



The Maritime Radio Historical Society is a non-profit, 501 c 3 Corporation
Established 1998

The Maritime Radio Historical Society welcomes you to the historic receiving station established by the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) in 1929.

This station was built as the "ears" of the RCA point-to-point service that provided fixed links for telegraphic communications with the great cities of the Pacific rim including Sydney, Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo among many others. The fields outside were populated like a thickly wooded forest with three large antenna arrays for each city. Receivers on the second floor captured the messages from each city and relayed them via wire line to the RCA Central Radio Office in San Francisco. The room in which you are now standing was the battery room for these receivers. Notice the plates in the ceiling with the three slots. These three slots contained large copper bus bars to carry the current from the batteries to the receivers.

After WWII this building received a new tenant: marine coast station KPH which provided telegram service to ships at sea via Morse code. KPH was previously housed at the Marconi receiving site in Marshall (or Marshalls as it was then called) along the east shore of Tomales Bay.

The transmitters for the point-to-point service and for KPH were (and still are) located in Bolinas at the transmitting station originally established by the American Marconi Company in 1913. The first transmitter was a 23kW rotary spark gap, the standard Marconi transmitter of the day. This was replaced in 1920 with two Alexanderson alternators, each with a power of 200kW. These remained in point to point service until after WWII.

KPH began its life in 1905 at the dawn of radio. Its first home was in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, from which it derived its first call letters: PH. After the 1906 earthquake and fire the station moved to several locations. These included Green Street in San Francisco (where the neighbors were kept awake by the crashing din of the rotary spark gap transmitter), Hillcrest in Daly City (where the operators were plagued by the local skunks) and Marshall. Along the way