W9XAP, which came with its purchase of WMAQ (AM). WMAQ continues to broadcast on radio and television today.

The Merchant is a book about business, industrial, and cultural expansion, and the changes they brought. It offers considerable context for the rise of Insull and explains his true legacy. At his peak, Insull's personal worth exceeded \$150 million—more than \$1.7 billion in today's dollars—which was controlled by a mere \$27 million in equity. Was he simply a selfish con artist as portrayed in the media, or a visionary? How did he come to create, own, or control 6,000 power stations in 39 states, representing the greatest centralized power network on earth? Did his traction (electric rail) empire really provide a 300-mile arc of efficient, inexpensive transportation around Chicago that stretched from Wisconsin to Michigan? Was the collapse of his business empire the result of unchecked commercialism and all that was wrong with capitalism, as expounded by Franklin Delano Roosevelt? In fact, out of the eight key points made by Roosevelt in his famous "New Deal" speech, five were ultimately enacted into law within his first 100 days as President; and many were directly intended to prevent another Insull-type business empire.





Samuel Insull in 1920 near the peak of his power. (Wikipedia)

Ultimately, Insull was acquitted in all three Federal trials, but he was aged and wounded. Ironically, those shareholders whose investments survived and who stayed the course without liquidating their holdings experienced better returns with Insull's remaining companies than in the general stock market during the period leading up to World War II. Late in life, Insull even invested with Nikolai Tesla to promote a new novel dynamo motor which consisted of a piston that vibrated in a casing filled with gas. It was a frictionless generator. But the empire was dismantled, and age had taken its toll on the tycoon. Fortunately, Insull would not live to see himself portrayed, along with William Randolph Hearst, as the blended model for Orson Welles' famous character *Citizen Kane*.

The Review

Insull was pivotal in driving fundamental shifts in American industry and he left a significant mark on history. His innovations in the delivery of electric power made possible the regulated monopoly, the expansion of American industry and the creation of the consumer age. Yet, the collapse of his financial empire became the impetus for New Deal laws that now govern much of corporate America. I found the contradictions among the myths and stories versus the actual history and the process of ferreting out his real legacy to be fascinating and somewhat unappreciated today.

I also learned many interesting facts. For example, Insull subsidized his workers in World War I, and he was widely loved and admired by the public for his employment practices and his development of low-cost energy and efficient public transportation. Insull founded both the Franklin Medal and the Edison Medal to recognize and honor scientists and innovators. And, despite the mythology, Insull had nothing to do with the notorious acts committed in the Edison AC/DC wars, eventually developing both AC and DC systems for their combined application in power generation and transmission.

So, has my curiosity and intrigue with the subject been satiated? Taken together, these three books offer bittersweet, complimentary biographies about one of the great titans of American industry, one who laid the foundation for modern electric power generation. Insull was a complex man, driven by many motives, whose life and times are fascinating, exciting, and often contradictory.



The Franklin Medal founded by Samuel Insull in 1914 which is awarded by the Franklin Institute “for signal and eminent service in science”. (Wikimedia Commons)

Conclusion

What about my own assessment of the man? I came to a very multifaceted view. In my opinion he was a tremendously bright and talented individual who clearly understood the technology he was developing even though he was not providing the detailed engineering. He was a workaholic whose personal relationships and relatives paid a price for his passions. He was a benevolent but very demanding industrial leader who bought and sold political power and control. He had great insights and forced great innovation. But, he also was capable of routinely repackaging the deal as he deftly built a mammoth corporate empire that was not anticipated to fall like a house of cards. Was he merely a scapegoat blamed for causing the Depression? Somewhat. Was he a scoundrel? Not fully. A genius? Yes. Evil? No. Self-serving? Yes. He was a product of his times that will not likely be seen again.

If you are intrigued by creation and invention and are curious about personal drive, ambition, and power (but oddly, not greed—in fact, Insull gave away much of his wealth), then I think you will find these books fascinating. I just happened to read them in the order described in this review. Perhaps reading them in a different order can prompt other perspectives and insights. All three currently are available on Amazon or through other sources in their original formats, or as reprints.

[This book review was originally published in the Proceedings of the Radio Club of America, Fall 2015.]

NEWS FROM THE HAMSHACK

By Jim Novak, WA9FIH

REMEMBERING POLY-COMM VHF RADIOS FROM THE 1960s

One of my long time ham friends, who earned his license a month or two after I did back in the early 1960's, was reminiscing recently about his first VHF amateur radio gear. After using a homebrew transmitter and six meter converter into his HF (shortwave) receiver for a while, he graduated to a Poly-Comm 62B AM transceiver which covered both the Six Meter (50-54 MHz) and Two Meter (144-148 MHz) bands.

Poly-Comm Advertisement.

Poly-Comm radios were made by Polytronics Lab. Digging around I found a 1962 address in Clifton, NJ which a Google Map shows as a tree-filled area across from a small residential subdivision. In 1963 ads, the company's address was given as 88 Clinton Road, West Caldwell NJ, which currently appears to be home to WMBC-TV in a commercial area.

Besides ham equipment, Polytronics also sold CB equipment, such as the rather stylish Poly-Comm 23. They also manufactured at least one CB for Lafayette Radio, their HB-333, which featured a receiver front end using two NuVistors and 11 standard vacuum tubes, and appeared in Lafayette's 1964 catalog with a \$209.50 price tag. And Polytronics ventured into the FM business band market as well with their \$300 Model B, a single frequency radio with built in 12 VDC and 115 VAC power supplies. A matching power amplifier, the Poly Booster, was available to hike RF power output from 10 to 100 Watts.



Poly-Comm Model 23 CB Radio.



Lafayette Model HB333A CB Radio.

My friend's Model 62B had a receiver using five Nuvistors in the front end, with triple conversion on two meters, the first IF being 50-54 MHz, second IF at 9.9 MHz, and finally a third IF of 455 kHz. The transmitter put out about 9 or 10 watts on 6 Meters and 4 or 5 on 2 Meters. Single band models with similar styling and circuitry were available for either 6 or 2 Meters. The Poly-Comm 2 listed at \$339.50 in 1963, which the Inflation Calculator shows as being about \$2,675 today!

One common feature to all the Poly-Comm ham equipment was its very compact construction – lots of tubes crammed into a small cabinet also means lots of heat, and there were areas of the wrap around cabinet, and even spots on the front panel, that you wouldn't want to rest your hand on for more than a few seconds! In fact, the point-to-point wiring was all Teflon insulated to prevent meltdown!



Poly-Comm Model 6 CB Radio.RKO.



Poly-Comm Model B.

Except for the CB badge for Lafayette which had a less expensive plastic hand microphone, all the other Poly-Comm ham, business band, and CB products had sturdy metal cased push-to-talk hand mics with a nice brushed chrome finish. Although referred to as transceivers, the radios were really transmitter-receiver units with dual receive and transmit VFOs that required the operator to “zero beat” the transmit frequency against the receiver. A front panel switch and socket also allowed for crystal control of the transmitter, and I recall that most of the hams who used a PC 6 in their vehicle had a crystal plugged in for convenience (typically 50.400, the mobile calling frequency that we all used back in the day). Another reason for crystal control while operating mobile was to avoid “FMing”: of the transmit signal -- “fuzzy” audio resulting from the mechanical vibrator power supply causing the VFO to rapidly shift frequency back and forth slightly!

Although rather pricey, I recall that the Poly-Comm line was popular back in the 1960s, but never made the transition from vacuum tube to solid state and left the market place after just a few years. I did find that the company was a member of the EIA (Electronics Industry Association) but never was able to learn the call letters of any ham operators associated with the firm.

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING COMMUNICATIONS

By David Bart

NATIONAL RADIO HALL OF FAME INDUCTION OF THE CLASS OF 2016

The Museum of Broadcast Communications (MBC) celebrated the 2016 induction of new members into the National Radio Hall of Fame on Thursday, Nov. 17. The sold out black-tie ceremony was hosted by New York morning personality and United Stations Radio Network's nationally syndicated host of America's Greatest Hits Scott Shannon. Jim Bohannon of Westwood One reprised his role as the broadcast's announcer.

Voting results for the 2016 NATIONAL RADIO HALL OF FAME's 24 nominations in six categories were tabulated in July. Four of those categories were decided by a voting participant panel comprised of 400 industry professionals. The other two categories, Music Format On-Air Personality and Spoken Word On-Air Personality, were voted on by the public.



The newly-inducted NRHOF Class of 2016 includes, by category:

Active Local/Regional (10 years or more)

ERIC & KATHY (ERIC FERGUSON & KATHY HART), WTMX (101.9FM THE MIX)/CHICAGO

Longstanding Local/Regional (20 years or more)

JEFF & JER (JEFF DETROW & JERRY CESAK), KYXY/SAN DIEGO

Networks/Syndication (10 years or more)

STEVE HARVEY, THE STEVE HARVEY MORNING SHOW; syndicated by
PREMIERE NETWORKS

Longstanding Network/Syndication (20 years or more)

DELILAH, syndicated by PREMIERE NETWORKS

Music Format On-Air Personality

BOB KINGSLEY, BOB KINGSLEY'S COUNTRY TOP 40; syndicated by
WESTWOOD ONE

For Contributions to the Radio Industry

GEORGE G. BEASLEY, Chairman/CEO/Founder of
BEASLEY BROADCAST GROUP, INC.

KIDD KRADDICK, the late beloved national air personality and founder of
KIDD'S KIDS CHARITY

TONY ROBERTS, former sportscaster and play-by-play announcer for
NOTRE DAME Football

NEIL ROGERS, the late legendary SOUTHERN FLORIDA air personality

NRHOF Chairman Kraig T. Kitchin said, "This year's class of inductees represents the diversity that makes radio so personal, entertaining, and impactful. We all very much appreciate everyone who participated in this process as we welcome the very best in our business into THE NATIONAL RADIO HALL OF FAME" Additional information can be found at the Radio Hall of Fame website <http://www.radiohof.org/>.



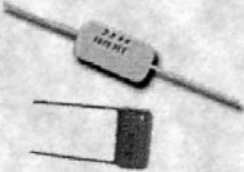


BUSINESS CARD ADS

We invite all of our members to scan and send in your business card to be included in *ARCI NEWS*. For \$80 your card will appear in the next 6 issues! Your card will be seen by approximately 400 people per issue and up to 1,000 people at Radiofest where we make additional copies of *ARCI NEWS* available at no charge. If interested, please scan your card and send it to jbart1964@gmail.com and mail a check for \$80 to Rudy Hecker, ARCI Treasurer, 127 Weymouth Court, Schaumburg, IL 60193. Thank you all for your continued support of ARCI!!!



Just Radios



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CLUBING AROUND

ANTIQUE WIRELESS ASSOCIATION

The Antique Wireless Association will have its next meeting in May 2017 at the AWA Museum in Bloomfield, New York. The AWA, our national affiliate, publishes the AWA Journal, the AWA Review and The AWA Gateway. The latest edition of The AWA Gateway is available for free at <http://www.antiquewireless.org/awa-gateway.html>. Dues are \$35 per year. Information can be found at <http://www.antiquewireless.org/>.

WISCONSIN ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB, INC.

The next WARCI meeting will take place in mid January 2017. For information about the club, please contact President Greg Hunolt at ghunolt@excel.net or see the web site at www.warci.org.

NORTHLAND ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

The Minnesota Club has its next event is scheduled for February 19, 2017, a workshop and outdoor mini-swap meet. Radio Daze, the Upper Midwest's ultimate vintage radio collecting event, will be held May 19-20, 2017. For more information and the date which will be announced, please see <http://www.northlandantiqueradioclub.com/index.shtml>.

MICHIGAN ANTIQUE RADIO CLUB

MARC's Vintage Electronic Expo is scheduled for Jan. 28, 2017 at the Costick Center in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Details will be announced. Please see the MARC web site for more information at <http://michiganantiqueradio.org/>.

INDIANA HISTORICAL RADIO SOCIETY

ÏIHRS Winter Meet will be held mid-Feb. 2017 at the Lawrence Park Community Center, City of Lawrence, 5301 N. Franklin Road (north east Indianapolis). For information please see <http://www.indianahistoricalradio.org/ihrsched.htm>.





ARCI NEWS

Antique Radio Club of Illinois

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